
UNIT 12 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN POLICY FORMULATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

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12.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the role of bureaucracy in policy formulation
- Discuss the role of bureaucracy in policy implementation
- Throw light on the advisory and monitoring functions of bureaucracy; and
- Explain the role of bureaucracy in policy analysis

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Public policies are the governmental programmes, goals and purposes considered individually or collectively, that is, the authoritative decisional output of a politico-managerial system. These may be expressed in a variety of forms, including laws, legal ordinances, court decisions, executive orders, governmental rules and so on. Broadly speaking, the *modus operandi* of policy making is in tune with that of decision making as outlined by Herbert Simon. Both involve rational application of choice, intelligence and selection. Over time, due to increase in the work load involved in policy making and the specialised nature of policy formulation, the bureaucrats' presence can also be seen at policy making and policy evaluation stages. There are various models of policy making such as Group Theoretic (involving interaction between different societal groups), Elite Theoretic (reflecting the values of elites involved in policy formulation), Incremental (entailing real life constraints of time, cost, information and policies), Institutional (concentrating on formulation and execution through institutions), Rational (involving policy efficiency maximisation), Game Theoretic (maximising gains through strategies in conflict and competition); and Systems (treating policies in terms of systems of action). These models are followed in conjunction with the insight and experience of policy makers while formulating policies. This Unit will highlight the role of bureaucracy in all the phases

and aspects of the policy process, be it formulation, implementation, evaluation, monitoring or analyses.

12.2 PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

Public policy formulation and policy implementation are two distinct but closely interrelated functions of the government. Public policy is laid down by the legislature or the political authorities, who are vested with the power of giving policy the requisite legal authority i.e. legitimacy. The policy implementation aspect is supposed to be in the domain of the executive, i.e., the bureaucracy or the administrative arm of the government. This distinction is in line with the traditional Wilsonian politics-administration dichotomy. Public administration, in theory, at least, maintained this distinction till the advent of the New Public Administration movement launched at the Minnowbrook Conference in 1968. In the 1970s, it was asserted that the dichotomy between politics and administration was unreal, as the legislature and the executive collaborated closely in policy making, and that policy process was multi-actor-centric.

In fact, in reality, administrative processes and structures have always witnessed an obvious 'transgressing and transcending' of these demarcated roles. The legislature lays down a policy in general terms, which is usually expressed in the form of Constitutional and legal enactments. In order to give a precise expression to the provisions underlying policies, the administrative or the executive arm of the government also joins hands in policy making. And this role of the administrative arm of the government in policy making has grown in importance over the years. Therefore, policymaking as well as policy implementation have come into the hands of the administrators to a large extent.

A policy cycle generally includes the following stages:

- Identification of policy problems, through demands for government action
- Agenda setting or focusing the attention of public officials on specific public problems
- Formulation of policy proposals, their initiation and development by the policy planning organisations, executive, legislative and interest groups
- Adoption and legitimation of policies through the political actions of the government, interest groups, and political parties
- Implementation of policies through bureaucracies, public expenditure and activities of executive agencies; and
- Evaluation and analysis of policy implementation and impact

Despite the formal control of the civil service by the political executive (Ministers at the Central and state levels as well as Members of Legislative Assembly) in parliamentary democracies like India, the debate on the role of higher civil servants in policy-making and a constant fear over their growing influence in this area is gaining steam. It has been argued that, on the one hand, their role is to develop and carry out the will of those who lay down policies. On the other hand, there is also a recognition of the fact that they are actively involved just as the other pressure groups, political parties and the like in the making of policy in its formative as well as secondary stages.

These aspects are usually embodied in a public policy that is authorised by the legislature and enacted in the form of legislation. Owing to the magnitude and complexity of public activities, legislation cannot provide for details required for moulding a public policy, with the result that appointed public officials are granted

discretionary powers to enable them to execute legislation. In practice, the execution of public policies (normally as legislation) is dependent upon the support of public officials (the bureaucrats at the upper, middle and local rungs) for those policies. They work in conjunction with political office bearers and could be referred to as associates striving to achieve the same goal. It is therefore a prerequisite that they should trust one another. For public servants, politics is a *sine qua non*. The policy functions of public officials or the bureaucrats, especially top echelons, are manifold. They are policy formulators, policy innovators, policy monitors, policy implementers, policy advisors, policy analysts; and policy evaluators. Thus, the role of bureaucracy is crucial in the entire policy process.

