



13.5 APPROACHES/MODELS OF POLICY FORMULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

There are various models or approaches to the process of policy formulation and development. Before focusing on the approaches or models of policy formulation, it is critical to understand what an 'approach' is and what a 'model' is. While an approach is a broad framework to understand a theme or a subject, a model is a well constructed concept. Various approaches and models have been developed by policy scientists in order to simplify the policy formulation process. Approaches/Models are thus helpful to clarify our thoughts about policy formulation and to develop the relevant knowledge of policies. Some of the approaches/models of policy formulation include the following: Rational, Incremental, Group Theory, Institutional, Game Theory and Systems models. We discuss them in the following sub-section.

formulate...
five steps to be followed in policy...
said to be rational only when these steps are followed while formulating...
The steps prescribed by Dror include:

- Identification of society's value preferences and their relative weights;
- Finding of policy alternatives that are available;
- Evaluation of the consequences of each policy alternative;
- Calculation of the ratio of benefits to costs for each policy alternative; and
- Selection of the most efficient policy alternative.

Herbert Simon, whose name is associated with this rational model, talks of three kinds of activities included in policy making processes: intelligence activity, design activity and choice activity. The intelligence activity searches the situation calling for a decision. The design activity identifies, develops and analyzes possible courses of action. The chosen activity deals with selecting a particular course of action from those available.

13.5.2 Incremental Model

The Incremental Model to Policy Formulation was put forward by Charles Lindblom, in his book '*Policy Making Process*'. Of all the models, the Incremental Model is popular because of the fact that it fits well with what actually goes on in government. Policies generally have societal character, since they determine the fate of people. For this reason any policy should not be formulated on a larger scale without understanding its repercussions. Hence, Lindblom has proposed the Incremental Model of Policy Making. According to Lindblom, no policy maker or government would like to formulate a new policy. If at all the policy maker wants to formulate a new policy, she/he would not do it on a larger scale. So policies are introduced on a smaller scale in the beginning and then they are expanded gradually. Under this model, Lindblom states that the policies are expanded slowly and steadily, after knowing the workability and feasibility of the policy. For example, the National Education Policy of 1986 and its Plan of Action, 1992 gave utmost priority to the elementary education of girls and focused on the removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to education. Based on such objectives, the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched and its objective was to bridge the gender gaps in elementary education and focus was laid on the educational needs of girl children. As an incremental measure, under the SSA, another programme called National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) was initiated and it facilitates the education of underprivileged and disadvantaged girls. In order to facilitate the education of girls further, another component was added under SSA, called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, which provides residential facilities to girl children to pursue their upper primary education.

The Incremental Model is widely used in a democracy. However, the incrementalism has been criticized on the ground that the problems being encountered by the governments are so crucial and critical in nature that the changes brought in the policies through incrementalism are not sufficient enough to cope with existing realities. Dror criticizes this model, stating that 'the most harmful effect of the

incremental change argument is that it paralyzes efforts and thus tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy'.

13.5.3 Group Theory Model

The Group Theory Model was put forward by a Japanese sociologist, Gaetano Mossaco. Group theory is an approach which seeks to maintain equilibrium in the society, balancing the interests of various groups. According to this theory, public policy is a product of group struggle. Individuals having common interests and demands join hands together and form formal or informal groups, in order to influence the policies of the government to suit their needs. On the basis of the equilibrium reached in the struggle of various groups in the policy process, public policies are formulated. Policy formulators succumb to the pressures of the dominant groups through bargaining, negotiating and compromising. Thus, in the process of group struggle, the demands and desires of the pressure groups enter the government arena and policy is formulated.

For example, to explain group theory, we can just look at the example of the policy documents of the government. Till the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78), the issue of gender concerns only formed part of the welfare programmes. Initially, the framework of the Sixth Plan was drafted on lines similar to the earlier plans, which discussed gender concerns only as part of social services. A small beginning was made when the women's movement strengthened by a wider information base and insights joined the growing number of gender experts and demographers in the struggle for gender-sensitive policy. A memorandum was jointly submitted by seven women's organizations in 1980 and support from women parliament members persuaded the Planning Commission to incorporate for the first time in Indian planning history, a chapter on women and development. Civil society organizations, in particular, women's organizations, gender studies experts and concerned citizens, conducted wide campaigns and lobbied with members of Parliament, state governments and with sections of policy makers during 1977-79. The campaigns and struggles of various pressure groups highlighted the need for change in the traditional welfare approach to planning for women. It was after such interventions of pressure groups that in the Sixth Plan (1981-85) there was a separate chapter on 'Women and Development'.

