

Public Organization and Management
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Lecture – 56
Innovation in Public Sector Organization - I

Hello, dear learners. I hope you are doing well. In this week, I am going to conclude the entire course that we have started in discussions in the public organization and management. This is the final module in this course, and the title of this module is Innovation in Public Sector Organization. I also want to remind you that I have been discussing the theme four, which is the final theme in this course. And the focus of this theme was on bringing administrative reforms, understanding the concept of organizational change and development.

And then I talked about the concept of NPM and the disadvantages of this particular reform and how the system has moved to more of a collaborative governance, which was module 11 that I had discussed at length with you. And this particular module, which is module 12, is the final in the final theme of this course and of course, the final session. of the entire course. So, I am going to conclude the course with this module on innovation in public sector organization.

Now, innovation is a very broad concept and various models, various frameworks, and theoretical concepts, and theoretical aspects are available in literature, many books have been written. not only in the public sector organization but innovation across private sector organization, non-government organization, social enterprises, hybrid organizations. So a lot of literature is available with respect to innovation. A lot of case studies are available to understand the idea and the success stories of organizational changes and development with respect to innovation. What I have done in this module is to keep two, three major frameworks to understand the innovation in public sector organization.

And I have included so many case studies to look into. I will show you some of the websites, especially in the context of India. where the innovation is, how innovation is done, what are the frameworks available, what are the platforms available to inculcate this culture of innovation in the organization. So we will have discussion on all these aspects. I will briefly tell you about the agenda of this particular module.

So, what I will do is I will initiate the discussion first of all in understanding the meaning of innovation as stated in the literature. Then we will go ahead with understanding some of the types of innovation. And more importantly, we look into the global trends in

innovation. It is important to discuss these global trends because sometime the organization or any nation might not need to do the innovation from scratch. Sometime we also learn from the best practices which are available elsewhere.

It can be in other organization it can be in another state some public organizations or the state government have found out the ways to deal with the wicked problems as i have mentioned in the previous you know modules so we can also learn and adapt to the best practices which have been found to be successful in other country context in other organizational context learning from the private sector non-government organizations or hybrid organizations And of course, learning from whosoever can provide inputs with respect to innovation. For example, citizens, there are active groups, there are platforms where people are talking about innovations. So, it is important to have a look at these global trends so that the learning can be there uh you know from the success stories of others and look at the applicability of all those models which have been successful in other contexts and adapt those model to and you know modify it to the local contextual needs and see if it works Because, you know, scratching from beginning, you know, in terms of starting from the beginning to understand the concept of innovation, of course, it takes time. But sometime it also requires a lot of funds to be used. And then you have to do a lot of testing.

So if something is already available elsewhere and have been found to be successful, it is a good idea to adapt to that particular concept. you know, the models or the solutions that other people have applied to solve their problems, it is good way to look at it. So, we will have some discussion on global trends, what is happening and also we will have some kind of interesting cases that how various models have been used, what are the theoretical process that organizations have followed and literature have talked about. After discussing this thing, we will move on to understanding the innovation more specifically in the public sector organization. We will look into the innovation process.

I will share very interesting the handbook published specifically in relation to the innovation in the public sector. I will discuss about that reference. It's a good source to understand the entire process of innovation in the public sector organizations. Now, the authors what they have done is, they have not only confined that particular handbook in the boundary of the public organization. So, they started discussing about the concept of innovation in general and wherever it is required, they also have substantiated the examples from the public sectors and applicability of that model.

So, we will look into that particular model and we'll look into various uh you know the applications and understanding of that model in the context of india and i will share some of the stories Once we are done with this, we will move to understand some very basic techniques and tools of innovation. There's another important text, which also is a part of, you know, your prescribed text for the course I will use. And then these are the practices

that we are going to talk about, techniques and tools in relation to public sector innovation. For instances, strategic innovation planning, re-engineering, quality management, benchmarking and team management. And finally, we will understand the integration and successful adoption of innovation strategies followed by some of the case studies on innovation in India as well as in the Western context.

