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THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO STUDY THE PUBLIC POLICY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CYCLIC/STAGES HEURISTIC MODEL

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Abstract

An approach suggests authentic procedures and techniques for the solution of a specific problem. To analyze the policy-making process, various approaches, theories, and models have been introduced by social and political scientists. American political scientist Harold Laswell presented the term 'Public Policy' in 1951 initially. Laswell projected a multi-disciplinary innovative dexterous approach to control the political procedures of industrialized civilizations of Post-World War II. At present, the study of policy process and analysis has quickly established a higher level of theoretical framework commonly in the West. The theoretical

approaches that are primarily connected with public policy formulation are rational-choice theory, incremental theory, policy output analysis, political system theory, and institutionalism, group theory, and elite theory. The cyclic/stages model offers a systematic framework for the examination of public policies. A reviewing study of theoretical approaches to study public policy was initiated, which explored the process of public policy as a cyclic model. The purpose of the study is to learn about the different approaches to study public policy. The finding indicates that the complex process of public policy formulation will relatively convert into the easiest mode by following the logical apparatus of the cyclic model. This paper recommends that the cyclic/stages model offers an upright design and methodical framework to examine public policies and could be used for data collection.

Introduction

Public Policy is an action plan of the government to acquire the particular goals that empower it to attain these goals. Public policies are framed by the executive branch and executed by public and private actors.According to Miljan (2012), public policy is produced for the assistance of the public by the government that empowers the government to attain definite goals by providing an action plan. The policy is enforced and executed by the public agency which itself is a wide-ranging action plan formulated to overcome a specific problem and articulated through a precise political process.

An approach signifies the actual techniques and methods which are applicable to find a specific task. The philosophical element of a phenomenon is considered a theory. It is determined by the theory of a subject which approach will be followed by the researcher. Commonly, approaches can be divided into three main groups that are normatism, behaviorism, and empiricism. These groups are used as tools for the analysis of a phenomenon(Shafritz & Hyde, 1997). The representation of reality is called theory which can be proved scientifically. A theory is a systematic, comprehensive, reliable, and consistent prediction and description of correlation amongst particular variables.

The ground for the public policy formulation is provided by the public policy theories. By the introduction of tools and techniques in the field of public policy for the improvement of rational decision-making, government practices have been improved (Lindblom, 1968).

Literature Review

"The policy sciences were consciously framed as being problem-oriented, quite explicitly addressing public policy issue and posing recommendations for their relief, while openly rejecting the study of a phenomenon for its own sake" (Lasswell, 1956). For policy research, scholars of policy studies tried to incorporate the consequences of the first/prime policy studies into a theoretical framework (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981). Consequently, for analysis of policies, they are producing a variety of models that concentrated mainly on different problems of policymaking. Therefore, the initial movement of policy studies could not appropriately reveal the frameworks for the implementation of policies and the results of those frameworks on policy outcomes. Resultantly, policy researchers and scholars started to identify the policy as a theatrical procedure.

The problems of public policy are basically challenging and intrinsically are multi-disciplinary. Different techniques which can support diverse perspectives indulge numerous stakeholders and demand different bases of information for the investigation, analysis, and

backing of decision-making in public policy. Dye (2013) described that "certain theoretical approaches and models have been introduced in studying public policy".

Research Methodology

This study on Theoretical Approaches to Study the Public Policy: An Analysis of the Process Model/Cyclic Model was exploratory in nature. The research design was qualitative. The data was collected through secondary sources which includes research articles published in various journals and available on online sites. Moreover, data was also collected through books written on public policy by some foreign and local authors.

