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# **UNIT 1 PUBLIC POLICY : MEANING AND NATURE**

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## **Structure**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Relationship between Politics and Policy
- 1.3 Meaning of Public Policy
- 1.4 Characteristics of Public Policy
- 1.5 Types of Public Policy
- 1.6 Stages in Public Policy Process
- 1.7 Importance of Public Policy
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Key Words
- 1.10 References and Further Readings
- 1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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## **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of public policy
- discuss the relationship between politics and policy
- distinguish between policy, decision and goal
- throw light on the characteristics of public policy
- discuss the different types of policy
- highlight the stages in public policy process; and
- discuss the importance of public policy.

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## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Public policies are as old as governments. Whatever be the form, oligarchy, monarchy, aristocracy, tyranny, democracy etc., — whenever and wherever governments have existed, public policies have been formulated and implemented. To cope with the varied problems and demands of the people the government has to make many policies, these policies are called public policies. This Unit tries to explain the meaning and types of public policy. It will highlight the different components of a policy and distinguish between policy, decision and goal. An attempt will be made to bring out the relationship between politics and policy, and importance and characteristics of public policy will also be discussed.

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## **1.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY**

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Before discussing the meaning of public policy, it would be better if we are clear about the relationship between public policy and politics.

Policy making process is a part of politics and political action. According to Gabriel Almond, political system is a set of interactions having structures, each of which performs its functions in order to keep it like an on-going concern, it is a set of processes that routinely converts inputs into outputs. Almond classifies inputs of political system into generic functional categories like political socialisation and

recruitment, interest aggregation, interest articulation and political communication. Output activities are those which are carried on by a political system in response to demands or stresses placed upon the system in the form of inputs. Outputs can take the form of governmental policies, programmes, decisions etc.

Another model on politics-policy relationship is the Feedback or the 'Black Box Model' coined by David Easton. According to this model the remaining demands which have not been included in the decisions and policies will again be fed back through the same process for the purpose of its conversion into decisions. These two models establish clearly the relationship between politics and policies in a political system.

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### 1.3 MEANING OF PUBLIC POLICY

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There are various studies about public policy and many scholars have attempted to define public policy from different angles. Before explaining the meaning of public policy, let us first go through some of its definitions.

Robert EyeStone 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 to do" Richard Rose says that "public policy is not a decision, it is a course or pattern of activity. In Carl J. Friedrich's opinion public policy is a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing opportunities and obstacles which the policy was proposed to utilise and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realise an objective or purpose.

From these definitions, it is clear that public policies are governmental decisions, and are actually the result of activities which the government undertakes in pursuance of certain goals and objectives. It can also be said that public policy formulation and implementation involves a well planned pattern or course of activity. It requires a thoroughly close knit relation and interaction between the important governmental agencies viz., the political executive, legislature, bureaucracy and judiciary.

The following points will make the nature of public policy more clear in your minds:

- 1) Public Policies are goal oriented. Public policies are formulated and implemented in 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 programmes of government.
- 2) Public policy is the outcome of the government's collective actions. It means that it is a pattern or course of activity of the governmental officials and actors in a collective sense than being termed as their discrete and segregated decisions.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Public policy is positive in the sense that it depicts the concern of the government and involves its action to a particular problem on which the policy is made. It has the sanction of law and authority behind it. Negatively, it involves a decisions by the governmental officials regarding not taking any action on a particular issue.

#### Policy and Goals

To understand the meaning of policy in a better manner, it is very important to make a distinction between policy and goals. Goals are what policies aim at or hope to achieve. A goal is a desired state of affairs that a society or an organisation attempts to realise. Goals can be understood in a variety of perspectives. These can be thought of as abstract values that a society would like to acquire. There are also goals that are specific and concrete. Removal of poverty is a goal that the government wants to pursue. Public policies are concerned with such specific goals. They are the instruments which lead to the achievement of these goals.

If the government announces that its goal is to provide housing to all the members of the deprived sections of society it does not become a public policy. It is a statement of intention of what the government wants to do. Many a time the government, for political reasons, announces goals that it has little desire to achieve. In order to become a policy, the goal has to be translated into action. Programmes have to be designed to achieve specific objectives. As an illustration, let us look at the policy of poverty alleviation. Several programmes have been designed for this, e.g., The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) etc. Each programme has certain goals to achieve within a specified time and each programme is provided with financial resources and administrative personnel. These become concrete efforts to achieve a goal. Policy spells out the strategy of achieving a goal. Thus policy is essentially an instrument to achieve a goal. Statement of a goal does not make it a policy.

### **Policies and Decisions**

A distinction needs to be drawn between a policy and a decision also. Many a time the terms are used interchangeably but that is not the correct usage. Individuals, organisations or government are constantly taking decisions. But all the decisions that are taken cannot be described as matters of policy. The essential core of decision-making is to make a choice from the alternatives available in order to take an action, if there is only one course of action available then there is nothing one can choose from and therefore, no decision can be taken. A decision can be taken only when there is more than one alternative available. Thus a decision is the act of making a choice. The entire science of decision-making has been developed in order to analyse the conditions that can improve this activity and how a decision maker can improve his choice by expanding the number of alternatives available to him.

There can be two types of decisions, programmed and non-programmed. Programmed decisions are repetitive and do not require a fresh consideration every time they are taken. These decisions are routine in nature and for these definite procedures can be worked out. Each decision need not be dealt with separately. In programmed decisions, habits, skills and knowledge about the problem are important. For example, once the decision to open the library from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. is taken, it does not require fresh consideration to keep it open during those hours. The decision is incorporated into procedures that are established for the purpose. Non-programmed decisions are new and unstructured. No well laid-out methods are available for such decisions, each issue or question is to be dealt with separately. Such decisions are required in the situations of unprecedented nature, for example breakdown of an epidemic, occurrence of earthquake, etc. Training in skills, needed for such decisions and innovative ability become relevant in this regard. Both the programmed and non-programmed decisions have to be taken in a broad framework or course of action.

Public policy is the broad direction or perspective that the government lays down in order to take decisions. Each organisation or the individual is enjoined to take a decision within a policy framework. Decision can be a one time action. Policy consists of several decisions that are taken to fulfil its aims. A policy consists of a series of decisions tied together into a coherent whole.

There can be some similarity in the processes involved in decision making and policy making. Both are concerned with choice among alternatives and for both similar processes can be followed in generating alternatives. But we should always remember that policy is a more comprehensive term, as it encompasses a series of decisions and has a comparatively longer time perspective.

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## **1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING**

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The meaning and nature of public policy will become more clear by throwing light on different characteristics of public policy. Some of the major characteristics of public policy making are:

**Public Policy Making is a Very Complex Process:** Policy making involves many components, which are interconnected by communication and feedback loops and which interact in different ways. Some parts of the process are explicit and directly observable, but many others proceed through hidden channels that the officials themselves are often only partly aware of. These hidden procedures are very difficult, and often impossible to observe. Thus, guidelines are often formed by a series of single decisions that result in a 'policy' without any one of the decision makers being aware of that process.

**It is a Dynamic Process:** Policy making is a process, that is a continuing activity taking place within a structure; for sustenance, it requires a continuing input of resources and motivation. It is a dynamic process, which changes with time, the sequences of its sub-processes and phases vary internally and with respect to each other.

**Policy Making Comprises Various Components:** The complexity of public policy making as we know, is an important characteristic of policy making. Public policy formulation often involves a great variety of substructures. The identity of these substructures and the degree of their involvement in policy making, vary because of different issues, circumstances and societal values.

**Policy Structure makes Different Contributions:** This characteristic suggests that every substructure makes a different, and sometimes unique, contribution to public policy. What sort of contribution substructures make, depends in part on their formal and informal characteristics which vary from society to society.

**Decision-Making:** Policy making is a species of decision-making because it lets us use decision-making models for dealing with policy making.

**Lays down Major Guidelines:** Public policy, in most cases, lays down general directives, rather than detailed instructions, on the main lines of action to be followed. After main lines of action have been decided on, detailed sub-policies that translate the general theory into more concrete terms are usually needed to execute it.

**Results in Action:** Decision-making can result in action, in changes in the decision-making itself, or both or neither. The policies of most socially significant decision-making, such as most public policy making are intended to result in action. Also policies directed at the policy making apparatus itself such as efficiency drives in government are action oriented.

**Directed at the Future:** Policy making is directed at the future. This is one of its most important characteristics since it introduces the ever-present elements of uncertainty and doubtful prediction that establish the basic tone of nearly all policy making.

Actual policy making tends to formulate policies in vague and elastic terms; because the future is so uncertain. It permits policy makers to adjust their policy according to emerging facts and enables them to guard against unforeseen circumstances.

**Mainly Formulated by Governmental Organs :** Public policy is also directed, in part, at private persons and non-governmental structures, as when it calls for a law prohibiting a certain type of behaviour or appeals to citizens to engage in private saving. But public policy, in most cases, is primarily directed at governmental organs, and only intermediately and secondarily at other factors.

**Aims at Achieving what is in the Public Interest :** However difficult it might be to find out what the "public interest" may completely refer to, the term never the less conveys the idea of a "general" orientation and seems therefore to be important and significant. Furthermore, there is good evidence that the image of "public interest" influences the public policy making process and is therefore at least, as conceived by the various public policy making units, a "real" phenomenon, and an important operational tool for the study of policy making.

**Use of Best Possible Means:** In abstract terminology, public policy making aims at achieving the maximum net benefit. Benefits and costs take in part the form of realised values and impaired values, respectively, and cannot in most cases be

expressed in commensurable units. Often, quantitative techniques can therefore not be used in this area of public policy making but neither the qualitative significance of maximum net benefits as an aim nor the necessity to think broadly about alternative public policies in terms of benefits and costs is therefore reduced.

**Involvement of Various Bodies/Agencies:** Industrial workers, voters, intellectuals, legislators, bureaucrats, political parties, political executives, judiciary etc. are the various organs that participate in public policy making and can influence the policy process to a great extent.

### Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Bring out the relationship between public policy and politics.

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2) Discuss the meaning of public policy.

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3) Distinguish between a policy and a goal.

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4) Bring out the difference between a decision and a public policy.

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5) Highlight the different characteristics of public policy making.

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## 1.5 TYPES OF PUBLIC POLICY

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Having explained the characteristics of public policy making, we will now explain the different types of public policy. There are various types of public policy like substantive, regulatory, distributive, redistributive etc.

**Substantive:** These policies are concerned with the general welfare and development of the society, the programmes like provision of education and employment opportunities, economic stabilisation, law and order enforcement, anti-pollution legislation etc. are the result of substantive policy formulation. These policies have vast areas of operation affecting the general welfare and development of the society as a whole. These do not relate to any particular or privileged segments of the society. Such policies have to be formulated keeping in view the prime character of the constitution socio-economic problems and the level of moral claims of the society.

**Regulatory:** Regulatory policies are concerned with regulation of trade, business, safety measures, public utilities, etc. This type of regulation is done by independent organisations that work on behalf of the government. In India, we have Life Insurance Corporation, Reserve Bank of India, Hindustan Steel, State Electricity Boards, State Transport Corporations, State Financial Corporations, etc., which are engaged in regulatory activities. The policies made by the government, pertaining to these services and organisations rendering these services are known as regulatory policies.

**Distributive:** Distributive policies are meant for specific segments of society. It can be in the area of grant of goods, public welfare or health services, etc. These mainly include all public assistance and welfare programmes. Some more examples of distributive policies are adult education programme, food relief, social insurance, vaccination camps etc.

**Redistributive:** Redistributive policies are concerned with the rearrangement of policies which are concerned with bringing about basic social and economic changes. Certain public goods and welfare services are disproportionately divided among certain segments of the society, these goods and services are streamlined through redistributive policies.

**Capitalisation:** Under the capitalisation policies financial subsidies are given by the Union government to the state and local governments, such subsidies are also granted to the central and state business undertakings or some other important sphere if necessary. Capitalisation policies are different in nature than the substantive, regulatory, distributive and redistributive policies as no provision for public welfare services is made through these.

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## 1.6 STAGES IN PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

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

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. At the policy interpretation stage, the formulated public policy is further clarified and interpreted in order to make it fully understandable. The next stage in public policy process is policy education. The government through various channels of mass-media attempts to make the masses aware of the formulated policies. After this comes the stage of policy implementation, when 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 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, and policy evaluation stage 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.

## 1.7 THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC POLICY

It is clear from the above sections of the Unit that policy is a purposive course of action in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern within a specific time frame. Before going into the question of importance which is attached to policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, it would be better to recapitulate the components of public policy.

- 1) Policy is purposive and deliberately formulated. Policy must have a purpose or a goal. It does not emerge at random or by chance. Once a goal is decided the policy is devised in such a way that it determines the course of action needed to achieve that goal.
- 2) A policy is well thought out and is not a series of discrete decisions.
- 3) A policy is what is actually done and not what is intended or desired, a statement of goals does not constitute a policy.
- 4) Policy also delineates a time frame in which its goals have to be achieved.
- 5) Policy follows a defined course of action viz. formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Actually the scope of public policy is determined by the kind of role that the State adopts for itself in a society. In the classical capitalist society, State was assigned a limited role and it was expected that the State would merely act as a regulator of social and economic activity and not its promoter. With the advent of planned view of development, State began to be perceived as an active agent in promoting and shaping societies in its various activities. This was considered as a great change in the role of a State. Public policies expanded their scope from merely one of regulation to that of development. Expansion in scope led to several other consequences like many more government agencies and institutions came into being in order to formulate and implement policies. In India, the Planning Commission and its attendant agencies came into being in order to formulate policies and develop perspectives that could define the direction which the country would follow.

So, the first major goal of public policies in our country has been in the area of socio-economic development. Wide ranging policies were formulated in the area of industrial and agricultural development. Many policies were converted into Statutes, like Industrial Development and Regulating Act or Land Tenancy Act. Others were kept as directives in the various plan documents. For all policy directions, the Five Year Plans became the major source. These policies were of two types, one of regulation and the other of promotion. Laws laid down what could be done or not done by the entrepreneurs. This could be in the larger area like what goods can be produced by the public or whether certain goods can be traded only by government agencies. Laws also specified how State agencies themselves were to provide goods and services like electricity, transport etc. The State undertook similar responsibility in the social sphere. Dowry Act, Divorce Act, etc., are examples of this.

But socio-economic transformation was not the only problem when India became independent. There were also problems of national integrity, the external environment was a source of threat and the country had to develop suitable policies to defend itself. Apart from this, there have been internal challenges. Regionalism has given rise to fissiparous tendencies that have to be countered in the long-term perspective. These would include not only defence policies but also similar efforts at decentralisation that create greater national cohesiveness. Thus, since independence, public policies in India have been formulated with a view to achieve socio-economic development and maintain national integrity. These goals have been complex demanding coherent policies. This has been a difficult task because goals have had to be divided into sectors and sub-sectors. Many a time by its very nature, policies have been contradictory. What may be rational for economic development may not be so for national integration. Thus, the need of a strong Centre to cope with external threats etc. is important but it may go against the principle of decentralisation which provides for greater national cohesion of a heterogeneous society. This is the reason why ascertaining of the actual impact of public policy becomes a necessity.

These days policy analysis is acquiring a lot of importance in the realm of the study of public administration. This trend is observable all over the world. The success of policy formulation, execution and monitoring ultimately depends on the success of policy analysis. In India, this trend emerged with the launching of our Five Year Plans. As the years passed by, one Five Year Plan was followed by another and disillusionment started setting in. Goals of socio-economic development could not be achieved. Those who were supposed to benefit from the development effort began to lose. Attention shifted to the management and administration in order to find out why the policies were failing to achieve their objectives. This investigation did not include the questions of policies being right or wrong.

It took the crises of the 1960s to raise the issue of correctness of policy. Disenchantment with the development processes followed the two wars in 1962 and 1965. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) enforced a devaluation of the rupee in 1966 and a terrible drought ravaged the land during 1966-68. It became evident that the development policies were in trouble. In the early 1970s another war, drought and the oil crisis gave a jolt to the plan that had been followed until then. The culmination was the imposition of national emergency in 1975 to cope with the rising dissatisfaction.

It was the emergence of the turbulent period that led to the questioning of the policies that had been followed. It was no more a question of implementation alone. The argument that began to gain the popular view was that policy itself was faulty and all the blame could not be put on administration. The first to pick up this line of reasoning was the discipline of economics. The economic failures dominated the scene and therefore it was natural that economists were the first ones to raise questions about the appropriateness of policy. Students of public administration began to emphasise that implementation failures could also emanate from inadequacy of public policy and therefore policy analysis should also be included in the area of study of public administration. This argument got support from certain developments in the discipline of public administration. In view of the everyday experience, it was becoming difficult to sustain the classical concept of separation of politics and administration. This distinction categorised policy formulation and implementation as two distinct activities. Policy formulation was regarded as a political activity and policy implementation an administrative one. But this distinction got increasingly blurred and it was not an easy task to determine where policy formulation ended and where policy implementation began. It came to be accepted that both were interactive processes and had to be seen in an integrated way. With this change in view students of public administration began to devote greater attention to the problems of policy formulation and influence of policy design on implementation.

