

Public Organization and Management
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Lecture – 58
Innovation in Public Sector Organization - III

Hello dear learners, I will continue talking about the innovation in the public sector organization. If you can recall in the previous session, I have talked about the aspect of innovation in the public sector and have compared the various regimes so far in the public management. For instance, traditional public management, new public management and new public governance and we have seen the various aspects of innovation in relation to the system, role of public managers, roles of citizens and governance and other things. So, let us continue talking about the concept of innovation. This part of this module is actually based on very interesting the text titled the Public Innovators Playbook.

Nurturing Bold Ideas in Government by Eggers and Singh published in 2009. So, this part of the module is largely built from this particular reference. I suggest that all of you go through this text, it is a wonderful way of understanding the innovation process in general and then the authors have also talked about various examples of the innovations in the public sector context. So I'll first of all talk about a very generic process that the authors have mentioned in terms of the process of innovation, where it starts, what are the various stages of the innovation and what is required for innovation to sustain in the organizations and the public organization context in the government.

We will look into the details of this. Let's first of all start talking about the process of innovation as described by the authors. So, they talked about innovation into four different stages. from idea generation, selection, conversion, implementation to diffusion. Let us understand what these mean.

I will talk about all these stages in detail and also including various examples to demonstrate, to explain the concept. First one is about the first stage of the innovation process as they mentioned is the generation of ideas. It's about create systems to generate and maintain the flow of good ideas. What does this mean? See, thing is we have already talked about that the organizations confront various kind of problems, the turbulent environment and the unpredictable events. So, what happen is they continue to look for the ways with which they will try to come out of this problem bubble.

And clearly defining the problem and also looking for the best possible solution is this very basic and fundamental process of the innovation process. How will you find out,

how will you look for the various ways and that depends upon how ideas are being generated. What are the kind of systems that you are putting in place which will help you to generate and maintain the flow of good ideas. So, it is important. it is not always required that you look for the ideas within, you can always look for the ideas outside.

As I have explained, innovation is going to be time taking and of course, a lot of resources are to be taken care of, lot of funding is required. Sometime, if some other organizations have done something and they already have an idea, So, in that ways what happened is agencies can also examine the applicabilities of those successful model in their own context and perhaps bring in some kind of modification in those models and go for applications rather than going for their own innovation in that way. So, in terms of idea generation, we are talking about we have to have systems in place which will help you to generate and maintain that flow of good ideas keep coming. So, more ideas meaning you have more alternatives, you can make more assessment that which ideas are going to work in the context of your organization. So, the very first foundation is generation of ideas.

Once you have a lot of ideas being generated, you have done it within, you have asked others, so it continue to flow in, so you have now number of ideas with you. Now, the second stage in this is about the selection, idea selection. you have to filter out of the ideas that you have, the various ideas being proposed by people within, outside or anybody in the network we have to see which are the ideas which are worth pursuing, which are the ideas which are going to be beneficial for the organization this is more specific to the context of public organization because see public organizations as i have talked about that funds are limited so whatever implementation that you are going to bring in whatever changes that you are going to suggest in it will be you know up for more scrutiny there will be a lot of questions asked in terms of the applicability in terms of the funds being used So, you have to do it very carefully because you as public organizations don't have all the liberty to go whatever you feel like doing. So, you have to justify, you have to defend your ideas because there are multiple people who are watching and your activities are dependent upon what stakeholders have to say. There are citizens, media, political leaders, interest groups outside which are putting a lot of continuous pressure on asking you questions about why do you want to do something and then you have to defend it with more justification.

You come with a strong, you know, justification and clarification about the idea. So, once the ideas are there, you have to filter good ideas by creating an efficient sorting process and in case of the public organization, you also have to have very strong justification of why do you want to pursue that idea, what is the worth of that idea and how those benefits are going to be realized in times to come. So, one thing, you know, of looking at it is because innovation takes time and by the time you start realizing the benefits of the innovation, it is going to be long time. So, convincing sometime is also going to be, you

know, cumbersome process for public organization. But having said that, that doesn't mean that the ideas should not be pursued and selected and implemented.

