



# Good Governance and Public Policy in India

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**Abstract**— Good Governance is required to ensure that the public policies have their desired effect. In the recent past, issues of governance have received serious attention from the researchers, policy makers and international development community. Today, 'governance' not only occupies centre stage in the development discourse but is also considered as a crucial element to be incorporated in the development strategy. The major focus of the study is on Good Governance and public policy process in India. In this context the present research paper discusses the basic concepts and elements of Good Governance in the first part of the article. The need of the Good Governance in the effective implementation of public policies has been elaborately discussed and the nature of public policy has been mentioned in the next part. Various stages and constraints that are involved in public policy process and need for an effective policy has been discussed in detail in subsequent parts.



**Keywords**— Good Governance, Public Policy, Development, India, Implementation

## Introduction

In the recent past, issues of governance have received serious attention from the researchers, policy makers and international development community. Today, 'governance' not only occupies centre stage in the development discourse but is also considered as a crucial element to be incorporated in the development strategy. The search for good governance has been going on since time immemorial. Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Marx, Macpherson, Rawls in western tradition and Kautilya et al., in Indian tradition; and many others directly and indirectly have given the theory of governance of society and state in one form or the other.

## Concept of Governance

The concept of governance has been in use at least since the fourteenth century. It was used in France during that period that implied 'seat of government'. It started with a range of meanings, from the act or manner of governing its office or power, which made it synonymous with government, to being virtuous or wise in one's general behaviour. Governance, in simple terms, means "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)". The Concise Oxford

Dictionary defines it as an "act or manner of governing" and "the office or function of governing". Governance has also become a term used to describe a particular set of changes. It signifies a set of elusive but potentially deeply significant shifts in the way in which government seeks to govern (Pierre and Peters). Governance refers to a process of exercise of authority to govern people or regulate public affairs. In the simplest terms, governance relates to the effective management of the affairs of a country at all levels, guaranteeing its territorial integrity, and securing the safety and overall welfare of people. It was Harland Cleveland who first used the word 'governance' as an alternative to public administration. He was of the opinion that what people want is 'less government and more governance'. He identified governance with a cluster of concepts. According to him, "the organisations that get things done will no longer be hierarchical pyramids with most of the real control at the top. They will be systems - interlaced webs of tension in which control is loose, power diffused and centers of decision plural. "Decision-making" will become an increasingly intricate process of multilateral brokerage both inside and outside the organisation, which thinks it has the responsibility for making, or at least announcing the decision. Because organisations will be

horizontal, the way they are governed is likely to be more collegial, consensual and consultative. The bigger the problems to be tackled, the more real power is diffused and the larger the number of persons who can exercise it- if they work at all".

### Meaning of Good and Good Governance

Governance as process denotes a value free dispensation whereas good governance connotes certain value assumptions. Thus, good governance is a value laden concept. the word "good" is derived from the word God and carries an innate sense of judgment, I.e. what is right, what is wrong; what is just, what is unjust; what is fair, what is unfair; what is moral, what is immoral. So when judgment or deed is just, right fair or moral it is good. In the context of good governance it means right or just or moral judgments made by those exercising authority in the public interest. Now question arises what is public interest? Public interest at best means an aggregation of the interest of the many but certainly not of all. This comes closer to Western thinking represented by Bentham – 'the greatest good for the greatest number' which Rarely encompasses universality. The journey of the concept of Good Governance in modern times has gone through many phases. In pre-independence period Gandhiji's vision of good governance essentially meant democratic decentralization which entailed power to the Gram Panchayats and people at the lowest level of political hierarchy. By the early 1990s, however, the idea of good governance had turned into a metaphor of donor-conditionality for the debt-ridden countries of Asia and Africa. It was often blamed for social unrest and political upheaval in many parts of the world. But freed from the element of coercion and external force, the concept retained a certain attraction spurring a number of policy initiatives based on the demand for participatory development, transparency in decision making and empowerment of people to decide and shape their destiny.

### Public Policy and Good Governance

The objective of public policy is always and for all times is the betterment of the entire society. Good Governance is required to ensure that those policies have their desired effect. In essence, it concerns norms of behavior that help ensure that governments actually deliver to their citizens what they say they will. The two terms are so closely interlinked that it is very difficult to draw a dividing line between the two. They are like two sides of the same coin. Public policy is the chief instrument of a politically organized community. The entire process involving /concerning public policy needs to be discerned primarily from two dominant angles. From the input side, the articulation of needs and interests and finally the factors

determining the choice activity have to be looked at from the output side; a distributive analysis has to be undertaken, in that the impact of the policy has to be assessed. This brings two major dimensions to public policy making. It is an instrument of effective control over the environment in that it harbors the potential to create "apocryptic social transformation". The other dimension Is that it "derives the normative on which it is based from the environment." It is the chief Instrumentality by which the input throughput and output activity is performed.