It is in this way that policy analysis has become an important focus of study. Policy makers have also shown great interest in it because it ultimately helps in improving the effectiveness of policy. Many universities and research institutes are involved in policy analysis. The government provides for a lot of funds in this area.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note :** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What are the different types of public policy.

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2) Highlight the various stages involved in public policy process.

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3) Discuss the importance of public policy

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## 1.8 LET US SUM UP

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It is clear that public policies are the activities that the government undertakes in order to pursue certain established goals and objectives. In this Unit we discussed the meaning and importance of public policy and the difference between a public policy, a goal and a decision. An attempt was also made to explain the relationship between public policy and politics. The Unit also highlighted the different types of public policy, the stages involved in public policy process and the various characteristics of public policy. Some of these aspects of public policy will be discussed in detail in the subsequent Units of this Block.

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## 1.9 KEY WORDS

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**Non-Programmed Decisions:** Herbert Simon makes a clear distinction between programmed and non-programmed decisions. Non-programmed decisions, are new, novel and unstructured. No ready made methods are available for taking these decisions, each issue is dealt with separately. Proper training in development of innovative capacity is required for such decisions.

**Programmed Decisions:** These decisions are repetitive and routine in nature. For such decisions definite procedures can be worked out. Each decision need not be dealt with separately. In such type of decisions, habits, skills and knowledge about the problem is important. Mathematical models and computer can help the decision makers to arrive at rational decisions as far as these decisions are concerned.

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## 1.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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## 1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points :
  - policy making is a part of politics and political action
  - political system is a set of interactions having structures, each part of the structure performs certain functions.
  - demands act as inputs which are continuously fed in the political system.
  - these inputs get converted into programmes, policies and decisions.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
  - public policies are governmental decisions.
  - public policies are the result of the activities which the government undertakes in pursuance of certain goals and objectives.
  - it involves a well planned pattern or course of activity.
  - it depicts the concern of the government and involves its actions.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
  - goals are what policies aim at or hope to achieve.
  - goals can be abstract, specific and concrete.
  - goal is a statement of intention of what the government wants to do.
  - in order to become a policy a goal has to be translated into action.
  - policy spells out the strategy of achieving a goal.
- 4) Your answer should include the following points:
  - the essential core of decision-making is to make a choice from the alternatives available in order to take an action.
  - a decision is an act of making a choice.
  - there are two types of decisions, programmed and non-programmed.
  - public policy is the broad direction or perspective that the government lays down in order to take decision.
  - a decision can be a one time action.
  - a policy consists of several decisions that are taken to fulfil its aims.
  - both policy making and decision processes are concerned with choice activity.
- 5) Your answer should include the following points :
  - public policy making is a complex process
  - it is a dynamic process
  - comprises various components
  - its substructures make different contributions
  - decision-making
  - lays down major guidelines
  - result in action
  - directed at the future
  - formulated by governmental organs
  - keeps in view the public interest
  - use of best possible means
  - involvement of various organs

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points :
  - Substantive
  - Regulatory
  - Distributive
  - Capitalisation
  - Redistributive
- 2) Your answer should include the following points :
  - policy formulation
  - policy implementation
  - monitoring of policy
  - policy evaluation and analysis

3) Your answer should include the following points :

- the reach and scope of public policy is determined by the kind of role that the State adopts for itself in a society.
- public policies have expanded their scope from merely of regulation to that of development.
- many policies have been converted into legal statutes.
- many aspects like socio-economic development, maintenance of national integrity, political stability have formed a major part of public policies in India.
- policy analysis has acquired a lot of importance in the realm of public policy process.
- the failure of our Five Year Plans has pressurised the government and research institutions to go deep into research on policy analysis.
- realisation that when policies fail only policy implementation should not be blamed has gained importance.
- policy formulation and implementation can no longer be regarded as two distinct activities.

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## UNIT 2 THE POLICY CYCLE

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Policy Formulation
- 2.3 Policy Implementation
- 2.4 Policy Education
- 2.5 Policy Evaluation
- 2.6 Constraints in Policy Making : Need for an Effective Policy Process
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Key Words
- 2.9 References and Further Readings
- 2.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- highlight the formulation of public policies
- discuss the implementation of policies
- explain their monitoring and evaluation; and
- throw light on the need for a systematic policy process

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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It is clear from the first Unit of this Block that as the State assumed more and more responsibility to bring about rapid social and economic changes, the goals and scope of public policies also increased tremendously. As a matter of fact State activities multiplied to such an extent that their presence could be felt in every aspect of social and economic life of people. Policies were enacted to promote economic development through direct as well as indirect intervention. Social structure as well as social relationship were also sought to be transformed by means of conducive public policies. Thus while the significance of State in people's lives increased, the expectations of people from the State also went up. But these expectations were not matched by government performance. The reasons for this increasing gap between expectations and performance were attributed to faulty policy making and implementation.

The purpose of this Unit is to focus attention on the total process of policy making and implementation and to understand the reasons behind the failure of the policies to produce proper results. Before we discuss this issue, we must deal with certain important questions, such as, why are specific policies framed?; and how do problems requiring attention reach the policy agenda, etc. Apart from providing answers to these queries, this Unit will try to throw light on how the policies are formulated, implemented, monitored and evaluated. To improve the performance of policies and to bridge the gap between stated objectives and results obtained, the need for systematic policy will also be highlighted.

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### 2.2 POLICY FORMULATION

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Before coming to the actual formulation of policies, we must be clear regarding how the issues/problems reach the policy agenda. In a democracy, there are various ways in which a government's attention is drawn towards problems that need its consideration. The people's representatives in the Parliament and state assemblies

raise issues and demand action from the government. These issues pertain to the areas where either the government has failed to take adequate action or its particular action has created certain problems. There are also organised pressure groups that can demand that the government should act in a particular way. For example, there are associations of business and industry like Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry or of central government employees or trade unions that attempt to influence government's policies. Social protest movements, like the Chipko Movement can also attract government's attention towards specific issues.

Voluntary organisations and mass media also play an important role in drawing government's attention to a particular problem or area of concern. Governments also frame policies on their own within the broad ideology that they espouse. Welfare or socialist ideals enshrined in our Constitution brings forth a whole package of policies to influence different aspects of social behaviour and economic development. Political parties help in articulating ideological positions and policy demands on the government. The opposition parties use various public or parliamentary fora to ask the government to adopt certain policies. Thus in a democratic set up, the government not only frames policies on its own but also responds to the various demands made by different organised groups and political and social institutions in the society. It is when these groups and institutions cannot play their role adequately that social conflicts develop and present the problems more starkly.

Once a problem has been brought on the policy agenda, processes begin to shape a governmental response and objectives, targets and goals are decided upon to tackle the problem. Three major components of policy need to be decided at this stage. First component is concerned with the setting of goals and objectives. It means a perspective has to be determined which should be able to generate broad goals of a policy. For example, in case of anti-poverty programmes, first component is concerned with the setting of goals and objectives. It means a perspective has to be determined which should be able to generate broad goals of a policy. So, in case of anti-poverty programmes, policy makers have to identify the problem of what can be done to alleviate poverty. Alternative policies have to be generated and a choice made regarding a specific policy. This policy can be set in long-term perspective (15 to 20 years) and then divided into concrete goals that have to be achieved in five years or one year. Thus, there can be a 15 to 20 year plan, a five year plan and an annual plan. One important consideration in setting these goals and devising a policy is whether these are implementable or not. Policy and its goals need to be realistic and should be based on the actual parameters of action. There is no point in having a policy that is not implementable, the goals of such a policy can never be realised. If, say 200 million people live below the poverty line, then a policy that takes care of around 20 million poor in a Five Year Plan period, without taking into account the yearly increases in poor population, cannot achieve the goals of poverty alleviation.

Second issue or component that needs to be considered is the strategy needed to implement the policy. For instance, poor can be helped in various ways. They can be given food and shelter at rates lower than the market rates or they can be provided with employment opportunities which may enable them to earn wages needed for the fulfilment of basic requirements. They may also be given assets from which additional income can be generated. Thus it has to be decided as to what type of strategy should be adopted to help the poor to cross the poverty line. Just a single strategy can also be thought of in order to achieve the policy goals and a proper mix of strategies can also serve the objective. This issue also has to be decided at this stage.

Once the strategy is chosen, the implementation machinery has to be determined. This is the third component of policy making. Some strategies may demand a new administrative set up, others may not. Integrated Rural Development Programme was established to enable the poor to generate additional income with the help of assets provided through loan and subsidy. Some strategies may only require increased financial outlay. If foodgrains at reasonable rates have to be provided, then the budget needs to allocate greater subsidy and greater amount of foodgrains for public distribution system. The role of bureaucracy and non-governmental organisations also has to be specified for implementing policy goals.

Thus, at the policy formulation stage, choices have to be made about objectives and goals, strategies and instruments of implementation. There can be identified properly only if the policy design is given due consideration. Policy design is a very crucial stage, as choices have to be made in a way that a coherent framework emerges. It is this framework that determines, to a great extent, the integration of various factors and resources required to achieve the objectives. The design has to identify the interlinkages and interdependencies among personnel and material. If the design is inadequate or faulty, then it will have its influence on the implementation and performance of the policy.

Formulating a policy design requires skills and competence among the policy makers. The policy makers must have the necessary expertise required in gathering and analysing appropriate information, generating alternatives and choosing among the alternatives. It is the competence of policy makers that determines the extent of choice available. The actual choice is a political decision and the question as to who has made the choice and why? has to be looked into. The performance of the policy is influenced by the motivation of the decision maker. The interest taken by the actors in the policy process and their commitment to policy objectives gets reflected in performance of the policy. In making a choice, the decision makers may also be influenced by their ideologies, caste and class interests or regional and ethnic loyalties.

Sometimes a policy design may not be the handiwork of national policy makers, it may come from external sources and may merely be adopted to suit the conditions prevailing in the country. For instance, the Community Development Programme had its genesis elsewhere and was funded by external agencies. Thus, policy designs can emanate from internal as well as external sources. So we can say that in order to understand the policy process and its consequences, some important questions have to be raised. First question is concerned with the policy design wherein a coordinated and integrated framework is developed which concretises the objectives, provides for their achievement and establishes choices of strategy and implementation. The second question is related to the mix of political and professional insights required to make these choices. The final question is concerned with the motivation of policy makers which influences them in making these choices.

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## 2.3 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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Now we come to the next stage of the policy cycle. This is a very crucial stage. In order to achieve the policy objectives, we have to see that the policy is implemented with full enthusiasm and commitment. There has been an assumption in most of our Five Year Plans that once a policy has been formulated, it will be systematically implemented and the desired results as envisaged by the policy makers will follow. But this assumption rests upon various political and organisational factors. All policies may not be the result of a serious commitment to resolve the issues. The political motivations can influence policies in such a way that it changes their entire complexion. These influences can become apparent at the formulation stage itself. However, what is important to understand is that the clash of political institutions and interests is not just confined to the formulation stage. It continues at each stage of implementation. This leads to cases where implementation can deviate from the goals that have been set.

Policies can become very difficult to implement if the implementors are not given sufficient autonomy and flexibility in carrying out their tasks. In order to ward off political pressures and adhere to the goals of a policy, the implementors need adequate powers. Very often the government itself modifies or abandons its policy in the face of opposition from interest groups.

A second reason why the policies may be difficult to implement is that the bureaucracy does not have the necessary professional skills needed for the implementation of the policies. Bureaucracy must have experts from different areas of specialisation, but due to inappropriate recruitment policies, such expertise is not available. In such cases, vast training programmes are initiated so that adequate

skills can be imparted to those who need them most. Bureaucracy should be strengthened to enable it to become an effective instrument of policy implementation.

Lack of resources, personnel, financial and technical also act as a hindrance in implementation of public policy. Inadequate staff, lack of expertise and skills, shortage of funds etc. block proper policy implementation. Another problem in policy implementation could be lack of response from the target groups. Sometimes people do not take interest in implementation of a programme, at times they are also not aware of the objectives and goals of a programme. Lack of people's participation often leads to breakdown in implementation.

Actually the effectiveness of policy implementation depends to a great extent on the policy design. The activities associated with these two stages of policy cycle are closely interconnected. The setting of goals and objectives, allocation of resources, minimising political influences and choice of implementation strategies influence the extent to which policy aims can be achieved.

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## 2.4 POLICY EDUCATION

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Policy education is a very important stage in policy cycle. Many problems in policy implementation can be solved through policy education. People have to be made aware of the objectives of the policies, the benefits that can be derived from them, the implementation machinery chosen for the policies, the changes that could be brought about through the policies, the nature of their effect on the people, agencies and institutions involved in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation etc. Such type of education can go a long way in developing the right kind of attitudes in people towards government policies and increasing people's participation in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. People should not just be the end of public policies that is the targets or beneficiaries of policies but should also be the means for achieving the goals of the policies. Thus policy education must receive due attention if public policies have to be made easily implementable and acceptable.

Adequate public support can make the role of voluntary agencies much easier. Leakages and corruption can be minimised and required expertise and skills can be incorporated. Voluntary agencies can act as a very crucial alternative mode of implementation. Thus before going into actual implementation of a policy, it must be made sure that those who are involved in the implementation as well as those who are going to be affected by its implementation are well aware of the formulated objectives and impact.

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## 2.5 POLICY EVALUATION

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Policy evaluation is the final and the most important stage in policy cycle. In order to determine the success or failure of a policy, it is essential that a systematic and effective policy evaluation system exists in the country. A precondition to fool proof policy evaluation system is proper policy monitoring. After the implementation of the programme, it has to be ensured that implementation machinery functions adequately. Agencies, people and institutions involved in implementation are not corrupt, resources needed for carrying out the programme are sufficiently available and intelligently spent, and the duration targets are met with. Only after keeping a track of all these activities can proper evaluation of a policy be possible.

Policy evaluation has to be quantitative as well as qualitative. Unfortunately, the qualitative evaluation of policy in India has not got enough attention. The first and foremost thing that should be determined in policy evaluation is the distinction between objectives and goals. As we read in Unit 1 of this Block, there is a clear distinction between objectives and goals and they should not be confused with each other. In order to assess what has been achieved, we should be clear about what was supposed to be achieved. Objectives can be considered as intermediate goals. Goal is a wider term and to achieve the goals certain objectives are set. For example,

the goal of a rural development programme can be generation of additional income. In order to achieve this, distribution of cattle can be one of the objectives. It is quite possible that while objectives can be achieved they may not lead to achievement of goals. In many rural development programmes, this has happened. For instance, distribution of buffaloes has been complete but incomes of beneficiary families has not increased. Therefore, we have to clearly guard against the evaluation of this type and in no way should the intermediate goals be equated with ultimate goals. Thus a clear and measurable definition of goals and objectives is required, this activity is usually not taken so seriously and the goals are hazily defined. Moreover there is no guarantee that throughout the policy cycle the same goals remain operational. Goals and objectives change as policy gets implemented. Policy may even have multiple goals which need not be in harmony with each other. Goals may come into conflict with each other and achievement of one goal may lead to failure of another. For instance, the public sector enterprises have not been able to resolve the conflict between their social service and profit-oriented goals. All this has to be looked into.

Another way to evaluate a policy is to determine its efficiency with regard to time and cost involved in its implementation. It has to be seen that the policy that is being implemented is able to make use of the money available for it or sanctioned for it in the most appropriate manner in order to avoid extravagant spending. It is also necessary that implementation of a policy is complete within the allocated time. Time and costs are interrelated factors which make or mar the policies. If policy implementation takes more time than required then the cost of resources and other ingredients needed for making the policy a success also go up and as a result, there are cost overruns or extra expenditure. Thus time overruns and cost overruns need to be avoided. During the course of policy implementation itself alternative methods to bring about efficiency have to be thought of so that money wasting and time wasting exercises get restricted.

Another type of evaluation can be qualitative evaluation. As mentioned earlier this is the area which needs due attention. It has to be determined whether the policy is beneficial for the people at large; whether the objectives formulated are proper and in consonance with the changing scenario, whether it will be viable in the long run; and whether it will be able to meet the rising expectations of people or not. The stated objectives of a policy might be development oriented but sometimes these get directed against people's demands. These days the controversies over Tehri Dam Project and Narmada Dam are examples of such policies that many people regard as anti-development, anti-human rights and anti-environment. Usually only a small number of people are able to derive benefits from a policy. As a result many policies have led to accentuation of economic and social inequalities. There can be policies which may generate conflicts among social groups, such policies become unacceptable even if the objectives set out in them are achieved in an efficient manner.

Thus there are several criteria of evaluation of a policy and a policy has to satisfy the interests of all sections of the community no matter on what criterion it is evaluated. Policies can be effective if there is consensus and agreement on issues. The goals and objectives underlying a policy are usually disputed if such type of consensus and agreement do not exist. Thus evaluation of a policy has to be done very carefully so that subsequent policies do not suffer from similar problems and lasting solutions can be thought of.

### Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) How is a policy formulated?

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2) Discuss the problems in policy implementation.

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3) What do you understand by policy education?

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4) Highlight the different criteria by which policies can be evaluated.