Theoretical Approaches/Models

Political science has established a variety of models to be familiar with political life like other scientific disciplines. These are the incremental model, rational model, process model, public choice model, institutional model, political system model, group model, and elite model (Dye, 2013). The theoretical approaches that are primarily connected with public policy formulation are rational-choice theory, incremental theory, policy output analysis, political system theory and institutionalism, group theory, and elite theory (Anyebe, 2018). The policy sciences methodology is intentionally normative or focused on values. The periodic subject of the policy sciences deals with democratic philosophy in various cases. The placement of value is mostly in response to behaviorism. To comprehend an issue, its significance apparatuses must be recognized. This research work explores diverse theories of public policy as follows:

Rational Model (Rationalism)

A rational model suggests that the administration should adopt such policies that can acquire maximum benefits at lower costs. "Rational comprehensive model has its roots in the rational comprehensive decision making and implies that policymaker has a full range of policy options to choose from" (Hanekom, 1987). Maximum social gains are achieved in the rational theory. The maximum social gain means that if the cost of any policy is exceeded over its benefits, that policy should not be adopted. The policy decision-makers should have to choose the alternate policy that can produce the utmost benefits over cost. Rationalism includes the schemes of all economic, social, and political values achieved through public policy.

The founder of the rational model, Herbert A Simon (1976), defines rationality as follows "a style of behavior that is appropriate to the achievements of given goals, within the limits imposed by given conditions and constraints".

The emergence of the Garbage-Cane model was a critique of the rational model. According to this model, the organizations could not function as computers to solve the problems whereas they function like Garbage-Cans. A mixture of problems and solutions is poured into it with the specific mixture determining the decision results.

The Incremental Model (IM) (Incrmentalism)

Incrementalism is anti-rationalism. According to the incremental model, the public policy is considered as a continuation of a former policy with minor alterations, policies, programs, and expenditures. Partial and restricted addition and modification in existing policies are done by

incremental decisions. Incrementalism is associated with Charles Lindblom. He described that in pluralists societies, incremental policymaking is adopted i.e. United States.

System Analysis Model by David Easton

David Easton interpreted the system theory in 1953 in political studies. Every political system is formulated by different sub-clusters which perform various duties; also it is a mixture of the duties to spinning the whole structure as relative to humanity (Olaniyi J. O., 1995). The system theory of David Easton may be described as two way traffic among the rulers and ruled which is clearly taught as:
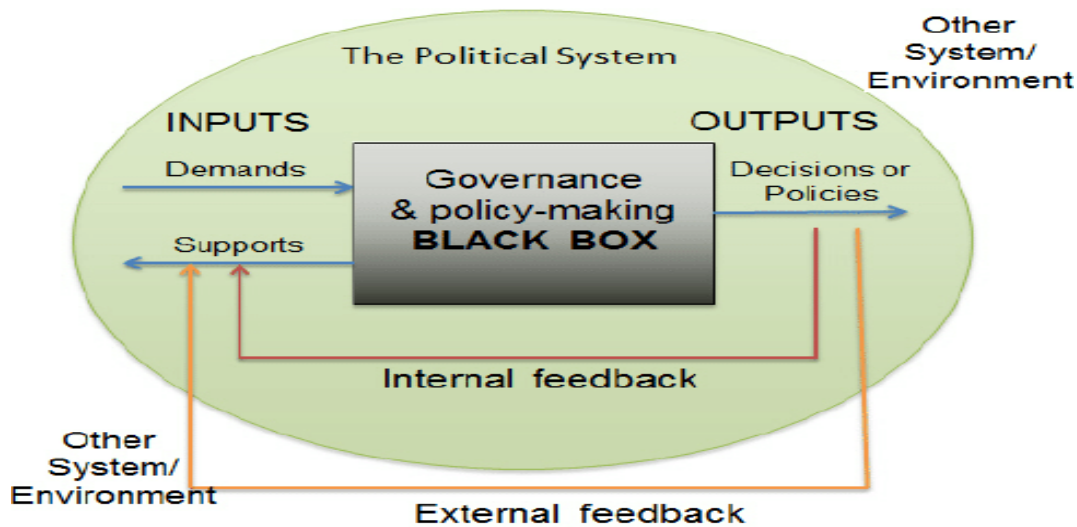

Figure 1: The "Black Box" Model of Political Science.

Source: Adapted from Easton 1965.

Demands and support from the social order are called input however influential decisions and policies are called output. Interest groups and parties are considered as gatekeepers and as a final point; they controlled the flow of inputs into the system. Through influential decisions and policies, the inputs are altered into outputs, and a reaction is desired from the public.