13.5.4 Elite Theory Model

According to this model, public policies are formulated as per the preferences and values of the elites. This model postulates that a society is divided into a few segments – those who have the power and those who do not have it. Policy in this social set up is not determined by the people or the masses. The ruling elite i.e. the political executive decides the policy and this is finally carried out by the bureaucrats who form part of the next segment of the elites. Thus, according to this model, the policies tend to flow from the top and do not move up from the bottom. Every society has elites competing with each other for power which ultimately paves the way to formulating public policy.

Thus, the elite theory explains that competition to influence policy is between elites in power and other elites attempting to come to power. The common masses on whose demands the public policies are formulated have limited or no influence in determining the public policies. Instead, policies are formulated by the ruling elite and the governing elite. The bureaucrats carry those into effect. Though in a democracy the elite theory is not directly implemented, its influence is found in an indirect manner. For example, a slight comparison can be made to the Reservation Bill. Though it has been the will of the people to empower women by way of political reservation, it has not taken final shape yet. The Women's Reservation Bill was introduced in parliament in 1996. It has still not been passed because of the competitive conflict between interest groups.



13.5.5 Institutional Model

Public policy is an institutional activity since it is formulated through cooperative effort. Policy formulation is not an individual effort. Many people or many agencies join together and formulate a policy by following a set of rules and procedures. The institutions not only constitute crucial and significant nodal points for policy formulation, but also determine the formulation or adoption of policies, their possible content and directions. The structures of the institutions and their arrangements and interactions have a significant impact on public policies.

This model argues that policy formulation is the outcome of the internal agenda of government institutions rather than the result of external pressures and influence. This model states that in policy formulation, power is exercised by different individuals and groups such as the Prime Minister, Members of Parliament, bureaucrats, leaders of interest groups. In this model, policies do not take the shape of a public policy unless they are adopted and implemented by government institutions. Thus, government institutions give public policy three distinctive characteristics as follows:

- Firstly, the government gives legal authority to policy, as it gets the approval of the law making body.
- Secondly, a policy gets universal character, as it can be applied to the entire society.
- Thirdly, public policy is backed by coercive power, since it is formulated by the government. The government can thus impose legal sanctions on violators of its policies.

Thus, according to the Institutional Model, the structure and pattern of the government alone decides the quality of a public policy and it has a direct bearing on the policies.

13.5.6 Game Theory Model

Game theory talks about strategic decisions that players make in a competition, where each participant or player seeks to maximize gains and minimize losses. In a competition, one person's gain becomes another person's loss. On similar lines, the Games Theory Model is applied for policy formulation as well. A public policy may not provide advantages to all sections of the people. Formulation of a particular policy may be gainful to one section of the society, whereas to another section it might be a loss. For example, formulation of gender-sensitive policies may require men to give up certain privileges and take on certain responsibilities in order to achieve greater equity in development outcomes. Such policies are beneficial to women while men may become losers in such policies.

13.5.7 Systems Model

The Systems Model put forward by Easton, views the Policy Process as a political system that responds to the demands of the environment. According to this model, a policy is the response of the political system to the changing demands and desires of the people. The political system consists of various interrelated institutions and activities in a society that comes up with policy decisions in the society. The environment provides inputs to the decision process in the form of demands and supports. Demands are claims of individuals or groups to satisfy their needs. Support is rendered when individuals or groups accept the decisions and actions of the political system that are made in response to demands. The inputs into the policy process are provided by outside interests particularly from pressure groups, consumer groups and interest groups. Such environmental inputs into the political system are converted into outputs or policies. There is a concept of feedback in

which serves as a tool to know the advantages and disadvantages of output. The errors in the policy thus get rectified through feedback. The model views the policy process in terms of conversion from inputs into outputs and then to outcomes. Thus, the policy making process has been a 'black box' which converts the demands of society into policies.

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