But because of the public sector context, because of the public sector organizations and because you are governed by the government rules and regulation and there are stakeholders, you need to be more proactive in your approach for the selection of ideas. Now, selection of idea is one thing, then comes the implementation, conversion of those ideas into products, services and practices. Now, this is important because the ideas when they are going to be converted in terms of implementation, you need funds. It must be, the idea must be funded and of course, it has to be properly developed and executed. Now, what happened is in terms of implementation, if you do not take care of the systems in place which will reinforce the implementation of that idea innovation at any stage of the innovation process, it can go back to square one.

If you do not get that kind of support, be it in case of the funding or maybe the top leadership support or the resources that you need, the employees at all levels have to be engaged in the process. If you don't get that kind of support in terms of execution, in terms of funds or in terms of development, it can go back to the stage where you have already started. So, it is important that you have that kind of support because you are now converting from idea selection to the conversion of the ideas. So, it is important that how you will take care of this aspect of the idea innovation process. So, largely what happened is many government programs lack predictable end results.

So, because you are dealing with uncertainties, there are unexpected events which requires lot of flexibilities and you have to go back and make lot of kind of corrections. So, it's more of an aspect of a commitment to that particular idea implementation. So selection is important but see all these stages of the innovation process are important what I'm saying is when you convert try to convert the ideas selection from to implementation you will face many more challenges and you have to continue to reinforce doing that ultimately to sustain that particular implementation of the idea Now, let's say once you are successful in your implementation and you have successfully implemented the innovation change, the idea here is to diffuse it further, meaning manage stakeholders and disseminate your ideas more widely. If it has been done in one part of the organization, you should take it to the another departments of the part of the organization. If it has been done in the one particular department of the government, it should be it to the other department of the government.

If it has been done in one particular country context, can be applicable to be the other country context, for example, in terms of replicability. So, diffusion is one thing, is basically the last stage in the innovation cycle, which is often referred to as spread of innovation. So, if you look at, we have seen the Abhinav Pahal portal which I have shown you in the session 1 and you see that how various state governments or agencies

are sharing the kind of work that they are doing in their jurisdiction. most of the public officials, the civil servants they are sharing their work what they have done you know are doing in their districts and their jurisdiction so they are sharing on the platform so what happened is you get to learn from other people because the ideas are now diffused they are spread of innovation to other people so that other people can also learn there are case studies being shared. So, it can be from one organization to another organization, but it requires lot of support from all the stakeholders because people have to continue to reinforce the idea that it has worked in one particular context, so it can also work in the other context also.

So, people should start also thinking coming out of their silos. They should not hold that particular thing with them because we are exporting these things, so we can only do that. And we have nothing to do with the other departments or the organization. So we have to break that silo thinking and spread the word of innovation in terms of what have been found to be very successful in terms of the programs, in terms of the bringing in changes in the processes. and take care of the various things.

So I have shown you the examples of various states which have replicated the models of innovation from the other states and which they found to be very, very successful. Maybe you have to do some kind of local modification in there, but largely what has been seen is that if it has been found to be successful, there are chances that you will also find it successful in the context also. But having stated that little local modifications can always be done. One good thing about replication is that already one particular state or the government or the office has done that. So they have already done the implementation.

The funds have been used to look at the applicability and suitability. So you have that advantage to try to replicate and you also have the results which are proven in that particular context and you can have a strong base for defending your idea implementation in your organizational context. So, these are the four stages as described in the handbook of Eggers and Singh, Public Innovators Playbook, Nurturing Bold Ideas in Government. Let us look into this in little more detail about what are to be done in these stages in order to capture what is supposed to be done by the organization. Now, if you look at the idea generation as a stage one process from where the idea are being generated.

Sources, we're talking about which are the sources for idea generation. Now, it can be within your organization, your employees. you can have internal partners many people, the government departments in the you know the various other government department outside your organization you can have external partners Other private organizations or the hybrid organizations, social enterprises, non-government organizations, you can always have the involvement of the citizens. So again, I am talking about here, my

government platform, it is coming time and again. It's a very good way of engaging with citizens.