Now, the content of this particular module is based on largely two important texts that I will share with you. Apart from that, various other research papers have been referred to in order to understand the concept of innovation and understand the case studies which have proven to be successful in the various contexts. So, let us first of all look into the meaning of innovation. So, there are many definitions available. I have taken the understanding from the paper here.

So, innovation is a complex, creative and open-ended search process. that develops and realizes new ideas in ways that lead to step changes that transform the way we are imagining and doing things. So, this definition is by Ansell and Torfing, 2014. Now, in this case, you say innovation is complex because it is dependent upon various factors. So, we are looking for, you know, open-ended, you know, it's the open-ended search and we are looking at the processes that develops and realizes new ideas in a way that leads step changes.

We have to make some kind of incremental changes which will lead to change the way, transform the way that we are imagining and doing things. So, it's one of the way or two, you know, look at the definition of innovation when we talk about how innovation will happen. So, it's about search in a way, you know, the processes, search process that helps developing and realizing the new ideas in a way that will make, you know, bring in incremental changes and that transfer of the way how we should we look at the things and doing things in a different way. Additionally, innovation also involves exploring and defining problems. Innovation involves exploring and defining problems.

So, whatever is situation that we are confronting, it's the process of exploration to know more about, in-depth about some problem, some situation in hand to find out where actual the problem is. Sometimes what happens is we say that we need to innovate but we are not very clear about what our problems and what our situations are. Largely what happens is people usually started considering symptoms rather than the real problems for which the solutions are required. what happen is we need to differentiate symptoms from problems because symptoms are surface issues so we have to actually explore more and dig deeper to find where the actual problems are and to tap those problems and defining them in a more refined way that is the only way to look at how we are going to go ahead with finding out solution for the problems. So, if we only look into the symptoms and try to take something in terms of overcoming those symptoms or try to suppress or try to do something about symptoms, but the problem still remains there.

So, the process of exploration is also, in addition to defining problems, is a part of innovation. We need to also understand the challenges that I have just talked about, defining problems, challenges and opportunities, also generating, articulating and assessing new and creative ideas which have not been worked before. So, we are looking at solving the issues or leveraging the opportunities or overcoming the challenges by generating various alternatives to solve our problems, leveraging opportunities and taking care of the challenges. And once we have generated this and we have already made an assessment of new and creative ideas, it's about selecting and implementing the most promising ones and consolidating and diffusing those solutions that team seems to be working.

So, in the process when I will discuss about innovation in times to come, it is also important that from beginning till end, there is a continuous support for the process of innovation. at any stage we exploring and defining problem challenges opportunities also it could be related to generating and articulating new ideas selecting the ones seeing which one are the promising and once it is successful diffusion is has to be taken care of so it's in process that i'm going to discuss so innovation bringing innovation is one thing and making sure that innovation sustain and it diffuse at a larger scale is also important component of innovation Also, innovation involves a creative combination of old and new ideas, but creativity only becomes innovation when the new and creative ideas are realized in practice. So, it is not only about thinking about innovative ideas, but we have to put those ideas into fruition so that they are implemented. because of the kind of issues and the kind of problems that we have looked into. So, we were looking for those solutions and if these are only on papers and only the idea exists and not converted into implementation, that cannot be considered to be innovation.

So, the innovation that have been done and found to be successful, implemented in a way that it led to the success and sustained over a long period of time. This is the basic understanding of the definition of innovation, what it means and how things are included. Why do we need innovation? See, there are various challenges and we have seen that especially in case of public organization, the environment is very turbulent. The organization sometime come across unpredictable, uncertain and turbulent environments. So, these are unforeseen challenges which are inevitable in the context of any organization, being it public organization, private organization or any other kind of organization.

So, innovation in that particular context can help organizations to stay ahead in the growth curve and take your organization to the next level. Because once the organization becomes stagnant and the organizations are not finding out the different ways to look into the growth prospects, what happens is then the organizations are going towards uh more decline right and you know have a kind of natural death uh in terms of their closure of the you know the organization the business because there is no uh innovation happening you

are not trying to keep your position in the market because competition is intense right So, these unforeseen challenges what happen is it makes the environment very turbulent and the organizations have to be more adaptive and flexible in terms of their response. So, innovation it allows for more adaptability and flexibility. For example, if you look at the changes brought in by COVID-19, it has drastically changed the way all organizations across the world are functioning. Most likely, if you look at public organization function, for example, delivery of services via digital platforms.