12.3 ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN POLICY FORMULATION

Policy formulation is often a non-linear process. It is incremental and subjected to influences exerted by wide range of actors. Though it is based on policy learning inputs, it may not always emanate from it. As has been put forth, policy formulation, on paper, is the craftsmanship of the legislature. In reality, however, bureaucracy is deeply involved in the proper articulation and shaping of policies, as the policy process entails the identification of policy problems and policy agenda. Thomas R. Dye has defined public policy as whatever governments choose to do or not to do. We contend that government's inaction can have just as great an impact on society as government action (Cf Sahni, 1987). Civil servants have to bring in a new orientation to the rules by which the everyday conduct of public affairs has to be regulated. Civil servants have much to contribute to the shaping and not just implementation of the policy (Beteille, 2000). The basic objectives of any government pertain to provision of economic infrastructure and goods and services, resolution of conflict situations, protection of natural resources, stabilisation of economy, promotion of human welfare and social justice. These get translated into public policies which are made, executed and evaluated by the legislature and the executive. Judiciary also plays an important role in policy review if it goes against the Constitutional norms. The role of bureaucracy in policy making is informative, suggestive and analytical.

Role of Middle Level Bureaucrats

It is often presumed that only the top officials – heads of the state departments and their immediate subordinates, i.e. the two top ranks – are actually involved in policy advice, policy formulation and policy monitoring. In practice, however, the incumbents of ranks three and four from the top (the so-called middle ranks) are actively engaged in policy making as well as policy execution. It is usually the incumbents of the middle ranks, who are responsible for the actual drafting of bills and proposed amendments to existing legislations, compiling white papers, pointing out to their supervisors whether the implementation of existing policies meets with the laid down requirements or not and suggesting alternative strategies that need to be followed. In fact, they are actively involved in policy formulation, innovation, monitoring, and advice.

Depending on the leadership (management) style of the minister, the political sensitivity of the issue on hand, and the acceptance levels of the heads of the department, the middle level officials may have a greater or lesser impact in the making of the public policy, especially if they are to have direct access to the minister. For example, when the minister bypasses the head of the department to hold consultations directly with the middle-level bureaucrats or requests them to report directly to him, their involvement in policy making goes up. Normally, this position does not arise and all the policy proposals of middle level bureaucrats are

scrutinised by the top bureaucrats, who may accept them with or without alteration, or refer them back to the middle level for changes, adjustments, clarification, details, or an explanatory memorandum on the issue, that could be utilised by the minister while making a policy decision.

It is quite possible that the situation might arise, where the top-level officials (who are supposed to have the official policy formulation authority because of the posts they occupy) might do little more than to legitimate the policy proposals formulated at the middle levels of the hierarchy. If necessary, they would make only minor adjustments to the proposal submitted to them, and occasionally make a selection between the alternative courses of action as proposed by their subordinates (who are often responsible for the actual task of acquiring and interpreting information and for framing proposals in acceptance terms) before submitting the proposals to the minister concerned.

Role of Top Level Bureaucrats

The top echelons of bureaucracy have a significant role in the policy process. The idea should not be created that the top-level bureaucrats only serve as a sort of clearing house between the minister and middle level bureaucrats. The reality is far from that. True, the top level bureaucrats are in direct contact with the minister, but their function is to challenge the proposals put to them by their subordinates, to add their own knowledge and insight into the proposals, and above all to see to it that the proposals eventually put before the minister have taken cognisance of the policy of the government of the day.