### What is policy?

Policy can be broadly be defined as a proposed course of action of an individual a group an institution or government, to realize a specific objective or purpose, within a given environment. to William Jenkins (1978) who is regarded as an authority in the field of public policy, a policy is 'a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actors or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those Decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve'. Some of the definitions of Public policy are as following Robert Eye Stone terms public policy as "the relationship of government unit to its environment". Thomas R. Dye says that "public policy is whatever government chooses to do or not do" Richard Rose says says, "Public Policy is not a decision, it is a course of pattern of activity".

The following points will make the nature of public policy clearer.

- Public policies are goal oriented. Public policies are formulated and implemented n order to attain the objectives which the Government has in view for the ultimate benefit of the masses in general. These policies clearly spell out the programmed of the government. public policy is the outcome of the government's collective actions. It means that it is a pattern or course of activity of the government officials and actors in a collective sense than being termed as third discrete and segregated decision.
- Public policy is what the government actually decides or chooses to do. It is the relationship of the government units to the specific field of political environment in a given administrative system. It can take a variety of forms like law, ordinances, court decisions, executive orders, decisions, etc.
- Public policy is positive in the sense that it depicts the concern of the government and involves its action to a participation problem on which the policy is made. It has the sanction of law and

authority behind it. Negatively it involves a decision by the government officials regarding not taking any action on a particular issue.

### Stages in Public Policy Process

A brief highlight on the various stages of public policy will clarify the actual process of public policy.

Policy formulation is the first stage in public policy process. Through this process the demands of the system are converted into policies. But before this it has to be clearly established as to which demands require to be converted into policies. The next stage in public policy process is policy education. The government through various channels of mass-media attempts to make masses aware of the formulated policies. After this come the stage of policy implementation, which the policies are systematically executed by the different administrative agencies at the central, state and local levels. To ascertain the impact of policies, it is very essential to keep an eye on the implementation process, to see that the expenditure does not exceed the resources available and to see that policies are positively affecting those for whom they are being made. For this proper monitoring of policy implementation has to be done, A policy evaluation is the final stage in policy process. Proper and appropriate administrative and adjudicative functions are needed for keeping a complete control over the public policies.

### Internal Conditions for Making a Public Policy:

When making public policy, government officials and policymakers must consider a variety of internal conditions within the government and its administrative structure. Internal conditions play a crucial role in the policy-making process within organizations, governments, and other institutions. These internal conditions encompass various factors that influence how policies are formulated, implemented, and evaluated. Some key internal conditions of policy making include:

1. **Organizational Structure:** The structure of an organization can significantly impacts the policy-making process. The division of responsibilities, communication channels, decision-making hierarchies, and coordination mechanisms within the organization can either facilitate or hinder the development and implementation of policies.
2. **Leadership and Decision-Making:** The leadership style and decision-making processes within an organization or government agency can shape how policies are developed and implemented. Strong leadership, effective communication, and clear decision-making frameworks can help streamline the policy-making process.
3. **Organizational Culture:** The values, norms, beliefs, and attitudes that characterize an organization's culture can

influence policy making. A culture that values innovation, collaboration, transparency, and accountability is more likely to support effective policy development and implementation.

4. **Resources:** The availability of financial, human, technological, and informational resources is essential for successful policy making. Adequate resources enable organizations to conduct research, gather data, engage stakeholders, and implement policy initiatives effectively.

5. **Expertise and Skills:** The expertise and skills of individuals involved in the policy-making process are critical internal conditions. Having knowledgeable staff with diverse backgrounds, experience, and expertise can enhance the quality of policy analysis, design, and implementation.

6. **Policy goals and objectives:** Clear policy goals and objectives provide a roadmap for policy development and guide decision-making throughout the policy cycle. Policy makers must define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound (SMART) objectives to ensure policy success.

7. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging stakeholders, including policymakers, experts, interest groups, the public, and affected communities, is vital for effective policy making. Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process can improve the legitimacy of policies and increase their chances of successful implementation.

8. **Political Dynamics:** Internal political dynamics within an organization or government agency can influence policy making. Power struggles, competing interests, bureaucratic inertia, and partisan considerations can all shape how policies are formulated and implemented.

