

## Lesson 1

# PUBLIC POLICY: MEANING, NATURE, SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE

## Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Definitions of Public Policy
- 1.3 Concept of Public and Policy
  - 1.3.1 The Notion of Public
  - 1.3.2 The Notion of Policy
- 1.4 Meaning of Policy
- 1.5 Nature of Public Policy
- 1.6 Scope of the Public Policy
- 1.7 Importance of Public Policy
- 1.8 Conclusion
- 1.9 Model Questions
- 1.10 References

## 1.0 Objectives:

1. Students would know about the definition, meaning and nature of public Policy.
2. Students would be able to learn about the scope and importance of public policy.

## 1.1 Introduction:

The lives of the citizens everywhere are formed by public policies, whether we are aware of them or not. The dream for improved life while its achievement rest on our own efforts, will probable to contain public policies to aid the result of it. Public policy is a subject or field of inquiry has a long past, though the current public policy analysis have a specific American and 20<sup>th</sup> century fragrance. The public policy seeds were sown in 1940s and made a significant influence on the government and academic organizations over these years. In the early 1950s public policy has developed as academic search and from then it has been securing new measurements and is stressed tough to attain the position of a discipline in the area of Social science. As a study of 'products' of government, policy forms a significant

component in many a course and academic programme in various disciplines like political science, public administration, economics and business management.

## 1.2 Definitions of Public Policy:

Dye, says that,...institutional studies usually described specific government institutions...without systematically inquiring about the impact of institutional characteristics on policy outputs...However, the linkage between institutional arrangements and content of policy remained largely unexamined. The definitions of public policy are as follows:

According to Thomas Dye, defines public policy as "whatever governments choose to do or not to do".

Dimock, stated public policy as "deciding at any time or place what objectives and substantive measures should be chosen in order to deal with a particular problem".

According to Chandler and Plano, who define public policy as "the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or governmental concerns".

Freeman and Sherwoods, stated that it is the public answer to the interest in refining the human circumstances. In these definitions there is deviation between what governments agree to do and what they essentially do. Public policy is a controller which government has planned for direction and practice in certain problem areas.

In the current times, the study of public policy has evolved into what is virtually a fresh branch of social sciences called as, 'policy sciences'. In 1951, Harold Lasswell, for the first time, the concept of policy science was framed. Presently, the policy sciences have departed far away from immature ambitions for societally applicable information.

## 1.3 Concept of Public and Policy:

In the literature of academics, the term 'public policy is regularly utilized in our present day life and we regularly refer to the policies which are implanted like, national, education policy, agriculture policy, health policy, wage policy so on. In fact this is the area where public are involved. The concept of public policy is assumes, that there is domain of life which has totally individual and is not private, which is believed in collective.

### 1.3.1 The Notion of Public:

It is very significant to recognize the notion of 'public' for a discussion of 'public policy'. We regularly use the words such as 'public interest', 'public sector', 'public opinion', 'public health', and so on. The public policy, has to do with which are labelled as the public, as

contrasting to scopes concerning 'private'. The measurements of public is usually mentioned as, 'public ownership' or governor for 'public purpose'. The term public contains all the measurements of human action observed as needing governmental involvement or social directive. Though, there has been battle between what is 'public' and what is 'private'.

### **1.3.2 The Notion of Policy:**

The notion of 'public', the idea of 'policy' is also not exactly defined. Policy signifies, between other things, 'guidance for action'. It might take the procedure of:

1. Commanding conclusion,
2. Principle or value
3. Purposive course of action,
4. Method of governance
5. Manifestation of considered judgment
6. Look of political rationality and
7. Declaration of common goals.

In a Machiavellian sense, policy is the base of power. While bureaucracy derived its legitimacy from its claim to "State", the politician claimed that their authority rested on the approval of their policies by the electorates. Hogwood and Gunn specified ten usages of the word policy as:

1. A label for the field of activity
2. An expression of desired state of affairs
3. Specific proposals
4. The decision of governments
5. Formal authorization
6. A programmes
7. Output
8. Outcome
9. A theory or model



10. A process.

### 1.4 Meaning of Policy:

The meaning of the term 'policy' is varying like other concept of social science. Unluckily, the policy itself is somewhat which take diverse procedures. David Easton defined policy as the 'output' of the political system, and 'public policy' as 'the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society'. The measures of this alteration in the methods of the accepted from other definitions progress by the scholars in this field.

Henry defines public policy as, "A script (course of action) adopted and pursued by the government". Anderson stated, that policy be observed as "Purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern". According to Sir, Geoffrey Vickers, policies are judgments giving way, unity and steadiness to the course of act for which the decision making body is accountable.

Friedrich look policy as, ...a proposed course of action of a person, group, or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities with the policy was proposed to utilized and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or purpose.

According to Parsons, who stated about it as, "A policy is an attempt to define and structure a rational basis for action or inaction". In present terminology a policy is broadly defined as a course of action or plan, a set of political purposes.

It might well be sufficiently defined "policy" as a purposive development of act taken or accepted by those in power in chase of convinced goals or objectives. It must be added here that public policies are the policies accepted and executed by government bodies and officials. They are framed by what Easton appeals the 'authorities' in a political system. Namely, "elders, paramount chiefs, executives, legislators, judges, administrators, councilors, monarchs, and the like". He stated as, these are the persons who "engage in the daily affairs of a political system", are "recognized by most members of the system as having the responsibility for these matters" and take action that are "accepted and binding most of the time by most of the members so long as their act within the limit of their roles".

