Public Organization and Management
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Lecture – 19
Accountability and Control – IV

Hello, dear learners. Let's continue the discussion that we have started in the previous session. I was discussing about the Romzek and Dubnick's framework on accountability systems. And we have looked at the four different kind of accountability systems in terms of bureaucratic accountability, legal accountability, professional accountability and political accountability. In the previous session, we have covered three bureaucratic, legal and professional accountability and I was discussing about the political accountability case in terms of public organization and I was talking about the Department of Space and Indian Space Research Organization as a case study. So, just to give you quick review what we have done in this case.

In terms of political accountability, we have seen in the previous session that in case of this accountability system, the source of agency's control is external, but the degree of control on agency's actions is low. So, there is a control outside, but the control outside does not put a lot of money, you know, extend to control the activities of the organization. So, these political executives, they let the organization decide their own activities of operation in terms of managing the diverse expectation, but there could be pressures from the political authority outside to just have organization align their actions better with the government mandates and the public expectations. Now, we were talking about that political authority or the political executives, they have always been very supportive of the Indian space program and in the previous session, I have talked about how in case of budget allocation or in terms of leadership support, it has only increased over a period of time by the way the organization have come up with the successful space missions and the confidence of this organization only has increased and not only it has impacted the organization but also the political authority is also confident about the operations of this particular organization.

Now, let us see how political accountability is ensured in this public organization. And doing this, I will also make use of the two important references which I have mentioned over here. The first is reference of Murthy, Sankar and Madhusudan, Organizational Systems, Commercialization and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Indian Space Program published in Current Science. And there is another paper Jayaraman published in NHRD Network Journal on decoding the culture and leadership at ISRO. So, I am making use of these two papers to build the case on political accountability in public organizations.

So, I am not saying they have highlighted it as a political accountability case, but I am using the references from this paper to demonstrate by adding from my own understanding of how political accountability is ensured. Now, let us look at how external control, source of control is there on ISRO. If you look at, it is governed by Department of Space. And the department set the long-term goals, of course, guided by the political authority. and conducts regular project reviews which help in aligning ISRO's missions with the national interest.

Now, definitely in this case, you can say that accountability lies outside the organization. This organization is to be responding or responsive to the political authority. They are held accountable for their actions to the agency outside. But at the same time, also please note that there is a lower degree of control over agency's actions. In terms of political intervention in that case, the ISRO's culture, it supports responsiveness to the public and governmental expectations without having a high degree of control over agency.

As I have mentioned that, though the political accountability in the source in terms of this thing is outside, there is a control outside, but that authority is not exercising that control to deciding what kind of operations are to be done. One of the important cases, ISRO as an organization has developed a culture so that it supports responsiveness to the public and the government expectations. So, they do not need that kind of control on deciding the you know their operation in that way. So, in this case we will look into this case what are some of the mechanisms which have helped this organizations becoming more responsive to the you know public expectations and of course the governmental expectations. So, for this I am referring to the paper of Jayaraman which titled Chandrayaan 3 Mission Decoding the Culture and Leadership at Indian Space Research Organization.

Let us look at how these cultural aspects. So, this is basically more related to leadership, but leadership has more important the aspect of ensuring of course the accountability of the organizational action to the outside world. Let us look at first of all these three important elements of the culture of autonomy, openness and tolerance for failure. I suggest learners to go through this paper to get much more understanding of very interesting stories which are referring, being referred to in this particular paper. I may not be able to go to entire instances which are being mentioned, but for your own understanding, I would suggest that you read this paper.

First of all, autonomy. You know, autonomy is more related with the freedom. Now, Indian Space Research Organization, it operates with autonomy. What is the meaning of this autonomy? Autonomy means where you are allowing scientists, of course, and engineers the freedom. Freedom for what? To decide their work, what kind of work and how they would want to do that work. But at the same time, accountable for their actions and accountable for the results. There is lot of autonomy in system. The environment is

such which allow lot of freedom to the scientists and the engineers inside in terms of their work activities. But at the same time, they should also be held, you know, accountable, remain accountable for their results. They should be results driven.