Inputs from the general public comprising of demands for specific policy is taken by the political system and manifestation of sustenance for government and changes into influential decisions and policies as output and these outputs response to societies to influence the succeeding circle of outputs. The work of the government is considered outputs. Feedback is the key to check the success of the policies of the government. For the improvement of the performance of the public policy, the policy decision may not be adopted as settled; it must be tested and analyzed (Olaniyi J. O., 1998). Generally, when the needs of the people are fulfilled, they like to support the government and when their needs could not be fulfilled they take away the support. The inputs and outputs have a very deep and dynamic interrelationship. The system cannot perform any function without input and the system cannot recognize the efforts of the

system without output. The system theory is understandable through three fundamentals as i.e. Parts or portions, the portion must be linked to the whole, and the whole is survived with the efforts of all parts. This part is the core of functionalism and is called the functions.

The main directorial belief of this approach is the supposition of equilibrium and that the cooperation of the part will be necessary for its functioning.
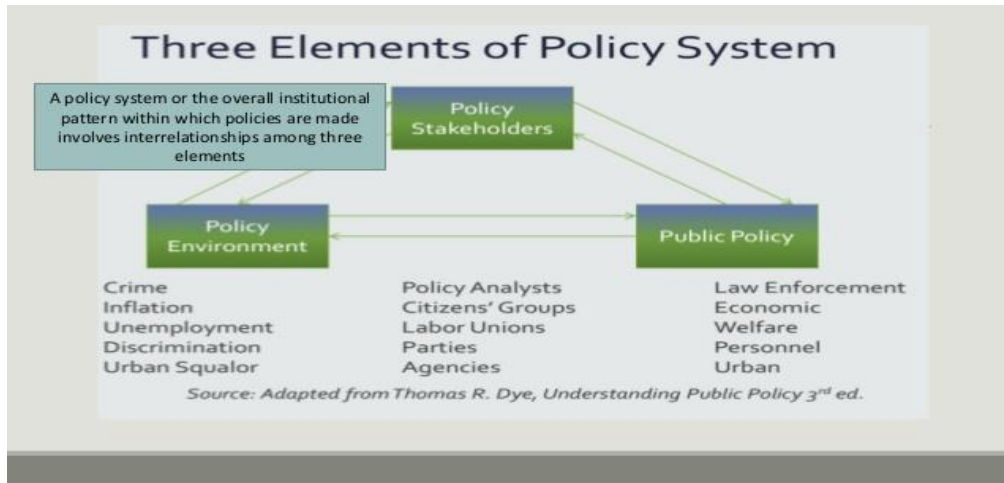

Figure: 2 The base of the system theory of policy formulation is the framework of Easton used to analyze the political systems.
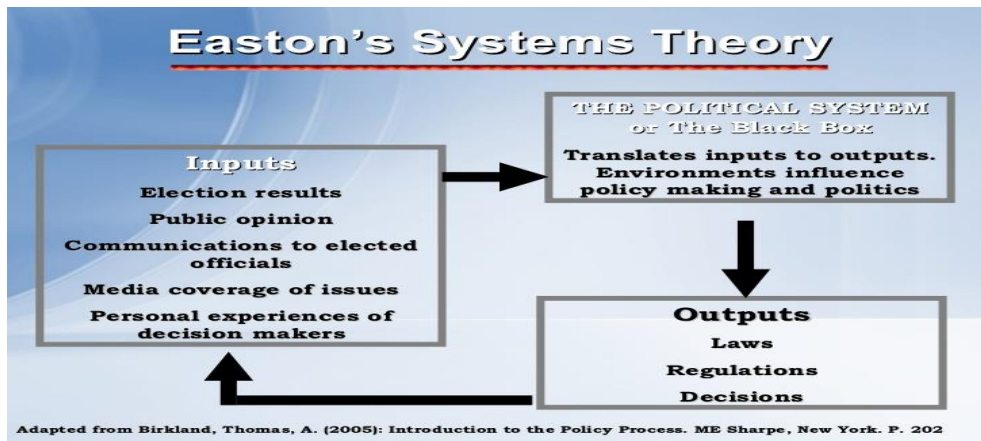

Figure: 3 The Institutional Model (Institutionalism)

The effects of governmental and political institutions on public policy are emphasized in the institutional model. The government institutions such as municipalities, legislatures of the states, etc. are studied in political science. These institutes enforced, determined, and implemented the public policy authoritatively. The correlation between these institutions of the government and public policy is close because public policy needs to opt, enforced, and implemented by some

institutions of the government to coming into the existence. Public policy is determined by government institutions. The judiciary, executive, and legislature are government institutions that give legitimacy to the policy. The government applies the policies universally and uses force for the implementation of policies. Dye popularized the importance of the institutional approach in 1972 for the study of public policy analysis.