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## 2.6 CONSTRAINTS IN POLICY MAKING : NEED FOR AN EFFECTIVE POLICY PROCESS

The success of any policy depends on how well it is designed, formulated, implemented and evaluated. Thus all the stages of policy cycle are crucial. Still a systematic policy design, a full-fledged policy education programme and a near fool-proof evaluation system can go a long way in making the policy effective. Policy analysis is a very important technique through which a policy can really be made viable. It is a very effective way of reducing policy problems, it provides all the relevant information needed to solve problematic policy issues. We will discuss the usefulness of policy analysis in one of our forthcoming Units of this Block. Suffice it to say over here that lot of thinking and rethinking has to go into the entire policy process. At each stage of the process proper analysis has to be made of all activities pertaining to policy, whether it is identifying the priority areas, surveying the resources available, setting the goals and objectives determining the implementation machinery, educating the people about policies, activating the agencies and institutions involved in implementation, supervising the programmes, identifying the loop holes, formulating alternative strategies or analysing the performance of policies.

As mentioned earlier in the Unit, there are various constraints in policy making which adversely affect the policy process. To recapitulate, inadequacy of financial resources is one problem which affects the smooth functioning of the policy procedure. The increase in expenditure due to non-adherence of time schedules etc. worsens the situation. Inadequate expertise and skills available with the personnel engaged in policy making is another constraint which can be rectified by proper training and education. Lack of clarity of goals and emphasis on short-term benefits also act as constraints. Political interference, lack of people's support, non-involvement of socially enlightened groups are some other constraints. Moreover faulty policy design, non-existence of policy education, improper monitoring and evaluation of policies can also be added to the list of constraints.

While discussing the nature and problems of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, it has to be kept in mind that political activity influences every stage of policy cycle. At each stage choices have to be made. The choice activity provides

the arena where political groups can make their influence work. The final choice or outcome can then be either a product of bargain among several groups or a choice of a dominant group. In both cases, the final choice should be acceptable to the people, that is to the society at large. A policy has to acquire a degree of legitimacy and credibility. Unless and until it is acceptable to the people, mobilisation of their support for systematic implementation becomes a very difficult task. The groups who are affected by it should not get the feeling that the policy is being forced upon them. In a democracy, genuine bargain should function and the political institutions should be such as to allow the expression of disagreements.

Policy formulators also have to mobilise public opinion in favour of policy choices. Again political parties make a major contribution in this area. For drastic reforms, this kind of support becomes a must, otherwise, policies cannot succeed. The stage of determining the implementation machinery also requires mobilisation of people's support. Bureaucracy in India has always had to face the wrath of the people. The involvement of bureaucracy in the implementation of programmes is often looked upon with suspicion and distrust by the people. Bureaucracy in its new role of a change agent has not yet been accepted by the people. Increasing people's support and participation, in policy implementation thus becomes a necessity. Political parties have to seek the support of the target groups in order to make the policies effective. Thus, for a policy to be viable, its aims and objectives should be formulated in such a way that people do not hesitate to lend their support. This acceptability will help in legitimising the goals of the policy. The instruments chosen to implement it should be able to command credibility and people's cooperation.

Coercion can never be the solution to policy problems. Legitimacy and persuasion have to be used to make policies effective. When people are sure of the legitimacy of government's policies, they willingly support them. Policy process requires the support of voluntary associations, worker's cooperatives, trade unions, women's organisations, human rights groups and various other social, political and enlightened bodies to make policies achieve their goals. These are the fora through which diverse opinions can be articulated and presented to the government. The government must give opportunities for the expression of such opinions.

### Check Your Progress 2

- Note :** i) Use the space given below for your answer.  
 ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the Unit.  
 ) What are the ways by which the policy process can be improved?

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## 2.7 LET US SUM UP

This Unit has given an idea about how the policies are formulated, implemented, monitored and evaluated. It threw light on the importance of educating people, making them aware of the objectives and consequences of policies. It highlighted the problems of policy implementation and drew our attention on the need for a systematic policy process. The next three Units of this Block will also focus on the necessity for improving public policy process by focusing on its relevance in the modern context, its importance as a study and the need for a discipline of policy sciences.

## 2.8 KEY WORDS

**Community Development Programme:** The programme was started in 1952. It aimed at transforming socio-economic life of the villagers for the better. The objectives of

the programme were to make people self-reliant by changing their outlook through education, employment opportunities and people's participation.

**Chipko Movement:** This non-violent movement was born in early 1970s. The credit goes to the women of Chamoli District who for the first time in April 1973, declared that they would literally embrace the trees if a sports goods company attempted to axe the ash trees. Their demonstration was repeated all over Uttarkhand where trees were threatened to be axed. Though the main demand of the movement in 1973 was an end to the contract system of forest exploitation and allotment of raw materials for local, forest based industrial units, on concessional rates, there was a basic change in the objectives of the movement. It developed into an ecological movement. The movement aimed at making the scientific truth of oxygen, water and soil being the main forest products acceptable. The movement has slowed down the process of deforestation in Uttarkhand region, it has exposed the vested interests involved in mass destruction of forests, it has created an awareness among the people and emphasised the importance of people's participation.

[Ref.: Singh Shekhar (ed) 1984. Environmental Policy in India IIPA, New Delhi.]

**Integrated Rural Development Programme:** It was introduced in 1979. It aims at enabling selected families to cross the poverty line through a strategy of productive assets creation. It provides assistance to beneficiaries through subsidy and credit. The programme is being implemented by District Rural Development Agencies.

**Poverty Line:** Poverty level is fixed on the basis of minimum level of per capita expenditure required for normal calorie intake, the extent of poverty is measured by estimating the number of people whose overall per capita consumption falls below this level called the poverty line.

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## 2.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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## 2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- problems for the policy agenda have to be identified
- there are various ways through which the attention of the government can be drawn to a certain problem
- parliament, state assemblies, voluntary agencies, mass-media, industrial groups, social movements, trade movements, political parties help in throwing light on serious issues that can be taken up for policy actions.
- once the problem/issue reaches policy agenda, objectives are set to tackle the problem
- broad goals are determined and strategy needed to implement the policy is decided upon
- implementation machinery is determined
- policy design has to be given due consideration

- 2) Your answer should include the following points:  
Policy implementation gets adversely affected by following problems
  - impact of political motivation on policies
  - lack of autonomy and flexibility with implementors
  - lack of expertise with bureaucracy
  - lack of resources — personnel, financial and technical
  - inadequate people's participation and support
- 3) Your answer should include the following points :  
Through policy education :
  - people are made aware of objectives and impact of policies
  - people come to know about the kind of implementation machinery that has been determined
  - in order to avoid leakages and minimise corruption people can give their support to policies
  - policies are made acceptable to the people
- 4) Your answer should include the following points :
  - need for proper monitoring
  - policy evaluation has to be both quantitative and qualitative
  - a clear distinction between goals and objectives should be established
  - cost and time overruns have to be avoided
  - the policies have to be in consonance with the changing scenario, people's expectations, their social and economic interests
  - multiple goals of a policy should not come into conflict with each other.

#### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
  - need for a systematic policy design
  - a full-fledged policy education system
  - an effective evaluation system
  - proper policy analysis
  - policies have to acquire a degree of legitimacy and acceptability
  - need for people's support
  - increased involvement of voluntary agencies, worker's cooperatives, trade unions, human rights groups, enlightened social and cultural groups, political parties etc.

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## UNIT 3 CONTEXTUAL SETTING OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

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### Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Nature of State
- 3.3 Nature of the System of Governance
  - 3.3.1 Democratic System
  - 3.3.2 Totalitarian System
  - 3.3.3 Policy Making in Developing States
  - 3.3.4 Policy Making in Developed States
  - 3.3.5 Nature of the Apparatus of States
- 3.4 Contextual Setting of Public Policy Making in India
  - 3.4.1 Basic Objectives underlying the Policies
  - 3.4.2 Role of Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies
  - 3.4.3 Role of Culture, Ethics and Values in Policy Making
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 References and Further Readings
- 3.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the policy making process in different types of political systems
- discuss the nature of State and the system of governance
- highlight the contextual setting of policy making in India; and
- discuss the role of ethics, values, and culture in policy making.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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It has been discussed in the earlier Units that any kind of policy in any type of polity occurs in a given system, a set-up, an environment, all of which combined could be termed as its contextual setting. The resources and limitations of the system, the Constitutional obligations, the ethos and values existing in a political system have definite bearing on the policies formulated and accordingly implemented in the system. According to the systems theory, it is difficult to properly understand and appreciate the policy making process and dynamism in any given set-up without considering the environment in which it takes place. Contextual setting is the surrounding conditions within which any policy or the system operates. It includes human and non-human factors, both tangible and intangible. Geographical factors, other social systems/customs/values, ideologies, institutions, Constitutional imperatives, etc. may all be features of a said contextual set-up. In systems analysis, such a setting consists of all the phenomena that affect the functioning of the system, whether they are directly the issues of focus or not does not minimise their importance. The governmental agencies cannot ignore the contextual environmental factors and forces at the time of making policies. Rather the policies are framed in accordance with these factors. Since the origin of the State and emergence of the government as an institution, the policies have been made keeping in view the environmental setting in which the government exists. The culture, traditions, customs, social factors, economic considerations, ethnic issues and factors all need to be kept in consideration at the time of making policy decisions. In this Unit, the focus of discussion is on different types of contextual settings and their role in policy making. Special reference has been made to contextual setting and policy making in India in order to highlight its importance. Besides, the role of ethics, values and culture in formulation of policies has also been explained.

## 3.2 NATURE OF STATE

State is a political community occupying a definite territory, having an organised government and possessing internal and external sovereignty. State has been defined by some as being essentially a class structure, an organisation in which one class dominates over the rest of the classes. A few others have termed State as an organisation which stands for the whole community by transcending class categorisations. It has been interpreted by a group of thinkers as a power-system, and by another as a welfare-system. It is considered as a community organised for action under legal rules. It has been identified with nation by some, whereas others say that nationality is not its major aspect and is incidental only. Some scholars have viewed it as the basic texture of life and another consider it nothing more than a mutual insurance society. The State has its existence in society but 'it is not even the form of society'. Its efficacy lies in an orderly and controlled system in operation in the society. The external relationship between different individuals in the society are regulated by the State. "It supports or exploits, curbs or liberates, fulfils or even destroys the social life over which it is invested with control but the instrument is not the life." It becomes necessary here to explain what does society mean in order to distinguish State from society.

Society is an aggregation of people who have certain common attributes that distinguish them as a group and who interact with one another in some characteristic way. Society commonly refers to a group having a distinct culture and living as a distinguishable entity. In sociology literature, a society is regarded as a social system that furnishes the primary orientation for people in a given territorial area, reproduce members, and persists beyond the life span of its individual members. In practice the boundaries of societies so defined tend to be fixed along political lines so that a society is likely to mean a national society that is, the people embraced within a sovereign political system.

Distinguishing between State and other associations like society, family, religious groups, etc., R.M. MacIver in his book, 'The Modern State', has posed a question whether the State has any institutions peculiar to itself. In response to it, he says that there are 'two great engines for political control' with the State which the other associations lack. One is sovereignty and another 'law' by which the State operates. Sovereignty means the supreme power of a State, exercised within its boundaries, free from external interference. The idea behind sovereignty is an ancient one, but it was first developed into an elaborate doctrine by the philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who sought to justify the absolutism of the king of the new State system. Besides getting the State external independence in relation to other States, on internal counts, it empowers the State to have supremacy vis-a-vis other associations in the system. Being internally superior and rather supreme and externally independent, the sovereignty enables the State to preserve its sovereign authority. In the words of Harold Laski, "The State issues orders to all men and all associations within that area; it receives orders from none of them. Its will is subject to no legal limitations of any kind. What it proposes is right by mere announcement of intention". The State is empowered to do so because of its sovereign authority. The major characteristics of sovereignty are: absoluteness, exclusiveness, permanence, universality, inalienability, and indivisibility.

Every association has a right to frame its own rules, regulations, and laws in accordance with which it operates. In comparison with the laws made by other associations and the ones made by the State, one finds the law of the State is ineluctable. It binds the rulers as well as the ruled. It has a strict element of universality being applicable to all or to the specific areas and groups, if made so. The law of the State is an unbroken framework over each area of society. After having gone through the various distinct characteristics of the State, it can be termed as "an association which, acting through law as promulgated by a government endowed to this end with coercive power, maintains within a community territorially demarcated, the universal external conditions of social order".

From the discussion made above, it becomes clear that the State possesses a significant position and it has the authority to frame laws for the purpose of

governance. The laws and the policies made in a given State are as per the system of governance in the said political system, which is a set of interaction abstracted from the totality of that social system. For understanding the role of State in the overall framework of contextual setting and policy making in clear terms, it would be better to discuss the system of governance in different types of political systems.

### 3.3 NATURE OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE

Every system has a set of boundaries, traditions, values, objectives, commitment to specific facets, and a system of governance. We would be discussing the democratic and totalitarian systems in this section in order to understand the role of contextual setting in policy making.

#### 3.3.1 Democratic System

The most conspicuous difference between authoritarianism and democratic regimes is that in the democratic governments, citizens choose their top policy makers in genuine elections. Some policy scientists speculate that voting in genuine elections may be important method of citizens' influence on policy not so much because it actually permits citizens to choose their officials and to some degree instruct these officials on policy, but because the existence of genuine elections puts a stamp of approval on the citizens' participation. Indirectly, therefore, the fact of elections enforces on proximate policy makers a rule that the citizens' wishes count in policy making.

Democracy is a system of government in which ultimate political authority is vested in the people. The democratic creed includes the following concepts. Individualism, which holds that the primary task of government is to enable each individual to achieve the highest potential of development; Liberty, which allows each individual the greatest amount of freedom consistent with order; Equality, which maintains that all people are equal and have equal rights and opportunities; and Fraternity, which postulates that individuals will not misuse their freedom but will cooperate in creating a wholesome society. As a political system, democracy starts with the assumption of popular sovereignty, vesting ultimate political power in the people. It presupposes that man can control his destiny, that he can make moral judgments and practical decisions in his daily life. It implies a continuing search for truth in the sense of man's pursuit of improved ways of building social institutions and ordering human relations. Democracy requires a decision-making system based on majority rule, with minority rights protected. Effective guarantees of freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, petition, and equality before the law are indispensable to a democratic system of government. Politics, parties, and politicians are the catalytic agents that make democracy workable.

Democracy is not adopted merely to make governmental decisions. Democracy, in the 20th century involves more than just universal suffrage and elected representatives. Its requirement on the part of the voters and their elected representatives is to follow certain kinds of social and economic policies. In the words of Maxey, "Democracy as interpreted in the twentieth century is, thus, seen to be more than a political formula, more than a system of government, more than a social order. It is a search for a way of life in which the voluntary free intelligence and activity of men can be harmonised and coordinated with the least possible coercion, and it is the belief that such a way of life is the best way for all mankind, the way most in keeping with the future of man and the nature of the universe"

In order to accomplish the goals, which the democratic institutions keep before it, there are certain requirements to be met for better performance. What is needed at the outset is the unambiguous and consistent community consciousness. What we want and how to attain it to the best of the circumstances prevailing must be very clearly imprinted on our minds. If the clear consciousness is lacking then the chances to fall prey to casteism, linguism, communalism, and provincialism are quite bright and such conditions around, to think of sound policies is not in the fitness of things. Clarity of community consciousness depends on the moral soundness of the society as a whole. Without honesty and integrity of the people, democracy cannot be a success. An effective public opinion, qualitative social conscience, and sound general

will are also the requirements to make democracy a laudable success. These factors cannot be created unless and until the people have proper education. Literacy amounts to considerable growth in the general awareness of the society and the awareness resolves so many aspects which would otherwise remain highly complicated. The political masters in democracies must provide opportunities to the masses for free expression of their opinion and free discussion of issues. Furthermore, the atmosphere should be made of the kind in which people feel genuinely interested in public affairs. For the adequate functioning of political democracy, democracy in terms of economic measures is also required. Abundant inequalities of wealth can amount to the undue influence exerted by the rich on the political masters, which leads to nothing less than ignoring the governing will of the masses.

### 3.3.2 Totalitarian System

It is a system of governance in which there is authoritarianism of the State, and it controls nearly every aspect of individual's life. Totalitarian governments do not tolerate activities by individuals or groups, such as, labour unions, youth organisations, etc., that are not directed toward the State's goals. Totalitarian dictators maintain themselves in power by means of a secret police, propaganda disseminated through all media of communication, the elimination of free discussion and criticism, and widespread use of terror tactics. Internal scapegoats and foreign military threats are created and used to foster unity through fear. Totalitarian regimes have abundant regimentation standing for absolute scope of power. State has unlimited authority and stands for supreme, perfect, complete and intangible power. Being essentially authoritarian, a totalitarian system stands for use of political power by the rulers in an arbitrary sense. Every possible effort is made to crush the freedom of the people and nowhere the scope is left for the opposition to be in existence. It has an ideological base, which could be religious — fundamentalist or tyrannical. A totalitarian system, in all absolute terms, stands for the single party dominance through an exalted leader. It has been claimed by some scholars that the communist States are the totalitarian States and governments because of the established philosophy in accordance with which the governance is made that is the single party dominance, concentrated decision-making, denial of existence to other parties, etc.