Freedom is there, that is another way of looking at how people are motivated to contribute towards the results of the organization. Now, this particular aspect of autonomy as per author, this particular cultural aspect of ISRO, it enables the organization to achieve national goals and we have all witnessed this, number of missions. failure or the success of program of course is is an outcome that we have to see but efforts also have to be taken into consideration how many efforts are going into making you know the program a success they're always learning from the failures and of course when the program goes success they want to improve it further So, this particular aspect helped the organization in achieving the national goals in terms of we have seen various missions, right, which is aligning with the political and public expectations, right. So, let us say, look at this case, you know, whenever the program is succeeding, you know, there is a success in the program, you see that the India's image, you know, as a nation in terms of its contribution to Science and space, it is highlighted, you know, very much visible in the, you know, if you look at the world map, right. So, this is basically again is very much aligned with the thought process of the politics of the country where we are showing it to the outside world that we are very serious about Science and what we are doing in terms of our missions and this thing.

So, these organization in terms of the success of operations and the way they are working in terms of team and team effort. collaborative effort, it has only leading to the better outcomes for the country. So, this culture is basically of autonomy, which is more responsibility driven, more outcome driven, is making this organization more responsive to the demands of the political authorities. Because you remember there is no control on the agency's operations by the outside control, which is political authority in this case. But you see that their culture allows them to be more responsive.

So, there is no need for that kind of control because their culture allows them to be more responsive. And culture has been such that all the people in the organization, they are actually set for, you know, achieving the highest level of goals in the organization, right? The next aspect of this is openness. So, the ISRO's culture in terms of, you know, openness, it encouraged debate, questioning, and of course, collaboration. We talked about the team effort, right? It actually created an internal accountability system. So, whenever there is something which has to be, which is to come up, you know, ideas, innovation, process changes, a lot of quality improvements, so on and so forth, so culture is of openness, you know, in terms of discussing openly your viewpoints and, you know, their thinking and feeling about the ideas which encourages debate, there is, you know, the culture of questioning.

Questioning leads to improvement. Questioning is not about letting somebody feel low. Questioning is about improvement. And of course, the collaboration. So, these aspects, what has happened is they have tried to create an internal accountability system within the organization. And finally, there is also tolerance for failure. The no-blame, which is the term which is used in the paper, no-blame culture fostered an environment for innovation. Because people will contribute and excel when they will not be, I would say, punished for their ideas and opinions, right? They should always be encouraged, even if the idea fails, doesn't matter. So, no-blame culture says that people are encouraged for innovation and risk-taking because it is allowed as a part of culture. right and it has only led to you know led to achievement of the ambitious goals so if you don't have that kind of a culture people will stop experimenting right people will not take risk because the culture doesn't allow if the culture doesn't allow you how will you take risk so you have to leadership plays a very important role So, leaders in the organization have to ensure that the culture of organization is set in such a way that it leads to ambitious achievement.

First of all, setting of the ambitious goals and then of course, working towards the achievement of that particular goals. Now, by analyzing the various failures thoroughly, whatever the programs they have not succeeded in the past or whatever the ideas have not worked or anything that has not worked previously, ISRO demonstrated its commitment to learning and improvement. Learn from system and come back with more efforts and more preparation and then lead to succeed. That's what is the, you know, the I would say mantra of success. How much, you know, you keep on trying.

Perseverance in terms of your motivation that you don't give up, you become more resilient, right? So, when you come up with the success, what happen is the confidence of your organization in the political authority, you know, political authority will have lot of confidence in the efforts of the organization. So, in that case, they need not to be involved in detail of the operations of the organization. So, they rely on. So, what happened is these cultural factors, we talk about autonomy, openness, tolerance for failure and leadership, it only has reassured the political figures of the effective resource use. I hope this is clear to everybody that these accountability systems that we have just discussed with the help of the Indian examples is very clear to you.