### 1.5 Nature of Public Policy:

It is very much evident that policy might take different procedures like legislation, executive orders or the official acts. They actually comprise of a set of intentions or objectives a combination of devices or means for attainment of intentions, a description of governmental

or non-governmental units indicted with the accountability of transporting out the intensions, and distribution of resources for the necessary tasks. To recognize public policy, it is very much needed to examine the nature. A policy may contain with specific or general, broad or narrow, simple or complex, public or private written or unwritten explicit or implicit, discretionary or detailed and quantitative or qualitative.

Public policy is in fact a skill because these tasks regularly some information about the social sciences and in this case the stress is on the 'public policy' which is known as 'government policy', selected by a government as a 'direction for action'. From the perspective of public policies, actions of government could be put broadly into two groups and they are:

1. Definite or Specific policies and
2. General, vague and inconsistent policies.

In reality a government rarely will have a fixed of supervisory values for all its actions and in fact the significant public policies are frequently made more clear specifically where the issue of law, regulation or strategy is involved. The Supreme Court can give its decisions, by new interpretations to some of the articles of the Constitution which can be develop into new policy.

These policies may be too unclear or too broad and may not be reliable to each other, in turbulent atmospheres like the current ones government has to make regular actions without reference to any particular policy, sometimes government announces some sort of policy for political convenience or for some reasons, in such cases, government will not have any intention to carry it successfully. Hence, it is likely to have a policy without action or it can have action without policy. Public policies alive only in set of practices and precedents. The public policies are embodied only in an unwritten Constitution of United Kingdom is the best instance of this form of a public policy.

Public policy contains major segment of actions, like, development policy, economic growth, socio-economic growth, equality, social justice, or any other such policy may be accepted by national policy. Hence, it can be observed a single policy in various written documents, it may be narrow, covering a particular action, like family planning which is reserved to certain division of the people or it can be for extensive range of the people in the country, for instance, government can accept that, no child is adult unless he attains the age of 16 years (recent amendment). Public policy is an area commonly defined by policy areas like health, education, housing, economic, environment, transport and social and it is mostly set that interdisciplinary and intergovernmental relations taking place. These policies can be



developed either by the central government or state government, or sometimes 'mega policies' act as a kind of master policy. This word mega policy is coined by Yehezkel Dror. The broad policies which are an expression of national aims are the instances for the mega policies, eg. Economic growth, social justice etc.

It is very much important to understand the nature of the policy means, it must contain an objective, an aim or a goal, or a purpose because a policy is a guidance for action. In fact all the mega policies are purposive and are object oriented but it is conceivable that a government can have policy without any recognizable objectives or purpose. It can accept any policy without any particular goals. The significant regarding the goals and objectives is that, while studying the policies of government collective as a total, the multidimensional nature of goals and objectives, as well as the presence of several irregularities and even ambiguities becomes observable. Government can accept vague, inconsistent or even contradictory policies so that to gratify all the pressure groups and political parties.

The public policy can be a positive or negative one, in its positive form, it can contain some system of evident government activity to treat a specific problem. Whereas, in the negative form, it might contain a decision by a public servant not to take action on some sort of matter on which the government action is required. These policies sometimes will have legally coercive so that people can adopt it legally for instance all the people will pay the taxes in order to stay away from the fines. These public policies makes public organizations different from private organizations.

## **1.6 Scope of the Public Policy:**

It is a noteworthy discipline examination and practice, meanwhile, the appearance of public policy as a field of investigation, it has extended in theoretical scope and application. A noteworthy amount of the study of public policy contains of the growth of situations of current styles. In several developing countries, there is excessive burden on the governments to speed up the growth of the nation, make usage of modern and applicable technological inventions, accept and enable essential institutional alterations, upsurge the production of the nation, make total usage of human and other sources, and advance the level of living standards. These tendencies and growths have hence, improved both the magnitude and possibility of the public policy. Michael Teitz, pronounces the outreach of public policy in term of the citizen's life cycle as follows:

"Modern urban man is born in a publicly financed hospital, receives his education in a publically supported school and university, spends a good part of his time travelling on

publically built transport facilities, communicate by the post offices or quasi-public telephone system, drinks his public drinking water, disposes of his garbage through a public removal system, reads his library books, picnics in his public parks, is protected by public police, fire, and health systems. Ideological conservatives notwithstanding his daily life is inextricably bounds up with government decisions on these various public services”.

Public policy stress on the problems of the public, according to Heidenheimer, the public policy is the study of “how, why and what effect governments pursue particular courses of action and inaction”. Dye, stated about it as, “what government do, why they do it, and what difference it makes”.

According to Lasswell, policy orientation is multi method, multi-disciplinary, problem which emphasizes worried to plan the context of the policy procedure.

### **1.7 Importance of Public Policy:**

It is evident that the public policy is the significant factor in the democratic government and it emphasizes on the public and its problems, in fact it is a discipline which is branded as public. The concept of public policy assumes that there is an area of life which is totally individual but said in public. Likewise, public policies have a significant purposes to work in the society where the democracy is prevails. The important role of the public policy is to make the society to lead a better life and to maintain the delivery of the goods and services are significant, it is regarded as the mechanism for developing economic-social system, a procedure for determining the future and so on.

### **1.8 Conclusion:**

It is evident that the area of public policy has an important role in the public domain, it can upsurge the growing density of the society. Public policy is not only worried about the explanation and extension of the reasons and concerns of the government actions. It also has the development of scientific information about the services determining public policy. The examination of public policy aids us in determining the social ills of the matter under the examination.

Policies do more than effect alteration in the situations of the society, they bring the people together to follow the uniformity in the state. These public policies are the main devices for any democratic nation and they improve the social and economic procedures from the present of the future. Hence, the examination of the public policy has become a significant element of the academic society as well.