

BLOCK 3
PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE



UNIT 8 PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH*

Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Nature of Public Policy Approach
- 8.3 Origin and Development of Public Policy Approach
- 8.4 Different Viewpoints on Public Policy Approach
- 8.5 Selected Models/ Approaches to Public Policy
- 8.6 Limitations of Public Policy Approach
- 8.7 Conclusion
- 8.8 Glossary
- 8.9 References
- 8.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to :

- Explain the meaning of Public Policy Approach and Model;
- Describe the different types of Public Policy Approaches;
- Examine the limitations of the Public Policy Approach; and
- Discuss the development of the Public Policy Approach.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Most governments of Third World countries are engaged in the momentous task of kindling rational resurgence through socio-economic development. They are struggling hard to develop their economy, to sustain improvements in the social system and to increase the capacity of their political system with a view to achieving the major objectives of sustainable development. They seek to improve the relevant policies. It is, therefore, taken for granted that the study of approaches, strategies and concepts, which will contribute towards this end is essential. The study of public policy represents a powerful approach for this purpose. Public policy is an important mechanism for moving a social system from the past to the future. The future requires new policies and choices.

What is trivial today may be of colossal importance in future. We can understand the future by extrapolation of the present trends. People cannot avoid being concerned with the consequences of public policy. The study of the past is therefore very important as it helps in explaining the present policy system. The past policies perpetuate themselves into present and future policies. Public policy is a field, which tends to be defined by policy areas or sectors. Some of the key areas of public

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policy include: health, education, transport, environment, housing, public toilets, law and order and urban planning. Within each of these areas, there exist specialised research networks and communities, which address problems and policies and advocate ideas (Harrop, 1992).

Thus, the Public Policy Approach is of vital importance. Now, the focus of political science and administration has shifted to description of content of public policy, analysis and explanation of the causes and consequences of government activity. Thomas Dye (2004) puts the matter in this way: “This focus involves a description of the content of public policy; an analysis of the impact of social, economic and political forces on the content of public policy; an inquiry into the effect of various institutional arrangements and political processes on public policy; and an evaluation of the consequences of public policies on society, both expected and unexpected”.

8.2 NATURE OF PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH

The starting point for a discussion of Public Policy Approach is to consider what we mean by the terms ‘public policy’ and ‘approach’. It is generally contended that ‘public policy’ has to do with those spheres, which are so labelled as ‘public’ as opposed to spheres, which involve the idea of private. The expression ‘public policy’ presupposes that there is a domain of life which is not, private or distinctly individual, but held in ‘common’. The sphere of the public interest or public opinion cannot be the same as that held by the private individuals.

The term ‘public’ comprises that aspect of human activity, which requires governmental intervention to secure public interest. The role of the State has been thus to create the conditions in which the public interest could be so protected. However, there has always been a debate on tension between what constitutes public and what is held to be private. Thomas Birkland discerned following key attributes of ‘public’ policy:

- “Policy is made in response to some sort of problem that requires attention.
- Policy is made on ‘public’s behalf.
- Policy is oriented toward a goal or a 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” (Birkland, 2011).

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 and Malone, 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”. In the words of Thomas Dye (2004, *op.cit.*) “Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do”.

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 and implemented by government bodies and non-governmental actors. Having explained the concept of

‘public policy’, we will now discuss the meaning and utility of policy approaches and models.

With a view to understanding public policy and its problems better, policy scholars and policy theorists have expounded various models and approaches. These models and approaches simplify and clarify our thinking about public policy and its problems. They also suggest explanations for public policy and predict its consequences. Although different ways of explaining public policy have been adopted and used, it would be proper to understand what a ‘model’ is and how it differs from an ‘approach’.

Admittedly, approaches are broad pathways to understanding a theme or subject, whereas models are slightly more well-knit abstractions, which can even be represented in mathematical or geometric form. An approach is a scholarly strategy or mode of analysis, which provides a set of intellectual tools for the study and understanding of political phenomena. An approach may in itself constitute a major body of theory or it may take the form of a simulation model. The main objective of an approach is to give order to a diverse range of political phenomena by fitting them within a limited set of concepts.

On the other hand, a model is a simplified representation or abstraction of some aspect of the real world. As a matter of fact, a model directs our attention away from irrelevant aspects or variables and focuses on the “real causes and significant consequences of public policy”. Most models are intellectual constructs used to organise thoughts and direct research. Models typically include sets of categories, assumptions, and postulates, which are used to sort out data, analyse it, determine relationships, and help the model builder to explain or predict. In the words of J. Forester, the famous policy modeller, “The mental image of the world around you which you carry in your head is a model. One does not have a city or a government or a country in his head. He has only selected concepts and relationships, which he uses to represent the real system. A mental image is a model”. Policy models are mental constructs of reality in specific policy issue areas such as poverty eradication, energy conservation and so on. The models are artificial devices for imaginatively ordering and interpreting the experiences of problem situations.

For better explanation of the public policy and its consequences, Y.Dror has prescribed *nine* elements which are as follows:

- i) There should be some clarification of values, objectives, and criteria for decision making.
- ii) The method should include identifying of alternatives, with an effort to consider new alternatives (by surveying comparative literature, experience, and available theories) and to stimulate creation of several alternatives.
- iii) The method should include preliminary estimation of expected payoffs from the various alternatives, and decision on whether a strategy of minimal risk or of innovation is preferable.
- iv) If it is the first, the incremental - change model should be followed. If it is the latter, the next step would be establishing a cut off horizon for considering the possible results of the alternative policies, and identifying the major expected results, relying on available knowledge and intuition.
- v) Analysis of the alternatives should deal with both quantitative (“economic”) and qualitative (“political”) factors, in order to overcome the limitations of current systems analysis and advance toward policy analysis.

- vi) The method should include an effort to decide whether the issue is important enough to make more comprehensive analysis worthwhile.
- vii) Theory and experience, rationality and extra rationality, will be relied upon; the composition of the mix must depend upon their various availabilities and on the nature of the problem.
- viii) Explicit techniques, such as Simulation and the Delphi methods, should be used as far as they are appropriate, and knowledge from various disciplines should be brought to bear on the issues involved.
- ix) The method should include explicit arrangements to improve the policy-making by systematic learning from experience, stimulating initiative and creativity, developing the staff, and encouraging intellectual effort.

8.3 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH

The Enlightenment notion that people's problems could be solved through the application of human knowledge forms the basis and the background of the origin and development of public policy approach. Thus, we may chart the development of the policy approach in terms of the acquisition of facts and knowledge about problems so as to formulate better solutions. As Max Weber, a German sociologist, showed, the growth of industries led to a search for more rational forms of organisation (termed as bureaucracy) for the State. Out of this, was to emerge the kind of separation of policy-making as a political function from administration as a bureaucratic function. In the early 20th century, economist John Maynard Keynes claimed that if government was to have any chance of dealing with the problems of day, it had to recognise the need for a policy approach to governing.