Gary Bertsch and others in their book, 'Comparing Political Systems: Power and Policy in Three Worlds', have talked of policy process in Communist Party States. As per them, the policies are made in these States in accordance to the synoptic or rational-comprehensive mode. The policy makers specify the needs confronting their system and, accordingly, review all information. The goals relating to the specified and felt needs are identified and as per the needs prioritised. All such actions or alternatives which could help attain the goals, are examined with a careful cost-benefit analysis of each and every thought of alternative. Following this, the outcomes to be of each alternative are evaluated for selecting the best course of action which maximise the probabilities of achieving the desired goals.

The policy process in a totalitarian State has a series of activities. These could be categorised as:

i) **Setting Goals:** It is a fact that unless the goals are set, the governance cannot be effective. Ideology, social needs, and developmental thrust are the major bases of setting goals in this system. In the words of Barrington Moore, "once an ideology has been determined it enters in as a determination factor in its own right in subsequent social situations. It has an effect, sometimes slightly sometimes considerable, on the decisions taken by those who hold it. In its turn, it is modified, sometimes slightly, sometimes considerably, by the impact of subsequent considerations". Besides ideology, the leaders' perceptions of the needs of the people and the State, complex interplay between the leaders and the masses are the other bases for setting of goals;

ii) **Taking action:** Once the identification of the goals has been done, the next phase is to take action of it through policy proposals. The top party leadership discusses the policy options and alternatives with the associates and advisors before, finally, presenting those to the top body — the politburo. The policy options are often



referred to by the leaders in their speeches in order to see the public response, debate, and discussions on the same. It is done to initiate newspaper coverage as well. After the period of discussion and debate, the alternative policy actions are brought formally before the politburo. The politburo is the body having ultimate decision-making power. Thorough discussion on each action takes place at this stage and, finally, through vote most policy alternatives are either picked up or dropped.

iii) **Producing Outcomes:** After reaching at a decision in the second stage, the policy actions are put before different government institutions/agencies for ratification of the same. Next to the ratification is the task of the government bureaucracy for executing the policy in order to attain the goals as specified therein.

The focus of discussion in this section has been on the democratic and totalitarian systems of governance. We can conclude that the nature of public policy making is related to its contextual setting. It thus differs from one system of governance to the other. In order to understand the steps involved in policy process, we have to look into the various problems faced by it and the solutions that could be offered.

Public policy must not be studied out of its context. For having a more clear picture of the policy making process in the contemporary world, Yehezkel Dror in his book, 'Public policy Re-examined', has talked of the policy making process in the developing and developed countries. We would be highlighting the major characteristics of policy making processes in both the types of the systems in the following sub-section.

### 3.3.3 Policy Making in Developing States

The major characteristics of policy making process in developing states include:

- i) Inheritance, legacy and working pattern of ruling elite shape the features of policy making process
- ii) Feedback system and mechanism is too weak
- iii) Policy strategy is not consciously determined. "The optimal strategy of public policy making is often one of maximax, with low security level and higher risks"
- iv) Prioritisation of values and operational goals are well spelled out
- v) Intense search for policy alternatives is made
- vi) The overall environment including the political culture, having much bearing on the characteristics on policy making systems' operation is inconducive to reality
- vii) The policy statements meant for generating the support and not actually meant for execution are more clear, consistent and having a wider scope
- viii) It is very difficult to ascertain the real output of a policy because of the lack of proper methods and infrastructure
- ix) Evaluation and redesigning of policies is not up to the mark
- x) Voters have rather insignificant role to play in policy making
- xi) Role of intellectuals is far short from satisfactory
- xii) Legislatures have secondary role to play in policy making
- xiii) The political executive is more strong and the permanent executive is weak. It lacks proper institutionalisation besides being heavily loaded with work
- xiv) Role of the judiciary is almost insignificant in most of these States
- xv) Acute shortage of the manpower resources in the developing countries badly affects the policy making system
- xvi) There is a lack of proper knowledge and information with those who are part and parcel of the process
- xvii) There is a lack of such professional standards, which could be made use of as standards for policy making
- xviii) Comprehensive planning, which is an essential ingredient of a policy making process, is not being either adhered to or complied with properly

- xix) The optimal quality of policy making is much low
- xx) Policy making is absolutely of an average quality, and could be termed as 'survival quality'.

### 3.3.4 Policy Making in a Developed State

The highlighting traits of policy making process in developed states include:

- i) There is lack of systematic institutional arrangements for learning feedback. In some of the cases just trial and error methods are applied. In general, learning is sporadic and slow
- ii) There does not seem to be enough exercise made for searching and developing different policy attributes
- iii) Implicit cut off horizons established are narrow, taking into account only the immediate problems and results thereof
- iv) Significant and tremendous role is played by extraneous components
- v) In western democracies, the policies enacted are realistic, having economic and political feasibility
- vi) Separate distinct institutions exist in some of the countries for the purpose of undertaking long range policy making, surveying, knowledge and for handling research and development of policy making
- vii) There is difficulty in a number of developed and modern countries in maintaining a reasonable viable distance between such units of governments which make policy, implement them and motivate the implementation of the same
- viii) In democratic systems, the voters exert significant influence on policy makers through elections
- ix) The intellectuals play a major and substantive role in policy making
- x) The Heads of the Governments have prominent and most important role to play in policy making, may it be, the Prime Minister, the President, the Chancellor, etc., depending upon the type of polity
- xi) Legislature as an institution has a major role to play in policy making in democratic systems and a minimal role in dictatorial systems
- xii) Political parties have a crucial place of importance in policy making
- xiii) Though the interest groups have a narrow and conditioned attitude towards values and goals, yet they perform an important role in policy making
- xiv) There is scarcity of trained and well equipped manpower rather than the resources and equipments
- xv) The professional civil service is appearing as a major contributor to policy making process
- xvi) Professional standards for policy making to be used effectively for the purpose of policy appraisal are yet to be developed
- xvii) Policy making in developed States is up to the mark for ensuring their survival and to satisfy the genuine needs and wants of the population.

The points referred above present the state of affairs regarding policy making in different political systems of governance. Besides taking into account the democratic and totalitarian systems, the developing and developed States' processes of policy making have also been discussed. These include all types of democratic systems (parliamentary and presidential), dictatorial, socialist, etc. This analysis would help us to understand the nature of coercive and welfare apparatus of State being highlighted in the subsequent sub-section of this Unit.

### 3.3.5 Nature of the Apparatus of States

As discussed in Section 3.2, State is an association which has a territory, sovereignty, law and a system devised by it to operate in a manner whereby the development

of the system could take place. The nature of the State apparatus has a wider bearing on the policy making in a given polity. For having clear understanding of this aspect, we would be discussing it in two separate points.

Firstly, there are a number of thinkers who have been advocating that the State is a power agency. It makes use of its power-feature through the policies enacted from time to time. The State is supreme and does not wish to have any danger to its supremacy and sovereignty. Simultaneously, the human beings have the tendency to take undue advantage of the liberties granted to them in the absence of some meaningful check through authoritative and punitive measures over them. It is a fact that people want to have all types of freedoms, but what would be the effect of those freedoms and liberties on the overall system and individuals, in case the freedom and liberties are being misused. In order to curb such activities which could ultimately lead to a threat to the basic supremacy and sovereignty of the State, it ought to adopt a coercive apparatus for keeping the things intact and for the welfare of all concerned.

Conversely, the other point is that the "State is a contractual federation whose units of association are the smaller corporations of cities and provinces. These are not merged and lost in the State. They unite for a purpose. The State is their agent, their instrument. The ultimate sovereignty rests with the people, acting not as individuals but as corporate unities". The first few lines of the above quotation from MacIver's book establish that the State is only an agent, and the ultimate sovereignty is with the people. It means that the State has to work for the welfare of the people not adhering to the master-servant relationship at all. But the last words of the quotation say that sovereignty is with the people not as individuals but as corporate unities. It means that the State ought to adopt ways and measures whereby the welfare of all could be taken into consideration and not that of a few. In order to put it into force, the State has to devise mechanism in accordance with which none is above the rule of the law, and the natural justice prevails.

If we attempt to analyse the nature of the apparatus of the State from any one of the two points referred to above or from the culmination of both the points, one thing is clear that the State has to own an apparatus to operate for the welfare of all and for the existence of the State in a proper way. There are different types of systems of governance in different States. Depending upon the Constitution, the custom, the traditions, and the prevailing values, the States adhere to apparatuses of governance conducive to their environment, culture, and prevailing issues. A State adopting absolute coercive apparatus cannot keep it going on for a very long period of time. It is possible that at a point of time, the State is compelled to go ahead for coercive apparatus, but with the pressing events subsiding, the State could come back to a normal welfare apparatus. Gone are the days when absolutism was regarded as the best way and obeyed also accordingly. The contemporary period has a number of instances where such coercive moves of the States have not been approved of, and, ultimately, the given States have to succumb to the pressure of its own people as well as other States. One aspect is very clear that the policies enacted through an adopted apparatus and system in a State have great bearing of the apparatus adhered to. The government institutions and agencies work in accordance with the same.

### Check Your Progress 1

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Discuss the series of activities in policy making process in totalitarian systems.

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2) Highlight any five points regarding policy process in developing States.

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3) Mention any five points regarding policy making process in developed States.

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### 3.4 CONTEXTUAL SETTING OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING IN INDIA

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The nature of State, system of governance, and the apparatus of State have been discussed in the earlier sections. It gives us a comprehensive idea about the way the State governance operates in the context of process of policy making in different kinds of political systems. In order to understand the role of contextual setting in the policy making in a better manner, the discussion in the following sections is focused on contextual setting vis-a-vis the policy making in India.

#### 3.4.1 Basic Objectives

India is a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic having the parliamentary form of government. The institutions of legislature, executive, and judiciary play an important role in policy making. Besides, some non-governmental organisations perform a major part in the total process. The Indian system of governance is in accordance with some of the basic objectives having been laid down by the planners, of course, in the light of the Constitution of the country. Broadly, in the context of these objectives, the policies have been and are being framed. Some of these objectives include — elimination of poverty, elimination of illiteracy, initiating measures of social justice, bringing about reduction of disparities in income and wealth, even distribution of economic power, helping weaker sections, establishing greater equality of opportunity, resisting inflationary pressures, utilisation of man-power resources to the fullest extent, boosting industrial productivity, achieving self-sufficiency in basic needs of shelter, clothing and health for all, augmenting agricultural production, achieving economic and technological self-reliance, promoting active involvement of all the sections of people in the process of development, developing the transport system, promoting policies for controlling the growth of population, etc. These are just some of the basic objectives which our development policies have been trying to achieve. The main thrust of the system has been on self-reliance, economic growth, industrialisation, modernisation, and social justice. In the context of these major goals the policies have been formulated and implemented. We would now be focussing on these five major thrust areas of our system.

**i) Self-reliance:** In order to be economically sound and independent, a State has to follow the path which fulfils its needs and is in accordance with its basic resources and values. It was strongly felt by the Indian planners and policy makers that for attaining self-reliance, India has to come out of the yoke of dependence on other countries with regard to trade, investment and technology. For attaining self-reliance, the focus has been on: diversification of domestic production; less dependence on foreign aid, reduction in imports for each and everything, imports

for only critical commodities, and exports promotion to earn foreign currency for paying for the commodities imported.

The purpose for being self-reliant was to have relationship on equal footing with the outside nations and to bring reduction in pressures being exercised on the country for the purposes of depending much upon them. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency are two different terms and so should not be confused with each other. In sectors, like foodgrains, defence, etc. self-sufficiency is required. Self-reliance is sought in the areas where normally the demand is fulfilled from the domestic sources, and only in acute cases the imports of few things from other countries is done on the basis of foreign exchange earned through exports.

**ii) Economic Growth:** Economic growth has been the major thrust area of Indian planners. It has been the basic underlying objective behind the fixation of plan targets and allocation of resources to different sectors. Unless and until the economic growth is increased, no country can think of producing in accordance with its needs and for being on a developmental path. Various development policies and strategies adopted by India indicate that increase in production has been the corner stone. The increased rate of production is considered to be a requirement for meeting the basic needs of the people. For achieving the objective of a high rate of production amounting to economic growth, the focus has always been on appropriate use of man-power resources available in the country. It has twin objectives—firstly, to satisfy the people's needs by getting them job opportunities, and secondly, to make use of them for increase in productivity. It also leads to reduction in poverty, establishment of just and equitable society, and raising the living standards of the people. "Growth is expressed both in terms of output and employment, although it is quite clear in the context that the planners put the emphasis on the first. The desire to reduce inequality, which is sometimes explicitly associated with the need to abolish poverty, leads, in turn, to a concern with a reduction in concentration of economic power and land reform. The decision to pursue a socialist pattern of development was an explicit political decision, adopted at the Avadi Congress, in 1954, to have a Socialistic pattern congenial to the native genius of the people." The objective of the economic policy that is most fully articulated and the one which the government has considered to be the most significant is economic growth.

**iii) Industrialisation:** Besides developing and promoting cottage and small scale industries, the objective has been to develop the medium and large scale industries for helping the country to be self-reliant. In accordance with this objective, the government policies for industrialisation have been formulated. Need for more development in the sphere of capital goods and basic industries was considered to be important, for which major stress was laid on the development of industries for producing more of coal, steel, chemicals, etc. Planning objective has always been the development of such sectors of economy, viz.: industry, mining, power, communication, etc. so that India could develop industrially. In accordance with these objectives, the industrial policies and strategies have been formulated and adopted.

**iv) Modernisation:** The term 'modernisation', in this context is associated with the distinct structural and institutional changes in the overall framework of economic activity. Marked change in sectoral composition of production, activities' diversification, coupled with technological development and institutional uniqueness has remained a part of the move for modernisation. The pace of economic growth gets accelerated with the proper application of scientific knowledge and tools and use of technology appropriate to a given aspect. For ushering in modernisation to cope with both the internal, as well as, external compulsion, the promotion of industrial growth and diversification have been emphasised upon. Industries producing basic materials and capital goods have been promoted. The contemporary thinking of the government is to make a move towards privatisation and also involve more multi-nationals for fulfilling the goal of modernisation.

**v) Social Justice:** India is a country of multi-dimensional inequalities and, easily, one could find gross disparities in social, economic, political, and cultural spheres. Fundamental rights and other political rights and liberties guaranteed to the people through the Constitution cease to have effect because of the presence of social

inequalities. Greater equity, put to use in effective sense, is required to remove poverty, unemployment, regional imbalances and inequalities on count of income. India has adopted mixed economy to establish socialist pattern of society. Social gain instead of individualistic benefits has been the major criterion for determining growth. The Second Five Year Plan has suggested that the important decisions regarding planning should be made to such agencies which are committed to social upliftment. In accordance with the major objective of social justice, the thrust in Indian plans, which is reflected in the various policies formulated over the period of time, has been on reducing inequalities in income, removal of poverty, removal of unemployment, removal of regional imbalances, and upliftment of backward classes.

Keeping the above mentioned objectives in view, the policy framers had been making policies in different areas/sectors from time to time. This establishes the bearing of some basic line of thinking and action on the policies made in the country. The illustrations from India have been made for understanding the importance of contextual setting in policy making. These objectives, certainly form an important part of the overall context, in accordance with which the policies are made.

### 3.4.2 Role of Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies

Based on the basic types of polity, the spirit of the Constitution, and the types of objectives, as referred to in earlier sub-section, the policy framing agencies, which are primarily the governmental agencies and institutions, make the public policies. India is a democratic country having a parliamentary form of government. The three important wings of the government are : Executive (both political and permanent), legislature and judiciary. Besides these, the non-governmental agencies also play a role in policy making. For ascertaining the importance of contextual setting in policy making, we would be discussing the role of governmental and non-governmental agencies, separately.

**i) Governmental Agencies:** In a democratic system, like that of India, the real political power rests with the executive organ of the government. It would not be wrong to say that we are residing in an executive-centred era. Of course, to legislate on the issues for the purpose of enacting policies is the job of legislature to whom even the political executive is responsible, but in actual practice the things are altogether different. The issues on which the policies are to be formulated are thought over and decided by the executive and submitted to the legislature for formal approval of the same. On the basis of its strength in the legislature, the executive is able to get the policy issues submitted to the legislatures as public policies. The executive in most of the under-developed and in some of the developing countries, exercise more influence in policy making in comparison to most of the developed countries. The permanent executive, that is, the bureaucracy also has an important role to play in the overall policy making process.

In the parliamentary form of government, the position of legislature seems to be apparently superior to that of the executive. The executive is in position to take action on an issue only once it is decided so by the legislature. The legislature formulates and expresses the will of the State through the policies. The executive can stay in power so long as it enjoys the confidence of the legislature. The actual position is of course, different. The executive has the support of the majority of the members in the legislature and so can get policies formulated on any issue. It does not mean at all that the legislature has no fruitful and meaningful contribution in the process of policy making. It not only brings the issues (considered for policy making) under scrutiny and deliberation in the House, which has the representation of the opposition parties representatives too, but also keeps a vigil check on the functioning of the executive vis-a-vis the policies already framed. The deliberations on the Bofors issue and resignation of the External Affairs Minister on an aspect related to that speaks of the importance of the legislature.