9. **Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating, and providing feedback on policies is essential for continuous improvement. Internal evaluation processes help assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of policies and inform future decision making. By considering these internal conditions of policy making, organizations and governments can create an environment conducive to developing sound policies that address societal needs, achieve organizational goals, and promote positive outcomes for stakeholders.
- ### External Conditions for Making a Public Policy:

External conditions also play a significant role in shaping the policy-making process. These external factors, which exist outside of the organization or government agency, can influence the development, implementation, and impact of policies. Some key external conditions of policy making include:

1. **Political Environment:** The political landscape, including government structures, political ideologies, party dynamics, and public opinion, can have a profound impact on policy making. Changes in political leadership, shifts in public sentiment, and partisan considerations can shape the priorities and decisions of policymakers.

2. **Economic Conditions:** Economic factors such as economic growth, inflation, unemployment, income inequality, and fiscal constraints can influence policy making. Policymakers must consider the economic implications of their decisions and craft policies that promote economic stability, growth, and prosperity.

3. **Social and Cultural Factors:** Social trends, cultural norms, demographic changes, and societal values can impact policy making. Issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and human rights often shape the policy agenda and inform decision making.

4. **Technological Developments:** Advances in technology, including digital innovation, automation, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, can create new opportunities and challenges for policy making. Policymakers must adapt to technological changes and leverage technology to enhance policy effectiveness and efficiency.

5. **Globalization and International Relations:** Global trends, international agreements, trade policies, geopolitical dynamics, and transnational challenges like climate change, pandemics, and migration can influence domestic policy making. Policymakers must consider global interdependencies and collaborate with international partners to address shared challenges.

6. **Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** Legal constraints, regulatory requirements, court rulings, and constitutional considerations can shape policy making. Policymakers must adhere to legal standards, respect individual rights, and comply with existing regulations when formulating and implementing policies.

7. **Media and Public Opinion:** The media landscape, public discourse, advocacy campaigns, and public opinion can influence policy making. Media coverage, public pressure, social media activism, and public protests can raise awareness about issues, shape policy debates, and hold policymakers accountable.

8. **External Stakeholders:** Engaging with external stakeholders such as businesses, nongovernmental organizations (ngos), advocacy groups, industry associations, and international organizations is crucial for effective policy making. Collaboration with external partners can enhance policy legitimacy, foster innovation, and ensure stakeholder buy-in.

9. **Interest Groups:** Interest groups include business, trade associations, professional organizations, labour unions, environment advocacy organisations, civil society, media, lobbies, etc. They try to influence the government in decision-making and policies by lobbying, collective bargaining and negotiations. These different interest groups advocate for public policies that serve the desires of their members and further the mission of their organizations.

10. **Donor Agencies:** Donor agencies provide conditional grants to meet their self-interest through aid. The aid receiving country must agree to obey certain terms and conditions of the donor agencies. Therefore, the agencies bargain with the government authorities to shape policies according to the favour of donor agencies. While formulating policies, sometimes government obey the terms and conditions of donor agencies to put impression and pleading the agencies. By considering these external conditions of policy making, organizations and governments can navigate complex external environments, anticipate emerging trends, respond to external pressures, and develop policies that are responsive to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

After all, it is implementation that yields results more than the soundness of public policy as such. But implementation is ultimately a team work. Blame game which is often found in our society, is to be avoided at all costs. Those who formulate the public policy ought to have the sacred responsibility of overseeing its implementation without any sort of bias. Those who are involved in the implementation of public policy ought to know the basic philosophical approach enshrined in the public policy. Then only team work becomes easier and faster. Insulating the bureaucracy from the unwarranted political pressures is indispensable to achieve the values of good governance. Accountability is another basic requirement to realize the goals and ideals of good governance; and it should at all levels. Accountability, can be reasonably expected, makes the bureaucrat to put his/her heart and soul into the work. But, at another level it is the feeling of responsiveness or conscience pricking that acts as a greater spur and haunts the official to work harder and to realize the cherished goals. Inter alia, enlightened citizenship will make the democracy more vibrant and it will go a long way in achieving the goals of good governance. This is what that was stressed by Lord Beveridge when he famously remarked "Democracy if it knows its business has no need to fear bureaucracy." to sum up, an honest public policy and efficient yet good governance are the primary tools if we are to realize the

Gandhi is greatest words “to wipe out every tear from every man’s Eye.”

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