The growth of public policy as a distinct field of academic activity may be traced to the late 1960s when, as a result of a meeting held under the auspices of the American 'Social Science Research Council', two Conferences resulted in a collection of papers edited by Austin Ranney (1968). In 1972 the Policy Studies Organisation was founded and this was followed by other 'policy' - focused associations and several journals (Henry, 2012). But perhaps more significant development was that the subject of policy and problems got the attention of wide academic interest. Consequently, policy analysis emerged in the 1970s as an approach which offered the possibility of a unified or integrated social science which could bridge the boundaries of academic disciplines. The prospects of policy analysis as an integrative field of inquiry prompted a lively symposium under the auspices of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in 1971 (Charlesworth, 1972).

In the 1970s and 1980s, numerous textbooks were published that aimed at undergraduate and post-graduate courses which were concerned with the analysis of policy-making, and the role of analysis in decision-making. This period also witnessed a veritable explosion of think tanks and research institutions in which interdisciplinary approaches to policy thrived. Think-tanks have provided the kind of problem and policy-focused environment, which has been conducive to the renewal of the 'policy orientation', which was first promoted by Harold Lasswell in 1951.

In the 1980s and 1990s, one of the most distinctive features of the public policy field was the extent to which it had spread beyond America to other countries. This indeed is a significant development because, for the greater part of the history of the subject, it has tended to be dominated by American material and ideas. But, it

was in America where moves towards a more unified approach to the study of public problems and policy really began in the work of Harold Lasswell (1951).

The Public Policy Approach is most closely associated with the contribution of four scholars: Harold Lasswell, Herbert Simon, Charles Lindblom and David Easton. Their ideas figure prominently in their works. But, there is no better starting point for the study of policy-making and the role of policy analysis than to read their early works and follow the development of their thought.

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 Public Policy?

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2) Bring out the difference between a Model and an Approach.

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8.4 DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS ON PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH

Lasswell's Ideas on Public Policy Approach

Harold Lasswell, perhaps, stands out as the pre-eminent moving spirit behind the growth of a Policy Approach. His writings on public policy may be dated back to the 1980s, when he was inspired by the Chicago School to be concerned with problems and to take a multidisciplinary approach. In the 1940s, for example, he was instrumental in setting up an early 'think-tank', the American Policy Commission, whose aim was to "close the gap between knowledge and policy" by fostering a constructive dialogue between social scientists, businessmen, and policy-makers (Smith, 1991).

Lasswell remarked : "We can think of the Policy Sciences as the discipline concerned with explaining the policy-making and policy-executing process, and with locating data and providing interpretations which are relevant to the policy problems of a given period. The Policy Approach does not mean that the scientist abandons objectivity in gathering or interpreting data, or ceases to perfect his tools of inquiry. The policy emphasis calls for the choice of problems, which will contribute to the

goal values of the scientist, and the use of scrupulous objectivity and maximum technical ingenuity in executing the projects undertaken”.

He introduced the idea of knowledge of/in the policy process and argued that the distinctive outlook of the Policy Sciences is that it is problem-oriented. This problem focus means that the subject aims to be multidisciplinary, involving the synthesis of ideas and techniques. According to Lasswell(1970), Policy Sciences could be defined in terms of ‘knowledge in the policy process’ and ‘knowledge of the policy process’ Policy Sciences thus included:

- i) Policy Analysis : concerned with knowledge in and for the policy process;
- ii) The Analysis of the Policy Process : concerned with knowledge about the formation and implementation of public policy. Policy analysis therefore evolved in an era in which government was seen as a ‘problem-solver’ and the political system as a problem-processor (Keith Hope, *quoted* in Sharpe, 1975).

Simon’s Contribution to Public Policy Approach

Herbert Simon’s contribution to the development of the Policy Approach has been without doubt outstanding. His work on *Administrative Behaviour* (1947; 1957) is central to the analysis of rationality (bounded) in decision-making in terms of a sequence of rational stages: intelligence, design, and choice. He sets out *two* tasks in decision analysis. At a theoretical level, analysis involves the study of the limits of human rationality in organisation contexts; while in practical terms, it involves designing the organisational environment so that “the individual will approach as close as practicable to rationality in his decisions” (Simon, 1957).

Lindblom on Public Policy Approach

Charles Lindblom’s contribution to the development of the Public Policy Approach is equally important. He is well-known for his advocacy of an alternative to Simon’s Rational Approach in the form of ‘incrementalism’. His Article, “*The Science of Muddling Through*” (1959) still remains an enriched contribution to the formation of a theory of the policy-making process. However, over the years, Lindblom’s thought has evolved beyond his original argument. Lindblom criticised Simon’s Rational Model and also rejected the idea that thinking in terms of stages or functional relationships (as advocated by Lasswell and Easton) was of any real value to the study of the policy process.

On the contrary, Lindblom’s Model (1968) took account of power and interaction between phases and stages. To him, policy-making “is a complexly interactive process without beginning or end.” It is gradually evolving, including variations on the past. This Approach is more politically expedient than Rational Approach. The policy-maker under this Approach is perceived as a person who does not have the time, money and brains to make totally different policies.

Easton’s Views on Public Policy Approach

The policy focus in political science is closely associated with David Easton’s contribution (1965). He provided a model of the political system which greatly influenced the way in which the emerging study of policy (outputs) in the 1960s began to conceptualise the relationship between policy-making, policy outputs and its wider ‘environment’. The main characteristics of the Eastonian model is that of viewing the policy process in terms of received inputs, in the form of flows from the

environment, mediated through inputs channels (parties, media, interest groups); demands within the political system (withinputs) and their conversion into policy outputs and outcomes.

The textbooks, which provided the ‘normal science’ of policy analysis were, for the most part, derived from the fusion of Lasswell, Simon and Easton’s models of decision-making and the political ‘system’(Kahn, 1962).The combination of rational stages (Lasswell’s) and systems approaches (Eastonian) thus afforded a more dynamic framework of policy-making, although from Lindblom’s point of view, these models have served more to obscure than to illuminate the policy process.

Besides Easton’s Model, Almond (1998) set out a model of the political system as composed of inputs (interest articulation), process functions (interest aggregation, policy-making, policy implementation and adjudication) and policy function (extraction, regulation and distribution). Policy output is fed back into the political system, which is a part of domestic and international environment.

Vickerian Approach to Public Policy

The social scientists, particularly in the field of public policy, who had most influence on the development of models for analysing the policy-making process were American, but there were a few exceptions to the dominance of American Policy Sciences. Sir Geoffrey Vickers, a British theorist, wrote *The Art of Judgement* in 1965. His work is important but had far less influence on the way in which the Policy Approach evolved. Vickerian Model addresses policy-making 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 judgements.

