UNIT 3 MODELS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Structure

3.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

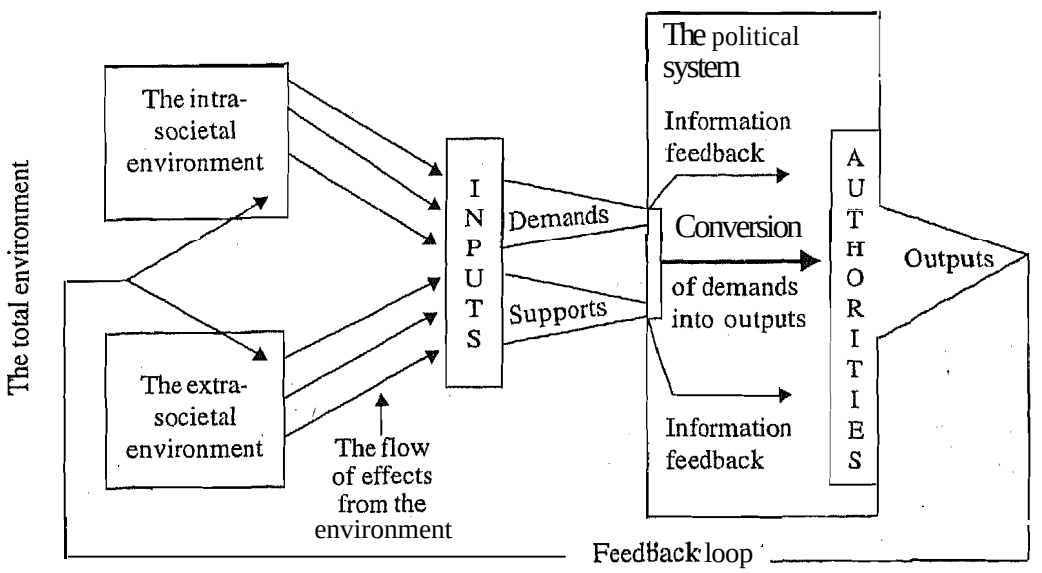
- Understand the Eastonian model for policy analysis;
- Discuss the Rationality model for policy-making;
- Highlight the Institutional approach, which addresses the role that state and social institutions have in defining and shaping public policies;
- Describe Lindblom's Incremental approach to policy-making;
- Explain Y. Dror's Normative-Optimum model to policy-making; and
- Describe the Political Public Policy approach.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of models and frames that structure and provide a discourse of analysis came into use in the 1970s and 1980s. They were thought of as modes of organising problems, giving them a form and coherence. A model involves the notion of constructing a boundary around reality, which is shared or held in common by a group of scholars or a theorist. When we study public policy we must be aware of how different models of analysis define and discuss problems, and how these clash and shift around:' In this Unit, we will examine certain models and theoretical frameworks that analysts employ. A few of these models and approaches will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

3.2 SYSTEMS MODEL FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

The policy-making process has been regarded by David Easton as a 'black box', which converts the demands of the society into policies. While analysing political systems David Easton argues that the political system is that part of the society, which is engaged in the authoritative allocation of values. The systems approach to political analysis is shown in figure 3.1.



Source: Adapted from Easton's A Framework for Policy Analysis (1965)

Pig. 3.1: The Estonian 'black box' model

Notes:

The intra-societal environment:

- ecological system
- biological system
- personality system
- social system

The extra-societal environment:

- international political systems
- international ecological systems
- international social systems

Above figure gives an idea of what Easton describes as a political system. Inputs are seen as the physical, social, economic and political products of the environment. They are received into the political system in the form of both demands and supports.

Demands are the claims made on the political system by individuals and groups to alter some aspect of the environment. Demands occur when individuals or groups, in response to environmental conditions, act to effect public policy.

The environment is any condition or event defined as external to the boundaries of the political system. The supports of a political system consist of the rules, laws and customs that provide a basis for the existence of a political community and the authorities. The support is rendered when individuals or groups accept the decisions or laws. Supports are the symbolic or material inputs of a system (such as, obeying laws, paying taxes, or even respecting the national flag) that constitute the psychological and material resources of the system.

At the heart of the political system are the institutions and personnel for policy-making. These include the chief executive, legislators, judges and bureaucrats. In the system's version they translate inputs into outputs. Outputs, then, are the authoritative value allocations of the political system, and these allocations constitute public policy or policies. The systems theory portrays pubic policy as an output of the political system.

The concept of feedback indicates that public policies may have a modifying effect on the environment and the demands generated therein, and may also have an effect upon the character of the political system. Policy outputs may generate new demands and new supports, or withdrawal of the old supports for the system. Feedback plays an important sole in generating suitable environment for future policy.

Limits of Systems Approach to Policy Analysis

The systems theory is a useful aid in understanding the policy-making process. Thomas Dye (Understanding Public Policy) says that the value of the systems model to policy analysis lies in the questions that it poses. They are noted below:

- What are the significant dimensions of the environment that generate demands upon the political system?
- What are the significant characteristics of the political system that enable it to transform demands in to public policy and to preserve itself over time?
- How do environmental inputs affect the character of the political system?
- How do characteristics of the political system affect the content of public policy?
- How do environmental inputs affect the content of public policy?