Though legislation is the task of the legislatures, the courts and the judicial organs also legislate in a different way and thus play a role in policy making. Whenever any policy is silent on an issue or is not in consistence with other policies, it is the judiciary which gives its interpretation in the light of basic premises underlying the Constitution. The courts are guided by the values of equity and justice. Their

decisions provide legitimacy to the governmental institutions in various policies. The power of judicial review speaks of the role of the judiciary in policy making. Indian judiciary has used the powers granted to it by the Constitution as and when the matters of Constitutional disputes have arisen.

Through the apparatus comprising executive, legislative, and judicial institutions, the Indian government formulates the policies. The role of the institutions have a significant place in the overall environment and contextual setting in a given system. Adhering to the basic objectives and ideology of the party in power, especially in democratic countries, the policies are made.

**ii) Non-Governmental Agencies:** The contextual setting of policy making, besides governmental institutions, has some non-governmental institutions like political parties, interest groups etc. The citizens are also a type of non-governmental force that plays a crucial role in policy making.

Political party is a group of organised individuals often having some measure of ideological agreement in order to win elections, operate government, and determine public policy. It won't be wrong to say that in the functioning of modern democracies, political parties, in one form or the other, are omnipresent. According to Burke, "It is a body of men united for promoting the national interest on some particular principles on which they are agreed". A political party normally observes democratic and peaceful measures for gaining power and implementing its line of action through policies formulated in order to protect and promote its specific interests in the light of its major objectives, ideology, and overall national goals and objectives. The political process is integrated, simplified and established by the political parties. They act as a link between the governmental institutions and citizens, As said earlier, the party having majority in the legislature forms the government, yet the remaining parties known as opposition parties play an important role in the policy making process. Besides, they keep check on the activities of the party in power which again reflects their crucial role in policy making.

The interest groups are organised groups in which members share common views and objectives and actively carry out programmes to influence government institutions, officials, and policies. Unlike political parties, interest groups are mainly interested in influencing the determination of public policies that directly or indirectly affect their members' interests. Groups are the first type of structure which is encountered in the analysis of political system. In the words of Blondel, "The study of groups raises very serious practical and theoretical problems. This is because groups are not as such part of the study of politics. We are interested in groups to the extent that they enter the political process, but not in the groups themselves. Some of them may be involved so often in politics that they cannot easily be separated from political life; but even then these are not wholly in politics. Conversely, however, any group, or almost every group is involved from time to time in the political process. Thus, we become concerned with practically all the groups which exist in society". The interest groups adopt techniques like lobbying, strike, agitation, dharna, etc. for influencing the policy making process in order to get such policies enacted which serve their members interests.

The government is supposed to work on the lines whereby it could provide maximum gains to the citizens. Of course, the gains and the benefits could be derived depending upon the resources and capacities of the system. The point of concern over here is not to measure the positive or negative gains or losses the political system has given to its citizens, but to ponder over the importance and significance attached to a citizen so far as his participation in the policy making process is concerned. We are aware that the policies are meant for the public and are implemented for them. In the overall environment, citizens occupy a pivotal position. All the aspects relating to politics and policies revolve around citizens. The citizens alone put a party or executive in ruling form. When the comparison is made between policy making and legislature, interest groups, political parties and citizens, probably citizen is the only one who has little control in comparison to the control exercised by the other three for policy making. The place and position of direct democracy has been taken by indirect democracy. So probably, it is not feasible to consult each and every citizen on each and every policy issue or alternative. Of

course, in some political systems, like Sweden, the citizens, still vote directly on legislation. But this practice is not in operation in other countries.

It does not mean that the governments or policy framers indulge in policy making which hamper the overall interests of the citizens. The governmental agencies do make policies on the issues which the political party in power places before the citizens at the time of elections and which are approved by the electorate. The amount of active participation, in casting votes, involvement in party activities, display of interest in politics by the citizens vary in degree. It is said that, at the time of voting, citizens attach little importance to the policy issues raised by the political parties, and the citizens cast votes on the basis of factors like caste, language, money, regionalism, etc. Whatever be the considerations, once the citizens have elected their representatives, and, on the basis of it, the government has been formed, the party in power has to make policies on the issues raised by it, and supported by the citizens. There is no point in ruling out citizens' participation in policy making. It is agreed that the participation is not direct but it is definitely there in an indirect form. The citizens, those who have the intellectual capabilities, keep on contributing to the policy process in the shape of providing new ideas and concepts to the policy framers. Ultimately, if we analyse the political party and interest groups functioning, we will find that this is also on the basis of the individuals' participation and interests.

### 3.4.2 Role of Culture, Ethics, and Values in Policy Making

The pattern of orientation towards government and politics within a society is called political culture. It generally connotes the psychological dimensions of political behaviour—beliefs, feelings and evaluative orientations. A political culture is the product of the historical experience of the whole society as well as the personal experience that contribute to the socialisation of each individual. Within a national political culture, one may distinguish between the elite and mass sub-cultures, reflecting differences in the orientations of the political decision makers from those of the less active citizens. The mass culture may in turn consist of numerous sub-cultures, based on class, ethnic, regional or other differences. Some what similar phenomena have in the past been studied under such labels as national character, temperament, ethos, spirit or myth, political ideology, political psychology, and fundamental political values.

It would be worth while to mention here about the meaning of the word 'culture' to know about its role in policy making. Culture is the aggregate of learned, socially transmitted behaviour patterns and characteristics of a given society. The culture of a social group is developed and maintained through formal and informal learning, language, knowledge, folkways, beliefs, customs, traditions, and institutions. In sum, it is the totality of social experience. A political system is shaped by related cultural factors and may, in turn, promote cultural change by influencing other behaviour patterns of society. A highly pluralistic society, for example, might be congenial to the maintenance of democratic institutions, and the latter would be likely to provide a setting where cultural diversity flourishes.

The role of political parties, interest groups, increasing level of literacy, etc. have brought in awareness in Indian citizenry. Under such situations the norms, values, attitudes, beliefs, traditions, and customs prevailing in the society cannot be put to minimal by the policy makers while formulating the policies. Though, it takes quite long for any nation to have its culture but keeping in view the fact that cultural diversity has to be allowed to flourish, the different sub-cultures ought to be kept in view while making the policies. The policies formulated having reflections on the cultured aspects, are not tolerated, nor do the policy makers attempt to do so, because, ultimately it could lead to their own losses in the elections. No group or sub-group ever tolerates that the accepted beliefs and orientations having acceptability are done away with by having one policy or the other made to that effect.

Ethics has an influential role to play in policy making process. In the words of Fred M. Frohock, being a "good guy" is usually more appealing politically than being a "bad guy". Also bad guys sometimes go straight to jail from their political office. But the definition of a 'good guy', someone ethically straight, is not always clear.



Nor is it always understood that the system itself may be an ethical issue, nor the people running it. Ethical offences that have direct bearing on political aspects and office are more important politically. Actions, like influence-peddling, issuing or making misleading statements, outright demagogery are unethical in the political sense though it may not be illegal. Any person trying to gain advantage by issuing a wrong or misleading statement is doing an unethical task. In legal sense, his/her action may not be wrong but on ethical grounds he/she is misleading the people by doing so. Likewise concealment of damaging information is unethical. The official misconduct is for all purposes an act of unethical way of functioning. Similarly, illegal action and unjust actions are unethical ones. Any one trying to do so would be doing injustice to the system or the office he/she is holding. Whatever the case may be, the policy formulators have to make policies in accordance with the fact that sense of being unethical is not at all reflected. Equality, justice, fairness, etc. could never be put at stake for achieving any short-run goal or purpose.

Preservation of basic dignity of human beings, protection of the Constitution, maintenance of State-fabric; upholding democratic spirit, just and fair play, principled stand on issues, determination of policies on "pressing issues and demands" rather than adherence to narrow parochial party or individualistic interests, and care for the sentiments, beliefs, and orientations of all concerned, etc., are some of the points which could be termed as 'ethical issues' or ethical code, which the policy makers can never do away with. Especially, democratic systems, like that of India, any public office holder or holders attempting to be unethical is put to severe criticism. Growing awareness among people, role of opposition parties, interest groups, operations, role of press, etc. keep a vigilant check on policy makers and any action of the framers of policies which can be called unethical are never tolerated.

A concept of what is desirable or good, or in some usages, the good or desired thing itself is known as "value". Values may thus reflect what a person wants — a goal, a preference or they may reflect his concept of what is good and right, what he ought rather than what he wants to do. Values are internal, subjective concepts that postulate standards of morality, ethics, aesthetics, and personal preference. A set of related values held by a person, or shared by a group, is called a value system. Over a period of time, what is good, how a thing should happen, when the action should take place, in a society take the name of social values, which a group of like thinkers in the society adheres to, and which has its acceptability even outside that group in the society. As stated above the values are subjective. This element in the values at times creates problems for the policy makers. Conflicting goals within the society inhibit the effective utilisation of scientific information for policy purposes. In the words of Alice Rivlin, "we are failing to solve problems because we do not know how to do it—the problems are genuinely hard. The difficulties do not primarily involve conflicts among different groups of people, although these exist. Rather, current social problems are difficult because they involve conflicts among objectives that almost everyone holds. These conflicts create technical or design difficulties which override the political ones. Not one is sure how to do it". It is difficult to describe the system without moral judgements creeping in. For, to look at a system, not from within but from outside implies that it is not the only possible system. In describing it we compare it with other actual or imagined systems. Differences imply choices which in turn imply judgements. One just cannot escape from making judgements and such judgements originate from the ethical preconceptions which have soaked into one's view of life. The values prevailing in a system have to be regarded but in a suitable, objective, and ethical way whereby, the values and the facts are integrated while framing the policy.

In one form or another, six major societal values emerge in public policy issues. These include equality among individuals; individual freedom, order within society; justice for individuals; legitimate decision-making process; and efficiency of government operations. All these have a bearing on policy process. Thus, culture, ethics, and values play a dominating role in bringing to focus the contextual setting of a policy making process.

## Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Policies are made in accordance with some identified major thrust areas. Highlight the important areas focused by the Indian policy makers.

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- 2) Mention the governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in policy making in India.

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## 3.5 LET US SUM UP

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Every system operates in a given environment, and has a contextual setting in accordance with which different policy issues and problems at hand are translated into action, implemented, and evaluated. The nature of State, the type of polity, the role of various governmental and non-governmental agencies and actors, role of culture, ethics, and values, etc. have a bearing on the formulation and implementation of policies. In other words, all these variables and forces are components of the contextual set-up of the policy making process. In this Unit, the discussion has been focused primarily on all these aspects.

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## 3.6 KEY WORDS

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**Demagogy:** is a method of political rule which involves appealing to people's emotions rather than using rational arguments.

**Ineluctable:** something that nobody can escape from.

**Ideology:** The "way of life" of people reflected in terms of their political system, economic order, social goals, and moral values. It is the means by which the basic values held by a party, class, or group are articulated.

**Individualism:** The political, economic, and social concept that places primary emphasis on the worth, freedom, and well-being of the individual rather than on those of the group, society or nation. The concept of individualism, may be contrasted with that of collectivism, which describes those systems in which primary emphasis is placed on the rights and welfare of the group.

**Judicial Review:** The power of the courts to examine the legality and constitutionality of administrative acts of officials and also the executive orders and the legislative enactments.

**Principles of Natural Justice:** The objective of these principles is to provide fair, impartial and reasonable justice.

These principles include:

- i) No person should be a judge in his/her own cause.
- ii) No decision should be given against a party without affording them a reasonable hearing.
- iii) Quasi judicial enquiries should be held in good faith and without bias and not arbitrarily or unreasonably giving every citizen a fair hearing, is as much a canon of good administration as it is of a good legal procedure.

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### 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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#### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
  - Setting up Goals
  - Taking Action
  - Producing Outcomes
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
  - Policy making process is shaped by factors viz.: inheritance, legacy, and working pattern of ruling elite;
  - Policy strategy is not consciously determined;
  - Prioritisation of values and operational goals are well spelled-out;
  - Evaluation and redesigning of policies is not up to the mark; and
  - Voters have insignificant role to play in policy making.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
  - Systematic institutional arrangements for learning feedback is lacking;
  - There is not enough exercise for searching and developing different policy alternatives;
  - Implicit cut off horizons established are narrow;
  - There is scarcity of trained and well equipped man-power rather than resources; and
  - Professional standards for policy making to be used effectively for purpose of policy appraisal are yet to be developed.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
  - Self-reliance;
  - Economic growth;
  - Industrialisation;
  - Modernisation; and
  - Social Justice
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
  - Governmental Agencies include;
    - Executive (political and permanent);
    - Legislature; and
    - Judiciary
  - Non-Government Agencies include;
    - Political Parties;
    - Interest Groups; and
    - Citizens

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## **UNIT 4 IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC POLICY STUDY : MODERN CONTEXT**

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### **Structure**

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 State's Role in Public Policy Process
- 4.3 The Public Policy Experience in India
- 4.4 Need for Systematic Public Policy
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 References and Further Readings
- 4.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- highlight the nature of State's role in public policy process.
- throw light on the public policy experience in India; and
- discuss the importance of public policy study and its present status.

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### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The study of public policy is very important for the relation between the public policy and its context is very intimate and organic.

This mutual influence accounts for varied experiences in the realm of public policy in different countries. This is also the reason, why all the countries do not have the same public policies. Assuming that they have the same policies, the priorities would not be the same. Thus, the nature of policy varies from country to country depending upon the requirement of its economy, social and cultural values, availability of resources, constitutional ideals, international pressure as well as, pressures from political parties, interest groups, trade unions, cultural and religious associations, etc., for example in India, our emphasis has been on the question of growth and modernisation, removal of poverty, development of agriculture, social justice, etc. Our public policies have been formulated keeping in view, all these issues. The western or developed countries have been concentrating on environmental hazards, innovations in science and technology, etc.

Thus the priorities in each country affect the nature of its public policies. The changing nature of public policies calls for extensive study of these policies. The questions relating to how these policies are formulated? Are these made keeping the priorities in view? Are these able to make optimal utilisation of available resources? All these questions have to be properly examined. As the nature of public policy largely depends on the role of the State, this Unit will try to highlight how the public policies are generated and handled by the State. The Unit will discuss the State's role in public policy process and throw light on the urgent need for a systematic public policy study. In order to stress upon the importance of public policy study, a discussion on public policy experience in India regarding its policies to bring about structural, economic and technological changes will also be made.

## 4.2 STATE'S ROLE IN PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

To understand the nature of public policy study, it is essential to understand the changing role of the State in public policy process. As it is the nature of State's role that affects the nature of public policy and its study, the discipline of political science has always been concerned with the study of State and power. The study of these two domains, though extremely important began to face challenges from people and the society at large in post World War II period. Doubts began to be raised about the utility and capability of the discipline of political science. The State and power structures came to be attacked. Questions on the use of a discipline if it cannot help the State in overcoming or facing the challenges gained ground. This led to another question as to why should we study a subject whose practical utility is marginal. It is during this period of crisis that the focus shifted to the study of public policy. Scholars like Harold Lasswell and David Easton argued for a shift in focus. Their views will be discussed in detail in the next Unit, they maintained that the discipline of political science should devote its attention to the study of public policy.

Thus the study of public policy became important during the post Second World War period. The Second World War, not only created major socio-economic crises in the countries that participated in the war, but created other innumerable problems in the countries that had attained independence or were in the process of attaining independence from the colonial rule. Colonialism had left these societies deprivation ridden. At the time of independence, Indian economy was caught up in a vicious circle of poverty, low income levels, limited size of market, stagnant agriculture and underdeveloped industry. The crisis thrust heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the State. The focus was on State intervention in economic development. The problems of crisis-ridden economy had to be solved through conducive public policies. As we know that the nature of these policies has been changing from country to country and so the role of the State in public policy process has also been changing.

During the colonial rule, the role of the State was confined to maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue in the ruled countries, while the ruler countries witnessed an increased role of the State. In these countries the State was concerned with development policies, besides its routine law and order role. A large part of industrialisation took place with the help and participation of the State over there. The State had to protect the industry from external competition on the one hand, and internal market on the other. For instance, when in the early part of the nineteenth century the British textile industry ran into crisis, the British State had to protect the local markets from textiles coming from outside. As a result the entry of the Indian textiles into the British market was prohibited.

In the course of rapid development, particularly, in the wake of industrial revolution, the role of the State in public policy process underwent a change. The market, at one stage, did not welcome the State intervention. The market forces became considerably free which was indicated by the tide of liberalism and privatisation. The logical culmination of this process can be seen in the American model of development. The western societies came to regard State as rigid and incapable of releasing productive forces. Thus, the study of the State was restricted to a great extent while the role of the market got enlarged. In the capitalist economies the State, thus, does not involve itself much with the tasks of bringing about rapid economic growth, industrialisation and modernisation, and this is left for the market. It is concerned more with correcting the perversions and distortions created by market. The capitalist society does not have adequate mechanism to cope with different socio-economic problems and crises that market creates. The State had to take up this task. It is this historical necessity that gave rise to the concept of welfare State. The role of the welfare State is basically to take care of those vulnerable sections of the society who are adversely affected by a particular process of development. Thus, the State enters the welfare domain. In the process, it formulates and enforces public policies.

