

**Public Organization and Management**  
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**Lecture – 16**  
**Accountability and Control – I**

Hello dear learners, I hope all of you are doing well and following the contents of this course. In this week, we are going to start another theme which is Theme 2 in this course and the focus of this theme will be on three modules, Module 4, 5 and Module 6. In the module 4, we are going to start looking at the aspects related to accountability and control in relation to the functioning of public sector organizations. Once we are done with the module 4, we will start looking at the aspects of organizational goals, effectiveness and performance of the public sector organization and we will conclude this module with discussion on organizational structure and its dimensions and the influence of the structure and its dimensions on the functioning of public sector organizations. So, before going ahead with the discussion on this theme, let me just give you a quick review of what we have done in the previous theme in module 1 to module 3. The focus of the theme 1 was on understanding the basic fundamentals of public management and the functioning of government and public organizations.

So, we have started with the module 1 where we have looked at the various frameworks in terms of conceptual understanding of the meaning of the public management and how it is different or similar from the other related concepts such as public administration. We looked at certain kind of important conceptual understanding given by various authors. Then we also discussed about the various differences and similarities between public and private sector organization, wherein I have also talked about the distinctive characteristics of public sector organizations and also talked about the various scopes, challenges and the research related aspects of public management in the module 1. Then we started looking at the history of organizations because it had important implications for how organizational management is done in today's context also.

So we have already talked about that the understanding of such evolution of the management thought was necessary to understand how management is practiced today. So we have reviewed and we have talked about various school thoughts of management starting from classical school to administrative school and then contemporary approaches to the management. The focus of the module 3 then was on understanding the environment and its impact on the functioning of government organizations. So, and we have discussed at length about various factors of the environment such as political, social, legal, cultural, economic factors and how these all factors they actually impact the functioning of the organizations. We have also looked at the aspects of competence and

responsiveness values and how they also somehow influence how the government and public organizations function.

So, this is a quick review of what we have done. so that you know that how we are going to now build further in this particular course. So, as I have mentioned that we are going to start Theme 2 in this course and the first module in this particular theme is about accountability and control in relation to the functioning of public sector organizations. So, let us first of all quickly look at the contents that we are going to discuss in this particular module. So, first of all, I will give you a little background about why we are discussing about the aspects of accountability and control and that too specific to the functioning of public organizations.

So, we need to understand why this particular topic we are discussing in the course entitled Public Organization and Management. Then I will give you the conceptual meaning of the aspects of accountability and control Then I will discuss about some of the types of accountability systems, mechanisms, some of the important frameworks which help us on understanding how accountability is understood and practiced in the organizations. Then we'll look at some of the control mechanisms like accountability is ensured by following some kind of control mechanisms. So, we will look into the control mechanisms, internal and external mechanisms, which will also include the discussion on very important control mechanism in terms of legislative, executive and judicial controls. So, when we do this, we will also talk about very important aspect of doctrine of separation of powers before I go ahead with discussion on legislative, executive and judicial control as control mechanisms to ensure accountability and things like that.

Then we'll talk about the role of civil society, how it actually influence the government's actions, they influence the functioning of the organizations and some of the cases also we will discuss about how when the people, they come together as a group, and they wanted some kind of things to be taken care of by the government seriously, they can also influence the functioning of the organization. So, in a way, the pressures outside the government and the public organizations, they somehow influence them to take actions to satisfy or meet the expectations of the society because they are actually working for the public benefit, welfare of the larger community. So, we look into the aspects of role of civil society, public opinions and we will conclude this particular module with looking at how people's participation in the various aspects of the management of public organization is actually helping as a control mechanism. So, these are the contents that we are going to focus on in detail in this particular module. Let us first of all talk about a little background about why we are talking about the concept of accountability in the first place and control mechanisms in the first place.

Since the beginning, we have been talking about that the entire intent of the course is to look at the functioning of the government and the public organizations and the goals and the objectives or if I say the purpose of the government and the public organizations largely is the welfare of the community. So all the actions or the strategies or the policy making or you can say the programs, anything that the government and the public organizations are pursuing, this basically directly relates to the lives of the people. Because these public policies and programs are actually designed and implemented in order to benefit the public at large. So the actions which have lot of implications for the lives of people outside. So these actions cannot be just randomly thought of.