  How does public policy affect, through feedback, the environment and the character of the political system?

The usefulness of the systems model for the study of public policy is, however, limited owing to several factors. It is argued that this input-output model appears to be too simplistic to serve as a useful aid to understanding the policy-making process. This model is accused of employing the value-laden techniques of welfare economics, which are based on the maximisation of a clearly defined 'social welfare function'. Another shortcoming of the traditional input-output model is that it ignores the fragmentary nature of the 'black box'. The missing ingredients in the systems approach are the "power, personnel, and institutions" of policy-making. Lineberry observes that in examining these "we will not forget that political decision-makers are strongly constrained by economic factors in the environment in the political system."

The Estonian model also ignores an important element of the policy process, namely, that the policy-makers (including institutions) have also a considerable potential in influencing the environment within which they operate. The traditional input-output model would see the decision-making system as "facilitative" and value-free rather than "causative", i.e., as a completely neutral structure. In other words, structural variations in the systems are found to be having no direct causal effect on public policy.

Further, it is argued that both the political and bureaucratic elite fashion mass opinion more than masses shape the leadership's views. The concept of 'within puts' as opposed to inputs has been created to illustrate this point. Thus, policy changes may be attributed more to the political and administrative elite's redefinition of their own views than as a product of the demands and support from the environment. Quite often, policy initiation does emerge from the bureaucracy. Under certain situations, the bureaucracy becomes a powerful institution in formulating and legitimising policy. In the Western democracies, the bureaucracy's role in the shaping of policy direction is

largely technical and fairly minimal. The policy direction remains, still largely, in the traditional domain of the political elite. On the other hand, in a developing country like India where the state's objectives are not fully articulated and clear, the bureaucracy easily capitalises on the process of policy selection out of alternative policy strategies. It does participate in the formulation of public policy in addition to performing purely technical tasks. Finally, the extent to which the environment, both internal and external, is said to have an influence on the policy-making process is influenced by the values and ideologies held by the decision-makers in the system. It suggests that policy-making involves not only the policy content, but also the policy-maker's perceptions and values. The values held by the policy-makers are fundamentally assumed to be crucial in understanding the policy alternatives that are made.

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO POLICY ANALYSIS

In a democratic society, a state is a web of government structures and institutions. The stale performs many functions. It strives to adjudicate between conflicting social and economic interests. The positive state is regarded as the guardian of all sections of the community. It does not defend the predominance of any particular class or section. Ideally speaking, it has to protect the economic interests of all by accommodating and reconciling them. No organisation has ever been able to succeed in its objectives across the whole range of public policies; and policy issues tend to be resolved in ways generally compatible with the preferences of the majority of the public.

In the pluralist society, the activities of individuals and groups are generally directed toward governmental institutions, such as, the legislature, executive, judiciary, bureaucracy, etc. Public policy is formulated, implemented and enforced by governmental institutions. In other words, a policy does not take the shape of a public policy unless it is adopted and implemented by the governmental institutions. The government institutions give public policy three different characteristics, Firstly, the government gives legal authority to policies. Public policy is the outcome of certain decisions and is characterised by the use of legal sanctions. It is regarded as a legal obligation, which commands the obedience of people. Secondly, the application of public policy is universal. Only public policies extend to all citizens in the state. Thirdly, public policies involve coercion. It is applied to the acts of government in backing up its decisions. A policy conveys the idea of a capacity for imposing penalties, through coercion of a kind usually reserved to the government itself. Only the government can legally impose sanctions on violators of its policies. Since the government has the ability to command the obedience of all its people, to formulate policies governing the whole country and to monopolise coercion, the individuals and groups generally work for the enactment of their preferences into policies.

As such, there is a close relationship between public policy **and** governmental institutions. It is not surprising; then, that social scientists would focus on the study of governmental structures and institutions. The institutional study has become a central focus of public policy. Thus, one of the models of the policy-making system might be called the institutional approach because it depends on the interactions of those institutions created by the constitution, government or legislature.

In policy-making, different individuals and groups, such as, the Executive or Cabinet, the Prime Minister, the Members of Parliament, bureaucrats, or leaders of interested groups exercise power. Each exercise of power constitutes one of the influences, which go to make up the policy-making process. This is to say that there is a process through which public policy is enacted. The process generally comprises a sequence of related decisions often made under the influence of powerful individuals and groups, which together form what is known as state institutions. The institutional approach is also concerned with explaining how social groups and governmental institutions bring influence to bear on those entitled to take and implement legally binding decisions. Such decision-

makers include those who hold office within the formal and constitutional system of rules and regulations, which give formal authority and power to the various positions within the governmental structures and institutions. The institutional approach attempts to study the relationship between public policy and governmental institutions.

Institutionalism, with its focus on the legal and structural aspects of institutions, can be applied in policy analysis. The stmctures and institutions and their arrangements and interactions can have a significant impact on public policy. According to Thomas Dye governmental institutions are structured pattern of behaviour of individuals and groups, which persist over a period of time.