The formal institutions of the government i.e. executive, legislature, and the judiciary are emphasized under the institutional approach although mass media and pressure groups are given less consideration. The institutional approach is descriptive rather than analytical in its nature and it was criticized due to it. All institutes of the government i.e. judiciary, legislature, and executive are some of the performers who participated in the policy formation and each of them done definite roles in the decision making (Olaniyi J. O., 1998).

The Elite Model (Policy as Elite Preferences)

According to the elite model, public policy is regarded as the preferences and ethics of the elite class which govern the nation. According to the assumption of this model, policy decisions are the sole responsibility of a small elite group (commonly known as government). Policies flow downward from elites to masses; they do not arise from masses' demands. It is a study of rational decisions in specific situations where two or more participants have a choice to make the outcome.

The Group Model

"Public policy is the product of the group struggle" (Anyebe, 2018). The group model emphasizes the influence of interest/pressure groups. A collection of individuals can be described as a group. As per the description of group theory, the fight among the different social groups of the society resulted in public policy. Group struggle produced the public policy. The resourcefulness of the interest groups is the chief agent for the policy change. Interest groups interact and pressurize the policy-makers for self-interest and first choice. The political system plays its role in the establishment and enforcement of compromising situations among the different conflicting interest groups in society. These individuals have several common interests and based on their common interests, they interconnect with some frequency.

Game Theory

The relationship between the two or more rational contributors resulted in public policy. Game theory is considered a logical and abstractive model of policymaking. According to this theory, a policy is considered as a collective decision making by self-interested people. Individuals can enhance their comfort through contracts or agreements among themselves and they come into politics for their mutual interests. Through collective decision-making, they acquired mutual interests and pursue their selfish motives. This model assumes that all taxpayers, voters, political actors, political parties, bureaucrats, and legislatures pursue their specific benefit in politics.

Mixed Scanning

Mixed scanning is the mixture of Incremental and Rational theories. It relates to try and error. The features of the Incremental and rational model are incorporated by the users of this theory (Hanekom, 1987).

An Analysis of Simplified Model of the Policy Process-(Policy as Political Activity): The Process Model/Cyclic Model/Stages Model

Due to the stages model, the presentation of complex procedure for formulation of public policy comparatively becomes easy in a modest way to pursuing a logical apparatus that may be imposed to formulate the public policy. The stages model is stated in different ways and has been individually named as the linear model, public policy cycle, heuristic stages model, or the sequential model (Jones, 1997); (Smith & Larimer, 2009); (Anderson J. E., 2011). The study of policy process and analysis has speedily developed as a unique extent of theoretical study which appropriately described to draw attention towards an extensive series of educational benefits, commonly in the western world. The stages model is used for the analysis of public policies which offers an upright design for the methodical framework to examine the public policies. According to this model, the procedure of public policymaking can be distributed into numerous stages. Actually, every stage parallels numerous moments in the policy cycle. According to the model of Howlett and Ramesh (2003), the Policy cycle has five phases i.e. agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adaptation/decision making, implementation, and evaluation.
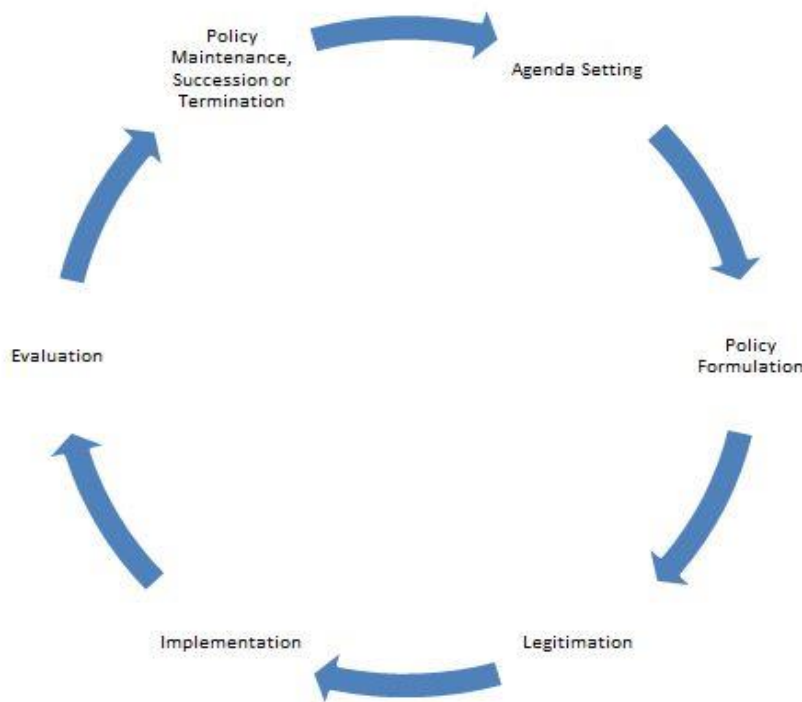