These actions should be well thought of. When I am saying actions, I am talking about how policies are being made, their design of policies, how they are implemented, in the way of how public managers are conducting in terms of their functioning in the organization, how government is planning. All these activities in terms of actions, they all have important implications or I will say the consequences for the general public at large. not only public at large but all the other agencies directly or indirectly who are being impacted by the functioning of the organizations in any context. I'm not talking about only in India, I'm talking about the nations across the world, whenever the government and public organizations, they came up with some kind of policies or reforms or programs, so they are actually impacting the public at large and of course, the other organization at large.

So, that's why we are talking about the concept of accountability and control. Because there should not be any situation where the government and the public organizations should indulge into any kind of actions which are not towards the benefit or the welfare of the community. So accountability and control mechanisms, we try to somehow ensure that this is taken care of. And no one is, I'm talking about the functioning of the organizations, no one is trying to do something which is against the constitution or against the welfare of the community at large. So, this is why we are picking up this particular topic of accountability and control in the course Public Organization and Management.

So, let us first of all understand very basic understanding of the term accountability. Because if you look into the literature and if you read lot of frameworks and the papers which are published in the area, books published in the area, they try to explain accountability in different ways. right so this particular term accountability as the literature mentioned it has been used in several different ways and these ways all these different ways in which the accountability has been defined or conceptualized or seen they have important implications for the aspects of governing right because we are saying that accountability is being undertaken because to ensure how you know his governance is being done what is government doing, how people are holding the government accountable or public organizations accountable for their actions. So, this also relate to

the important aspect of governance, that's what we have just written here. So, if you want to just understand more about it, I have given the important references on the slides.

This particularly is based on the two important references of Thomas and Peters given on the slides. If you really want to understand more about, which I am going to talk about in little more detail as I move ahead with the content, you will get to know about. I will just briefly explain the concept, why transparency is important and in what ways transparency is being understood by various researchers and how it has important implications for the governments. Let us look at the definition as proposed by Peters in the text titled Performance-Based Accountability. According to the conceptualization proposed by the author, the most straightforward way of defining accountability as per author is that when a government agency or any public organization They openly report on what it has done, you know, in terms of their actions and these actions can include how the money is being spent.

For example, whatever budget allocation is being given to the government or the public organizations, how that money is being spent, right? What are the kind of services these organizations are providing? and also the success and failure of these programs. So, this basically is in a very simple way of informing the agencies or the groups or the public outside that what government agency or public organization is doing and there is a reporting mechanism to this. So, this is one way of communicating with the people outside the organization about the actions of the government or public agencies with respect to various activities that the organizations are doing. Now, I am not saying that accountability is not important for private sector organization, but accountability is seen in a different way in the context of private sector organizations. So, even if you look at Private sector organizations as per the law, they are mandated to publish their annual reports wherein they will disclose the important information which is to be disclosed to the public.

They will also say something about published newsletter times and again. with the help of the electronic media, social media, they'll keep on informing the customers who are impacted time and again about what kind of products and services they come up with. So there's also another way of looking at accountability. But in this course, the focus of discussion is on understanding the accountability and control in the public sector organizations. So that's what we are going to look at in a little more detail in this particular module.

Now, let us continue, so as I have just mentioned that this particular aspect of accountability in the literature has been looked upon at in different ways and as per the authors This has been seen in the three main different ways of looking at accountability in the public organizations. So, they talked about accountability related to in terms of being transparent, the organizations being transparent in their action. they are responsible

and of course, they are responsive in their actions. So, we will look into the details of these particular aspects one by one that what is the meaning of transparency, what is to be done in terms of responsibility and what about the responsiveness. Now, first of all, let us look at the aspect of transparency in relation to the aspect of accountability.

So, when we talk about transparency, this is basically a very basic form of accountability. In this same, this particular transparency relates to, you know, the reporting, the aspects of reporting. Transparency's relation to accountability is with respect to reporting. Now, this is the basic form of accountability, you know, where an organization, say in our case, government and public organization, they report their actions publicly. right and how they will report that what how what are the ways in which it can be done so these reports when they go public you know from the government or the public sector organization they include a financial information you know record of the finance in terms of how budget is being spent how money is being utilized, you know, optimal utilization of resources.

So, financial information, it also provide information with respect to what kind of services are being provided, how many beneficiaries are there and of course, the outcomes of the various public policy programs and so and so forth. Now, I would like to give an example here, if you go to the website [www.data.gov.in](http://www.data.gov.in), where you will see lot of data is being shared, openly shared by the government, in the sense that, of course, look at various policies and the programs which are implemented.