The top echelons of bureaucracy have to also go into the political expediency of the proposed policy, and the viability of proposals in terms of economic conditions. They also have to ascertain the resources at hand, availability of manpower, and administrative practicability, i.e. to measure correctly the limits of what is possible and acceptable. It is often believed that expected expertise is of a bureaucrat, whilst the minister should exercise judiciousness. If the aforementioned functions of the top-level bureaucrats are taken into account, he is also expected to exercise judiciousness when dealing with proposals, which are to be put to the minister, *albeit* judiciousness is to be seen within the parameters laid down by the policy of the government of the day.

Even though policy is formulated by the ministers and the bureaucrats (top and middle levels), the bureaucrats being neutral, in theory, are not supposed to have much say. They serve the government and not the party in power. As such, the political executive, irrespective of their party, can depend upon the civil servants. But the civil servants or the bureaucrats have their own views about what is significant for the department and the country, and recognising the fact that they cannot act independently, look for strong ministerial leadership. Officials do not like political heads who are unable to exert influence. If a minister has a strong commitment to a policy, especially supported by a party ideology, the bureaucrat's influence is reduced considerably.

Jon Pierre (1995) states that it would be misleading to think that politicians and bureaucrats invariably share an adversarial relationship. On the contrary, policy makers and bureaucrats frequently develop networks promoting common sectoral interests. There are various models to describe the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats. The models range from the ideal mode of highly distinctive roles of politicians and bureaucrats to the model where the roles almost converge. This convergence model is called 'Pure Hybrid' model. The nature of the interaction between politicians and bureaucrats depends not only on systemic factors; but is also contingent on contextual factors. It varies between different policy sectors, over time and under political regimes of different ideological orientations.

There are numerous reasons for the growing role of bureaucracy in policy formulation. In fact, the very concepts of 'delegated legislation' and 'administrative adjudication' (about which you would be reading in the next Unit, i.e. Unit 13 of this Course) have emerged out of the accentuating significance of bureaucracy's role in formulation of policies. Let us see how the bureaucrats are placed in the policy process and in what way does their position influence policy making. There are many factors that put bureaucrats at an advantage vis-à-vis policy formulation:

i) Information Base

Under the Indian Constitution, the higher civil servants or top echelons of bureaucracy have a Constitutional responsibility to advise on policy options. The secretaries to the Government of India, for example, advise the ministers to take decisions that arise within the framework of the existing laws or policy, which otherwise cannot be dealt with by routine procedures. Such decisions clarify the scope of a policy and finalise its application in new and special situations. Further, they are extensively involved in preparing explanatory material for ministerial use on the operation of existing policies. Thus, higher civil servants, particularly the secretaries to the Government of India and the state government play more than an advisory role in the public policy formulation process.

ii) Knowledge and Experience

Higher civil servants have a nearby total monopoly of the knowledge, which they have derived from their educational qualifications and their direct experience with the operation of public policies. The vast experience and knowledge enable them to argue from positions of great strength about the financial and administrative difficulties of policy proposals, the repercussions likely to be encountered from the affected groups, and many new methods of dealing with policy problems. They are the think tanks of the government. The very fact that they collect data for policy decisions, analyse the underlying problem and select policy alternatives has a bearing on policy making. By contrast, the new industrial and scientific technology places in the hands of modernised elite and State officials many new weapons of social control. The result is, as has been pointed out, that quite often bureaucracies and military, have usurped in the name of 'tutelage' played by legislators and party leaders.

iii) Permanence of Service

The bureaucrats' position is further strengthened by their permanence in the administrative organisation as compared to the frequent rotation of a minister. The average time spent by a minister with a department is much less than the average time spent by a bureaucrat. Minister's stay in the office very often falls short of the time required for a policy to be formulated, implemented and evaluated. Bureaucrats are normally appointed for a career in the public service. This puts them in the position to acquire vast knowledge of a specific public sphere. Due to their expert knowledge of the work done in their departments; of the results and impacts of existing legislation, and also because they can devote all their time to the administration of their departments, they are in the unique position. This is further strengthened by the fact that they know intimately what is feasible or not feasible and where innovation and creativeness could serve a positive purpose. They need not therefore wait for things to happen, but could initiate improvements and stimulate the development process more satisfactorily than their political bosses or the ministers.

iv) Advisory Expertise

To be implement able, a public policy must be realistic, which means that public official should provide the elected political office bearer with complete data and advice him on the possible implications of the specific policy alternatives. The mere fact that they present the political office bearer with alternative policy proposals is

indicative of their important role in anticipating the future and forecasting policy impacts. The quality of the policy advisory function of the bureaucrat is dependent upon the extent to which he connects with the policy of the government of the day, the views of the opposition parties; and the needs of the society.