Dror’s Approach to Public Policy Making

Yehezkel Dror was an Israeli political scientist who contributed to the enrichment of the policy-making process. He was opposed to Lindblom’s incrementalist position and advocated a modified form of rationalism. He drew from system analysis, policy analysis and the behavioural sciences in an attempt to develop a scientific approach to the study of public policy. His work *Public Policy Making Re-examined* published in 1968 still remains as an important source of the policy approach, and the later edition of 1989 greatly benefitted from practical experience in the Israeli government. It may be observed that from the Middle Eastern perspective, Y.Dror was more sensitive to the constraints of the policy analysis for the developing countries than had been the case of American and European texts.

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) Examine the views of Simon and Easton on Public Policy Approach.

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2) Discuss the Rational Policy Making and Group Models to Policy Analysis.
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8.5 SELECTED MODELS / APPROACHES TO PUBLIC POLICY

Since the 1960s many scholars in political science and policy theorists have developed a number of policy models and approaches to help as understand politics and policy process. Specifically, here an attempt is made to examine public policy from the perspective of the following models and approaches:

Institutional Approach to Public Policy Analysis

In a democratic society, the State as a web of government structures and institutions performs many functions including formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies. The government institutions give public policy *three* different characteristics. *Firstly*, the government gives legal authority to policies. Public policy is the outcome of certain decisions and is characterised by the use of legal sanctions. *Secondly*, the applications of public policy is universal. Only public policies extend to all citizens in the state. *Thirdly*, public policies involve coercion. A policy conveys the ideas of a capacity for imposing penalties, through coercion of a kind usually reserved to the government itself. Only the government can legally impose sanctions on violators of its policies. Since the government has the ability to command the obedience of all its people, to formulate policies governing the whole country and to monopolise coercion, the individuals and groups generally work for the enactment of their preferences into policies.

The institutional study has become a central focus of public policy. Thus, one of the models of the policy-making system might be called the Institutional Approach because it depends on the interactions of those institutions created by the Constitution, government or legislature. The Institutional Approach is also concerned with explaining how social groups and governmental institutions bring influence to bear on those entitled to take and implement legally binding decisions. Such decision-making includes those who hold office within the formal and Constitutional system of rules and regulations, which give formal authority and power to the various positions within the governmental structures and institutions. The Institutional Approach attempts to study the relationship between public policy and governmental institutions.

According to Thomas Dye, governmental institutions are structured pattern of behaviour of individuals and groups, which persist over a period of time. The value of the Institutional Approach to policy analysis lies in asking what relationships exist between institutional arrangements and the content of public policy, and also in investigating these relationships in a comparative fashion.

Rational Policy Making Model

Rationality and rationalism are words too often found and used in the literature of social science, but they are more widely espoused than practised in policy-making. However, rationality is considered to be the ‘yardstick of wisdom’ in policy-making. This Approach emphasises that policy-making is about making a choice among policy alternatives on rational grounds. Rational policy-making is “to choose the one best option.”

Thomas Dye (2004) equates rationality with efficiency. In his words, “A policy is rational when it is most efficient, that is, if the ratio between the values it achieves and the values it sacrifices is positive and higher than any other policy alternative”. He further observed that the idea of efficiency involves the calculation of all social, political, and economic values sacrificed or achieved by a public policy, not just those that can be measured in monetary terms.

A policy-maker wedded to rational policy-making must :

- Know all the society’s value preferences and their relative weights.
- Clarify the goals and objectives and rank them.
- Know all the policy alternatives available.
- Compare the consequences of each policy alternative.
- Calculate the ratio of achieved to sacrificed societal values for each policy alternative; and
- Select the most efficient policy alternative that matches with the goals.

In a rational decision-making process, instead of making an “ideal” decision, as Simon observes, policy-makers will break the complexity of problems into small and understandable parts; choose the one option, that is, best and satisfactory ; and avoid unnecessary uncertainty. Herbert Simon further notes, “although individuals are intendedly rational, their rationality is bounded by limited cognitive and emotional capacities.

Group Model: Policy as Group Equilibrium

The Group Model of public policy-making is based on the “hydraulic theory of politics” in which the polity operates as being a system of forces and pressures pushing against one another in the making of public policy. A Group is a collective of individuals distinguished by some common attributes or shared relationship. As per this Theory/Model, public policy is the product of group struggle. Individuals having common interests and demands join hands with each other as a formal or informal group to get the policies made by the governments as suitable to their ends.

In Group Theory, policy formulators are often seen succumbing to pressures of groups through bargaining, negotiating and compromising. Another important dimension of the group struggle is the maintenance of equilibrium in the system. The competition among groups does not permit any group to become absolutely powerful in a system for all times. Public policy is, in such a context, some sort of an equilibrium reached in the group struggle at any given moment. The interests of dominant groups are usually reflected in public policy at any point of time.

Elite-Mass Theory : Policy as Elite Preference

C. Wright Mill (1956) is, perhaps, the leading representative of the Elite-mass Model. According to this Theory, public policy is the product of elites, reflecting their preferences and values. Elite Theory or Model contends that the people are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy. Elites actually shape mass opinion on policy questions more than masses shape elite opinion.

Elite-Mass Theory has been summarised briefly by Dye (2004) as follows:

- i) “Society is divided into the few who have power and the many who do not. Only a small number of persons allocate values for society; the masses do not decide public policy.
- ii) The few who govern are not typical of the masses who are governed. Elites are drawn disproportionately from the upper socio-economic strata of society.
- iii) The movement of non-elites of elite positions must be slow and continuous to maintain stability and avoid revolution. Only non-elites who have accepted the basic elite consensus can be admitted to governing circles.
- iv) Elites share consensus on behalf of the values of the social system and the preservation of the system. In America, the bases of elite consensus are the sanctity of private property, limited government, and individual liberty.
- v) Public policy does not reflect the demands of masses but rather the prevailing values of the elite. Changes in public policy will be incremental rather than revolutionary.
- vi) Active elites are subject to relatively little direct influence from apathetic masses. Elite influence masses more than masses influence elites”.

One implication of the elite mass theory is that innovations in public policy come about as a result of redefinition by elites of their own preferences and values. But with a view of preserving the system, elite decision also reflects what is important for the welfare of the masses. Elitism does not mean that public policy will be hostile toward mass welfare.

Political Public Policy Approach

A significant departure from the rationality model is the Political Policy Process Approach espoused in policy-making. Writers, such as, Laurence Lynn and Peter deLeon have advocated this Approach. As policy analysis is a rational process, it cannot resolve value conflicts. On the other hand, politics is the management of conflicts. People have different ideas about what are the major concerns and problems confronting the society and about what the government should do about them. Therefore, policy-makers must rely on political process. A Political Approach to policy analysis lays emphasis on :

- i) Identification of societal problems that need government action.
- ii) Reasonable trade-offs among conflicting values at the policy-making process level.
- iii) The search for common beneficial outcomes for diverse groups.
- iv) Compromise, conciliation and bargaining among participants to win allies.