See, before the COVID-19 pandemic, who thought that technology in that way can change the entire landscape, the way the organizations carry on their day-to-day activities. So, with this particular event that happened, COVID-19 pandemic, it has disrupted the business on a large scale. So, routine operations which the organizations or daily basis they used to do, they have become obsolete because everything had to go online. See, the impact is such that still the organizations are trying to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. some organizations are out of the business, some organizations are trying to come back from that bubble of that turbulent environment.

So, in this case what happened is innovation is necessary for all the organizations to adapt and overcoming the challenge. So, the organizations have to be flexible in terms of bringing in changes depending upon what happens outside. So, in that way, when we say that the internal adjustments are to be done in order to adjust to the outside changes happening in the world, for example, COVID-19 pandemic, how it has impacted the organizations to go online overnight. You talk about schools, you talk about universities, offices, public offices, organizations, all the systems have gone online. So, it has totally changed the way organization used to work before the pandemic.

So, the innovations allows for more adaptability and flexibility. That's the first very basic thing that we have to change ourselves depending upon whatever happening outside. See, COVID-19 is a kind of event which has of course impacted the organization but apart from that there are also smaller changes happening around which also put a lot of pressures on the organizations to change the ways they are functions. For example, in the module 3 on environment of public organizations, I discuss at length that how various factors like technological factors, political factors, social, cultural and demographic factors put pressure on the organizations to change their way of functioning. So, there also innovation, you know, comes at forefront to help organization to think of different ways to improve the functioning of the organization so that the organization meet the challenge outside the organization and satisfy the expectations of the citizens, especially in the context of public organization I'm talking about.

Second is it fosters growth. Once it makes you more adaptable and flexible, it also fosters growth. You try to find out with the help of innovation, for example, business organization, new product development, new services, change the way they used to do

processes, adoption of new technologies and getting the competitive advantage through making use of technologies or processes or people. So, different ways, innovative ways help organizations continue to grow. Rather than I just discuss about the concept of stagnation, if nothing is being done, the organization will move towards the natural death in terms of decline. Example, innovative use of fintech technologies like UPI has increased enormous growth in digital transactions.

Now if you consider, before these UPI online transactions are available, people used to have lot of physical money with them. But nowadays, I don't recall that when I have last withdrawn the money from the ATM. Because mostly transactions are happening online. One, it fosters the growth, other thing is it also taps the illegal use of transactions because now when you are doing digital transactions, it is being recorded and people uh any anyone if you making any kind of transaction even the street vendors for example from where you are buying vegetables fruits and grocery and others you will see that everybody is using making use of these platforms for for a transaction so it is much more transparent It also put a tap on illegal transactions, illegal use of money and so on and so forth. But at the same time, it also fosters growth because the process changes happen, it makes the system more faster, more efficient and effective.

Another important thing is it separates businesses from their competition. Now, what is the meaning of that? See, when we are talking about the businesses in the market and we are talking about all the organizations which are doing some kind of business activity in the market. So, you see there is lot of competition in the market. So, because of this intense competition, you continue to come across situations where you feel that you are becoming more stagnant or you are failing in the competition. So, if you want to enjoy that kind of competitive edge, so innovation can provide you that kind of an edge.

Now, how would you sustain your position in the market? You can sustain your position if something allows you competitive advantage. if you look at the resource-based view of firm, you will see that if you have resources which are valuable resources and these resources are not easily, no substitutes are available for these resources and these resources are well organized, they are valuable, they are inimitable. So, these resources if you have, they will provide you competitive edge over the competitors. So, Now, innovation can provide you that kind of an edge. If your organization's product, services or the processes that you are following, they are innovative enough, it can provide you the innovation edge, the competitive edge into the organization.