In capitalist economies, the policies mainly concern with the protection of weaker sections of the society, encouragement of innovation in the field of science and technology, prevention of crime, drug addiction, smuggling, precautionary and

remedial measures to curb environmental pollution etc. In this process of correction of distortions, there is one crucial area in market economies where State performs a very important role. This is in the realm of competition where the State formulates the policies. Capitalism is a competitive system. Theoretically it assumes perfect competition. But perfect competition is almost an utopian concept. The competition always tends to be unequal and unjust. In such a situation, there is a need for certain ground rules without which competition on rational and reasonable plane may not be possible. The State, thus, assumes the role of an umpire. As a part of this obligation the State not only frames certain policies but sees to it that the competing forces do not violate them. This leads to certain restrictions on economic activity and control over industry and market. This gives rise to considerable public policy activity even in the market centered societies.

The situation in the countries that attained freedom from colonial rule is very different. These countries inherited a poverty stricken stagnant economy as a part of their colonial legacy. The planners of these countries had the gigantic tasks of achieving rapid development in all the major areas of economy in a limited duration with meager technical, natural, personnel and financial resources. The State, thus assumed the role of the development agent, the presence of the State was felt in all the spheres of growth whether it was agriculture, industry or science and technology. The State had to step even in social and cultural spheres. For instance in India, one of the important constituents of our economic policy, since the First Five Year Plan has been the promotion of the rapid growth of the public sector. And as you have read in Unit 3 of this Block, this growth has also been advocated as a means of securing fulfilment of some of the specific objectives of planning in India. Though our new economic policy lays stress on privatisation and liberalisation of transactions related to policy process, until now, we have witnessed the growing presence of the public sector in all the major economic areas.

The growth of the public sector in India since 1950-51, leaves one with the general impression that, judged on the basis of several criteria, there has been a considerable enlargement of the size of the public sector. However, the growth has been more rapid in terms of government revenue, government expenditure and employment in public sector, than in terms of share in the generation of national product or of the share of the factor income accruing to the government. The present emphasis on private sector is due to the fact that the actual costs of the projects in the public sector have by far exceeded the original estimates, the projects have taken a longer time than required to complete, and have often made use of inappropriate technology. Public sector undertakings have failed to make profits and have not been able to make optimal utilisation of scarce capital resources. Still the move to privatise does in no way indicate a demise of public sector and the role of the State in policy process. It is just that the areas that earlier used to be solely reserved for public sector would cease to be only its monopoly. Private sector will be able to invest in all the areas of economy. Public sector will no longer be the dominant means of bringing about economic growth, rapid industrialisation, modernisation and social justice in the country.

After the collapse of communism, the role of State in the major areas of public policy making is slowly declining. The erstwhile USSR is now witnessing a new wave of privatisation in its Independent Common Wealth of States. The cry of privatisation can be heard in all the East European countries. Gradually, in many parts of the world there is a movement toward privatisation and market economy. Students of public policy have to closely watch the emerging trends and see whether the market can undertake the activities that were performed by the States earlier. It has to be seen whether the market can perform the State functions with a sense of social responsibility and tackle problems of growth, poverty, discrimination and lop sided development process. It still remains a serious question. Even though we are witnessing the phenomenon of the State divesting itself of regulatory authority, we must not forget that the State has a major role of correcting the distortions created by the forces of competition and privatisation. In no way can the role of the State be undermined. All these trends have to be kept in view while studying public policy. Policies have to be formulated keeping in mind the time and resources available, the short-term and long-term impact, the safety measures and constitutional provisions, etc.

### 4.3 THE PUBLIC POLICY EXPERIENCE IN INDIA

The nature of State's policy process and its importance, will become more clear, if we take up the Indian experience in the field of policy formulation and implementation. This case study is appropriate because we have accumulated very rich experience in making and carrying out several public policies. Since Independence, our Five Year Plans have been emphasising on planned economic development. Planning is the base of all public policies. Theoretically, in a planned development, all the policies should enumerate from planning itself. A discussion on some of the crucial aspects of the public policy in a planned context would highlight public policy experience in India.

The public policy experience of India can broadly be classified as follows:

- i) Structural intervention
- ii) Technology intervention, and
- iii) Anti-poverty intervention.

We will now discuss them briefly.

#### Structural Intervention

At the time of Independence people were promised a fair and just society. This sentiment got a place in the Directive Principles of the State Policy enumerated in our Constitution. As these goals cannot be realised through the existing socio-economic structure, the need to change the structure itself gained ground. The changes in the structure, it is argued, can be achieved through public policy intervention. The policies that are related to changes in land, property and other forms of wealth can be categorised as structural policies. One of the important structural interventions during the post-independence period has been the policy of land reforms. The policy essentially took shape during the freedom movement, but was given effect to after Independence, as part of planned socio-economic development. Land reforms included measures, such as abolition of intermediary tenures, tenancy rights, fixation of ceiling on land holdings, distribution of surplus land, consolidation of land holdings, development of institutional credit and marketing, improvement of agricultural taxation, supply of modern inputs etc. These measures were enacted through various legislations in order to help the small and marginal farmers, tenant cultivators and landless labourers.

If we examine the experience of land reforms policy, we can note that implementing the policies which touch the structure is fraught with innumerable problems. Any policy that aims at bringing out changes in the structure such as the land reforms policy needs a comprehensive legislation, systematic implementation and monitoring, bureaucratic commitment and people's participation. The extensive research on land reform does indicate that there was absence of many of these conditions. There were very few attempts for mass mobilisation in support of land reforms policy. In the absence of political will, the legislation also suffered from several loopholes. The judiciary did not take up the cases on an urgent basis. There are several cases that have been pending for decades in the courts. The bureaucracy did not evince interest in the implementation of land reforms. In fact, they almost became a hindering block in its execution and monitoring. Bureaucracy was only interested in its own personal benefits and perpetuation of status quo. Over and above, the people who were to benefit from these measures did not participate in carrying out the legislation regarding the reforms. Such an experience highlights the importance of the public policy study. It clearly indicates that mere formulation of public policy e.g., land reform policy cannot solve anything. Problems arise at the implementation and evaluation level and these aspects have also to be looked into and seriously studied.

#### Technological Intervention

The second dimension of public policy intervention can be seen in the form of technological intervention. The example of technological intervention in developing countries like India has been in the form of Green Revolution or modernisation of industry. The need of technological intervention comes up when structural intervention policies fail to produce desirable results. Green Revolution policy



helped the agricultural sector to raise the overall production. It led to an increase in cereal production with the help of adequate water supplies, high fertilizer applications, efficient weed and pest controls etc.

Despite the phenomenal increase in agricultural yield, the overall results of Green Revolution were also not really positive, it led to greater regional disparities and widening of incomes across the classes. As a consequence there have been considerable revival of tensions. Though the Green Revolution linked the agrarian economy to the global economic system as a large part of the technology came from the west, its negative impact cannot be overlooked. It increased the gap between rich and the poor. Thus it is essential that the State formulates the policies which lead to greater balanced development. The serious imbalances which sometimes lead to tensions and turmoil have to be corrected. It has to be examined as to what measures are required to make these types of policies successful. These trends also indicate the crucial place of public policy study in the governance and transformation of society.

### **Anti-Poverty Intervention**

Though all our Five Year Plans ever since independence, have stressed on the need for removal of poverty and inequalities, it was the Fourth Five Year Plan which explicitly focused on poverty removal. From this period, the era of anti-poverty programmes began and a whole lot of such programmes were launched one after the other. The failure of structural and technological interventions led the government to think in terms of commencing the programmes which would directly attack the poverty problem. Various programmes like National Rural Employment Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme are in existence. All these programmes aim at generation of additional income and assets, provision of employment, loan and subsidy to assist the families living below the poverty line.

In the absence of an adequate and integrated approach the anti-poverty programmes have not been able to make a significant dent on the question of poverty. The coverage of beneficiaries has not been adequate. Beneficiaries have also suffered problems regarding getting the loans. Usually, no preliminary survey is conducted to determine the infrastructural facilities available in the district needed for the programmes. Beneficiaries are not aware of the ongoing programmes. The follow up process to monitor the implementation of programmes is very weak.

Corruption is prevalent at various levels of programme implementation, cost and time over-runs mar the success of the programmes. Policy making, implementation and evaluation are the major tasks which affect the working of a system. A systematic analysis of policy process, is very essential to remove the loopholes in implementation of the programmes, whether, they relate to structural changes, technological or social changes. The Indian experience in terms of its policies regarding structural changes, technological advancement, social and economic reforms has been far from satisfactory.

Our public policy experience indicates that a lot needs to be done to overhaul the entire policy cycle. Each stage in policy process has to be clearly looked into, each lacuna has to be identified and removed, efforts have to be made to reactivate monitoring agencies, increase people's participation, curb corrupt practices, strengthen the political will and augment the required resources.

It has to be remembered that policy that disturbs the existing order can not only solve a problem but create many other kinds of problems. For instance, the reservation policy. Unlike many other policies, it is a policy which has its roots in the Indian Constitution itself. The framers of the Constitution thought that reservations could provide some avenues for the members of the disadvantaged sections to enter the public service and positions of political power while the political reservations and reservations in the civil service for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, by and large, have been accepted, the reservations for the other backward castes (OBCs) have become controversial. The Mandal Commission recommendations triggered off a great controversy giving rise to social turmoil.

There were serious debates on the issue and the matter was repeatedly taken to the judiciary.

Thus, certain public policies can cause social tensions. The flaws can be at the formulation level, implementation level, evaluation level or even at the monitoring level. As we read in the Unit 2 of this Block, one has to be very careful regarding what aspects/issues should reach the policy agenda. The political, social and economic changes at the time of carrying out the policies have also to be carefully studied. This, calls for a systematic public policy study. It is very important that all the problems discussed in this section are taken up for extensive research work. The next section would throw some light on the present status of public policy study and the various ways through which it can be developed.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Note :** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) The role of the state in public policy process varies from country to country. Discuss.

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- 2) Throw light on the structural and technological intervention policies of the government of India. Why were these not successful?

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**4.4 NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC PUBLIC POLICY STUDY**

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The foregoing discussion clearly indicates that the nature of public policy process is so complex that a systematic study of public policy is urgently needed. The increase in the State's role in development activities calls for an increased emphasis on the public policy study. Most of the developed, as well as the developing countries, have been undertaking research on policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation from time to time. The stress has been to assimilate public policy making with the changing environment, growth in science and technology and new development trends.

Public policy study assumed importance because to assimilate new knowledge into policy making machinery quickly and carefully, the political, economic, social and cultural situation must be analysed, the changes in it that are both feasible and needed must be pointed out and steps must be taken to ensure, that when changes become possible or needed, they will be made. As public policy making decides major guidelines or actions directed at future, mainly by governmental organs and formally aims at achieving what is in the public interest by best possible means, the study of public policy requires systematic analysis of governmental activities.

Though a lot of work has been and is being done in the area of public policy study, the present status of research suffers from various problems. Though the problems vary from country to country, certain common loopholes can be pointed out in the present status of public policy study. The writings on policy study, have lacked any

systematic empirical analysis. That is the reason that they have not been able to provide a reliable basis for descriptive generalisations. One of the main tasks faced by behavioural sciences is to engage in an empirical study of policy making, and to integrate the findings of such a study with insights and abstract thought to form a comprehensive, systematic and reliable theory of public policy making.

A lot of work these days is being done on minor decisions and secondary policies, but most of it suffers from lack of comprehensive theoretical framework. Very little work is being done on the macro system of public policy, and suitable research methods for this kind of study are also not available.

The present state of public policy making study suffers from various drawbacks which can be summed up as follows:

- 1) Considerable empirical research and theorising is being done on the basic components of public policy making, namely individual and small group decision-making. Some work is being done on organisational decision-making but as yet few generalised findings have emerged. Most of the empirical work is in the form of case studies. Thus the present state of public policy study seriously lacks in established generalised conclusions.
- 2) An increasing number of studies deal with community decisions, and with single case of public policy making at the national level. Most of these studies are monographic, and use theoretical frameworks that do not bring out the "decision" aspects of policy making. Almost no work is being done on analysing and reanalysing historical material in terms of decision-making concepts, because both the theories of decision-making and policy making and the study of history might benefit greatly from the attempt to apply decision-making oriented analytical frameworks to the study of history.
- 3) Some studies of specific facets of public policy making are available including studies of the characteristics of some policy makers and of behaviour patterns in policy making units. With a few exceptions, most of the studies on public policy making do not have a theoretical framework, and are not significantly related to the current work in decision-making theory. Tentative conceptual frameworks for systematic empirical study of public policy have been developed, but again with a few exceptions, these conceptual frameworks have not been systematically applied to the study of actual policy making.
- 4) Most of the material related with the study of public policy continues to appear in biographies, memoirs, journalist descriptions, etc. This material unfortunately is often neglected by the students of behavioural sciences.
- 5) Almost all empirical studies of public policy making explicitly reject an orientation toward reform, since they aspire to be "Value free". Moreover most of the available studies deal with modern countries. Only a few of them focus on policy making in the developing countries or include material directly relevant to public policy study.
- 6) Few studies have been done on high level public policy making processes. Decision-making at higher governmental bodies is surrounded by secrecy and no access to it is granted for research purposes. The most important sources of information on these critical policy making activities are books written by insiders and occasional public hearings.
- 7) Research methods suited to studying complex phenomena including public policy making, are very underdeveloped. The most complex systems are today being developed mostly outside the mainstream of the behavioural sciences by the new interdisciplines of management science, operations research and systems analysis. Even the integrated treatises on public policy making as decision-making process which could be based on what little data are available have yet to make a mark.

The above mentioned problems are not just peculiar to one country or a few countries, the situation is the same all over. The sorry state of affairs continues even in India. Thus, we can say that public policy study has to go a long way given the current problems, it has to be seen that more emphasis is laid on drawing

generalisations, comparative analysis and theorisations. More and more research organisations have to be established in order to speed up the in depth study of public policy process.

It is very essential to determine as to how can the potential benefits of new knowledge be put to good use and how can the catastrophes that follow from their misuse be prevented. This calls for better policy making which in turn calls for better public policy study. What is strongly needed is a systematic learning, feed back, meta policy making about basic characteristics of policy making system, explicit determination of policy strategies, elaboration of operational goals, exploration of alternatives and special units for evaluating and redesigning public policy making. All this is possible if a proper full-fledged research in public policy process is launched and its results are incorporated in the ongoing policy process.

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer  
ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) The present state of public policy study suffers from certain problems. Discuss them briefly.

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**4.5 LET US SUM UP**

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The study of public policy process is still in its nascent stage. A lot needs to be done regarding the development and advancement of public policy study. The nature of the State's role which affects the nature of policy process in a country needs to be carefully examined. Problems of formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies have to be clearly identified and efforts have to be made to find suitable solutions to them. This Unit has tried to explain the changing nature of the State's role in policy process and its impact on policies. It also highlighted the status of public policy study and emphasised the need to systematise it.

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**4.6 KEY WORDS**

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**Factor Income :** Income occurring to factors of production in exchange for their use. A factor of production is any input or resource that is used for production of goods and services.

**Green Revolution :** A description for the phenomenal increase in cereal output which occurred in some developing countries during the 1960s and 70s. This was made

possible by Borlaug's plant breeding research in Mexico which produced high yielding dwarf wheat varieties and by work at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines which did the same for rice varieties. Success with these new varieties depended upon an integrated production system, with high fertilizer applications, adequate water supplies and efficient weed and pest controls. (Ref.: the Cambridge Encyclopedia)

**Market Economy :** It is an economy where resources are allocated for alternative uses by exchange in the market through supply and demand.

**Utopian Concept :** Imagined perfect concept or state of things.

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## 4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points :

- during the colonial rule the role of the State was confined to maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue.
- in the wake of industrial revolution, the role of the State was marginalised and the market took over.
- in the capitalist economies, the State does not involve itself with the tasks of bringing about rapid economic growth, industrialisation and modernisation.
- in the capitalist economies the State is mainly concerned with correcting the distortions created by the forces of privatisation.
- in capitalist economies, policies mainly concern with prevention of environmental hazards, upliftment of weaker sections, drug control, growth of science and technology etc.
- in the developing countries, the State assumed the task of an all round development agent right from the beginning.
- the deprivation ridden economy of the post colonial countries entrusted heavy responsibility on the State.
- in the developing countries, State's presence has till date been seen in all the major spheres of economy.
- the recent emphasis on privatisation and collapse of communism has restricted the role of the State but in no case undermined it.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- land reform policy aimed at distribution of surplus land, consolidation of land holdings, improvement of agricultural taxation etc.
- this structural intervention policy suffered from various problems at implementation level.
- people who were to benefit from the reforms did not participate in its execution.
- the bureaucracy acted as a stumbling block in its proper implementation.
- similarly the technological intervention policy in the form of green revolution did not provide positive results.
- it created regional imbalances. It increased the gap between rich and the poor and divided the people on caste and class lines.
- it created a lot of rural tensions.
- an extensive study of the loopholes that marred the successful implementation of these programmes is required so that similar mistakes are not repeated again and again.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- lack of generalised findings
- emphasis on individual and small group decision-making
- no reanalysing of historical material in terms of decision-making concepts
- lack of theoretical framework
- most of the material is in the form of case studies
- material appears mostly in the form of memoirs, biographies etc.
- only a few studies regarding public policy focus on developing countries
- decision-making at higher governmental bodies is surrounded by secrecy
- research methods needed to study public policy making are underdeveloped.