In this Political Approach, policy analysis plays a secondary role in the policy-making process. Charles Lindblom (1998) explains : “Strategic analysis and mutual adjustment among political participants, then, are the underlying processes by which democratic systems achieve the level of intelligent action that they do.”

Strategic Planning Approach of Policy Making

Strategic Planning is an attempt to combine the Incremental and Rational Approaches to public policy-making. This Approach has the feature of reconciling the day-to-day demands with long-range strategies for the future. Strategic Planning concentrates on making decisions but blends rational analysis with economic and political analysis. But the success in strategic planning by governments “is not achieved mechanically”, as governments are unable “to follow the linear, sequential planning models of the business policy textbooks.”

8.6 LIMITATIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH

The approaches and models discussed in the Unit are mental abstractions of what are considered to be the mechanics and processes of policy-making. These are explanatory devices seeking to represent the realities of the policy-making process. In the development of Policy Sciences, the models are extremely useful methodological tools. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that administrative reality is too complex to be amenable to complete capture in a system of modelling. Accordingly, it has been discussed in the Unit that each model has its own angle of vision, and no single model is comprehensive enough to embrace all the complexities and subtle nuances of the policy-making process.

It must be admitted that public policy is desirable, particularly if it can eliminate poverty, end racism, ensure peace, prevent crime, clean the air and water and so on. But any serious study of public policy must also recognise the limitations of the policy approach in adopting the right policies. Some societal problems continue to persist because of the way in which they are defined. For example, if the poverty line is defined as the line that places one-third of the population below it, poverty cannot be eliminated. Similarly policies that solve the problems of one group in society may create problems for the other groups.

Second, expectations may always outrace the capacity of the political system. Moreover, it is quite possible that some economic and social forces cannot be harnessed by governments, even if it is desirable to do so. For example, some children may not be able to learn much in public schools no matter what the government tries to do so. In other words, governments may not be able to bring about social reforms in the society. Moreover, societal problems may have abnormal causes and consequences and a specific policy may not be able to uproot the problem.

Third, the solutions to some complex societal problems may require policies that are more costly than the problems. For example, civil disturbances, riots and occasional violence cannot be eradicated without the adoption of very repressive policies which would prove too costly in democratic values such as freedom of speech and press, and right of assembly.

And *fourth*, the democratic set up of the country is not structured for completely undertaking rational policy-making. But solution of societal problems generally implies a Rational Approach. Instead the democratic set up may reflect elite preferences,

group interests, incremental changes or mass influences more than rationalism. As such the possibility always exists that Rational Approach to public policy may not be adopted. Presumably, a democratic system is not structured for a complete rational policy-making.

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) Bring out the features of Elite-Mass Theory and Strategic Planning Approach.

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2) Examine the limitations of Public Policy Approach.

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8.7 CONCLUSION

This Unit dealt with the meaning and significance of public policy. It also dealt with various approaches and models of public policy. As a Public Policy Approach, it described the interaction between government that mainly produces public policies and the people for whom the policies are intended. It is observed that the function of the modeller is to facilitate public policy process by providing a theoretical model or approach. Certainly, the usefulness of an approach or model lies in its ability to simplify the really significant aspects of people's problems. Attempting to bring modern science and technology to bear on societal problems, Policy Approach searches for good methods and techniques that help the policy-maker to choose the most advantageous action. Thus Public Policy Approach is a study of government and its people. It underlines the idea that government could, by making policies solve problems of the people.

8.8 GLOSSARY

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 solutions that ‘satisfice’.

- Enlightenment** : This term is used “to describe a philosophic movement of the early eighteenth century, in which numerous theorists and philosophers developed new political and social philosophies based on reason and on insights from that of natural sciences”.
- Policy Environment** : Policy environment has come to mean that the public process is a product of a system that is influenced by and influences the environment in which it operates.
- Satisficing** : It means making the best possible decision under related constraints of time, information and other resources.

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8.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - ‘Public’ comprises that aspect of human activity which requires governmental intervention towards public interest.
 - Policy is made on public’s behalf .
 - Policy is made by governments.
 - Policy is made to address on issue and look for solution.
 - Policy is what government chooses to do or not to do.
 - Policy is a study of government.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Approach is a broad method for understanding a subject.
 - Approach provides a set of intellectual tools for understanding a phenomenon.
 - Approach assimilates broad themes of a phenomenon into a set of well-defined concepts.
 - An approach could be a major part of theory.
 - A model is a simplified representation of some aspect of real world.

- Model directs our attention away from irrelevant variables.
- Models are intellectual constructs used to organise and direct research .
- Model include sets of categories and postulates which are used to sort out data.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Simon sets out two tasks in decision analysis.
- For Simon, analysis involves the study of the limits of human rationality.
- Simon observes that policy analysis involves designing the organisational environment .
- Lindblom rejects Simon's Rational Approach to policy or decisions.
- Lindblom takes account of power and power interaction.
- For Lindblom, policy gradually evolves including variations on the past and develops incrementally.
- Easton views policy process in terms of received inputs related through input channels and converted into outputs.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- As per the Rational Approach, policy making is a choice among policy alternatives on rational grounds.
- Rational policy making is to choose the one best option.
- Rational policy is designed to maximise 'net value'.
- Rational policy involves weighing value preferences, clarifying goals, comparing consequences and selecting the most efficient policy alternative.
- Group Model is based on the hydraulic theory of policies.
- As per Group Theory, public policy is a product of group struggle.
- Policy formulators prepare policies keeping a particular group and their demands, bargaining and struggle in mind.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- As per Elite-Mass Model, public policy is the product of elites reflecting their preferences and values.
- It believes that elites shape mass opinion on policy more than masses shape elite opinion.
- Innovations in public policy come about as a result of redefinition by elites of their own preferences and values.
- Strategic planning entails the Incremental and Rational Approaches to public policy making.