B.Guy Peters (2001) talks of on ‘Agency Ideology’ in order to understand the bureaucratic response to policy intentions. The soft version of agency ideology is that the existing programme itself is a fit of ideas that are favoured by the bureaucracy, mainly due to familiarity. Thus, ongoing programme of a governmental agency is agency ideology. Ministers coming into positions of power over bureaucratic structures have invariably reported overt or covert resistance of bureaucrats and existence of “departmental view” about policy that limits the effectiveness of ministers. The “hard” version states that not only must the bureaucracy be interested in the preservation of existing policies of the agency, but it must also be interested in imposing a new set of policy priorities. Moreover, the bureaucrats do change their perceptions of good policy over time in view of their expertise, knowledge, attitudinal configurations and stay in the agency.

The bureaucrat should therefore not be indifferent to party politics. As has been pointed out, the senior civil servant should not be indifferent to the ends a government undertakes to serve. He should not refrain from pressing upon his minister his own conception of broad policy. He should not be coldly objective in indicating alternatives. He should not merely remain a repository of factual information.

Thus, the bureaucrat must provide factual advice on which policy to follow. In practice, this means that the bureaucrats dominates the “fact finding, analysis and recommendations side” of policy making, with the result that a minister with an extremely able group of bureaucrats as advisers will find that his personal impact on policy making will not be very great and the balance of ability could, in the end, be decisive of the balance of power.

It is, however, true that bureaucrats can influence only in so far as the elected political office bearers are willing to take their advice on the fact that a specific course of action is the best. In their policy advising function they thus have only an indirect impact. They could, nevertheless, tailor their advise to the minister to fit in with their views on policy, or give advice only in areas where the minister has no specific view.

12.4 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND THE ROLE OF THE BUREAUCRATS

Pfiffner and Presthus (1960) call bureaucracy the social instrument that could bridge the gap between legislative intent and its fulfillment. Bureaucratic influence over policy implementation is significant, ranging from virtual nullification of some legislation to the limited discretion involved in administering a detailed statute. But in every case discretion is involved.

Public policies are made, implemented and evaluated by public officials and by governmental institutions duly authorised or specifically established to do so. The relationship between the policy makers (the legislature or the ministers), and policy implementers (the bureaucrats as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions) is likely to affect policy implementation. The institutions established specifically for policy implementation, for example state departments, the courts and quasi-autonomous (or para-statal) institutions, have through their executive activities, a greater or lesser degree of direct contact with public.

The bureaucrats are considered to be the agency of government for getting the benefits of legislation to the public through implementation of various policies, which

are enacted by the governmental agencies from time to time. The implementation of policies by the bureaucracy helps in building the credibility of political executive in the eyes of common people.

Policy implementation involves a number of steps. The very first is to study and understand the policy statement and determine whether the executors should go ahead with implementation as prescribed. This entails several pertinent queries such as would the support staff and resources be adequate enough, would the staff be able to perform their tasks effectively, what additional resources and information would be required and what criteria would be adopted to evaluate and assess the policy outcomes. Implementation should be a fact-finding as well as a problem-tracing exercise. Though the bureaucrats are assigned the task of implementation, the political executive controls the process through control over policy finances.

The bureaucrats play a dual role of performing the 'output' functions of executing policies and programmes and also the 'input' functions, which relate not only to policy making but also influencing public attitude towards the government. The important duties of the bureaucrats are to: (i) Execute policies and orders, as prescribed by the government, (ii) Maintain and keep in order the overall administrative apparatus which lies within its official charge, and (iii) Give advice to the political executive regarding rules of procedure, regulation etc.

