

Constitutional Law and Public Administration in India

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Lecture-04

Role of Public Policy in Public Administration – II

Policy education generally is done by media channels that use various kinds of acts to ensure that the policy education is done. People should be educated on the policy's objectives. There are many areas that need to be considered with regard to policy education, namely, are the benefits of the policies, how should the implementation machinery work this out, the changes to be brought about through this policy, the nature of effect on people or agencies, how will the policy actually bring about a change in the lives of people or benefit people at large and so on. The institutions that are involved in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy also play a critical role in this regard. The benefits and the reason why policy education needs to be done is so that people realize the benefits that can be accrued from it. People know what kind of rights they have through this policy, the kind of benefits they are getting from this policy and people also need the right kind of attitude when the government is bringing a certain policy.

This is because at a time when a new policy is being introduced, the government may not be very prone to accept it or may not be very happy to accept it in the manner and way it is. So, the government needs to tell the people that this is for the people's welfare, because in our country, there are groups that will actually go with the mala fide intent to tell the people that a policy is bad. To ensure that such things do not happen, and such clouds are not cast over the heads of the subjects, the right kind of attitude in people is a must and this can only be done through a proper policy education mechanism.

Likewise, there needs to be an increase in people's participation. The government cannot outreach to everyone, it needs to train a few people who will again further take the training and sub-deliver the training, who will again take it further. There is a need to enhance the role of voluntary agencies. You need the hands of private bodies, private individuals, influential people, or the influential people in a particular village who are considered to be wise and who everyone looks up to in a particular village. Such voluntary agencies and people are also required who will render their services in this regard.

This can work as an alternative mode of implementation that does not go through the formal channel but through the informal channel, because at times it becomes more effective and prone. This reduces corruption and leakage because people need to know if this much money is being sanctioned for this policy, or if this is the amount that a person should receive. For instance, if 1.5 lakh is being sanctioned for this particular project that someone has applied for, he should get 1.5 lakhs deducting all the taxes that are required. You need the incorporation of required skills and expertise in this particular manner. You need various kinds of skills; you need such skills in this order. Lastly, coming to policy evaluation. Policy evaluation is again one of the most important stages in this regard.

It is a precondition to a full proof policy evaluation system, like a policy proper monitoring system. And this needs to be made at every stage in the implementation process. There should be a proper implementation plan in the form of a questionnaire in which you see how people are responding to a policy. If the response has been negative throughout for a large number of individuals and through a continued period of time, there needs to be some changes in the policy so that the decisions will be much firmer and much more pinpointed.

Then the effective way of reducing policy problems. It again is very important on how you reduce the problems. It can be qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative policy evaluation involves assessing distinctions between objectives and goals. How the objectives that are set out and how the goals are framed in this regard are very important. What is achieved and what was supposed to be achieved on a particular time frame, time and cost involved in implementation, the magnitude of the cost of implementation or has there been an extra wage in spending and excess of time involved are all things that need to be taken into consideration. Qualitative policy evaluation means assessing whether the policy is actually beneficial to people.

The objectives formulated; whether these are in consonants with the changing scenario and with the changing of the mind of the people; its viability in the long run, how far it will meet the rising expectations of the people and so on. In the quantitative policy, we focus on the little things that are there on the qualitative apps tracked; and the position is seen, and we try to focus everything with the changing scenario. And lastly, public policy is to satisfy all sections of the community at large. Every section of the community should be felt that they are taken care of because we are a welfare economy. Our first job is to provide welfare to the people. We take care of our people, whether it be women, children, or the elderly citizens or anyone. Our policies also extend to preserving animals, various kinds of domesticated animals, cows, wild animals in the forest. So, all these sections are there where the effect of a policy goes into being. With regard to policy maintenance, the Indian constitution has gone through various amendments from time to time and therefore it is called a living constitution.

The reason it is called a living constitution is because it adapts itself to the changes in time. There are various timelines in which it is changing. So a policy is actually being maintained over a course of time wherein it is understanding what is the need of the people, what is the output that needs to be delivered and how the same can be incorporated. This is based on its performance. The way in which people conceive the particular policy, the way in which people are reciprocating to the policy in the same manner and in the same order, the maintenance of the same will transpire. Policy making is not a very easy task. There are a lot of critical challenges and constraints that come in policy making. Policy making involves a lot of people coming together, a lot of organs of the government coming together. It is very difficult to reach consensus when there is a large group of people. But there are a lot of constraints that a person or a government face when they are bringing out a policy.

First is with regard to inadequacy of financial resources. You need to see if the state exchequer is ready to incur such a large amount in order to bring out or channel out this particular plan of the government. So, the first constraint is with regard to the finances. The second constraint comes up with regards to inadequate expertise and skills. If there is a certain project, for example, a certain specific kind of chemical needs to be disposed of, which the company that is actually going to do it should be thought of. You need such specialists and expertise in that field. If you don't have it, it is very difficult to formulate or ideate in that particular direction. Then policy making cannot also be very broad as it lacks clarity on what it actually wants. The emphasis needs to be on short term benefits not long-term outputs. But if your emphasis is not there on short term benefits, it is difficult to make a viable and practical policy. And then there is always political interference, there is always political instability at times, if the government does not have a majority. One section of the government thinks such, the other section thinks such. It is difficult to get the legislation out of that particular policy. Then lack of support from the people, which is quite common because generally everyone does not like change. When a changing atmosphere is coming, when something is changing, it is very difficult to garner support from the people.

If your socially enlightened groups are not involved with you, it even becomes more difficult to consult or to go ahead and to actually take support of the people. Then if there is a blatant fault in the design of the policy difficulty arises. Next, with regards to policy education, if the education is not outreached in the right manner, it is very difficult to take out the approach from the people. How will people know what the true nature of the policy is? An improper monitoring and evaluation. Timely evaluation for any project is a primary responsibility for the government. For instance, when we take up a small project, we do have little parameters that we see on how the project has been functioning. Then mobilization of public opinion in favor of policy choices. If there are policy choices, there

will also be immobilization. People may revolt or revolt to it in a manner that we may not have anticipated. And then non-attainment of legitimacy and credibility.

Policies cannot also be so futuristic and so visionary that it lacks a legitimate purpose and credibility on its first proceeding or the existing reading when we preclude the same. So, on a question related to constraints in policy making, Policymaking is a serious affair of the government. But there are a lot of constraints, and all these parameters can be highlighted in the form of a map giving a flowchart in between saying policymaking constraints. And there can be bubbles taken out on every corner wherein they can highlight through examples, non-existence of public policy or for instance, lack of clarity of goals. For example, we have the new Education Policy. The same came up a few years back, but its implementation is taking a lot of time. So, the national education policy can be critically analyzed as to why it is not reaching its primary objective. So, it is time now that we revisit the new education policy, see how the same was received by headmistresses and headmasters of schools, the principals of schools, how students who are at the forefront of taking this, how they are receiving it and then finally conclude on its nature.