**Public Policy
Perspective**

- Strategic approach blends rational analysis with economic and political analysis.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
- Definition of an issue may come in the way of policy success.
 - Some economic and social forces cannot be harnessed by governments.
 - Societal problems may have abnormal causes and consequences and a specific policy may not be able to uproot them.
 - Policies could come into conflict with freedom of speech and press.
 - Rationality cannot be practiced every time during policy making



UNIT 9 POLICY SCIENCES APPROACH*

Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Nature of Policy Sciences Approach
- 9.3 Lasswell's Vision of Policy Sciences
 - 9.3.1 Multidisciplinary Perspective
 - 9.3.2 Contextual and Problem-oriented Perspectives
 - 9.3.3 Explicitly Normative Perspective
- 9.4 Scope and Expansion of Policy Sciences Approach
- 9.5 Appraisal of Policy Sciences Approach
- 9.6 New Directions and Perspectives
- 9.7 Conclusion
- 9.8 Glossary
- 9.9 References
- 9.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the significance and nature of Policy Sciences;
- Explain the meaning and scope of Policy Sciences Approach;
- Analyse the Policy Sciences Approach; and
- Describe the new directions and perspectives on Policy Sciences Approach.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Theories, models and approaches of the policy process continue to remain influential because scholars have found them to be useful for explaining important aspects of the public policy. However, like most social science theories, public policy approaches and models fail to explain all the phenomena that comprise the public process. Heineman *et. al.*(2002) and his colleagues have observed "...despite the development of sophisticated methods of inquiry, policy analysis has not had a major substantive impact on policy makers. Policy analysts have remained distant from power centres where policy decisions are made."Lasswell (1951) has stated: "We can think of the Policy Sciences as the discipline concerned with explaining the policy-making and policy-executing process, and with locating data and proving interpretations which are relevant to the policy problems of a given period."

Policy Sciences is an important area which has received wide attention from the

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policy community as a term, 'Policy Sciences' is a systematic and scientific study of public policy. It is a contemporary adaptation of the general approach to public policy. Historically speaking, 'Policy Sciences' is very old when seen in terms of general approach to public policy and public advice. Its historical progression has depended on the complex interaction of social scientists and socio-political events.

There has been now a growing scepticism and criticism of the credibility of Policy Sciences to produce 'objective, empirical and normative truths'. Scientific rationality, which was once its emphasis, is being replaced by 'a broader theory of reason to society'. Today the Policy Sciences have gone far beyond new and naive aspirations for societally relevant knowledge.

Policy Sciences, like many social sciences has not built up what McCool (1995) calls a "dominant theoretical tradition", or what Thomas Kuhn (1970) would call, in the natural sciences, a 'paradigm'. The point is that it is difficult to develop a Policy Sciences Approach because of the wide variation in terminology in the various texts and policy study. For example, McCool notes that "the conceptual distinction between terms is indistinct". But acts of developing and testing approach are important because they are the very tools that help us to understand the broader question of public policy.

Therefore, the Policy Sciences scholars should remain vibrant in theory building on scientific lines on how public policy is made. It is one of the most challenging tasks in the sphere of public policy. This Unit examines Harold Lasswell and other public policy scientists' ideas and approaches on Policy Sciences. Besides, it discusses the nature and role of Policy Sciences. It also critically examines the challenges to Policy Sciences and proposes ways in which Policy Sciences could be amended.

9.2 NATURE OF POLICY SCIENCES APPROACH

The concept of 'Policy Sciences' was first formulated by Harold Lasswell, in 1951, in his work on 'The Policy Orientation', co-edited with Daniel Lerner. This work is regarded as the first systematic effort towards building a new field of enquiry to deal with social problems. Lasswell in his essay 'The Policy Orientation' (1951) has acknowledged Dewey as a policy scientist, more interested in "evaluating and reconstructing the practices of society than in higher ratiocination about the higher abstractions from which his values are derived".

Lasswell (1951) describes Policy Sciences as the culmination of efforts to define a discipline for producing and applying "societally relevant knowledge". Lasswell's vision of Policy Sciences is multidisciplinary, contextual, problem-oriented, and explicitly normative. Realisation of these ambitious goals became the concern of the Policy Sciences community in the second-half of the 20th century. The contributions of various scholars, though with different emphases, have an explicit impact on the evolution and acceptance of Policy Sciences. Brooks (1983) adds, "Policy Sciences is the most recent, and certainly the most explicit manifestation of this quest for an independent vantage point, above the political fray, affording objective criteria upon which policy decisions can be made".

Policy Sciences is a rational approach to the processes of policy making. V. Subramaniam (1980) characterises Policy Sciences as "the practical application of all relevant knowledge in the social, physical and natural sciences, to specific policy problems identified well ahead of time". The rationalist model involves a "commitment to scientific planning. This means an overhaul of the traditional approaches to making

of decisions. However, the spectre of Duncan MacRae is warded off by the suggestion that a policy analysis culture be created in order to achieve greater rationality in policy-making. This policy analysis culture has *three* main features, as found in Dror's pioneering writings:

- i) Technical experts who are sensitive to the ethical implications of decisions;
- ii) Close cooperation between researchers in government; and
- iii) An informed citizenry to fend off the anti-democratic spectre of an expert ruling class.

From Lasswell to Dror, the central idea in Policy Sciences is that it entails a 'theory of choice', an approach to the determination of policy choice. As Nagel (1980) has expressed "As social science does more analysis of hypotheses, predictions, causation, and optimising, there develops a body of potential premises that can be used in deducing conclusions, just as chemistry was able to deduce the existence of new elements before they were empirically discovered".

A large number of articles and books devoted to the teaching of policy studies and the training of policy analysts reveal the fact that Policy Sciences is a scientific approach centering around the development of professional analysts who are expert in rational decision-making. The evidence for the orientation of these professionals can be found in Nagel's discussion of the methods of policy analysis, which consists mainly of a review of the principles of optimisation of decision theory. Nagel advocates the development of a code of ethics, professionalism, and institutionalised checks.

Y. Dror (1971) and most writers on the subject seem to agree on the fact that Policy Sciences constitutes an interdisciplinary approach, which is mainly concerned with improving the policy process through the use of systematic knowledge, structural rationality, and organised activity. What Dror emphasises is that the Policy Sciences "is not directly concerned with the substantive contents of discrete policy problems, but rather with improved methods of knowledge, and systems for better policy-making".

In a similar way, Lasswell (*op.cit.*) also stresses: "Knowledge of the decision process implies systematic and empirical studies of how policies are made and put into effect". While most authors on the subject seem to agree on the basic aims of Policy Sciences, they generally do not provide an operational definition of the concept due to the cross-disciplinary nature of knowledge involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy issues. Its boundaries are not precisely delineated. They cut across such disciplines as sociology, psychology, political science, public administration, management sciences, etc.

Some writers on the subject argue that Policy Sciences, like physics and chemistry, is a science. The empirical aspect of Policy Sciences is stressed by Lasswell thus: "... to insist on the empirical criterion is to specify that general assertions are subject to the discipline of careful observation. This is a fundamental distinction between science and non-science". The term 'model' is commonly used in physical sciences and Policy Sciences. This term is used to "as a simplified representation of some aspect of the real world"(1972).

Like other social sciences, Policy Sciences is also not an exact science because substantive science is concerned with the pursuit of truth which it seeks to understand and predict. Most writers are of the view that policy sciences is merely an approach

which is concerned with improved methods of knowledge and systems for better policy-making. It is a technique which helps the decision-maker to take decisions with improved methods of knowledge. Carol Weiss (1977) describes Policy Sciences as a decision-driven model of research use. This sequential model has the following stages:

- Definition of the social problems.
- Identification of missing knowledge.
- Acquisition of the relevant data using social research techniques.
- Interpretation for problem solution.
- Policy choice.