The public policy, owing to a lack of time, information or expertise, is sometimes framed in general terms. The executive institutions are therefore responsible for supplying the details pertaining to policy execution, with the result that the administrative process can be regarded as an extension of the legislative process, and as such puts bureaucrats at the centre of the arena. The problems that could be encountered in policy implementation, the resources that would be needed for execution, the work mechanism and nature of policy execution and agencies to be involved in are some pertinent issues that are decided during the policy making phase itself by the ministers and bureaucrats.

Public policy legislation becomes significant only when efficiently implemented, usually by the bureaucrat. His actions or inactions can, therefore, seriously make or impede the success of a particular policy. Successful implementation of policy depends on the insight of the official and whether he identifies himself with the policy aims of the legislator. In fact, he is supposed to do nothing that could prove to be embarrassing to the minister, but has to treat the aims of the policy as his very own and work towards achieving them.

The bureaucrats' decisions pertaining to policy implementation are limited to decisions that correspond to the political policy of the government of the day. The decisions of the bureaucrats should, if possible, be those decisions, which the minister would have taken if he were personally implementing the policy. In other words, the bureaucrat is expected to implement policy with the same goodwill of the minister and is to render services in order to provide products to the public irrespective of personal prejudice or bias. Since the bureaucrat always executes his tasks in a political milieu, all his decisions are a mixture of political and administrative considerations, the bureaucrats cannot dissociate themselves from the political ideology of the government of the day; neither can they dissociate themselves from the policies embodied in legislation.

Apart from being the chief formulators of the bill, the bureaucrats are also, to a great extent, responsible for help and advice in the process of passing a bill through Parliament. Without the help and cooperation of the bureaucrats, the minister could find himself in a position where he is confronted with wide-ranging questions pertaining to policy related issues, which the bill deals with. Ministers and bureaucrats are thus partners in the passing of a bill.

When implementing policies, the bureaucrats have direct powers. Because of complexities of the modern government and administration, they are granted the right to exercise discretion in the execution of policy. The exercise of discretion gives them a chance to prevent the perusal of policy goals to which they are opposed. They are thus in a position to delay the implementation of policies, or only partially implement them. It is often found that both the political leadership and the citizens blame the permanent executive (the career bureaucrats) for the lack of proper execution of the policies. The bureaucrats, on the other hand, feel that they do not get the due support and infrastructure from the political executive. The bureaucracy makes the policy objectives clear to the citizens and persuades them to adhere to the policies. Such an attempt smoothens the task of policy implementation. The bureaucracy, especially at cutting-edge level, tries to be closer to the public and endeavours to placate the interest groups. By virtue of their position at the interface between citizens and the State, street level bureaucrats have significant opportunities to influence the delivery of public policies. These street level bureaucrats or the front-line workers are responsible for many significant tasks from determining programme eligibility, allocating benefits, judging compliance, imposing sanctions, and exempting offenders from penalties. They thus operate as important lynchpins that not only deliver but actively shape policy outcomes by interpreting rules and allocating scarce resources. The policies implemented by the street level workers are closest to the requirements of the citizens. (Meyers and Versanger, 2003)

As policy implementation is a complex process, bureaucrats have to take many policy decisions themselves. They also have to determine which decisions should be taken by the ministers themselves. The relationship between the minister and the bureaucrat and the political circumstances surrounding an issue will determine what is decided and by whom the final decision is made. In practice, it is accepted that the bureaucrat is the catalyst in policy implementation, whilst the final policy decisions are in the domain of the minister.

The continued exposure of the bureaucrats to political matters and their expert knowledge of specific public issues, helps them, in due course, to learn to answer questions related to policy in such a way that the material they provide to their ministers can be advantageously used to defend a policy in Parliament and elsewhere. In practice, this means that the bureaucrats participate in defending the policy of the government, irrespective of the party in power. The bureaucrat has, thus been referred to as a permanent politician, whose views are extremely important in modern-day government, and as an expert, he is a co-ruler in the administration. This could lead to a position where the minister is totally dependent on the bureaucrats, in that the minister is not fully conversant with all the aspects of policy either because of being new to the office, or because of not taking cognisance of the results of policy monitoring.