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# UNIT 5 EMERGING DISCIPLINE OF POLICY SCIENCES

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## Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Meaning and Importance of Policy Sciences
- 5.3 Policy Analysis
- 5.4 Mega and Meta Policies
- 5.5 Approaches to Policy Sciences
- 5.6 Views of Easton, Lasswell and Dror
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 Key Words
- 5.9 References and Further Readings
- 5.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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## 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning and importance of policy sciences
- highlight the significance of policy analysis
- explain the terms mega and meta policies
- discuss the different approaches to policy sciences; and
- throw light on the views of Easton, Lasswell and Dror regarding the importance of policy sciences.

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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The concept of policy sciences was first formulated by Harold Lasswell in a paper called "The Policy Orientation" in 1951. Policy sciences aims at improving public policy process. It is essentially an attempt to develop a theoretical base for the discipline. In the absence of conceptualisation and theoretical developments, the societal experience can neither be meaningfully discussed nor communicated to others. This is the reason why one should discuss not only the operational dimensions of a phenomenon but also its reflections in the theory. This Unit attempts to analyse the broad trends in the process of developing the theoretical base of the discipline. The Unit will discuss the meaning, importance and approaches of policy sciences. The meaning of policy analysis, mega and meta policies will be highlighted and the views of Easton, Dror and Lasswell will also be dealt with.

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## 5.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF POLICY SCIENCES

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Policy sciences is a systematic and scientific study of public policy. Policy formulation and implementation is governed by certain inherent principles. It is these principles that govern the policy choice and outcome. Policy sciences attempt to discuss these principles in a systematic way. It strives to establish causal relations for the success and failure of certain principles.

The main concern of policy sciences is with the understanding and improvement of public policy making systems. According to Yehezkel Dror, it includes:

- a) policy analysis, which provides methods for identification of preferable policy alternatives
- b) alternative innovation, which deals with the invention of new designs and possibilities to be considered in policy making
- c) master policies or mega policies, which provide postures, assumptions, strategies, and main guidelines to be followed by specific policies
- d) evaluation and feedback, including, social indicators, social experimentation and organisational learning; and
- e) improvement of meta policy, that is, "policy on policy making" through redesign of public policy making system, its organisational components, selection and training of its personnel, and reconstruction of its communication and information network.

Policy sciences is a new emerging discipline which is oriented towards the improvement of policy making and is characterised by a series of paradigms different in important respects from contemporary "normal" sciences. The place of policy sciences is related to the question of importance of the State and their public policy concerns. No area of enquiry can be important if it has no social relevance. In order to benefit from each other, the discipline and practice have to have a dynamic relationship. The theoretical insights are very important as they provide both explanations and directions. The theoretical explanations enable to avoid the occurrence of same mistakes again and again. It sees that each successive policy benefits from the previous experience. Policy sciences assumes importance because it has considerable scope for a comparative perspective. As public policies are universal and each country pursues certain set of policies, a science can always benefit from this rich comparative experience.

There is yet another dimension of the policy sciences which is related to the interdisciplinary character of the science. The public policies embrace every aspect of social life, therefore, the policy science can draw from the works of the other disciplines like economics, sociology, history, science and technology. In order to become effective, the usual dichotomy between pure and applied research in policy sciences must be bridged, which is achieved by accepting the improvement of societal direction as its ultimate goal. As a result the real world becomes a main laboratory of policy sciences, and the test of the most abstract theory is in its application to the problems of policy making. Tacit knowledge and personal experience must be accepted as an important source of knowledge, in addition to more conventional methods of research and study.

The importance of policy sciences can be ascertained by emphasising their distinguishing characteristics. Efforts to distil the tacit knowledge of policy practitioners and to involve high quality policy makers as partners in the building up of policy sciences are among the important characteristics distinguishing policy sciences from contemporary "normal" sciences. Though policy sciences share with normal sciences a main involvement with instrumental normative knowledge, in the sense of being directed at means and intermediate goals rather than absolute values, it is sensitive to the difficulties of achieving "value free sciences". It tries to contribute to value choice by exploring value implications, value consistencies, value costs, and the behavioural foundations of value commitment.

Actually the more the policy sciences develop, the more should the policy making system be redesigned to avail itself of policy sciences knowledge and more should politics be reformed to permit full symbiosis between political power and policy sciences knowledge. As policy sciences deal with systematic policy analysis and formulation of meta and mega policies, a little discussion on these aspects would further highlight the meaning and importance of policy sciences. It should be remembered that while the main test of policy sciences is better achievement of considered goals through more effective and efficient policies, policy sciences as such are not directly concerned with the substantive contents of discrete policy problems. These deal with improved methods, knowledge and systems for better policy making. In particular, policy sciences are based upon a fusion between behavioural sciences



and analytical decision approaches. These also absorb many elements from decision theory, general systems theory, organisation theory, operations research, strategic analysis, systems engineering etc.

### 5.3 POLICY ANALYSIS

Policy analysis plays a crucial role in the improvement of policies and therefore forms the major part of policy sciences. As an applied social science discipline, policy analysis employs multiple methods of enquiry and argument to produce and transform policy relevant information. The scope and methods of policy analysis are partly descriptive aiming at the production of information about causes and consequences of public policies. Yet policy analysis is also normative, since its practitioners seek as well as produce information about the value of such consequences for past, present and future generations. Policy analysis therefore provides answers to questions that are designative (what are the causes and consequences of policies?), evaluative (of what value are policies?) and advocative (what policies should be adopted?).

Policy analysis, when viewed as a process of producing knowledge of/in policy processes, is so general that it includes the entire spectrum of efforts to develop and apply specialised knowledge throughout history. It uses reason and evidence to clarify, appraise and advocate solutions for public problems. It goes beyond traditional disciplinary concerns with the explanation of empirical regularities by seeking not only to combine and transform the substance and methods of several disciplines, but also to produce policy relevant information that may be utilised to resolve problems in specific political settings. Moreover, the aims of policy analysis extend beyond the production of "facts". Policy analysts seek also to produce information about values and preferable courses of action. It includes policy evaluation as well as public advocacy. The relationship between policy-informational components and policy analytic methods provides a basis for distinguishing three major forms of policy analysis, these are prospective analysis, retrospective analysis and integrated analysis. Prospective analysis involves the production and transformation of information before policy actions are initiated and implemented. Retrospective analysis is confined to the production and transformation of information after policy actions have been taken. Integrated policy analysis is a more comprehensive form of analysis which combines the operating styles of practitioners concerned with production and transformation of information both before and after policy actions have been taken.

The policy analyst is expected to produce information and reasoned arguments about three kinds of questions:

- i) Values whose attainment is the main test of whether a problem has been resolved;
- ii) Facts whose presence may limit or enhance the attainment of values; and
- iii) Actions whose adoption may result in the attainment of values and the resolution of problems.

Policy analysts use three different approaches to study policy making. This is clear from the following chart:

Approach	Primary Question	Type of Information
Empirical	Does it exist (facts)	Designative
Evaluative	Of what worth is it (values)	Evaluative
Normative	What should be done (action)	Advocative

Source: Dunn. William N., 1981. *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

This policy analysis is concerned with facts, values and actions. it is empirical as well as normative. As an applied discipline, policy analysis not only borrows from the

social and behavioural sciences, but also from public administration, law, philosophy, ethics and various branches of systems analysis and applied mathematics. Policy analysis has to give appropriate weight to prudential and moral reasoning about policy means and ends. It has to be kept in view that principles and methods of analysis differ greatly depending on the nature of policy problems and comprehensiveness of analysis. A proper and systematic policy analysis can make a thorough dent in our policy process problems.

## 5.4 META AND MEGA POLICIES

Meta and mega policies are the important contents of policy sciences. An understanding of these terms can help us to comprehend the nature of public policy process. Dror uses the term meta-mega policies to cover both meta policies and mega policies.

Meta policy refers to policies on how to make policies. They deal with the characteristics of the policy making system, including, structure, process patterns, personnel, inputs and stipulated outputs. The term mega policy refers to master policies which deal with overall goals, basic assumptions, conceptual frameworks, policy instruments, implementation strategies and similar interpolicy directives.

The concepts of meta-mega policy can be used behaviourally to describe and explain actual (past, present and expected future) phenomena. A meta-mega policy behavioural analysis can improve our knowledge concerning actual policy making by providing better frameworks for identifying and ordering data, and improved models for interrelating policy variables. The concepts can also be used normatively to indicate arrangements needed for better policy making. These two main uses of a meta-mega policy framework are inter-related, in the sense that all normative recommendations must be based, atleast partly, on behavioural knowledge, and the collection of behavioural information depends, in part, on the uses of that information in which we are interested. Therefore, meaningful and reliable application of these concepts to behavioural sciences, requires comprehensive knowledge of actual behavioural sciences, meta-mega policies, of the relations between behavioural sciences, meta-mega policies and behavioural outputs, and of the values which we want behavioural sciences to advance.

One of the main utilities of the concepts of behavioural sciences should be to stimulate research, study, contemplation, design and analysis focusing explicitly on meta-mega policy level. The major metapolicy issues relate to the basic modus operandi of policy making systems, organisational components and policy making personnel, components patterning of policy making methods, phasing the methods in time stream, developing methods and techniques for explicit analysis. It deals with questions like what type of information is needed for good policy making? Which parts of information are cost effective? What arrangements are needed to collect and process that information? etc.

The main mega policy issues relate to the values at which policy making should aim, explicit determination of their impact, the costs (political, psychological, moral etc.) of classifying values, preferences between outputs located on different points of the time stream. It deals with questions like, should policies be mainly directed at achieving specific goals, at providing options or at building up resources?; how to encourage and to what extent encourage innovations in policy making?, etc.

### Check Your Progress 1

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Throw light on the meaning and importance of policy sciences.

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2) What do you understand by policy analysis.

3) Explain the terms meta and mega policies.

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## 5.5 APPROACHES TO POLICY SCIENCES

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Two approaches to policy sciences have been identified, one is the behavioural approach and the other is the systems approach. Both the approaches aim at improving policy process. We will now briefly discuss them.

### The Behavioural Approach

The focus of this approach is not so much on the substance of a policy as it is on the organisational structure within which policy making takes place. It lays stress on the individuals involved in the making and administering of the policy. In other words, if a particular policy or set of policies are adjudged less effective than it had been hoped, reasons for failure will probably be sought in the relationships among the personalities involved in the policy making process. Value orientations and socio-economic backgrounds of policy makers are regarded as relevant in this approach.

### The Systems Approach

The focus of this approach is on the nature of policy process. It deals with the different steps involved in policy making. This approach is similar to systems analysis and resembles approaches which are presented under the rubrics of e.g. operations research, cybernetics and planning, programming, and budgeting system. Policy sciences, as per this approach, evaluates inputs in terms of their relationship to the desired outputs; subsequently, the feedback it gets from the social system that receives these outputs is analysed. The emphasis of this approach is on definition of the problem (e.g., goals of the system, programme objective), selection of criteria (or indicators) for operationalising or measuring these objectives, devising of alternative strategies for reaching these objectives, identification of costs and benefits of each strategy and feedback, re-evaluation and re-formulation of the implemented strategies.

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## 5.6 VIEWS OF EASTON, LASSWELL AND DROR

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No discussion on emerging discipline of policy sciences can be complete unless the views of prominent scholars like David Easton, Harold Lasswell and Yehezkhel Dror are taken into account. Their writings paved the way for the development of the discipline of policy sciences. We will, therefore, throw light on their contributions to policy sciences.

### David Easton

David Easton occupies a very important place in the modern political theory. His influence on the world of political science has been quite significant. He is an

important contributor to policy sciences. He is one of the modern political scientists who pleaded, that the discipline of political science should be rooted in a new approach. Easton observed that the discipline of political science is in a state of crisis as its usefulness is being questioned. He thinks that this crisis prevails in the discipline in spite of an enquiry into the nature of the polity for more than two thousand five hundred years.

The political science discipline has been concerned for a long time with the concepts of the State and power. However, it has not succeeded in fully explaining these two facets of a political order. He notes that "in spite of considerable research during the last seventy five years, there is limited knowledge about the fundamental distribution of power among the basic social aggregates". The discussion is more confined to given conditions rather than the process of political change. The general discussion is embedded in equilibrium theory. With the result, he observes, "the major concepts are unclear and this reduces the discipline to a low position on a scale of maturity in social sciences".

Easton strongly feels the need for a new theoretical approach. For the development of new theory, he gives three orientations necessary to fill in the gaps.

- i) The basic concepts of political science need to be reoriented in such a way that they are distinct from the other kinds.
- ii) The discipline must take into account the new data and fresh experience.
- iii) The role of value judgements is realised in formulation of the new theory.

Based on this new orientation, Easton thinks that the idea of a political system requires to be examined. As a part of this new exercise he suggests that we should start with the common sense idea of political life; this can start with a question; what is the nature of good life and what policies can seek to achieve these goals? Further in common perception, power has come to signify that state is a trick. It refers to policy making or problems of government, and the power struggle among individuals and groups.

Based on the above logic, Easton attempts to redefine the discipline of political science based on a new approach. As a part of it, he defines political process as "authoritative allocation of values for society". There are three important components of this new orientation viz; policy, authority, society. The essence of policy, according to Easton, lies in the fact that through it certain things are denied to some people, and are made accessible to others. It also includes allocation of values and their empirical experience-implementation. Further, authority lies in the people who accept the allocation of the values. And this acceptance of authority may flow from a desire to confirm, fear of coercion or indifference and apathy.

The societal nature of the policy is the third concept helpful in isolating the subject matter of political science. The nature of the society is determined and conditioned by the way groups seek to satisfy all the conditions for its collective existence. Authoritative allocation is one such condition. This also includes a detailed study of institutional forms.

Easton is aware of the consequence of new orientation towards policy activities. It is necessary to admit that power has not been adequate as it is a relational phenomenon. Therefore, it is pleaded that the concern of political science should shift to how policies are made and exercised. If authoritative allocation of values constitutes the base of the discipline, then the influence and distribution of power can be studied. There is a further argument that each generation should define its own image of political science with greater insight, as every succeeding generation has a better understanding of the phenomenon. Given the dominant trends of our times, defining the discipline in terms of authoritative allocation of values would be justified.

Easton pleaded that political science discipline should base its analysis and theoretical formulations on fresh data. This should include situational data. The study of impact of institutionalised activity on policy should not be just one dimensional. There should also be an attempt to take into account psychological factors. The third aspect to be added is the legal aspects of the situation and its inner dynamics. The

law and its interpretations have been playing a very crucial role in policy making. By adding these aspects with a focus on public policy, the base of the discipline can be enlarged.

David Easton is one modern political analyst who pleaded for a strong moral foundation for the discipline of political science. He maintained that no discussion on a subject can be complete without a clear knowledge and understanding of its moral premises. He cautions that mere formal description of ethical premises does not meet the requirements for moral clarity. Therefore, the discipline must go into the question of value judgements. The values of individuals are partly emotional responses. The emotions are conditioned by the extent to which an individual desires a particular state of affairs to exist. The question of moral propositions and value judgements of a political system or its processes can be studied and examined through public policies; for policies are basically value preferences of people in power.

Although David Easton's main argument revolves around the public policy thrust, he also takes notes of its limitations. He opines that political science cannot at this stage be transformed into policy science. He thinks that it could be premature at this stage. He argues that policy science is over enthusiastic to reform the political structures and processes. The reformative approach tends to be incremental and confined to minor adjustments. Easton pleads that policy sciences must go beyond the incrementalism and contemplate values which can result in more drastic revisions and lend themselves to fundamental generalisation explaining political change. In the absence of such an approach, Easton fears that the development of theory may get retarded.

#### **Harold Lasswell**

Lasswell is a political scientist who can rightly be described or categorised as a policy scientist. He was one of the first political scientists to write about the policy sciences. Lasswell observes that "the policy sciences study the process of deciding or choosing and evaluating the relevance of available knowledge for solution of the problems". As a part of this exercise, unlike the conventional political science, the policy sciences can study the processes of non-governmental organisations and individuals. This implies that there is a need to enlarge the base of the discipline. Lasswell maintains that policy sciences is a problem solving activity. There are five intellectual tasks that it has to perform. The policy scientist must pay attention to these factors. These tasks are : i) clarification of goals; ii) description of trends; iii) analysis of conditions; iv) projection of future developments and v) invention, evaluation and selection of alternatives. Now we will briefly discuss these tasks.