How they are extending benefits to the public at large and there is some kind of data being collected. A lot of data is collected and it has been freely available on this particular website and this is again one way of sharing this transparent information that what was the outcome of the public policy programs, how many beneficiaries are actually taking the benefits of the program. what data for example look at the education related data you know in terms of school enrollment you know enrollment in the schools teachers let us look at the data related to healthcare policy right or we'll say environment also so you'll see a lot of data is being shared I am talking about the government you know transparency in terms of sharing this data with the public at large So, you can also log into this particular, you can actually go to this website and see what kind of data is being collected and what are the various things being shared on this platform. And also, it doesn't only have collection of data, there are discussions happening, there are blogs where people are sharing their viewpoints, their feedback and so and so forth. So, transparency is basically about reporting, what are government organizations and they are doing.

So, when we say that these reports are being published, that data available on government platform is one of the example of this thing. On the other hand, government organizations, I just talked about that there are important documents that they will publish in terms of reporting that can include annual reports, There can also be newsletters that they publish, one way of saying it to the government or showing it to the people outside that what they are doing. But it doesn't mean that whatever they are reporting has to be taken in that way. They are audited reports. These reported are well audited by the independent organizations when they are made public.

Now, the important consideration also here that you need to take into consideration is that, you know, this also need to be ensured when these reporting is done that, you know, in terms of these, we will say, the reports or the documents, the public can first of all and access to this particular documents and also understand. These documents should be understandable so that if there are any kind of questions or if there are any kind of queries, the public have that kind of freedom or I will say the authority to ask questions to the government for asking for more clarity, public organization for asking for more clarity. For example, if public policy programs are implemented and if some beneficiaries feel that they are not happy with the way it is being done, they can of course ask for clarification through various platforms or mechanisms which of course we will talk in little detail. when I go ahead with the discussion.

For example, RTI is one of them. There's one way of asking information how public policies are being designed or what actions or what strategies, how certain decisions are being taken, you know, criteria, goals and performance and so on and so forth. So, this is the first one, you know, one of the ways to look at the accountability in public organizations that the government and public organizations being more transparent in the reporting activities with respect to their actions. the second aspect of this is about responsibility right the government and the public organizations being responsible right now in this case what happened is the focus is on the ethical and you know lawful behavior of public officials when we say that responsibility whose responsibility is it now we'll say that the government and the public organizations of course are represented by their officials you know public officials who are taking decisions with respect to policy making, implementation or various other activities in the organizations. So, these are the people who are actually representing the organizations and the government. So, when we talk about these people who are actually indulging into the actions or decision making, their ethical and lawful behavior is very very important in terms of understanding the aspect of responsibility in relation to accountability.

Now, this ethical and lawful behavior is largely dependent upon the official's own understanding of the legal and ethical standards because individuals are different. Their experiences are different the way they look at or they understand the aspects related to ethical and legal standards so it varies right but it is important because responsibility is there they are accountable people can ask them the questions why they have done certain things which they have done in the past especially if it has important implications for the people outside. So, the government officials who are being given the authority to do something in terms of the policy making and the things like that, they are responsible for their actions. They should be responsible for their actions. So, in that way, the ethical and legal standards are very, very important. You know, in terms of their conduct, how they are conducting themselves in the organizations.

So, this particularly, you know, the works the best when there is a strong tradition of ethics in public service. This is very important, right, because we are talking about responsibility. So, legal and ethics, you know, comes at forefront. How certain things are being done, following what principles, you know. So, they should justify directions, so ends through their means, how they are reaching the ends and what means are being used, so responsible way.

But it can also be challenging in the settings, the aspect of understanding of this ethics when there are not clear consensus on standards. We don't have those kind of very clear criteria for things. So, this could be a challenging situation because it involves the clear standards and how performance indicators or things like that are taken into consideration. So, responsibility is another important way which is related to the aspect of Now, third important factor in terms of looking at the aspect of accountability is to do with responsiveness. Now, when we talk about the responsiveness, responsiveness means that how government is responding to the demands of the stakeholders and in terms of the response, what is the time that they are taking in responding to the events.

So, basically responsiveness here they actually involves the role of the public servants or we will say civil servants you know responding to the needs of their you know political authority, political leaders and of course the public and specific groups. So, there are always demands by the citizens. They want something or the other from the administration to take into account their viewpoints or what they demand from the public sector organization. So, in that way, the representative of the government and the public organization, they have to respond to their demands. So, how they are responding? So, basically, this responsiveness dimension is basically listening to the public and fulfilling their demands as much as possible.