Figure: 4 Policy Cycle According to the Rationalist Model

As per recommendations of the stages model, the process of public policy formulation may be divided into various stages. The concept of demonstration of the policy process in form of stages was initiated by the Lass-well. He put forward the model of the policy process in 1956 to introduce a prescriptive and multi-disciplinary policy science. This process consisted of seven stages i.e. intelligence, promotion, prescription, invocation, application, termination, and appraisal.

Problem Identification/Agenda Settings

Problem identification is a logical starting point in the policy cycle in which problems that require the government's attention to find solutions are described. At this stage, the policy activities emphasized problem identification, resources description, and issues prioritization by using a statement of the policy (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980). The first stage in the policy cyclic model is agenda-setting which can also be mentioned as "Definition of Problem" or Rationale in the ROAMEF Model. A problem must exist before the creation of the policy which can attract the attention of the government. After the problem is recognized, the policy is formulated to resolve the issue. At this step, public policy is typically manifested by consultation of individual citizens or interest groups, debates, and discussions among government officials.

The nature of the problem and identification of the problem with its historical background is explained. This procedure often engaged that whether the public is aware of the problem and who is affected. "No policy response is likely to be effective without a clear definition of the issue. It is very essential that public issues need to be thoroughly deliberated with identified actors and possible means that are available" (Dye, 2013). "The most critical step in the policy process is defining the problem because this can have a serious impact on what circumstance/action will be taken towards the policy agenda, what policy alternatives will be chosen, and how the policy will be implemented" (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Randall, 2004).

The formation is the first phase in the policy process. Policy actors described this phase and its definite actions to discriminate it from other phases. At this stage, the policy actors are observed as authorized policymakers or maybe government position holders. Their status authorized them for the formulation of policies and the use of resources. Conventionally, there are four phases of policy formation: Describing the public issues

i.   Consultations about challenging policy solutions
ii.   Evaluation of specific policy results.
iii.   Acceptance of common issues of implementation (Silver, Weitzman, & Brecher, 2002)

When an issue takes the form of the policy after openly defining and stating, the challenging and diverse solutions are argued about the issue, and policy choice is agreed upon. In the policy formulation phase, the study of the best suitable solutions of the policy is followed by the statement of the problem. "The way in which policy is defined and expressed determines the policy choices. However, solutions are distinct from the problems which they might be called on to solve although; it is one of the several relatively independent streams of events that make up the specific decision within an organization" (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980).

The agenda is described as: "the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside the government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time" (Kingdon, 1995). "The general purpose of this step is to set clear goals and list the steps to achieve them. The formulation step often includes discussions of alternatives, solutions, potential obstacles, and how to measure the effects of policy changes. The development of public policy proposals usually came from the interest groups, government staff, and committees of think tanks. After having an in-depth discussion about alternate solutions and potential the policy is formulated" (Dye, 2013). "Ideally, the government in Pakistan would then ask the concerned ministries to prepare a draft document that takes stock of the existing situation, diagnoses the problems, analyses the various options,

outlines the preferred option, costs out its financial implications, and spells out the action plan along with milestones and deadlines" (Hussain I. , 2013).