And can also have taken help of social media platforms to have small competitions for the citizens where they can be asked to provide solutions to the problem. We'll talk about some of the hackathons. I have an example of this in time to come. So, in terms of idea generation, meaning that ideas can be from anybody. It need not to be that a person who is working in the public organization, or a person working in other government department it can be any because you see we are talking about now the concept of networks and we are talking about the concept of collaboration talking about the concept of partnerships right they're moving going ahead we have to find out ways how we can enhance the you know the aspect of effective public service delivery so we have to have form you know forming participation with the other entities like private sector organization or non-government departments organizations or social enterprises or involving citizens civil society or the interest group or the people who are working at the grassroot level.

So, all these people can actually help you in generating ideas. Sometime different perspective is all required what you need to get an idea. Sometimes the people who are actually facing problem, they might not be able to look at from a different perspective. But when the third party, other person who was not in know-how of the problem and they look at the problem, they can come up with a different perspective and hence the idea generation.

I hope that makes sense. So the first stage of innovation process is that generation of ideas how it will come so you have to have systems in place for example if you want your people to give you ideas what are the mechanism that you are following within the organization are you creating the environment in such a way where people are allowed to give suggestions. If you can recall, when I talked about the module on environment and accountability and control, I have talked about the culture of Indian Space Research Organization. They talked about the cultural aspect of giving people autonomy, then the openness and also tolerance for failure. So these are the important aspect of the culture when you put these in place when you have the ecosystem in place where people are having more freedom to do their work and they can decide on depending upon their expertise what kind of activities they want to bring in which are leading to increasing the efficiency of the operations of the organization. There is a lot of openness in terms of interaction with the superiors, with the colleagues and the subordinates and people are open to criticism.

The managers are open to listen to the viewpoints of the employees even if they are against the manager. But we have to create an ecosystem because what we are looking at is we have to go to the better alternatives. I am not saying the managers or the public

officials are doing raw but maybe there are better alternatives available which you have not looked into so if you have that culture of openness that you have created in terms of the ecosystem of the organization you allow criticism to feed into the system in terms of only improvement but not blaming anybody or giving people punishment so you can always look for the better ways of this So, in terms of idea generation, the systems can be put in place which can look into the various aspects of generating ideas. So, people should be feeling free, they should be having autonomy and there is no fear that they would be punished or be blamed or embarrassed in front of others when they are coming up with the ideas. Because when you present ideas, you sometimes have to disagree with your leaders.

So that should be allowed as a part of culture. So idea generation as an important stage because a very fundamental stage of the innovation process. So you have to have some system in place with which you can actually ensure that how ideas are going to come. You have to partner with internal and external agencies. You have to actually engage citizens to get more ideas.

Example of this is you can create wikis and blogs for cross-pollination of ideas. People sharing with each other and one person's idea is adding to the other. Another person's idea is going to help you in bigger ways. Once this is done, there's a second stage which is called as idea selection. So, you please create the transparent mechanism like an ideas marketplace where ideas can be sold and prospective buyers can also buy them.

Automatically, good ideas get sold. So, in terms of idea selection, we have talked about in previously also, especially in the case of government organization, you have to have funds for the idea selection, then there should be development of the ideas and of course, finally, the execution of the idea. So, how you need continue to, sorry, this is basically not idea selection, this is basically in terms of, you know, making an assessment of what ideas are to be selected, meaning what ideas are worth pursuing. what ideas are worth pursuing. Now, after the idea generation thing, the second stage is idea selection. In this thing is we are going to make assessment you know of ideas depending upon what ideas do you think are worth pursuing.

So what you can do is you can have to have create and a transparent mechanism like idea marketplace where ideas can be sold and prospective buyers can buy them. So automatically good ideas get sold. So, in terms of assessment and the ideas which are worth pursuing, so you have to have this kind of mechanism because you being a public organization have to defend your selection of the idea. So, because resources are limited as I have just talked about this. Moving on, the third stage in the innovation process is in idea conversion.