Original paper has talked about various other examples. If you want to look at those examples, you can please go through, but this is what it is we have talked about in terms of various accountability systems with the Indian examples. Let us continue our discussion of another quickly I will do this particular accountability framework. Previously, we discussed about something which is more worked in a traditional accountability framework. This particular discussion is based on the article by Dubnick and Fredrickson, Accountable Agents, Federal Performance Measurement and Third Party Government, published in Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory.

This particular accountability framework is basically applicable in the case where the accountability is shifting from the traditional to the modern accountability model so we have seen that accountability ensures what adherence to policies laws and ethical standards in the public organization this is a very basic thing that we have been discussing so far right but now you see that the service delivery model the way in which the public service delivery is being you know, being followed is shifted from direct to third party governance. A lot of parties coming together in terms of partnership, collaboration, for example, in terms of outsourcing. So, what happened is this public service delivery is being shifted to the other, you know, the sectors also where parties come together, they will form a mechanism, they will form a collaboration and partnership to ensure the public service delivery. Now, in this particular thing, the key concern is how to ensure and measure accountability. So, in this case, Dubnick and Fredrickson, 2010, they came up with the promise of accountability framework.

Now, this promise of accountability framework is basically of six dimensions they have talked about. promise of control, integrity, ethical behavior, democracy, performance and justice, equity. In the paper, they talked about that promise of control and integrity is more of an input kind of a mechanism, behavior and democracy is more related to the process and performance and equity is more of an output. So, we will quickly go through each of these dimensions here to demonstrate how these accountability mechanisms are basically ensured. So, when we talk about the promise of control, as per the authors they talked about, accountability as control, it assumes that the hierarchical structures, standardized procedures and regulations as input to the system, it will ensure accountability.

So, there is a promise of control that these systems like structures, procedures and regulation will ensure the accountability. Promise of integrity. Basically, when parties are actually involved, they also have to make sure that whatever action that they are going to pursue in terms of the collaborative effort, there is a promise of integrity and all these organizations who are coming, they will have to develop the cultures of accountability through relational trust and shared values, right, where particularly the control, you know, formal controls are weak. So, when we say that these parties are coming together for collaboration, right, and they want to do public good and welfare of the community, they should develop the culture of, you know, that, you know, culture of accountability where each party should be held accountable for what they are doing in terms of, you know, the delivery, public service delivery. So, we need not to have very formal contracts for everything.

So, this relational contracting and trust, you know, works really well in this case. So, that is the promise of integrity, right. Then comes the promise of ethical behavior in terms of process. So, this particular dimension focuses on the procedural mechanism. What are the procedural mechanisms? Basically, author says that these are basically to prevent the

unethical or corrupt behavior and this promise by the actors in the third party governance we will talk about focused on ethical codes, audits and of course reporting environments.

Then comes the promise of democracy. Promise of democracy basically is the democratic promise of accountability that relates to the responsiveness to the public needs. Right, ensuring that the government actions are responsive to the needs of the general public and of course that the public has a voice in decision making process. So, how it is being ensured in terms of ensuring people's participation in the decision making process even if it is a collaborative effort in terms of different agencies coming together to ensure the public service delivery. We can talk about citizens engaged in having a say, maybe in terms of their contribution or their feedback in terms of policy design or policy implementation, use of budget or things like that. In that case, we can talk about that these democratic properties of accountability ensure that how public organizations are responsive to the needs of the public and they are being properly heard.

In terms of their viewpoints, their feedback, and so on and so forth. Then comes the promise of performance. Since I've talked about this is an most of an outcome related thing, we talked about this. So, in this case what happened is the promise of performance, it actually ensure accountability with the idea that if the measuring, the idea that if we measure and assess the outcomes of the government programs.