"Agenda-setting results in a selection between diverse problems and issues. It is a process of structuring the policy issue regarding potential, strategies, and instruments that shape the development of a policy in the subsequent stages of a policy cycle. If the assumption is accepted that all existing problems could not receive the same level of attention, and some are not recognized at all." (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993).

After the incorporation of, views of stakeholders, the revised draft of policy would be circulated amongst the provincial governments and ministries concerned for their opinions. Once again, the draft of the policy would be updated and moved to the ruling party. The management or think tanks of the party will be responsible for the assessment of whether the policy document has the capacity of adaptation. Modifications can be made in some cases if required, in other cases; the policy would be endorsed and forwarded to the concerned department.

Policy Formulation (Planning, Analysis and Design)

Policy formulation is "developing policy proposals to resolve issues and ameliorate problems" (Dye, 2013)

Policy Planning

According to Howlett and Ramesh (2003) during the policy formulation stage, "governments develop the course of action to be taken to address a public issue which has been identified."While at formulating stage of the policy, issues are accepted and various probable options are suggested and considered, objectives are identified with the cost and estimate of the special effects of solutions. These objectives are picked from a list of clarifications and instruments of policy. Numerous solutions to the problem are offered by policymakers.

Policy Analysis

"Policy analysis is a process of multidisciplinary inquiry designed to create, critically assess and communicate information that is useful in understanding and improving policies" (Dunn, 2004). Policy "analysis is simply the analysis of the policy process and can be either descriptive or prescriptive" (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003). Policy analysis is accepted as "an approach which tries to assimilate and visualize models and research for public policy from orientation of policy and disciplines having problems" (Parsons, 1965)

Policy Design

"Many theorists designing a policy state that underlying sequence is the major reason for the accomplishment or failure of a policy because the design of a policy leads to the results of a policy" (Hai Do, 2010.) "Firstly, the design of a policy would identify the list of policy mechanism i.e. institution-building" (Weimer & Vining, 1992). "A policy was well-made if a vigilant analysis regarding the relationship of the means and ends had been made. Thus, the trends of recognizing the design of a political procedure comes first to the choice made for each policy" (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

Policy Legitimization/Adaptation (Decision Making)

"This stage of the process includes a discussion of problems that can potentially surface around policy goals, the key actors in the implementation process, resources earmarked for the policy and indicators for measuring the success of the policy" (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980). "Policy statements can be hindered by technical limitations and conceptual complexities that can create a difference of opinion among policy experts and make it difficult to stimulate the various groups required for implementing policy alternatives" (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980). "Those who hold the most power in the process will determine the policy solution. However, implementation of the solution ultimately determines the policy outcomes despite the policy solution chosen to address the problem" (Silver, Weitzman, & Brecher, 2002). "Each of these evaluation designs is able to standardize the review of policy alternatives, where the decision about which policy alternative is chosen is typically made by those who have control over the political resources" (Ackerman & Heinzerling, 2001). Possible implementation problems should be wisely addressed during the policy formulation process to stop the probable delays and obstacles at the implementation level.

It can include one or more governmental/legislative approvals, pursuing endorsement with concluded discussions with interest groups and surveys. It is ensured that the selected instruments of policy have backing. It is decided at the decision-making stage which solutions may be acknowledged and implemented. "Making well-timed decisions play an essential role in the public policy creation and its implementation" (Edwards, 2001). This step provides better choices to the decision-makers among the substitutes.

Policy Adoption:

Demands, proposals, and articulated problems are converted into governmental programs at the stage of the policy adaptation. Formulation and adaptation of policy contain the description of objectives that can be acquired from the policy. Policies are designed to solve the socio-economic problems of the community. Policymakers evaluate the alternate policies. The construction of the highest choice among the alternatives becomes easiest for the policy decision-makers due to this act. The major purpose of this action is to facilitate the decision-makers to construct superior selection amongst the alternatives. "In this process, it is very essential to establish a viable criterion for analyzing the alternatives.