Policy Sciences may contribute to the selection of policy options, As conceptualisation, it has *two* thrusts:

- i) It contributes to the way in which policy-making is done; and
- ii) It's policy options may percolate into society, influencing “the way that a society thinks about issues, the facts of the issues that are viewed as susceptible to alteration, and the alternative measures that it considers”.

In sum, Policy Sciences can have an influence upon the political agenda through sensitising both policy-makers and the mass of people. Nagel also argues that policy analysis provides ‘new insights’ and enables policy-makers to make better-informed choices and by implication, better policy. Stokey and Zeckhauser also declare that “no sensible policy choice can be made without careful analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each course of action.” These statements echo Dror’s belief that institutionalised Policy Sciences would result in improved policy options.

Check Your Progress 1

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

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

1) Examine the nature of Policy Sciences Approach.

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9.3 LASSWELL’S VISION OF POLICY SCIENCES

In the context of the development of the Policy Sciences Approach, its advocates, especially Lasswell, have deliberately distinguished themselves from early scholars in political science, public administration, psychology, jurisprudence and sociology by posing three defining characteristics. These are discussed in the subsequent sub-section:

9.3.1 Multidisciplinary Perspective

The Policy Sciences are distinctively multi-disciplinary in their intellectual and practical approaches. This is because almost every social or political problem has multiple components closely linked to the various academic disciplines without falling clearly into any one discipline's exclusive domain. Lasswell's work and approach are multi-disciplinary in nature. In the words of Lasswell: "A policy orientation has been developing that cuts across the existing specialisation. The orientation is twofold. In part, it is directed towards the policy process, and in part towards the intelligence needs of policy.

According to Lasswell, the "Policy Sciences" are not to be equated with "applied social science" or "applied social and psychological science". Nor, he admonished, "are the 'Policy Sciences' to be thought of as largely identical with what is studied by the political scientists". The stress in this Approach "is upon the fundamental problems of man in society". Social scientists have argued that the roots of the policy sciences laid within economics.

It may be noted that with the advancement of knowledge on Policy Sciences, focus on uni-disciplinary approaches was de-emphasised. As of the tendency of these theories and programmes to exclude normative considerations, such as equity, was not taken very well by policy makers. Growing awareness and sensitivities led policy analysts to propose new conceptual paradigms and methodological approaches.

Y. Dror (1971) has emphasised: "Policy Sciences must integrate knowledge from a variety of branches of knowledge into a supradiscipline focusing on public policy-making". However, it may be noted that these efforts were quietly given up for two reasons. *Firstly*, the nascent field as a discipline lacked the theoretical ground and empirical stance to support such an enterprise. *Secondly*, there was the problem of a consensual set of foci as to definition and goals of Policy Sciences. *Finally*, emphasis on meta theory (as advocated by Y. Dror) at this stage would have deflected the Policy Sciences from other central features, such as, the attention and applications to real-world social problems. Therefore, to gain a complete appreciation of the phenomenon, many relevant orientations must be utilised and integrated.

9.3.2 Contextual and Problem-oriented Perspectives

The Policy Sciences were consciously framed as being problem-oriented, quite explicitly addressing public issues and posing recommendations for their relief. According to Lasswell, Policy Sciences were problem-oriented and adopted broad contextual approaches. Regarding problem-oriented and contextual policy orientation, Lasswell's idea was double-fold; in part it is directed toward the policy process, and in part toward the intelligence needs of policy. Later in 1971, Lasswell identified *two* separate approaches to the Policy Sciences: one emphasising knowledge of the policy process and another emphasising knowledge for use in the policy process. Lasswell's chosen phrase was "the Policy Sciences of democracy."

While distinguishing between 'analysis of policy' and 'analysis for policy', Ham and Hill (1993) observed that the distinction is important in drawing attention to policy analysis as an academic activity concerned primarily with advancing understanding; and analysis for policy as an applied activity concerned mainly with contributing to the solution of social problems. The Policy Sciences were to integrate both the approaches.

This vision of scientific method and democratic humanism, however, proved

operationally difficult as the Policy Sciences moved to realise status and gain academic recognition during the 1960s and 1970s. These two approaches – process and content – strengthened their respective identities, each claiming some sort of conceptual superiority. Operationally, the *two* approaches are: Policy Analysis and Policy Process.

- ***Policy Analysis***

Those models emphasising policy analysis have been dominant among economists, operation researchers and public administrationists who assumed that policy problems and their solutions could be defined with rational accuracy and subjected to empirical analytical precision. Stokey and Zeckhauser in their work, “A Primer for Policy Analysis”(1978) have provided analysis with models and techniques ranging from differential equations to queuing models to linear programming and cost-benefit analysis. Their prescription was to choose the right technical model for doing analysis. Clearly, Policy Analysis is concerned with knowledge in and for the Policy Process.

Edward Quade, a pioneering proponent of the Policy Analysis Approach, in his analysis for public decisions, (1975) saw both operations research and systems analysis as synonyms for policy analysis. He identified *five* elements of policy analysis as:

- i) Identification of objectives.
- ii) Specification of alternatives.
- iii) Recommending policy action.
- iv) Monitoring policy outcomes; and
- v) Evaluating policy performance.

- ***Policy Process***

Policy Analysis was criticised as being unworkable and dangerous. The critique of Policy Analysis focused on constraints of human and particularly institutional rationality that prevent legitimate claims to knowing all possible alternative solutions or being able to forecast specific policy effects. In place of rational and scientific ideals, democratic and pluralist norms were suggested. It is observed that scientific rationality is being replaced by a broader theory of reason in society. In comparison to Quade’s model, May and Wildavsky(1979) have described a policy process cycle in which they include: agenda setting, issue analysis, implementation, evaluation and termination.

Although these *two* approaches –Policy Analysis and Policy Process – have their own utilities and constraints, it would be unrealistic and harmful to isolate them. Simon has outlined a theory of decision – making bounded by notions of ‘satisficing’ and ‘bounded rationality’ one in which policy – making was constrained by imperfect and incomplete information. To Etzioni both these approaches are necessary. Lately, efforts have been made to reach a synthesis of the two and is characterised by the phrase “Post-positivism.”

9.3.3 Explicitly Normative Perspective

The Policy Sciences Approach is deliberately normative or value-oriented. This value orientation was largely in reaction to behavioralism, i.e., “objectivism” in the social sciences, and in recognition that no social problem nor methodological approach is value free. As such, to understand a problem, one must acknowledge its value components. Similarly, no policy scientist is without her/his personal values. Lasswell

and Kaplan (1950) define the Policy Sciences as providing “intelligence pertinent to the integration of values realised by and embodied in interpersonal relations”, one which “prizes not the glory of a depersonalised state or the efficiency of a social mechanism, but human dignity and the realisation of human capacities”.