So, idea conversion means you are also started talking about the implementation of the idea and in here you need funds, you need development support and then finally execution of the idea selected. Now, if you really want it to happen in a smooth way and without any problems, you can think of something on gain sharing. For example, rewarding employees for improving performance and reducing the cost. What is in it for them? This should be the motto. What is in it for them? You put in system in place where there's a gain sharing in terms of if ideas are selected, are implemented and their benefits.

So what kind of rewards they will be getting out of this process? Share in savings, having partner share project costs risk and rewards. So, it actually reduces the burden on one party, each party coming together, especially in terms of collaborative effort. It provides a lot of edge to the organizations and also mitigate the risk among the partners. So, that's another way of smooth implementation or converting the idea from a selection to the implementation stage. also try to build a coalition for change involving frontline employees see thing is frontline employees are the one who are actually dealing with the public outside so they have important information on what particular group of people wants what citizens want from the government organizations but the thing is the frontline employees may not be having that kind of access to what organization as a whole want to achieve so please Try to see how you you know get themselves these people on board and try to give them a vision in such a way that there in these people can also Help you in terms of understanding the needs and expectations of the citizens and as an organization what your strategies are you come together so you build a condition for that kind of a change process because you need people's involvement at all levels and So, when people are engaged and they are talking about that, the same thing ultimately the implementation are more effective, you will have lesser chances of resistance from the people out there.

Then comes the idea diffusion. So now the ideas are being implemented. Now you have converted the ideas from selection to the implementation stage. You have put in system in place to work for these innovations. Now idea is to diffuse it to a scale from one particular department to other department, from one organization to another organization or perhaps from one state to another state, from one particular country context to another country context. How would you do that? What is required? Create a buzz around successful innovation.

Example, if it is successful, how it has reaped the results. Focus on results. Improvement in the performance. What kind of outcomes that you have got out of this innovation. So, when people relate the innovations with the actual results, the outcomes.

So, what happens is the acceptance and of course, the adoption of ideas become much more effective. So, try to create buzz around successful innovation, share your stories. For example, Abhinav Pahal portal I have talked about, work for transforming India with the help of innovation. so you talk about that how have you achieved success what is that

led to the innovation what has led to the effective results and enhancing the citizens experience and so and so forth right you also gain support from all these stakeholders right because they are the one who has helped you in the process of innovation and they will also, the people will be talking about innovation to the others.

So, you try to gain support from the other people. Break down organizational silos. People should not be thinking about, you know, their boundary, their expertise, their idea. They should be, you know, you have to work beyond the organizational boundary, beyond your expertise domain and things like that. So, overcome any kind of reluctance to change. If people, of course, we are going to talk about the change also.

So, overcome any kind of reluctance to change that has been there. So, if you can recall in the previous module on administrative reforms, cultural change and things like that, I have talked about the aspect of overcoming reluctance to change at length. So it is important that you proactively work on all these things. You anticipate from where the reluctance can come.

So try to overcome how would you do that. There can also be third party validation in terms of if idea diffusion is to be more and more effective. So for example, Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration. So somebody is already validating that this particular innovation has been found to be very successful. You know, for example, Abhinav Pahal portal also gave awards. So it is one way of validating that this successful innovation has really worked.

For example, in terms of sustainability, various organizations across the country are coming up with the various way of improvement in the processes. For example, water management and the energy management in the organizations and what are the systems that are in place. So, there are the platforms, they have been awarded from the ministries in order to recognize their efforts and one of the other way is to disseminate that information to the others. concept of sustainable villages, people who have worked into this, they are sharing their stories. So, when the third party, they are validating the innovation, it's not only people who have done that they are diffusing, they are the people, the third party who are validating that this particular innovation has worked and it has actually worked for the better outcomes and the results.

That's where it started getting more and more effective diffusions for the others. So, it's one way of getting validation from the third party in terms of the awards or certification or the authentication. Also, publicize evidence of successful outcomes. Keep talking about it, maybe with your social media platforms, on the websites. If you go to some of the conferences or forums or any kind of meetings, you keep talking about your outcomes.

innovations in that way so that it helps your organizations and the kind of innovation that you have done in a bigger way right so I'll stop here with the organizational process then I will talk about in the next session about the various stages of innovation and how it will change the process and so and so forth right