Traditionally, the focus of study was the description of governmental structures and institutions. The approach did not, however, devote adequate attention to the linkages between government structures and the content of public policy. The institutional approach was not backed by any systematic enquiry about the impact of these institutional characteristics on public policy decisions. The study of linkage between government structures and policy outcomes, therefore, remained largely unanalysed and neglected.

Despite its narrow focus, the structural approach is not outdated. Government institutions are, in fact, a set of patterns of behaviour of individuals and groups. These affect both the decision-making and the content of public policy. The institutional approach suggests that government institutions may be structured in such ways as to facilitate certain policy outcomes. These patterns may give an advantage to certain interests in society and withhold this advantage from other interests. Rules and institutional arrangements are usually not neutral in their impact. In fact, they tend to favour some interests in society over others. Certain individual groups may enjoy, therefore, greater power or access to government power under one set of structured patterns than under another set. In other words, 'there is the impact of institutional characteristics on policy outcomes. Under the institutional approach one can study the relationships between the institutional arrangements and the content of public policy. The policy issues can be examined in a systematic fashion with a focus on institutional arrangements.

The value of the institutional approach to policy analysis lies in asking what relationships exist between institutional arrangements and the content of public 'policy, and also in investigating these relationships in a comparative fashion. However, it would not be right to assume that a particular change in institutional structure would bring about changes in public policy. Without investigating the true relationship between structure and policy, it is difficult to assess the impact of institutional arrangements on public policies. In this context, Thomas Dye says, "both structure and policy are largely determined by environmental forces, and that tinkering with institutional arrangements will have little independent impact on public policy if underlying environmental forces – social, economic, and political – remain constant".

3.4 RATIONAL POLICY-MAKING MODEL

Rationality and rationalism are words too often found and used in the literature of social science, but they are more widely espoused than practised in policy-making. However, rationality is considered to be the 'yardstick of wisdom' in policy-making: This approach emphasises that policy-making is making a choice among policy alte natives on rational grounds. Rational policy-making is "to choose the one best option". Robert Haveman observes that a rational policy is one, which is designed to maximise "net value achievement".

Thomas Dye equates rationality with efficiency, In his words, "A policy is rational when it is most efficient, that is, if the ratio between the values it achieves and the values it sacrifices is positive and

higher than any other policy alternative". He further says that the idea of efficiency involves the calculation of all social, poiitical, and economic values sacrificed or achieved by a public policy, not just those that can be measured in monetary terms.

Hence political policy-makers should be rational. But it is not easy. In order to be rational, it is desirable that there should be:

i) identification and determination of the goals;

ii) ranking of goals in order of importance;

iii) identification of possible policy alternatives for achieving those goals; and

iv) cost-benefit analysis of policy alternatives.

A policy-maker wedded to rational policy-making must:

i) know all the society's value preferences and their relative weights;

ii) clarify the goals and objectives and rank them;

iii) know all the policy alternatives available;

iv) compare the consequences of each policy alternative;

v) calculate the ratio of achieved to sacrificed societal values for each policy alternative; and

vi) select the inost efficient policy alternative that matches with the goals.

In a rational decision-making process, instead of making an 'ideal' decision as Simon observes, policy-makers will break the complexity of problems into small and understandable parts; choose the one option, that is, best and satisfactory; and avoid unnecessary uncertainty. Herbert Simon further notes, "although individuals are intendedly rational, their rationality is bounded by limited cognitive and emotional capacities,"

Rational policy-making, thus, requires making hard choices among policy alternatives. It entails many stages:

i) To begin with the policy-maker identifies the underlying problem. He formulates and sets goal priorities, This is necessary because one goal may be more important than another.

ii) At the second stage, the policy-maker identifies the range of policy alternatives and options that help to achieve the goals. He prepares a complete set of alternative policies and of resources with weights for each alternative. The process of identifying policy alternatives is of critical importance as it affects both the range and quality of alternatives.

iii) The third stage requires the calculation of predictions about the costs and benefits of policy alternatives. The policy-maker is required to calculate for each pplicy alternative both the expectation that it will achieve the goal, and also its cost. Here there is a question of calculation of the "cost-payoff" ratios of each alternative.

iv) Although simultaneously with calculating net expectation for each alternative, the policy-maker is required to compase the alternatives with the highest benefits. It is possible that by comparing two alternatives, one may derive the benefits at less cost.

v) Finally, the policy maker selects the most efficient policy alternative.

Once a policy choice is implemented, the rational policy-maker is required to monitor this implementation systematically to find out the accuracy of the expectations and estimates. If necessary, the policy-maker may modify the policy or give it up altogether. This is called 'the feedback stage' of rational policy-making. If decision-makers make use of feedback to monitor and adapt policy, the policy system becomes self-correcting or cybernetic.

The concept of rationality is espoused to such an extent that many types of rational decision models are to be found in the literature of social sciences. Thomas Dye, as shown in figure 3.2, has given an example of a rational approach to a decision system that facilitates rationality in policy-making.