See, as the name indicates, performance. So, if we measure and assess the outcomes of the government programs, it will lead to enhance the effectiveness and ensure that the organization meet their goals. That's what the idea is all about of promise of performance. So, if you tied the idea of accountability with the idea of measurement and assessment of government's outcome, it will lead to the increase in the effectiveness of the government programs and ensuring that the government organization will, of course, meet their goals. And finally, the promise of justice and equity. It's about fairness of government actions in terms of ensuring that public policies and programs, they deliver just and equitable outcomes for all the citizens.

These are outcomes related promise of accountabilities. So, when we say that promise of justice and equity, this particular promise, they addresses the issues related with the fairness of the actions by the government and public organizations and of course, ensuring that the outcomes which the people are getting, they are equitable outcomes and they are just equitable items, they are fair outcomes there. So, these are the six outcomes that, you know, being six promise of accountability, you know, dimensions which have been described in this paper. The reference is given, please go through this paper to find out more about it, especially in terms of analysis of accountability in the third party governance, you know, the case, right.

Okay, let us continue the discussion. Now, we have discussed more about the accountability mechanisms. Now, we have to focus on talking about the aspects of control. So, we will talk about why control mechanisms are to be discussed in relation to the accountability. So, we talked about what is accountability. Accountability is more about transparency, responsiveness and responsibility.

Now, accountability are to be ensured by following some kind of controls. As defined in the text of Avasthi and Maheshwari, if you look at, "the meaning of accountability is that the control, it includes measure to keep administration under a close watch and ensure that public servants exercise their power and discretion in accordance with the laws and regulations". So, of course, we are talking about accountability here also. But accountability has to be ensured by following some kind of mechanisms. And that is what we are going to look at in this particular aspect of how various control mechanisms can be designed, can be put in place, which will ensure accountability of government and public sector organizations.

But why we are doing it? Let us talk about from the perspective of resources. Any kind of resource if you pick up, physical, human, financial resources, resources are scarce. They are limited resources. So, the purpose of this particular module when we talk about accountability and control is about ensuring that resources are not wasted. They are optimally utilized in the organization, of course, while achieving the organizational objectives.

So, see it is not only about public organization, in private organization also if you see that there are lot of control mechanisms are put in place. Sometime in terms of technology, in terms of increasing efficiency controls are being put up to track what is going on in terms of the activity, how much resource is being utilized, the aspects like total quality management, quality management, the aspects of quality circles to improve the productivity, all these are related to the aspect of ensuring the efficiency of the system as a whole. So, the idea here is how the organization is trying to ensure that they are trying to achieve more with the limited number of resources that they have. So, what is the way, what is the process with which they can ensure that this can be ensured? But in case of public sector organizations, we are to deal with this in another way, different way in the sense that control mechanisms are to put in place to ensure that the representatives of the government, public officials and the employees working in the public sector organization, they actually conduct, they do behave in the way depending upon you know, what is, you know, the code of conduct says, what is the laws and regulations says about things, right? So, control, another, you know, very important discussion that has to be taken care of when we are talking about this particular module. Because it is going to tell us about how accountability is to be ensured in the public sector organizations.

Now, if you look at the types of controls, the types of controls are broadly classified into internal controls and external control. As internal control and external control. So, when we talk about the controls which are internal, we say that the controls which operates from within the administrative machinery. They are termed as internal controls. Within the administrative machinery, the controls are put in to ensure that how accountability is to be ensured, they are known as internal controls.

And some of the examples of the internal controls are budgetary control, administrative ethics and professional standards, hierarchical order, organizational processes, inquiries and investigation, personal management control. So, what we will do is, we will look into the different kind of internal controls in details and we will also look into how budgetary controls are taken care of, what about hierarchical order, how administrative ethics and professional standards are being taken care of as an internal control mechanisms to ensure the aspects of accountability and finally, personal management control, how it ensures the internal accountability, control measures to ensure accountability. So, I will stop here. I will continue the discussion in the next session with much more detail about all these internal controls that how they ensure the accountability as a mechanism.