To compare and measure alternative policy, economic or social benefit must be considered in the selection of any policy alternatives. The result of each alternative policy is evaluated and compared to select the viable alternative (Dye T. R., 2010).

The policy draft would be forwarded to the Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet for discussions and for final endorsement by the ministry concerned. The draft may be approved, altered, or sent back with observations to the concerned ministry by the cabinet or ECC. After approval of the policy, it may be essential in some conditions to back it along with legislative tools. The law ministry arranged these legislative instruments and was driven through the committees concerned of the Lower House (National Assembly), the Upper House (Senate), and lastly in the floor of the houses (Hussain I. , 2013).

Policy Implementation

Policy implementation or execution is the last step of public policy procedure. At this level, the important organizations and associations are contacted and responsibilities are handed over to each group. At this stage, proposed solutions are implemented and the responsibility of

implementation of the policy is assigned to the relevant department ensuring that the department
has all assets such as legal authority, funds, and human resources for working. According to
Cairney (2012) Policy implementation is "establishing or employing an organization to take
responsibility for implementation, ensuring that the organization has the resources (such as
staffing, money and legal authority) to do so, and making sure that policy decisions are carried
out as planned".

A key phase in the policymaking cycle is policy implementation. In this phase policy
goals and targets are interpreted into action/practice by the bureaucrats. "What develops between
the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something or to
stop doing something and the ultimate impact in the world of action" (O'Toole, 2000) . "An
activity of groups or individuals directed toward achieving the goals outlined in a policy
mandate" (Meter & Horn, 1975). The policy implementation may be viewed as a process of
interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve them" (Pressman &
Wildavsky, 1979).

Different government agencies perform their role to translate the statutory language into
easy commendations for the implementation of the policy and to achieve policy objectives. This
procedure is called rulemaking, and civil servants are responsible for this interpretation.
"Implementation is the carrying out of basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but
which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions. Ideally, that
decision identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objective(s) to be pursued, and
in a variety of ways, structures the implementation process" (Hill & Hupe, 2008). "Degree of
compliance with specific mandates, smoothness of established routines, absence of problems and
the extent to which a policy accomplishes desired results are characteristics of successful
implementation" (Ripley & Franklin, 1986).
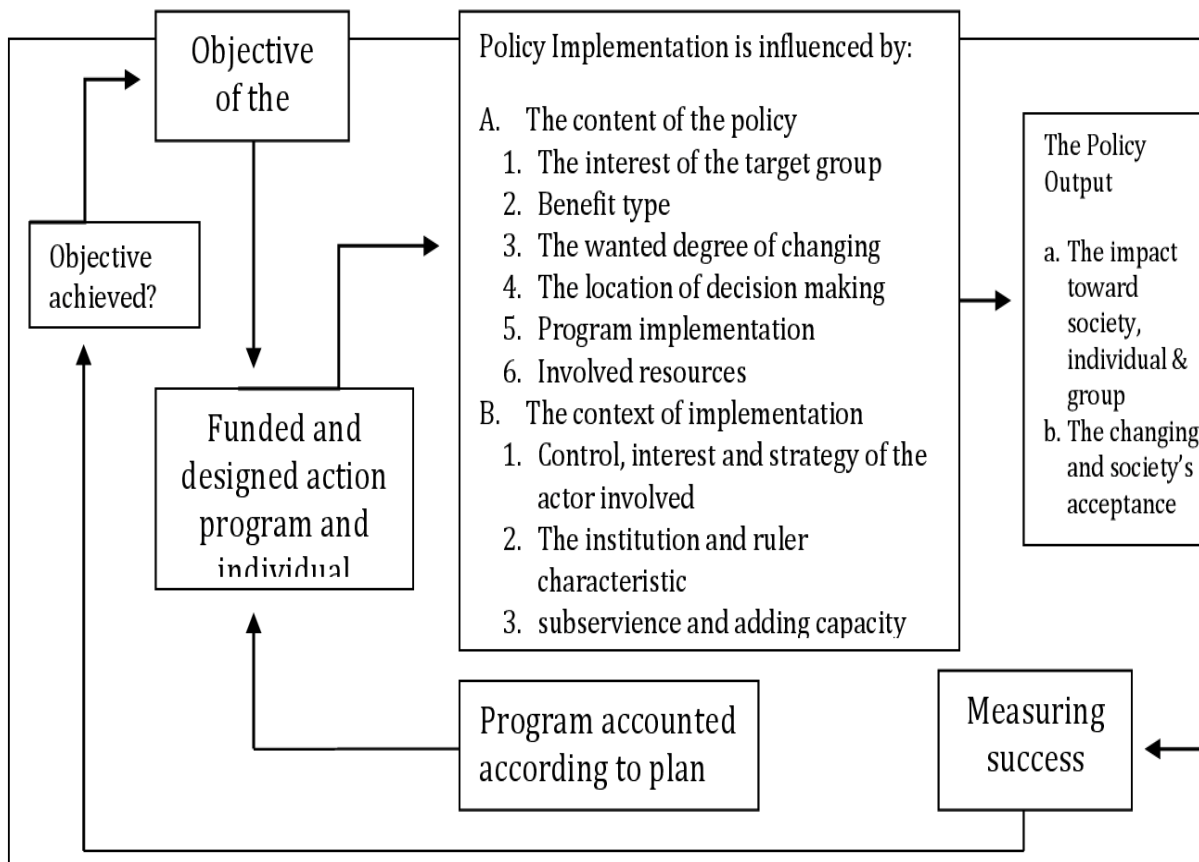
Policy Implementation Framework