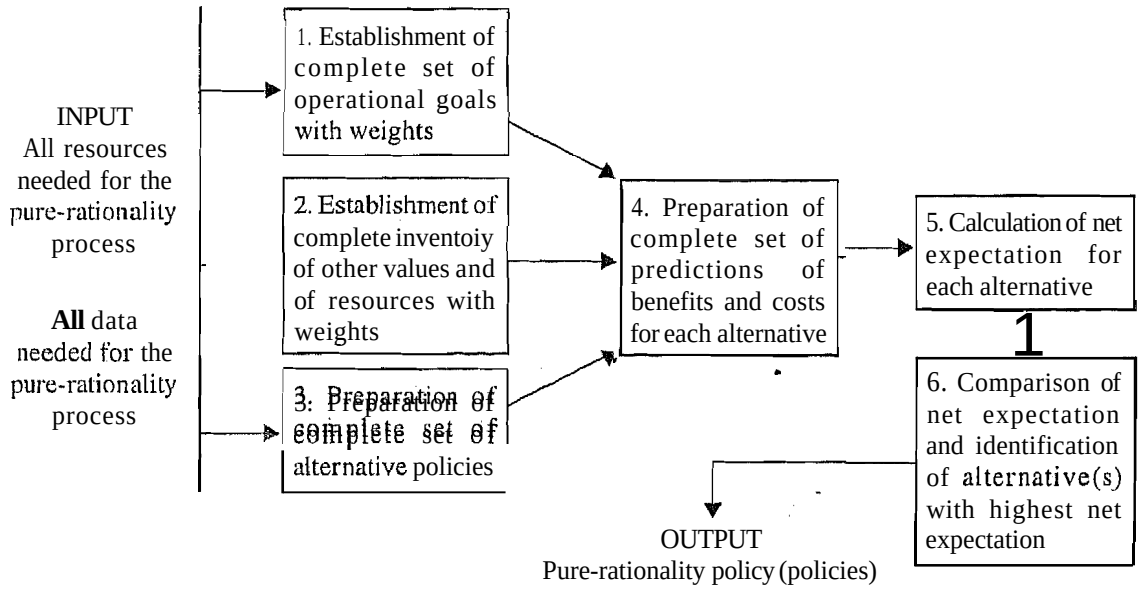


Fig. 3.2: A Rational Model of a Decision System,

Constraints to Rationality

Rational decision-making suffers from many constraints. The concept of rationality is bandied about so much and so indiscriminately that it threatens to lose its meaning. It is more widely espoused than practised. Some of the important constraints to rational policy-making are:

i) Accomplishing **Goals**

Rational policy-making is a very difficult exercise. The expectation that a rational policy will emerge is small. By the time the policy-maker recommends a rational policy, the problem in question may, at times, become so complex that the prescriptions become decisions that are made on the basis of other goals. Instead, decision makers may try to maximise their own rewards, such as, power, status, money and re-election. Therefore, rational policy-making might turn out to be more an exercise than the actual realisation of a set a goals.

Yet, attempts at rationality have some positive purposes. Rationality is somewhat like democracy. In this context, Lineberry says, "... as democracy is the measuring rod of virtue in a political system, so too is rationality, supposedly the yardstick of wisdom in policy-making".

ii) **Securing Optimisation**

The rational policy-making model is expected to produce optimal results. But in reality, it does not always happen. The public interest is considered to be more important than being merely the sum of individual interests in the policy. If air pollution control is a public interest, because all share in its benefit, then the strategy might require that every automobile sold is to be fitted with an expensive set of anti-pollution emission control devices, making it to cost more. Yet, few citizens are willing to pay more of their own money to reduce automobile emissions. If pollution control is a public good, which is individual's own decision, in fact, too often, others should also be guided by the same rational perspective while taking individual decisions. Contrary to this, many of them tend to proceed with a different assumption, "everybody's doing it and my little bit won't really matter

much." Thus, the motivation for various stakeholders in a policy to try to maximise net goal achievement is missing. Further, policy makers in government merely try to satisfy certain demands for progress. They do not strive to search until they find the one best way.

iii) Conflict between Rational Choice and Need for Action

There is aconflict between the search for rational behaviour and the need for action. As already stated, policy-makers are not motivated to make decisions on the basis of rationality, but try instead to maximise their own rewards, such as, power? status, money. Secondly, the time for a thorough analysis of impending legislation may be short. In an emergency situation, action is sought immediately. But the time is too short for careful analysis. In routine policy-making also, the sheer number of potential issues limits the time available to analyse'any one issue carefully.

There is also no consensus on the societal values themselves. The prevalence of many conflicting values among specific groups and individuals make it difficult for the policy-maker to compare and weigh them.

iv) Dilemma of Political Feasibility

The dilemma of political feasibility concerns also confronts every policy maker. By political feasibility is meant "the probability that, however rational and desirable, apolicy option would actually be adopted and implemented by the political system". Politicians too often resolve the dilemma of political feasibility by avoidance of conflict. Uncertainty about the consequences of different policy alternatives may also force politicians to stick to previous policies. Elected officials do not want to sacrifice their chance of re-election at the cost of rationality in policy-making. Postponement of the decision, or recourse to other dilations tactics is common ways to avoid a rational decision in the event of political costs. Thus, political executives often weigh the rational choice against political feasibility.

v) Problem of Cost-Benefit Analysis

It is difficult for the policy-makers to calculate the cost-benefit ratios accurately when many diverse social, economic, political and cultural values are at stake. Apart from these, policy-makers have personal needs, inhibitions and inadequacies, which render them incapable of assessing the alternatives to arrive at rational decisions.