Now, if you look at the, you know, in the context of the public organization and government, a list of awarded innovation in the government of India is available at this site. So, if you go to this particular site, you will find out that, you know, Abhinav Pahal This particular website talks about various innovation. You look at this best practices contain both awarded good governance initiatives and other best practices. All details are

mentioned here. Now, what is the idea of this platform is to know what is happening around. What is happening in the various organizations, what is happening in the other states in terms of taking care of the public service delivery, public policy and so on and so forth. So, it's also about understanding of best practices replicatedly. Replication means if some innovation has worked in one particular state, it can also be replicated in another state. So, we can see some of the, you know, replications being done.

Look at, you know, this particular thing. For example, Solar Urja Lamps project in Dongarpur, it has been replicated in eastern West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. If you go into the details of this, you will find out how this has been done. So, one project which is much more, you know, has been found to be successful. can be replicated in there, right. So, if you look at the summary, you will get the more details about this thing.

There are some pictures also, you can get into the more details how this has been found to be very successful. You can maybe have another look at towards a malnutrition free district replicated by Bhagalpur Bihar, if you can look into the details, so you will find out. So, what happened is this provide lot of, and there are also YouTube videos which you can refer to and find out how this particular Abhinav Peahal platform is transforming India about innovation for Vixit Bharat, right. So, this platform is also one way of sharing the good initiatives, good governance practices and innovation amongst the other community members, amongst the other people who would be interested to look at it, right. So, this particular portal also contains information about, you know, district at 100, provides you detailed visions of district uploaded in the portal for 100 years of independence.

What are the emerging ideas? There are portals, people are, there are blogs where people can share their views, you look at this information, education, health, water conservation, promoting livelihoods, boosting economy, agriculture, there are also messages being shared by the leaders because of their commitment towards the process of innovation and the continuous support which is required from the top of any organization or if you talk about the context of any nation. So, it is important that support is there and these platforms are there. Now, what is the aim of this platform? They are talking about that it is the aim to establish a vibrant platform for sharing and dissemination of the best practices. So people can post, people can share the success stories and then it can be shared with others. And also it says that it can promote and enhance innovative capabilities among the public administration because it's a process of learning also.

The information is being shared openly. So one of the things is innovation happens. That's not the issue. The problem is when it is not being shared, people do not know what successful models are available. So this platform is one of the platforms which can actually collate the information of innovations happening around the country and people can of course learn from the best practices of others. So this portal also provides a

platform to experience the awarded good governance initiative and give a window for adoption and replication of these awarded initiatives.

Reading from this portal, I suggest you that you go to this portal and find more, explore more about it. A lot of information is available on this thing. People are sharing. For example, civil servants who are actually into public services, they are sharing their experiences of how they have brought changes in their jurisdiction, what kind of best practices, what kind of innovative ideas and how they are communicating with the community to bring in those kind of changes, right? So, this is one way of looking at it.

Very interesting, you know, the platform, Abhinav Pahal. So, I suggest you go through and find out if something is interesting. And also, some people can also find, you know, do some kind of research into this. If you want to write some kind of interesting case study, you can reach out to various districts, you can reach out to the people who actually brought in this innovation. So, it also provides a lot of academic you know input to the researchers to do things and you know who knows once you start doing this the aspect of research and you can always contribute back to the portal and of course to the nation in terms of finding out what works best in different context and if the application can be done there and of course the researchers who are interested can also have benefit in terms of you know good publications and things like that. Yeah, these are the things which I have discussed about that what is that we need innovation for.

Let us look into the aspects of global trends in government innovation. So, this particular thing I have taken from this report, if you look at OECD OPSI 2023 report, Global Trends in Government Innovation 2023, I have given the detailed link here. I am just going to give you the major points here, what the report covers here. And also there are other references mentioned here to just substantiate what I have mentioned on the slides here. Let's look into the global trends in the government innovations.

First one is looking at the new forms of accountability for a new era of government. So, you see that we cannot continue to way we function in the traditional way. We have to think of different ways of conducting the activities that we need to do. Now, what happened is the organization across, especially a public organization, they are making use of technologies. For instance, artificial intelligence is extensively used in terms of design and delivery of the policies and the services. This also is accompanied by the use of algorithmic decision making where you have used the data to avoid any kind of bias or any kind of discrimination that happens and it allows public servants to understand data ethics. So, when you have a lot of data, for example, in the environmental module, when I discussed about the components of environment, I talked about the data.gov.in website, where a lot of data is being collected in terms of the public policy delivery and implementation, who are the people who are benefited, what are the statistics available. So, what happens is when you have a lot of data, This can also aid in the decision-

making for future activities in terms of coming up with the new policy design or bringing in changes in the existing policy framework and overcoming the challenges of the policy implementation.