12.5 POLICY MONITORING FUNCTIONS

As has been pointed out earlier, drawing an absolute dividing line between policy advice and policy formulation is not possible. A similar point can be made when analysing the policy monitoring function by the bureaucrat. The basic purpose of policy monitoring is to obtain policy relevant information that will enable the bureaucrat to advise the minister on policy results for adapting existing policy or devising policy alternatives.

Policy monitoring mechanism uses various methods to obtain information about the causes and consequences (*what, why, how?*) of public policy and is usually concerned with facts pertaining to the policy after adaptation and implementation, i.e. with the

signs of what the implications of implementation are. Since the bureaucrat also has an important role in the policy monitoring function, he has to see to it that the State effectively serves the society, which means he has to compare the results with intentions of a policy and is the 'eyes and ears' of the minister in the department. Furthermore, it is the task of, especially the higher bureaucrat, to ensure that no conflict develops between the intentions of the policy makers, as embodied in legislation, and the practical execution of the policies by the staff in his department.

Thus, the purpose of policy monitoring is to ascertain that implementation of policies is in consonance with policy goals and objectives. Policy targets have to be achieved through adequate implementation. Policy monitoring is done by the ministers with the help, support and advice of the bureaucrats. Over here, the role of street level bureaucrats is again very pertinent as they oversee the implementation of policies at the field level along with the local level functionaries and non-governmental and self-help organisations.

Various methods in policy monitoring are taken into view depending on the nature of the policy being implemented. These are basically policy evaluation approaches as continuous policy monitoring is an integral part of policy evaluation. Some of the approaches are Front-end Analysis, Availability Assessment, Process evaluation Approach and Evaluation Synthesis approach. Policy monitoring could be piece-meal exercise, which means that it is either monitored on a monthly or a six monthly basis or it could also be done on an annual and long-term basis. Monitoring becomes easier if the targets of the policy are set in a definite and quantifiable terms. The more tangible and quantitative the policy goals, the more clear and meaningful would be policy monitoring.

When the output involves direct contact with citizens, the ability of supervisors to monitor and direct staff activities is even more constrained. The bureaucrats have to overcome these hurdles to ensure a smooth and efficient policy monitoring process. This is an area where bureaucrat's role has come in for a lot of flak. They must play a more positive role in policy monitoring. The bureaucrats have a specific role in policy monitoring. They see to it that at the policy making stage itself, the magnitude of the problem is encountered, the target group of the policy, the processes and actors involved are all identified and segregated for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation.

12.6 BUREAUCRACY AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Policy analysis consists of not only examining and bringing improvements in the process of formulating policies but also evaluating the choices and outcomes of the policies. The quality and eventually the usefulness of a policy depends on a scientific, professional and detailed analysis of the existing or proposed policies. It is only when the public policy making bodies are supplied with the data regarding the causes, consequences, costs and implement ability of a policy, with stress on its utilisation in policy adaptation, that the promotion of rationality in public policy making moves a step forward. Unfortunately, owing to constraints such as the restricted availability of information, exorbitant costs of gathering information, information overload, political considerations and ever-changing demands and priorities of the society, no systematic analyses of the public policy can provide all answers to policy defects. Nevertheless, through public policy analysis, information on priorities and certainties becomes available to the policy makers to serve as the basis for policy decisions.

Policy analysis could be descriptive, prescriptive or comparative. Its dimensions include purposes, interventions, political feasibility, beliefs, perceptions, and other determinants. In order to make a detailed and systematic examination of any policy, the analysts ought to be fairly clear about the meaning and goals of the policy under study. Bureaucrats have to see what policy choices have been made and why, what are the benefits and losses, what difference does the money make, what is the impact of policy; and how should the policies be evaluated. The bureaucrats thus have to keenly observe and evaluate the role of different structures and processes in policy execution. Again, as we read in the case of policy monitoring, systematic policy analysis is also dependent on adequate policy making.