Rational policy-making requires making hard choices among policy alternatives. But there are several constraints in gathering the amount of information required to be aware of all possible policy alternatives, and the consequences of each alternative including the time and cost involved in information gathering.

vi) Nature and Environment of Bureaucracy

Another important obstacle to rational policy-making is the environment of the bureaucracies. Thomas Dye observes, "The segmentalised nature of policy-making in large bureaucracies makes it difficult to coordinate decision-making so that the input of all of the various specialists is brought to bear at the point of decision." Fragmentation of authority, satisfying personal goals, conflicting values, limited technology, uncertainty about the possible policy alternatives and consequences thereof, and other factors limit the capacity of bureaucracies and other public organisations to make rational policies.

There are policy analysts who warn against placing too much reliance on the rational model. For example, Patton and Sawicki argue, "If the rational model were to be followed, many rational

decisions would have to be compromised because they were not politically feasible. A rational, logical, and technically desirable policy may not be adopted because the political system will not accept it. The figures don't always speak for themselves, and good ideas do not always win out. Analysts and decision-makers are constantly faced with the conflict between technically superior and politically feasible alternatives".

Following the rational model by analysis of facts, setting out alternatives and choosing the alternative with the highest utility weight, would often be undemocratic. Denhardt observes that policy analysts typically apply technical solutions to the immediate problems and "under such circumstances, technical concerns would displace political and ethical concerns as the basis for public decision-making, thereby transforming normative issues into technical problems". Even a small issue, such as, the shifting of a small-scale industry from the capital, New Delhi, can rarely be decided, as the people involved would not accept a technical solution. Politicians and pressure groups do intervene unless the decision is imposed, which would often be undemocratic.

It stands to reason that the rational policy-making model sets up goals and procedures that are both naive and utopian. It seems that rational policy-making is a very difficult exercise. Some decision-making theorists, and perhaps most decision-makers, believe that rational policy-making is impossible. Yet, this model remains of critical importance for analytic purposes as it helps to identify the constraints to rationdity.

Herbert Simon observes that policy-makers do not really "optimize", but rather "satisfy". To him, a "good" decision will do even if it is not the best decision. A rational decision depends on having clear and well-defined goals as well as sufficient authority to coordinate action, The private organisation is a profit-maximising system that aims at its goal, single-rnindedly, whereas public organisations often lack goal specificity.

3.5 LINDBLOM'S INCREMENTAL APPROACH

As an alternative to the traditional rational model of decision-making, Charles Lindblom presented the 'incremental model! of the policy-making process. His article on the "Science of Muddling Through", published in 1959, gained wide recognition in the development of policy analysis as concerned with the "process" of making policy. Since then Lindblom's thought has evolved beyond his original argument.

In criticising the rational model as advocated by Simon and others, Lindblorn rejects the idea that decision-making is essentially something which is about defining goals, selecting alternatives, and comparing alternatives. Lindblom wants to show that rational decision-making is simply "not workable for complex policy questions". To Lindblom, constraints of time, intelligence, cost and politics prevent policy-makers from identifying societal goals and their consequences in a rational manner. He drew the distinction in terms of comprehensive (or root) rationality advocated by Simon and his own 'successive limited comparisons' (or branch decision-making).

The incremental approach (branch method) of decision-making involves a process of "continually building out from the current situation, step-by-step and by small degrees". In contrast, the 'root' approach, as favoured by the policy analysts, was to start from "fundamentals anew each time, building on the past only as experience embodied in a theory, and always prepared to start from the ground up".'

According to Lindblom, constraints of time, intelligence, and cost prevent policy-makers from identifying the full range of policy alternatives and their consequences. He proposes that "successive limited comparison" is both more relevant and more realistic in such a condition of "bounded rationality".

Features of Incremental Decision-Making

The following features characterise the decision-making in terms of 'muddling through'. First, it proceeds through a succession of incremental changes. Policy-makers accept the legitimacy of existing policies because of the uncertainty about the consequences of new or different policies. Second, it involves mutual adjustment and negotiation. The test of a good decision is agreement rather than goal achievement. Agreement arrived at is easier in policy-making when the item in dispute increases or decreases in budgets or modifications to existing programmes. Thus, incrementalism is significant in reducing political tension and maintaining stability. Third, the incremental approach involves trial and terror method. It is superior to a "futile attempt at superhuman comprehensiveness". Human beings rarely act to maximise all their values; on the contrary, they act to satisfy particular demands. They seldom search for the "one best way", but instead search to find "a way that will work". This search usually begins with the familiar, that is, with policy options close to contemporary policies. Incrementalism is, thus, more satisfactory from a theoretical point of view as it scores high on criteria like coherence and simplicity.