For example, the demands could also be to do with some kind of infrastructure development in the region or let's say the creation of schools or public health facilities in the vicinity. So, what happened is district administration will always be receiving lot of demands and people will be reaching out to them for fulfilling these demands. So, how these officials are responding to the demands of the public and the political authority, these all are related to the aspects of the responsiveness. But one of the things here is because there are a lot of stakeholders, there are a lot of people who will have their demands, there will be political authority, there are interest groups, there are people, citizens there. When they are coming with a lot of demands, these public officials often face a challenge of balancing these demands.

For example, which kind of... priorities or demands should be prioritized. So, sometimes they face this kind of a challenge and that's what we talked about the aspects of managing in the public organization. So, that's another way of looking at the differences between the management of the public versus private organizations. Perhaps in private organizations, the demands would not be that much conflicting or expectations would not that be very conflicting. But in public organizations, it can be a case where the public officials, they often come across the competing demands and then they have to balance which particular goals are to be prioritized, which particular demands take the priority.

Now, these are the three important ways in which we can actually look at the aspects of accountability in relation to transparency, responsibility and responsiveness. Now, here there is an important discussion that I want to pick up. Now, these approaches that we have just talked about in terms of accountability sometime can also come in conflict with each other. example, transparency in conflict with responsibility or responsibility is in conflict with responsiveness. Let us look at first of all, you know, a case of responsiveness versus, when we talk about the conflict, how they can come in the conflict, we will look at responsiveness versus responsibility.

And we have already talked about what is the meaning of responsiveness and what is the meaning of responsibility. Now, let us say an example of a public servant, a civil servant official who is a representative of the government and public organization. who has much more focus on responsiveness to meet the demand of the stakeholder. I am talking about the conflicting demands between the two. This official may focus on responsiveness and he or she when he is executing the function as meeting the demands of the people may prioritize helping people, citizens in that particular district where he or she is appointed.



Even if it conflicts on the strict rules because responsibility will say that it is basically adherence to the legal and ethical standards. So, sometimes that can also be a consideration where sometimes rules do not allow to have that happen. but sometime being responsive you are working in that vicinity you understand the way the things are to be done so you under you know you end up helping people there which can of course come in you know conflict with the responsibility but then again the people have to balance this aspect So, these kind of situation, you will see that various, you know, the public servant officials, they will keep on sharing their viewpoints or their experiences with other people when they came across these kind of situation, how they handle the political authority, how they meet the demands of the, you know, people outside and how they take care of the media, things like that. Another example could be responsibility versus transparency.

I am talking about the conflict. These kind of values can come in conflict with each other. How to look at it? For example, an official who is committed to the rules in terms of conduct might struggle to meet all public demands if they perceive them as legally or ethically questionable. So, you see that the two values, they are coming in close conflict with each other. So, this is the way to look at the accountability, perhaps this is not the only way to look at, we have just covered some part of it as per what the authors have described in their research here, but there could be others also, could be another dimension, very important dimension is about trust and its relation to the aspects of accountability, there is another way of looking at it. So, these are not the only ways of looking at accountability in public organization, but there are others also, but we are just covering some of the important aspects here which need to be looked into.

Okay, following this, we will talk about importance of accountability. Why we are talking about the aspect of accountability? What is the importance, right? So, three important discussions we will have. Importance of accountability for effective democracy, for efficiency and effectiveness of organization and of course, for steering society. Again, the references are being highlighted here for you to look at. Now, when we talk about for effective democracy, so when we talk about the aspect of accountability, it ensures government transparency and of course, allows the public scrutiny.

We talked about this thing, government being transparent in reporting activities and then public understand what the government is trying to do and of course, when the documents are made public in terms of transparency, they are open to public scrutiny, right? This particular accountability mechanism, why it is important for effective democracy is to basically, very very important for monitoring the executive power and bureaucracy. How somebody is conducting and taking care of their official duties. So, accountability is also to ensure the executive power and the bureaucracies. Also, accountability in terms of democracy, they empower people to go against.

For example, mobilization against poor performance. So, people have power if they see that there are some kind of inefficiencies in the system and things like that, they can always go against, come in the group and can tell government what is going wrong. And in that way, they have the power to influence the government to change the way they are thinking or come up with some kind of reforms which will help in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness. So, I will stop here. I will continue this discussion in the next session, where I will talk about another two important aspects of accountability.