Yehezkel Dror has listed nine standard features of policy formulation method, which can help in policy analysis. These are:

- i) There should be some clarification of values, objectives and criteria for policy making
- ii) The method should include identification of the alternatives, with an effort to consider new alternatives
- iii) The method should include preliminary estimation of expected pay offs from the various alternatives and a decision on whether a strategy of minimal risk or of innovation is preferable
- iv) There is a need to establish a cut off horizon for considering the possible results of the alternative policies and identification of the expected results, relying on available knowledge and institution
- v) Analysis of alternatives should deal with both quantitative and qualitative factors in order to overcome the limitations of current systems analysis and advance towards policy analysis
- vi) The method should include an effort to decide whether the issue is important enough to make more comprehensive analysis worthwhile
- vii) The composition of a mix of experience, rationality and extra-rationality should be relied on
- viii) Explicit techniques such as Simulation and Delphi should be used; and
- ix) The method should include explicit arrangements to improve policy making by encouraging intellectual effort.

After the crucial issues requiring urgent policy attention are identified, it has to be ascertained by the bureaucrats whether such issues could make for viable policies or not. The bureaucracy engages itself in analysing the pros and cons of the issue that is taken up for policy formulation. It frames and reframes policy proposals keeping in view its viability, future prospects, resources available and acceptability. It also has to see that Constitutional provisions do not get sidelined in framing of public policies. Thus, the bureaucrats prepare for policy analysis at the time of policy formulation itself.

The bureaucrats are often too hard-pressed by day-to-day cases and workloads to be able to reflect on new policy. The administration of existing policies generally occupies their major time. Forecasting expenditure, preparing explanatory briefs on current policy, negotiating with interest groups and administering of subordinate personnel often adds to the neglect of the policy-making function by the higher bureaucrats. The desirable role of senior civil servants in policy analysis is now receiving attention from policy experts in the developed and developing countries. Accepted patterns of senior civil servants' recruitment, training and careers are

increasingly being recognised as inadequate for meeting the changing needs of the day.

Policy analysis and policy management are demanding activities in which abstract (but evidence based) thinking must be applied to pressing issues. Therefore, intensive efforts are needed for appropriate training of bureaucrats in policy analysis and management. There is a need for preparation of suitable texts, training materials, and computer programmes etc. and this requires highly qualified and experienced trainers. These training needs raise serious difficulties; more so, as inadequate training efforts in policy management for senior bureaucrats may cause much more damage than benefit. Therefore, urgent action is needed to prepare adequate policy analysis for essential training activities. Improvement in the skills of senior bureaucrats does take time and is not only a matter of development, but of working arrangements, as well as organisational settings. Without political support and the willing cooperation of top administrators, little can be done. Furthermore, the all round improvement of the senior bureaucrats is only one dimension of the problems of policy analysis.

The bureaucrats as policy analysts have to view the policies in the light of the significance of the role of political executive in policy formulation, The role of ruling party, opposition parties and legislative committees has to be examined by the policy analysts in order to bring forth how a policy virtually comes in to being. If politicians are the masters of policy ideas, then certainly, as has been observed, the bureaucracy is the master of routine and technique. It does not actually present feasible means to carry out policies but translates what is feasible into policy. The bureaucracy may wish to be innovative but is frequently limited by a dependency on accepted procedures for a definition of what can and should be done. If stress is on increased accountability; then bureaucrats would most certainly retreat behind a wall of procedures for protection, thus bidding good bye to the much desired flexibility and innovativeness (B. Guy Peters, *op.cit.*). Even the role of the judiciary in policy making should come under the purview of policy analysis.

The analysts of the policy have to also examine the implementation mechanism and the role played by governmental and non-governmental actors. Policy analysis has become more problematic in the contemporary context of governance against the backdrop of globalisation and networking among many agencies. With the coming of international agencies and taking over or contracting out of many public services such as power distribution, water supply and civil aviation by private operators, policy monitoring and analysis have become cumbersome exercises. The bureaucrats have a complex role in case of analyses of such public policies, which are being implemented in collaboration with national and international private and non-state actors. This is another area that requires systematic deliberation by the old as well as the new participants in policy analyses.