So several forward-thinking government and external ecosystem actors, they are actually promoting the algorithmic decision-making because it emphasizes transparency, And explainability, if you look at the paper, they have talked about these aspects, transparency, explainability and also if these are there, it leads to the building of trust between government, public organizations and the citizens. So, it is another way of looking at it. Then, it's the new aspects of transparency. The government is becoming more and more transparent by sharing more data.

Again, I will quote the example of data.gov.in and not only that, we also have the laws which give a lot of freedom and rights to the people to ask for the information to hold the public organizations accountable. So, these mechanisms which are put in place to again come up with new ways of working which are becoming more transparent also provide organizations edge because it leads to the higher level of trust. Here, I would like to talk about the example of Netherlands Public Sector Register. This basically is a tool used in the city of Amsterdam to obtain and share publicly transparent information on all the sensors which are placed at the various places for the professional use in the public spaces of the city. Now, the resistor sensors are visualized online, whatever sensors are placed and they also give input on what kind of data it collects and processes and the responsible party.

So, these online information maps are available where the sensors are placed, what kind of data is being collected and how the data can be used which can act as further input to bringing in lot of improvement. So, another way of looking at new forms of accountability for new era of government. So, you try to demonstrate by use of innovative ways to do work in order to enhance the accountability for the new government, being it making use of the artificial intelligence tools, maybe it is to do with bringing in the better processes, creative processes to increase the transparency and so on and so forth. Another way of looking at is new approaches to care. How these innovations are happening? Now, for example, again, I will take the instance of the COVID-19 pandemic and the way it has disrupted the environment.

It has the major implications and people are still and organizations are still trying to overcome this. People have lost their businesses. Family members have lost the family members. There were a lot of stress, anxiety and the state of depression among the people. And more than that, the people who are the service providers, especially the healthcare professionals, they were under immense stress. The government agencies, the healthcare, the non-government organizations, people, everyone has undergone immense stress. So, everybody was under immense anxiety and stress. So, there were issues

already prevailing there, but this COVID-19 pandemic had again added to that particular thing so people have gone into the state of depression a lot of stress so there the new approaches to care I'm talking about in terms of empathy and care to support mental health so I'm not saying it is only about COVID-19 has done that but there were already existing issues and challenges which has added to this but because of the COVID-19 pandemic it has only added to the existing problems and the challenges. So, in terms of innovation, how would you deal with the situations like this when people are dealing with the problems of mental health, their well-being is at stake. So, I am taking an example of mental health cafe in Australia, different way to look at it.

It is actually applicable in the Latrobe city in Australia. It's basically the community members coming together. Of course, it's the state government initiative. So, community members coming together and try to positively shape and facilitate the ways of working to improve the overall health, well-being and mental well-being and wellness of the people. So what happens in this particular the thing is that they have developed the innovative mental health cafe. Basically, it's the physical space for which, you know, where which people can go after work hours and, you know, they who are experiencing mental health challenges.

See, this is also taboo. People don't want to talk about it. So, there are places being created, there are platforms being created where people can go and talk about it. It's no more longer something which cannot happen, it can happen with anybody. So, you have to find out ways how will you take care of this. So, this is an example of a community-centered and community-driven approach. Where it try to increase the opportunities for peer support. You can build the social connection, discuss with others and try to learn from their experiences and look for the support when required. So, it basically is an innovative way to look into the challenge with respect to the employee well-being and mental health. Now, again, new technologies revolutionizing healthcare and you have seen various examples. The new technological approaches, they are transforming the way in which government are taking care of the health and the well-being of their people. So, how we can do that is we can take the help of technology and technology is being largely used in terms of leveraging it to provide care online at a distance.