The emphasis on values has remained the cornerstone of the Policy Sciences Approach. But in spite of clarification, the normative aspects of the Policy Sciences were neglected mainly for three reasons. *First*, some argued that government programmes basically contained normative postures. *Second*, some claimed that quantitative techniques, such as operations research, were essentially value-free and had nothing to do with concerns of ethics or values. Explicit beliefs in Dewey’s pragmatism and Weber’s ‘bureaucracy’ underlay this assumption. And *third*, some policy analysts argued that values were the exclusive domain of the policy maker and that for analysts to interject their values would be uncalled for and against their professional competencies. No doubt these arguments have some merit. They clearly go beyond the original explanation and enunciation of the Policy Sciences. Without consideration of the normative aspects of the policy process, analysis would be incomplete.

However, this narrative pays scant attention to three hallmarks of the Policy Sciences Approach: there is little direct attention to the problem orientation of the activity, the multidisciplinary themes are largely neglected, and the normative groundings of policy issues (and recommendations) are often overlooked.

9.4 SCOPE AND EXPANSION OF POLICY SCIENCES APPROACH

Through the 1970s, the Policy Sciences approach addressed mainly *four* topics: Evaluation; Utilisation; Implementation; and Termination. Let us discuss them now:

Evaluation: The obvious purpose of Policy Sciences was to learn from public programmes so that the social objectives could be met with new and effective programmes. In many aspects, evaluation was considered to be the policy analysis *sine qua non*.

Utilisation: An important issue that was addressed by Policy Sciences was related to the aspect of utilisation. The likelihood of success for policy analysis in alleviating policy problems was the utilisation of policy research.

Implementation: It was felt in the 1970s that the real culprit of policy failure was the

administrative delivery system. Policy Sciences advocates, therefore, proposed implementation strategies that could help policy-makers appreciate implementation problems.

Termination: In the 1980s and 1990s, the Policy Sciences advocates focused on programme termination under such labels as ‘Cutback Management’, ‘Sunset Legislation’ and ‘Fiscal Retrenchment’. This was in response to the demands for a greater economy and a reduction in government expenditure.

It may be noted that emphasis on programme implementation, evaluation, utilisation and termination studies largely failed to provide a solid programme advice. However, the expanding scope of Policy Sciences Approach remains the issue of intellectual pursuit.

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) Bring out Harold Lasswell's views on Policy Sciences.

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2) Examine the scope of Policy Sciences Approach.

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9.5 APPRAISAL OF POLICY SCIENCES APPROACH

It is to be noted that the challenges to the Policy Sciences are not unexpected. The contemporary Policy Sciences, which emerged in the 1990s have a short history. As an academic pursuit, Policy Sciences continue to be echoed even today in every major policy text book. Today, the Policy Sciences have gone far beyond naive aspirations for 'societally relevant knowledge'. However, the credibility of Policy Sciences has been increasingly questioned for its failure to produce empirical and normative truths. Scientific rationality which was once its base is being replaced by a broader theory of reason in society.

Some scholars like Kenis and Schneider acknowledge that there is a shift from the Policy Sciences through policy inquiry to policy networks. In policy-making, Kenis and Schneider observe that network is regarded as an arrangement characterised by a predominance of informal communicative relations, a horizontal as opposed to a hierarchical pattern of relations and a decentralised pattern of actors' positions.

Schneider *et. al.* argue that policy networks have the ability to increase the likelihood and scope of policy agreements "by increasing available information about potential agreements and enhancing the credibility of commitments to fulfil the agreements." The likelihood of successful policy-making can be increased by spanning organisational boundaries, exploring the details of organisational decision-making, and discovering barriers to implementation.

As already mentioned, the credibility of Policy Sciences has been increasingly questioned. The *first* dilemma is reflected in what Douglas Torgerson (2005) has argued: "The dynamic nature of the (Policy Sciences) phenomenon is rooted in an

internal tension, a dialectic opposition between knowledge and politics. Through the interplay of knowledge and politics, different aspects of the phenomenon become salient at different moments.” In other words, there is conflict between politics and science as knowledge.

Second, Policy Sciences are faced with dilemma of methodological problems. Scholars like Dryzek and Fischer (1993) argue that since positivist methodologies (based on tenets of social welfare economics, e.g., cost-benefit analysis) were fundamentally flawed, as such, it should not be astonishing that resulting analyses were also flawed. Referring to Positivism as ‘instrumental rationality’ which, Dryzek claims, “makes effective and appropriate policy analysis impossible ... (and, most critically) is antidemocratic”. According to Hajer and Wagenaar (2003), rationality, which is a destructive feature of the Policy Science Approach, “destroys and represses individuals” and is “ineffective when confronted with complex social problems”.

Third, Lasswell’s idea of democratic values was to be realised through citizens’ participation in the policy analysis. However, this participatory policy analysis has also been severely criticised by some theorists as being “too cumbersome” or demanding too much or including too many participants to move toward policy closure, especially today’s mega-policies. Some have characterised it as little more than a publicity exercise.

9.6 NEW DIRECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Although policy research still continues to produce the most systematic and critical analyses of complex social problems, it is also true that Policy Sciences represent only one of the several “rational ideologies” competing for social and political acceptability. Pursuing a pro-active approach, a few scholars of the Policy Sciences revisited, in the 1990s and in the first few years of the 21st century, some of the old themes in an effort to reconcile long-pending conflicts. They have also moved away from adherence to a simple theory of rational choice to a theory of reason in society, and from Policy Sciences to ‘policy inquiry.’ Two items have remained prominent on the agenda for the Policy Sciences since 1990s. *First*, the Policy Sciences were to become normative; and *second*, Policy Sciences were to be related to the emerging field of public management.

Continuity of Values in Policy Sciences

Ethical values are important for governance in government and society. Keeping politics and administration separate, it is argued, would theoretically prevent political power from corrupting bureaucracy. Similarly, introduction of measures to ensure public accountability of higher bureaucracy would provide the moral safeguards against ethical transgressions. Under ethical and social morality approach the individuals and groups both inside and outside public service are forced to make concrete ethical and value judgements on a regular basis. In a developing country like India where policy-making and policy implementation is a serious concern, much work remains to be done on methods and procedures for ethical analysis and this can be on the top of the policy agenda in the first decade of 21st century.