12.7 CONCLUSION

In the establishment and implementation of public policy, three sources could be identified; legislative institutions, bureaucrats and interest groups or other elements of civil society. Other policy-making bodies responsible for provision of information pertaining to policy are commissions of enquiry, staff units and public institutions. However, the ministers and the bureaucrats as primary and secondary policy makers are the most important participants. Political office bearers or ministers are responsible for decisions pertaining to the policy formulation, implementation or adaptation of policy, in conjunction with the public officials or bureaucrats.

In practice, top-level and middle-level public officials are actively engaged in the policy process: the middle levels entail officials who are actually responsible for the drafting of bills and the top level includes officials who are the go-between among their subordinates and the ministers. They are also involved in exercising their judgment in evaluating the proposals put to them, which in turn, they put before the ministers.

The bureaucrats are engaged in the policy process as innovators of policy; as advisors of political office-bearers on what course of action is best to follow; as formulators of draft legislation; as policy implementers advising the policy-maker on the outcome of particular policies; as policy monitors comparing the results of policies with the intentions of the policy makers; and also as policy analysts and evaluators analyzing policies to gauge their effectiveness. The policy process thus involves a close cooperation between the bureaucrats and the political executive. Gone are the days when the bureaucrats used to advise a little and implement a lot more. The changing norms of neutrality, commitment and anonymity are making them more and more involved in the entire policy process. We will read more about their role in our next Unit on the 'Contemporary Context of Indian Bureaucracy'. This Unit has mainly focused on the role of the bureaucrats in the public policy process.

12.8 KEY CONCEPTS

Delphi Technique

It is one of the forecasting techniques developed in USA by N.C Dalkey and associates in the Rand Corporation. It gradually gained importance as a group decision-making tool. This involves a panel of experts drawn both within and outside the organisation examining a particular problem. Each expert is asked to make predictions about the problem and a composite feedback from the experts is secured. Based on the information available, forecasting or a decision is made. The forecasting made by each expert is revealed. A major key to the success of this technique lies in its anonymity.

Front End Analysis

It means the review of the kind of work which is being undertaken before a decision is taken to go ahead for framing a policy on a particular issue. The need and magnitude of the problem, nature and number of persons or groups to be affected, amount of costs, cost benefit feasibility etc. are some parameters, which are kept into view at pre-policy formulation stage.

(IGNOU Course Material. BDP Elective in Public Policy, EPA-06)

Para-statal Institutions

It literally means semi-autonomous or quasi-state institutions. These are institutions that are wholly or partially owned by the State.

Simulation Technique

Literally, simulation means an artificial situation and environment. As a training technique, it is a game that simulates a community or environment. It models real life situations and/or variables. Strategy war games mimicking historic battles are simulations; so are racing games that teach adjustment to different situations. It is also a technique of representing the real world by a computer programme. A simulation is an imitation of some real device or state of affairs. Simulation attempts to represent certain features of the behaviour of a physical or abstract system by the behaviour of another system

Street Level Bureaucrats

Political Scientist Michael Lipsky, in his book in 1980 invented the phrase “ Street level bureaucrats” to refer to ‘public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work’. The organisations that these functionaries work for include schools, public and welfare departments, lower courts and legal service offices etc.

(Arvind K Sharma, 2004, *Bureaucracy and Decentralisation*, Mittal, New Delhi)

Evaluation Synthesis Approach

The approach synthesises or reanalyses the result of findings from one or a number of evaluations for determining what has been known about a policy. It has a capacity to address various evaluative questions

(EPA-06, IGNOU BDP Material).

12.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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12.10 ACTIVITY

1. Visit some nearby government office or a public sector undertaking and pen down your observations on the nature of interaction between top level bureaucrats and ministers as well as middle level bureaucrats and the political heads (be it a minister or a member of legislative assembly) at different phases of the policy process.