3.5.1 Strategic Policy-Making

Etzioni was a critic of both the rational and incremental approaches. He advanced the 'mixed-scanning' approach, a third one. According to Etzioni, models based on pluralist decision-making were biased because of the pre-existing inequities in the power of the participating interests and individuals.

In his work, Politics and Markets, Lindblom concedes much to Etzioni's critique of his theory of incremental pluralism. He recognises that pluralist decision-making is biased. Not all interests and participants in incrementalist politics are equal, some have considerably more power than others. Business and large corporations, he analyses, occupy a predominant position in the policy-making process. In his later work (1977), Lindblorn proposes the need to improve mutual partisan adjustment by "greatly improved strategic policy-making".

In his subsequent article, "Still Muddling Through" (1979), Lindblom makes clear that the core idea in an incrementalist approach is the belief in skill in solving complex problems, and his aim is to suggest 'new and improved' ways of 'mudding through'. To do this he draws a distinction between: i) incrementalism as a political pattern, with step-by-step changes, and ii) incrementalism as policy analysis. In this article he makes the case for 'analytical incrementalism' as a method of securing the balance of power in a pluralist polity in which business and large corporations tend to exercise a powerful influence over the policy-making process. He argues that there are three main forms to incremental analysis, as mentioned below:

i) **Simple Incremental Analysis:** It is a form of analysis in which only those alternative policies, which are marginally different to the existing policy are analysed.

ii) **Strategic Analysis:** Lindblom argues that since completeness of analysis is not possible because of many constraints, an analyst should take a middle position: 'informed, thoughtful' and uses methods to make better choices. These methods include: trial and error learning; systems analysis; operations research; management by objectives; and programme evaluation and review technique.

iii) **Disjointed Incrementalism':** Disjointed Incrementalism is an analytical strategy, which involves simplifying and focusing on problems by following six methods: **a)** the limitation of analysis for a few familiar alternatives; b) intertwining values and policy goals with empirical analysis of problems; c) focusing on ills to be remedied rather than on goals to be sought; d) trial-and-error learning; e) analysing a limited number of options and their consequences; and f) fragmenting of analytical work to many partisan participants in policy-making.

In his work, "A Strategy of Decision" (1963) jointly authored with David Braybrooke, Lindblom introduced the notion of "disjointed incrementalism". He sees this as a method of decision-making in which comparison takes place between policies, which are only 'marginally' different from one another and in which there is no 'great goal' or vision to be achieved. Objectives are set in terms of existing resources, and policy-making takes place by a 'trial and error' method. It is disjointed because decisions are not subject to some kind of control or coordination. This work places incrementalism in a continuum of understanding and scale of change.

3.5.2 Partisan Mutual Adjustment

In his work "The Intelligence of Democracy" (1965), Lindblom argues that decision-making is a process of adjustment and compromise which facilitates agreement and coordination. Partisan mutual adjustment, he observes, is the democratic and practical alternative to centralised hierarchical controls. As Lindblom argues in his latest presentation, "...policy evolves through complex and reciprocal relations among all the bureaucrats, elected functionaries, representatives of interest groups, and other participants". (The Policy-Making Process, 1993).

Since 1959 when Lindblom first advocated incremental decision-making, there had been an apparent 'volte face' in his arguments. In 1977 and 1979, Lindblom attacks the idea of pluralism, offers a radical critique of the business, and believes that there is a need for drastic radical change in a whole range of policy areas, and that the whole world is in need of more than simply incremental change. But societies "seem incapable, except in emergencies, of acting more boldly than in increments". Such are the constraints on decision-making and on the way in which policy agendas are narrowly formulated, he has grave doubts as to the possibility of drastic change in policies.

In 1959 we have observed Lindblom, the pluralist, as an advocate of incremental decision-making as the most effective mode of policy-making. Yet, Lindblom of the 1970s through 1990s is indeed a more radical critic of incrementalism as a 'political ideology'. He has developed his ideas about the policy-making process as moving slowly, but has continued to maintain that it can be improved.

Both Y. Dror and A. Etzioni, however, are not convinced that incremental model is either a realistic or a satisfactory normative account of decision-making. To Dror, this model is profoundly conservative and is suitable in those situations where policy is deemed to be working or is satisfactory, where problems are quite stable over time, and where there are resources available.

The incrementalist approach to policy-making is in a dilemma, critics note that its deductive power is constrained by the difficulty in specifying what an increment is whilst its degree of confirmation is reduced by the typical occurrence of shift-points in policy-making which defy the interpretation of the incrementalist equations as stable linear growth models. For all its simplicity this model seems to be too crude in the context of the complexity of policy process, Taken as a whole, the central concern of his work has been to explore the constraints that shape decision-making in the modem policy process.

Incrementalism, it may be noted, has not been a major concern of his writings so much as the relationship between power, human knowledge and politics, Lindblom (1993) notes, "Hence, anyone who wants to understand what goes wrong in the effort to use government to promote human well-being needs to comprehend how power relations shape and misshape public policy — and to probe how power relations might be restructured to produce better policy".