Focus on Public Management

During the 1970s, the Policy Sciences addressed topics of evaluation, utilisation, implementation and termination. To some extent, each of these topics have focused on moving from strategic policy analyses and advising to practical operations and

organisation. A policy remains just a policy statement unless it is implemented. Public management, like policy, shared a general disdain for traditional objective, discipline-bound, social science inquiry and preferred the multi-disciplinary, problem-oriented, and explicitly normative nature of its policy-oriented kin. The public manager is concerned with the specific functions necessary to the organisation and implementation of public policy, that is, planning, organising, directing, and controlling. Public policy and public management, that is, are partners, convergent in outcome, but with different focus. Managing public policy, according to Lynn, is “the result of executive effort directed at affecting governmental outcomes by influencing the processes that design and carry out governmental activity”.

Continuity of Relevance

It may be argued that Policy Sciences has achieved a great deal in altering the landscape of academic and public organisations. As an approach, it is relevant for resolving complex social and political issues. Social and economic policies are the issues of public concern that would largely benefit from the systematic lenses of the Policy Sciences. The Policy Sciences appear to hold an implicit assumption about the benefits of government intervention.

Emphasis on Policy Enquiry

The modern theory of policy analysis, instead of emphasising the traditional rational approach relies more on a “polity of rational ideologies “in which policy inquiry replaces the “objective” model of the Policy Sciences. A reasoning approach has the added advantage of furthering ‘the context-oriented and explicitly normative nature of the Policy Sciences’. Fischer and Forester (2012) are of the view that future of policy analysis depends on moving towards a broadened conception of reason in society that accounts for social, political, legal, moral, and ethically based rationalities. New approaches in the Policy Sciences appear to be based on the theory of applied reason and communication in society. The method of policy inquiry or argumentation promises not only to meet the goals set out by a theory of reason in society, but also to integrate the process and content divisions that have arisen within the policy sciences. The policy inquiry might represent a new advance, but it is neither free of problems nor a definite answer.

Democratisation of Policy Sciences

As already mentioned, scientific rationality is being replaced by a participatory policy analysis and post-positivist model. There is a greater concern for values, as they exist. Further, in the first quarter of the 21st century much attention is being attached to public participation in the policy process. It appears necessary for the Policy Sciences to achieve their Lasswellian goal of the “Policy Sciences of democracy” because the human condition is often temperamentally beyond quantitative capture. But this Post-positivist approach, combined with participatory policy analysis, is not without shortcomings but it promises a new vision for the future.

Social Network Analysis

Hanf and Scharpf have viewed the policy network approach as a tool to evaluate the “large number of public and private actors” from functional areas of government and society. The traditional forms of policy research have largely focused on the hierarchical policy process. On the other hand, the network approach looks at the policy process in terms of the horizontal relationships that tend to define the

developments of public policies. Although there are certainly some problems, in many ways social network analysis provides the Policy Sciences with a methodological approach that is convenient with the wide range of institutional actors who form the policy process. Thus, a network approach is useful, but Carlsson has claimed that, as of now, it is not a viable approach for Policy Sciences.

9.7 CONCLUSION

Although, Policy Sciences as a discipline or an area of study has achieved success in altering the landscape of academic and public organisations, yet its credibility has been challenged for its failure to produce ‘societally relevant knowledge’. Some scholars saw policy science approach as a substitute for politics. Brooks has observed (1993): “While not anti-democratic, the analytical approach to public policy-making aspires to the de-politicisation of the policy process”. Although the term ‘Policy Sciences’ is mostly associated with works of Lasswell and Dror, a policy orientation was evident in work of America’s first social scientists.

Highlighting the value of ‘policy sciences’. Brooks (*ibid.*) has written: “These visions of a new politics share a conviction that the institutionalisation of scientific analysis into the policy-making process is a necessary condition for the attainment of democratic government in a modern society”. But to reinvigorate the Policy Sciences Approach. The traditional analytic toolkit is, at worst, “ineffective and anti-democratic.” One obvious requirement is that “policy researchers will need to acquire a new set of analytic skills dealing with public education and negotiation and mediation, that is, helping to foster new policy design models that are less hierarchical than has been the case, rather than simply advising policy-makers”.

DeLeon and Vogenbeck (2007) have suggested that “the policy scientist should become more fluent and practised in addressing the potential effects of decentralised authority”, for it is observed that most governments are “moving at the moment toward a more localised, state-centred form of government”. It may be added here that the future of policy science approach (although presently faced with numerous crises of identity and being at crossroads) will depend less on its adherence to scientific rationality and more on its ability to serve the knowledge needs of the administrative and political community in the form of directed policy inquiry and social network analysis.

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) Describe the new directions and perspective in Policy Sciences.

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2) Examine the shortcomings of Policy Sciences Approach.

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9.8 GLOSSARY

- Behavioural Sciences** : The Behavioural Sciences study human behaviour by scientific means as a preliminary approximation.
- Empirical** : It refers to collection of data or facts based on inductive methods of enquiry.
- Normative** : Relating to or establishing a norm; normative analysis emphasises on human dignity, democratic values.
- Scientific Method** : It involves identifying a problem, gathering data and testing hypotheses.
- Paradigm** : A broad theoretical framework or model about phenomena that guides research.
- Policy Community** : It refers to a group of actors, such as interest groups, government agencies, the media and elected officials, who are actively involved in policy-making in a particular domain.
- Policy Tool** : According to Lester Salamon and Michael Lund, it is “a method through which government seeks a policy objective”.

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9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Policy Sciences concept was formulated by Harold Lasswell in 1951.
- Policy Sciences is much-disciplinary, contextual, normative and problem oriented.
- Policy Sciences includes choices, prediction, and optimisation.
- It is mainly concerned with improving policy process.
- It represents the real world by defining social problems and interpreting solutions to problems.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answers should include the following points:

- In Lasswell's view, Policy Sciences are multi-disciplinary.
- Policy Sciences focus on multi-disciplinary perspective, contextual and problem-oriented perspective as well as policy analysis, policy process and explicitly normative perspective.
- Roots of Policy Sciences lie within economics.
- Sensitive and aware policy scientists propose new conceptual paradigms and methodological approaches.
- Lasswell identified two approaches to policy sciences on focusing on knowledge of policy process and second on knowledge for use in policy process.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Scope and expansion of Policy Sciences Approach include evaluation, utilisation, implementation and termination.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Policy Sciences represents only one of the several rational ideologies competing for social and political acceptability.

- Continuity of values in Policy Sciences is still there.
 - There is a poignant focus on public management in Policy Sciences.
 - As an approach it is important in solving complex social and political issues.
 - There is a focus on Policy Enquiry.
 - Policy Sciences is focussing on democratisation and participation.
 - Policy network approach is gaining value.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
- Policy Sciences are not unexpected or have a short history.
 - Policy Sciences have gone far beyond naive aspirations for societally relevant knowledge.
 - There is a shift from policy inquiry to policy.
 - Policy Sciences have been criticised for their inability to produce empirical and normative truths.
 - Dynamic nature of Policy Sciences is rooted in internal tension.
 - Policy Sciences are faced with dilemma of methodological problems.