So, what happened is medical consultations, they have moved online. You see that how the platforms like Practo and others, they have the accounts of the medical practitioners who are available online to provide consultation to people. there are platforms created where people can have one-time access also, you know, one platform, not one time, one platform access to have consultations, their reports, their entire record of health can be kept there. And then, of course, there is a way to track reports and everything So, it is also looking into the aspect of transforming it at a scale. It's not about, you know, the applicability of this particular platform and things like that in a smaller scale. space we are looking at when we talk about the government and public organization we always try

to look at increasing it up to a scale there right so i would like to take example of Ayushman Bharat health account so it's an account number is a actually hassle-free method of accessing and sharing your health record with the help of technology which is digitally So, it also enables and supports if you want to interact with the healthcare providers.

It can also give you a lot of edge in terms of technology to have a look at your reports digitally. The prescription can be given there, diagnosis from the verified healthcare professional and health service provider. I talked about PRACTO already with you. So, this is again new ways to provide care to people. And, you know, we're talking about the global trends in the government innovation. So, there are changes happening. There are the new ways of looking. Maybe in times to come, this will also go obsolete.

We have to come up with the other innovations. So, it's a continuous process. It's a never-ending process Now, another global trend in the government innovation is new methods for strengthening equity. Now, what happened is, when we talk about the concept of public organizations and the government, unlike business organizations whose entire motive is to earn profits, the public organizations, they are to conduct their activities in a way that their activities and processes are fair, they are just taking care of the justice and equities. Increasing inequalities because of the society, because of the pressure of the competition. So, what happens are government are trying to support and ensure the fair distribution of the benefits with the help of innovations, at the same time also taking care of the aspect of sustainability. So, the government and public organizations, they are focusing on developing the innovative strategies to address the cost of living crisis, to look into the aspect of unemployment, the provision of housing to people, taking care of the crime, discrimination, inequalities, poverty, unemployment and so on and so forth.

Here we talk about example of enabling families and communities and the example is empowered family initiatives by Singapore government which is mentioned in the paper also here. It says that life has become more expensive so because of inflation and a lot of you know pressure on the families because to cope up with the environment. So, the governments what they are doing is they are taking the innovative initiatives to address the poverty and inequalities with a view to provide more sustainable and human-centric efficient results. So, look into this particular example to get into detail of how government are coming up with the new methods so that they can strengthen the equity issues in there.

New ways of engaging citizens and residents. And I think we have discussed about it at length before also. Empowering voices. For example, if you look into the example of my government platform, you will see that this platform has been extensively used across the states. The ministries and the government departments, the states are finding out the ways to connect with the outside world you know there's a there are interactions happening the

people can give their feedback can provide inputs on the policy documents you know they can provide feedback to the government on in terms of what policy designs are being you know a decision taken taken on and then how the policies are being implemented what are the flaws and the problems in that so it's the way that you know you connect with the people, citizens of the country.

Social media is another way to connect. So you'll see that a lot of, you know, the government and public organizations, you know, look at, you know, how politicians, political leaders, the organizations are communicating with the, you know, social media handles and try to give information to the citizens about what is happening in different ministries, for example, health, education, agriculture, finance and so on and so forth. So another is reimagining community physically and virtually looking at the ways of communities in different way. The example that has been taken here is of Freetown, capital of Sierra, it launched Freetown the Tree Town initiative that aims to increase the city's green space and vegetation cover using innovative, disruptive, low-cost digital technology for tree tracking. Now this is the way you try to imagine the ways in which you want to look at the communities. I would suggest that you go to this particular innovation paper here and see more details of how it has been done.

So in this particular thing what they have done is this initiative is basically has been applicable they say that the heavy rains coupled with deforestation has resulted in in disaster landslides and you know, people are losing their lives So in 2020 the free town city councils as they have mentioned They tried to address and decided to address this by launching the Free Town, the Tree Town initiative. The aim is to increase the city's green space, planting more trees and with the help of disruptive and innovative low-cost digital technology, tree tracking happening. So, it's another way of looking at the global trends in innovation. So, you see that it's not about always bringing major revolutionary changes. It's also about small changes and how it leads to enhancing the overall experience of the citizens and the various nations around the world. So, I'll stop here. I will continue to talk about the global trends in the next session.