3.6 DROR'S NORMATIVE-OPTIMUM MODEL

Yehezekel Dror (1969) finds Lindblom's 'Incrementalist Model' of decision-making quite conservative and unsatisfactory. He believes that incremental approach is unjust as it creates

a gap between those who have more power and those who have little power. The latter category of people will find it difficult to bring about change. In place of incremental and rational models, Dror offers an alternative model which seeks to accept the :

i) need for rationality (in Simon's definition);

ii) need for introduction of management techniques for enhancing rationality of decision-making at low levels;

iii) policy science approach (Lasswell's term) for dealing with complex problems requiring decisions at the higher levels; and

iv) need to take account of values and irrational elements in decision making.

Dl-or's (1964) aim is to increase the rational content of government; and build into his model the 'extra-rational' dimensions of decision-making. Dror calls it 'normative optimalism', which combines core elements of the 'rational' model (such as, the measurement of costs and benefits) with 'extra-rational' factors that are excluded from the 'pure rationality' model. He argues, "what is needed is a model which fits reality while being directed towards its improvement, and which can be applied to policy-making while motivating a maximum effort to arrive at better policies."

Thus, Dror presents a modified form of rational model, which can move policy-making in a more rational direction. Policy analysis, he argues, must acknowledge that there is a role of extra-rational understanding based on tacit knowledge and personal experience. He argues that the aim of analysis is to induce decision-makers to expand their thinking to deal better with a complex world. Thus in place of a purely rational model, Dror (1989) puts forward a more coinplex model of about 18 stages, which include the following main stages.

Metapolicy-making stage includes processing values; processing reality; processing problems; surveying, processing, and developing resources; designing, evaluation, and redesigning the policy-making system; allocating problems, values and resources; and determining policy-making strategy.

Policy-making stage covers sub-allocating resources; establishing operational goals with some order of priority; establishing a set of their significant values with some order of priority; preparing a set of major alternative policies including some 'good ones'; preparing reliable predictions of the significant benefits and costs of the various alternatives; comparing the predicted benefits and costs of the various alternatives, and identifying the 'best' ones; and evaluating the benefits and costs of the 'best' alternatives and deciding whether they are 'good' or not.

Post-policy-making stage includes motivating the execution of policy; executing the policy, evaluating policy-making, after executing the policy; and communication and feedback channels interconnecting all phases.

To Dror, this 18-stage model operates at two interacting levels, that is, rational and extra-rational. For example, in phase 1—"the processing of values"—decision-making involves specifying and ordering values to be a general guide for identifying problems, and for policy-making. At the rational 'sub-phase' this involves "gathering information on feasibility and opportunity costs"; and at the extra-rational sub-phase decision-making will involve "value judgements, tacit bargaining and coalition-formation skills".

In this 'normative-optimalism' combin- both descriptive (in the real world decision-making is driven by rational and extra-ration- es) and prescriptive (improving both the rational and extra-rational aspects) appro- ags a radical reform of the public policy-making process. According to Dror, - ring about changes in the personnel (politicians, bureaucrats and expert:: - and process (to improve systematic thinking and integrating experts into p- ell as in the general environment of policy-making.

Thus, his model aims to analyse the real world, which involves values and different perceptions of reality, and creates an approach that combines core elements of the rational model with extra-rational factors.

Dror is of the concerted view that a long-term strategy to improve public policy-making is necessary for human progress. Dror comes close to Lasswell, but there is a significant point of difference between the two. While Lasswell saw the policy sciences as having a "role in enlightenment, emancipation and democratization", Dror seems to have very little regard for the public in policy-making. To quote Dror (1989): "But if the success of democracy depended on the people's ability to judge the main policy issues on their merits, then democracy would surely have perished by now".

His model of 18 stages is seen as a cycle, which has its 'rational' and 'extra-rational' components. It may be of relevance to point out the real strength of Dror's analysis is not in terms of the prescription dimension of his model, so much as in the framework it provides to analyse the policy-making process.

3.7 POLITICAL PUBLIC POLICY APPROACH

A significant departure from the rationality model is the Political Policy Process Approach espoused in policy-making. Writers, such as, Laurence Lynn and Peter deLeon have advocated this approach.

In this approach, public policy-making is viewed as a 'political process' instead of a 'technical process'. The approach emphasises the political interaction from which policy derives. Lynn sees public policy as the output of government. According to him, public policy can be characterised as the output of a diffuse process made up of individuals who interact with each other in small groups in a framework dominated by formal organisations. Those organisations function in a system of political institutions, rules and practices, all subject to societal and cultural influences. According to Lynn, individuals in organisations function under a variety of influences, and "to understand policy-making it is necessary to understand the behaviour of and interactions among these structures: individuals holding particular positions, groups, organisations, the political system, and the wider society of which they are all a part." Therefore, instead of involving particular methodologies, policy-making in this approach is a matter of adapting to and learning to influence political and organisational environments. The policy-making process is constrained by such factors as institutions, interest groups, and even 'societal and cultural influences'. The focus in the political process of policy-making approach is on understanding how particular policies were formed, developed, and work in practice. Lynn argues that policy-making "... encompasses not only goal setting, decision-making, and formulation of political strategies, but also supervision of policy planning, resource allocation, operations management, programme evaluation, and efforts at communication, argument, and persuasion".