Figure: 5 Policy Implementation Framework. Source: (Grindle, 1980)

Policy Evaluation

Policy evaluation is the last stage in the policy cycle which controls the quality and monitoring process. At this stage outcomes and effects of the policy are assessed. Evidence and understanding acquired at this level are recycled for improvement of the project and to implement the policies. "Policy evaluation, as a functional activity, is as old as policy itself. Legislators, administrators, judges, pressure-groups officials, media commentators, and citizens have always made judgments about the worth or effects of particular policies, programs, and projects" (Anderson A. , 2011). The policy is evaluated at this stage to know that after implementation, how it is working. Whether it remained successful to resolve the problems of the public and it is executed accurately to get required objectives.

"There are various type of evaluation methods are employed for the assessment of policy such as cost benefit analysis, multi-critics analysis, economic impact and developing forecasting. This part of the process is generally implemented through a co-operative effort between policy manager and independent evaluation. The evaluation takes place at several of shapes in the policy process. This part of the process is generally implemented through a co-operative effort between policy manager and independent evaluation. Furthermore, the impact of policy is also evaluated to get know overall effect of that policy" (Dye T. R., 2010). The policy evaluation is

the final stage of the policy process. The efficiency of the policy regarding the results of the policy relates to this stage.

"Policy evaluation can focus on the quantifiable aspects of policy (cost per service, personnel resources and infrastructure) or qualitative measures (impact on policy constituent and consumer, focus on changing the policy context or environment). As a result, policy evaluation can assume many different methodological stances" (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980). "The appropriateness of the different methodologies used for policy evaluation has been a subject of debate since its inception in the early 1960s" (Marsh & Smith, 2001). "However, more recent policy evaluation studies have given way to theories of action evaluation or the evaluation of planned policy actions. Policy actions and outcomes are closely linked to the policy goals and directives. This relationship forms the basis for theories of action evaluation with an emphasis on how closely policy is implemented according to the original goals and intents" (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002). "A theory of Action evaluation assists policy actors in identifying the critical links in implementation strategy. In addition, it provides an opportunity to weigh the political promises associated with a particular policy with the programmatic and personnel costs of choosing a particular policy option" (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002).

Conclusion

Public policy formulation is a complex process. In different countries, the content and scope of public policies may differ in reliance upon their ideologies and governing system. Policy problems of the developing countries that came into being afterward World War II to be analyzed in the special perspective of their establishment particularly, in the case of Pakistan which was established on the basis of an ideology presented by the philosopher-poet Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Therefore, no firm assumption can be presented in regard of authenticity of theoretical approaches. Each approach has its own salient features. The policymakers should be flexible in selection of these approaches and extract the adequate and suitable explanation and depiction of policies.

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