#### **Clarification of Goals**

This involves a question: What are the value goals of policy scientists? Lasswell thinks that it includes two aspects viz; a) pursuit of knowledge; b) analysis of power. He further pleads that the starting point of a policy scientist can be self-observation of conscious and unconscious perspectives which he himself possesses. It is also necessary to study how the values are acquired and what are the influences that shape the values. Value problems lead to comparison of alternative commitments in a given social context. Lasswell thinks that one can search for the universal base of values. He suggests that the human dignity that is reflected in the universal declaration of human rights is one such instance. Thus, values of policy scientists is one important question that Lasswell paid attention to.

#### **Description of Trends**

Lasswell asks another important question viz.; What is the role of policy scientists in social affairs? This leads to another question related to the very role of the knowledge and of the teachers who are engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. Lasswell pleads that the policy science thrust should shift from mere academic concerns to the real world. He suggests that persons of knowledge should mediate between research workers and teachers on the one hand and officials and revolutionaries on the other. In other words, he wants a continuous mediation between knowledge and action.

## Conditions

Lasswell raises another question about the conditions which are favourable for the growth of policy sciences. He traces the rise of policy sciences to the coming of urban civilisations, on the one hand, and the need for value clarification in very complex modern societies, on the other. Lasswell observes that the primitive knowledge analysed omens, magical or religious rites and forecasting. He thinks that this knowledge was manipulative and not speculative. This was replaced by modern empiricism. Lasswell is optimistic when he says that the conditions obtaining in modern society are favourable to the rise of policy sciences. He perceives the favourable conditions in; a) dependence on science and technology; b) growing conflict between nations and individuals; c) the growing pluralistic nature of the societies. He further observes that while democracies give rise to greater role to policy sciences, autocracy has a negative influence. However, the role and place of policy sciences, ultimately, depends on whether political processes pursue the politics of consensus or politics of coercion. The public policies are important where there is striving for consensus, and, in those situations, where there is emphasis on coercion, policy sciences are of lesser importance.

## Projections

The policy sciences also have a role to provide the linkages between the past, present and future, Lasswell maintains that while Marxian paradigm provides the linkages, it lays emphasis on inevitability as it predicts revolutions as a logical outcome of the historical processes. This aspect, Lasswell thinks needs examination. He also pleads that policy sciences requires developmental constructs which can be used for critical direction of social processes. The policy scientists, Lasswell suggests, should build alternative paradigms. The need for alternative paradigms is all the more acute when societies are faced with crisis. As an illustration he says that a construct like democracy vs oligarchy can be very useful and helpful.

## Alternatives

Lasswell notes that in the existing situation policy scientists can gather intelligence. They can present information through the modern audio-visual media. This analysis may have to deal with the value alternatives or outcomes, accumulation and enjoyment, shaping or sharing of the power and so on. The policy scientists must conduct field investigations and base their analysis on empirical data.

Lasswell observes with optimism that policy sciences and policy scientists will have an increasing role in the times to come. There are going to be very big challenges to the policy scientists. These challenges would come from the advancements of science and technology. He opines that knowledge is on the brink of explosion. There are immense possibilities; death might be overcome, space might be conquered. In the event of such major developments, one wonders whether policy sciences would be able to command that level of creativity which would make it possible to cope with the complex problems.

## Yehezkhel Dror

While David Easton placed policy as one of the central concerns of the political science discipline, Lasswell discussed the role of policy sciences and policy scientists in the modern society. Yehezkhel Dror — an Israeli based policy analyst ventured to argue the need for bringing different social science disciplines under the umbrella of a supra-discipline called policy sciences. Although Dror presents a very ambitious scheme, it does indicate the growing concern and the importance of policy sciences.

Dror categories the existing body of knowledge into three levels; a) Control over environment; b) control over individual and society; c) control over control (Meta control). If one takes stock of the existing levels of development in the field of knowledge, Dror observes that knowledge over the environment is the most advanced. The knowledge relating to control over individual and society is also relatively more developed. The knowledge about the control over the control is the least developed. The control over environment is dealt by the domain of science and technology. The control over individual and society is dealt by humanities.

and social sciences. The control over control is not dealt by any body. It is, this neglected domain, that should become, according to Dror, the main focus of policy sciences.

Dror maintains that blind spots or areas in human knowledge have been the cause for the human suffering. These blind areas of knowledge, according to Dror, are not accidents. The growth of knowledge in certain areas and its lack of growth in certain other areas has been a conscious and deliberate attempt. He, therefore, argues that every generation should take a total view of knowledge and fill in the gaps. The lopsided growth of knowledge is dangerous, as the society loses its capacity to manage its affairs if certain sectors grow faster than the other sectors. This situation calls for societal direction systems.

Dror holds that the rapid advancements in the area of science and technology would trigger off tremendous changes without supplying the necessary values. This can be illustrated by an example. Supposing in the domain of science and technology, the society has already achieved the capacity to determine the sex of the foetus in the mother's womb and if genetic science advances, we may also acquire the ability to alter the gender of the foetus, it can pose a problem. Given the patriarchal values and preference for the male child, a number of parents may go for male children either through medical termination or alteration of the gender. This would result in a drastic disturbance in sex ratio. For the nature has been maintaining a balance between both the sexes. The alteration in sex-ratio has implications for the institutions of marriage and family. The science which gives us the ability to alter the gender ratio would not give us the socio-cultural values to cope with the type of crisis that it will create. It is for this reason that Dror wants advancement of knowledge in a far more integrated manner. Based on this understanding Dror formulated a law called Dror's Law:

"While human capacities to shape the environment, society and human beings are rapidly increasing, policy making capabilities to use those capacities remain the same." This law suggests that society should be able to have a direction system. It is further implied that policy making is one of the most important components of the societal direction systems. This, according to Dror, needs an interdisciplinary approach. Dror strongly pleads for integration of knowledge. As a part of this exercise he makes several suggestions. It is difficult to cover all the suggestions here. A few suggestions are listed out to indicate Dror's direction. These suggestions are as follows:

- i) He suggests that the barriers between the social science disciplines should be broken.
- ii) The gulf between pure and applied science should be built. In other words, the research in physics should be brought closer to the mechanical engineering or research in political science on democracy and freedom should come closer to the question of civil liberties and democratic rights.
- iii) The concept of value-free science should be rejected and the need to develop an operational theory of values should be recognised. This means that no social activity is value free or value neutral. Instead of going on emphasising on value neutrality, it is better we have a theory of a good society and what is a good society. Dror also rejects the historical approach. As human beings have had a long history and all of us are a part of that historical process, there is no point in rejecting the history. There is another suggestion that knowledge must give up 'the take it or leave it approach'. It must concern itself with the concrete problems of the society and their solution.

Dror admits that there have been attempts to build scientific knowledge for policy making. These efforts, he feels, suffer from the following weaknesses. The attempts emphasised more on micro level approach, which has not been helpful in policy making. Secondly, the knowledge is so disjointed that it is highly fragmented. This fragmented knowledge cannot be useful. Thirdly, there has been too much of incrementalism in policy making without any effort for the Nova-Design. The Nova-Design means framing fresh and new policies, instead of depending only on the old policies. Fourthly, policy making has been too narrow and its studies also have tended to be narrow. They have neglected critical elements like political and social conflict. Another observation is that policy making has not been able to make use of the existing body of knowledge because of the conventional nature of research and knowledge.

In view of this background, Dror strongly pleads for the development of this new science called policy sciences. He thinks that integration of knowledge about the control over the nature and control over individual and society needs to be integrated. All these sciences should be brought closer. The policy sciences should take full advantage of the existing body of knowledge and enter the new domain of control over control and strengthen the societal direction systems. The policy sciences should strive for these goals.

Dror does raise some doubts and questions about the prospect of policy sciences. He says that the magnitude of the problems is very high. He fears that the present human capacity may not be adequate to meet the challenge. His second doubt is whether the existing academic culture would allow a new science to develop? For there are vested interests in the world of knowledge who would resist any change and prevent any new direction. The students of public policy and policy sciences have to take these questions seriously and ponder over the solutions.

Thus David Easton, Harold Lasswell, Yehezkhel Dror plead for the development of policy sciences. Easton calls for development of policy sciences within the ambit of political science discipline. He is apprehensive about converting political science into policy science and propagates a fresh and strong theoretical base for political science. Lasswell talks about the expanding role of policy scientists in improving policy sciences and solving complex policy problems. Yehezkhel Dror provides various suggestions for the improvement and development of policy sciences. The development of policy sciences thus is still in a nascent stage. The policy sciences originated largely in America, and so far have remained a predominantly American phenomenon. Dror has remarked that even in countries where policy sciences have evolved most fully and where policy scientists have actually received support, reactions often range from “active hostility, legal restriction on research and foundation support, and budgetary stringency, to widespread lack of support, non-cooperation and cold shouldering of research results”.

Dror in his book, ‘Ventures in Policy Sciences’, maintains that such policy making : arrangements are needed which can assure that policy sciences knowledge will be correctly appreciated and taken into account. Arrangements that assure that its under-utilisation and overutilisation is avoided.

There is a need for:

- i) Pervasive utilisation of policy analysis for consideration of issues, exploration of alternatives and clarification of goals;
- ii) Encouragement of explicit mega-policy decisions, in distinction from discrete policy determination;
- iii) Encouragement of comprehensive mega-policies, in which discrete policy issues are considered within a broader context of basic goals, postures, and directives.
- iv) Systematic evaluation of past policies in order to learn from them for the future.
- v) Special structures and processes should be designed to encourage better consideration of the future in contemporary policy making.
- vi) Search for methods and means to encourage creativity and invention in respect to policy issues.
- vii) Establishment of a multiplicity of policy research organisations to work on main policy issues.
- viii) Development of extensive social experimentation designs and institutions able to engage in social experimentation.
- ix) Advancement of citizens’ participation in public policy making. Policy sciences must develop new formats for presenting and analysing public issues in the mass media.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.



- 1) Highlight the different approaches to policy sciences.

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- 2) Discuss the views of David Easton on policy sciences.

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- 3) Throw light on the views of Lasswell on the importance of policy sciences.

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- 4) Dror has made a significant contribution in the area of policy sciences. Discuss.

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## 5.7 LET US SUM UP

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We can say that policy sciences is an emerging discipline and if comprehensive decision-making in policy formulation is encouraged, if policy analysis is systematically done, if proper research and experimentation goes into policy process, if policies are sincerely advocated and if citizens fully cooperate, we can surely work towards the development of the discipline. This Unit has given us an idea about the meaning and importance of policy sciences. The approaches to policy sciences have been discussed. The Unit has thrown light on the meaning of policy analysis, mega and meta policies. The views of Easton, Lasswell and Dror on the importance of policy sciences have also been dealt with.

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## 5.8 KEY WORDS

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**Autocracy:** It refers to a government or polity in which a single governor has claims or unlimited power.

**Behavioural Sciences:** The Behavioural Sciences study human behaviour by scientific means as a preliminary approximation (Ref.: International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences).

**Cybernetics:** The term “cybernetics” designating a distinct field of activity, appeared on the scientific scene at the close of World War II with the publication of Norbert Wiener’s book ‘Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and Machine’. Wiener defines the term as ‘the entire field of control and communication theory whether in machine or animal’. The concepts of cybernetics, emphasising an

information processing analysis of the mechanisms that generate purposeful behaviour excited the interest of some psychologists, physiologists and even psychiatrists. (Ref.: International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences.)

**Empirical:** Knowledge and practice based on experience. Empirical method of research relies upon practical experience rather than theoretical study.

**Normative:** Relating to, or establishing a norm, normative analysis emphasises on logic, values and ethics.

**Oligarchy:** A form of government in which the power is in the hands of a few. It is commonly distinguished from an aristocracy as being the rule of a few for corrupt and selfish purposes. (Ref.: Webster's New International Dictionary)

**Operations Research (OR):** It is the application of scientific analysis to the decision-making process, with problems typically arising in the areas of military planning, industrial management, economic analysis, and the determination of public policy. In a technical sense, OR refers to a number of mathematical modelling techniques, including optimisation and simulation methods, which find frequent application in the study of rational decision-making. (Ref.: Greenworld Douglas, 1982. Encyclopedia of Economics, McGraw Hill, New York)

**Paradigm:** An example, model or pattern.

**Pluralism:** In the context of public affairs and political thought, pluralism refers to specific institutional arrangements for distributing and sharing governmental power and an approach for gaining understanding of political behaviour. Some propositions are integral to the political theory of pluralism; individual fulfilment is assured by small governmental units, the unrepresentative exercise of governmental power is frustrated when public agencies are geographically dispersed, society is composed of independent religious, cultural, educational, professional, and economic associations, public policy is binding on all associations and government has to act only upon the common denominator of group concurrence. These propositions define the exemplary State as one within which public authority will properly devolve on a plurality of groups and these groups will naturally complement one another. The role of government will be limited to preserving an equilibrium.

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## 5.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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## 5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
  - policy sciences is a systematic and scientific study of public policy
  - it aims at understanding and improving policy making system
  - it includes policy analysis, meta and mega policies, invention of new designs and a proper feedback mechanism
  - it is characterised by paradigms different in important respects from contemporary "normal" sciences

- it has considerable scope for comparative perspective and provides theoretical base to public policy system
  - it is interdisciplinary and embraces every aspect of social life
  - it shares with “normal” sciences a main involvement with instrumental normative knowledge but is not a value free science
  - it deals with improved methods, knowledge and systems for better policy making
  - it absorbs many elements from general systems theory, decision-making theory, organisation theory etc.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
- as an applied social science, policy analysis makes use of multiple methods of enquiry and argument to produce and transform policy relevant information
  - it aims at production of information about causes and consequences of public policies
  - it also produces information regarding values of these causes and consequences
  - it provides answers to questions that are designative, evaluative and advocative
  - meta policy refers to policies on how to make policies
  - meta policies deal with the structure, process patterns, personnel inputs and stipulated outputs of policy making system
  - mega policy deals with overall goals, basic assumptions, conceptual frameworks, policy instruments, implementation strategies of policy making system
  - the concepts of meta-mega policy can be used behaviourally in order to improve our knowledge about actual policy making
  - the concepts can also be used normatively to indicate arrangements needed for better policy making
  - the concepts should stimulate research, studies, design and analysis
  - it includes the entire spectrum of efforts to develop and apply specialised knowledge
  - it uses reason and evidence to clarify, appraise and advocate solutions for public problems
  - it includes policy evaluation and policy advocacy
  - prospective, retrospective and integrated are the three types of public policy analysis
  - it produces information regarding values, facts and actions, it means it is empirical as well as normative
  - it borrows heavily from various social sciences disciplines
  - the principles and methods of analysis differ depending on the nature of policy problems and comprehensiveness of analysis.
- 3) Your answer should include the following points:
- Dror uses the term meta-mega policies to cover both meta policies and mega policies
  - the major meta policy issues relate to the basic modus operandi of policy making systems, organisational components, patterning of policy making methods etc.
  - the major mega policy issues relate to values at which policy making should aim, the costs of classifying values etc.

## Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
- behavioural approach — dealing with organisational structure within which policy making takes place, stressing on individuals involved in policy making
  - systems approach — dealing with different steps involved in policy making, emphasising on definition of the problem, selection of criteria, devising alternative strategies, identification of costs and feedback
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
- David Easton pleaded that the discipline of political science should be rooted in a new approach

- according to him political science has not been able to explain the concepts of State and power properly
- he strongly feels the need for a new theoretical approach as the role of value judgements, new data and experience has to be realised fully
- he attempts to redefine the discipline of political science
- he defines political process as "authoritative allocation of values for society"
- the essence of policy, according to him, lies in the fact that through it certain things are denied to some people and are made accessible to others
- he feels that law and its interpretations play a crucial role in policy making
- according to him the question of moral propositions and value judgements of a political system or its processes can be studied and examined through public policies
- he says that policies are basically value preferences of people in power but feels that political science at this stage cannot be transformed into policy science
- he argues that policy science is overenthusiastic to reform political structures and processes
- he pleads that policy sciences must go beyond the incrementation and contemplate values which can result in more drastic revisions and lend themselves to fundamental generalisation explaining political change.

3) Your answer should include the following points:

According to Lasswell:

- policy sciences study the process of deciding and evaluating the relevance of available knowledge for solution of the problems
- policy sciences can study the processes of non-governmental organisations and individual
- policy sciences is a problem solving activity. Policy scientist has to pay attention to clarification of goals, description of trends, analysis of conditions, projection of future developments and invention, evaluation and selection of alternatives.

4) Your answer should include the following points:

- Dror emphasised the need for bringing different social science disciplines under the umbrella of a supra-discipline called policy sciences
- he categorised the existing body of knowledge into three levels (i) control over environment (ii) control over individual and society and (iii) control over control (meta control). Meta control is least developed.
- he holds that the growth of knowledge in certain areas and its lack of growth in certain other areas has been conscious and deliberate, rapid advancements in the area of science and technology would trigger tremendous changes without supplying the necessary values.
- according to Dror the society should be able to have a direction system, barriers between the social science disciplines must be broken, gulf between pure and applied science should be built and the concept of value free science should be rejected.
- he feels that though attempts have been made to build scientific knowledge for policy making, they suffer from micro level approach, disjointedness, incrementation and narrowness
- he pleads for the development of new science called policy science which would stress on integration of controls over natives and individual and society and enter the new domain of control over control.