Lynn uses 'managers of public policy' who operate under a variety of influences. He observes, "Public executives pursue their goals within three kinds of limits: those imposed by their external political environments; those imposed by their organisations; and those imposed by their own personalities and cognitive styles". Rather than being technical experts, effective managers of public policy, observes Lynn:

i) establish understandable premises for their organisation's objectives;

ii) attain an intellectual grasp of strategically important issues: and identify and focus attention on those activities that give meaning to the organisation's employees;

iii) remain alert to and exploit all opportunities, whether deliberately created or fortuitous, to further their purposes;

iv) consciously employ the strong features of their personalities as instruments of leadership and influence; and

v) manage within the framework of an economy of personal resources to govern how much they attempt to accomplish, and how they go about it.

Under this approach, managers use appropriate means to achieve their goals. They work in this way because their own positions are at stake.

3.8 MIXED APPROACH BY HOGWOOD AND GUNN

In addition to the above approach, there is another approach described by Hogwood and Gunn which is mixed and concerned both with the application of techniques and with political process. They value the political aspects of the policy process. Hogwood and Gunn set out a nine-step approach to the policy process, which they say is 'mixed', that is, can be used for both description and prescription. The nine steps of their model are:

i) deciding to decide (issue search or agenda-setting);

ii) deciding how to decide;

iii) issue definition;

iv) forecasting;

v) setting objectives and priorities;

vi) options analysis;

vii) policy implementation, monitoring, and control;

viii) evaluation and review; and

ix) policy implementation, succession, or termination.

James Anderson's model of the policy process reduces these stages into five. They include: i) problem identification and agenda formation; ii) formulation; iii) adoption; iv) implementation; and v) evaluation.

The policy process model by Hogwood and Gunn is a typical one. While its roots may be in the rational model, it does deal with the political aspects of the policy process. They argue for a "process-focussed rather than a technique-oriented approach to policy analysis". It is seen as "supplementing the more overtly political aspects of the policy process rather than replacing them",

As to the main difference between the two approaches, it may be emphasised that policy analysis looks for one alternative, that is, best or satisfactory from a set of alternatives and is aided by empirical methods in their selection. On the other hand, political public policy sees information in an advocacy role, that is, it realises that cogent cases will be made from many perspectives, which then feed into the political process.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This Unit dealt with the variou ap; and models of public policy. It emphasised on the public policy as an important urea of nd public management. Or public policy could be considered a distinct paradig i.con ith public management. As a separate approach, it is useful in studying the inter ion overnment that produces policies, and its people for

whom the policies are intended. There are now two public policy approaches each with its own methods and emphases. The first is labeled as 'Policy Analysis'; the second, 'Political Public Policy'.

From a policy analysis perspective, Putt and Springer argue that the function of policy research is to facilitate public policy process by providing accurate and useful decision-related information. The skills required to produce information, which is technically sound and useful lie at the heart of the policy research process, regardless of the specific methodology employed. Attempting to bring modern science and technology to bear on societal problems, policy analysis searches for good methods and techniques that help the policy-maker to choose the most advantageous action.

There is another approach (Lynn) that emphasises on political interaction from which policy is derived. Here, it is rather more difficult to separate public policy from the political process and sometimes it becomes difficult to analyse whether a particular study is one of public policy or politics. Public policy is seen to be different from the traditional model of public administration. Public policy is, therefore, more 'political' than 'public administration'. It is an effort to apply the methods of political analysis to policy areas (for example health, education, and environment), but has concerns with processes inside the bureaucracy, so it is more related to public administration. The policy analysts use statistical methods and models of input-output analysis. However, the political public policy theorists are more interested with the outcomes of public policy. Whatever may be, both public policy and policy analysis remain useful in bringing attention to what governments do, in contrast to the public administration concern with how they operate, and in applying empirical methods to aid policy-making. Public policy-making, as distinct from its study, now seems to be a mixture of these perspectives, and managerialism or public management combines them.

3.10 KEY CONCEPTS

Black Box — It is a model of system analysis popularised by David Easton (1965). Black box denotes the processes, whereby the processing of inputs takes place to produce outputs/ ,outcomes. It applies the logic of cybernatics, propounded by Norbert Weiner to understand political processes and behaviour. The cybematics is the science of control systems theory – via feedback relationship. Positivist assumes and believes that there is a definable cause and effect relationship between supports, demands, and outputs. However, critics argue that it is too mechanical and rigid.

Bounded Rationality : The concept appears in Herbert Simon's Administrative Behavior. According to Simon, human behaviour is neither totally rational nor totally non-rational. It has its limits. Hence, decisions are never the 'best possible' outcomes in choice behaviours on the part of decision-makers, but are only solutions that 'satisfy'.

Meta Policy-Making : A meta policy is 'policy about policies', that is, decisions regarding who will make the policies, how, what authority and responsibility would be prescribed at each stage etc.

3.11 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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3.12 ACTIVITIES

1) Outline the characteristics of the institutional approach to policy-making and point out its shortcomings.

2) Critically examine the policy-making models and suggest best suitable model/models for a specific policy.

3) Differentiate Lindblom's incremental approach from Dror's Normative-Optimum model.