



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

On

Democracy and Public Policy in India: Choices and Outcomes

(26th & 27th February 2020)

Organized by

Department of Political Science

Jamia Millia Islamia

New Delhi - 110025

Under

UGC-SAP-DRS-I

CONCEPT NOTE

The Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia proposes to organize a two day (February 26th and 27th 2020) **International Seminar** under its **UGC - SAP DRS- I** Programme on *Democracy and Public Policy in India: Choices and Outcomes*.

Public policy can be broadly defined as an officially enacted and ready to implement course of action by a government to achieve specific objectives or goals of a ruling political regime in a state. Policies may constitute part of a government's professed ideology or a response to an unanticipated situation. In the making of policy a variety of actors come into play (governmental and non-governmental) including individual, institutional or civil society actors who may act as pressure groups for enacting preferred legislation. Policies are designed to respond to "identified" problems, reflect the compromises between competing interests and in reality underlie theories, both normative and empirical.

Perhaps it needs to be stated that policy can never be totally apolitical and emerge from a non contested domain. Some theoreticians of policy "sciences" would like to believe that fact and value can be separated, that policy can be made neutral or apolitical. It cannot be under emphasized that "politics" is the essence of public policy. There are competing groups in society, based on their different interests with regard to allocation of resources and their authority over the policy making process. These influences (constituting the political) affect each stage of the process, from agenda setting to the identification of alternatives, assessment of the options and finally, choosing the most favorable one for legislation. So far as the field of policy studies (enquiry and research) is concerned, theories are of crucial importance. They are needed to diagnose problems, project future impacts of new regulations, and evaluate the effectiveness of past policy interventions.

The transition from an era of "government" to that of "governance" has brought the shaping and execution of policy to the forefront of seminal changes in the operational context in both developed and developing countries in the 21st Century. Since World War II, the role and functions of government has witnessed an unprecedented increase, largely due to the fact that development was considered a statist activity. Since the 1980's the world has seen a reverse swing, with globalization inaugurating a paradigmatic shift of emphasis towards a market driven, private sector led development model, with a basic philosophy to roll back the "administrative" state.

India is going through a time of significant change. Economic growth, technological advancements, rapid urbanization, a growing youth population, a closing gender gap and

escalating impacts of climate change are coming together to redefine India's role and mandates as a major world power. While these developments bring new opportunities, times of transition can be both creative and challenging. India could not achieve many Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) particularly in hunger, health, nutrition, gender and sanitation.

We need to revisit all our existing policies in every sector to see whether they will meet the requirements of our changed demography, fluctuating economy, rapid urbanization, and jobless growth resulting in differentiated citizen access to good education, housing, health care and jobs.

The literature on policy studies reveals three broad approaches to the understanding of public policy. One emphasizes political economy and the interactions of state and civil society and different interest groups. Another examines the histories and practices linked to shifting discourses and how these shape and guide policy problems and course of action. The third gives primacy to the roles and agency of individual actors and / or institutions in the making and implementation of public policy. The invited paper presenters are requested to integrate these varied perspectives rooted in different schools and disciplines – to explore how actors and institutions shape policy narratives and outcomes while being constrained by them at the same time.

The linkages discussed in the Concept Note are sought to be identified through the following **six themes:**

- 1. Policy Studies as a Discipline: Theoretical Frameworks**
- 2. The Policy Making Process in Democracies: Advocacy, Activism and Enactment.**
- 3. Shaping Public Policy in the LPG Era: Actors and Institutions**
- 4. Public Policies in 21st Century India: The Vision, the Means and the Making of Policy.**
- 5. Sectoral Public Policies in India – Implementation Studies.**
- 6. Policy Studies Enquiry and Research: Identifying Gaps and Developing New Paradigms.**

Book of Abstracts & Prelude Volume of the Seminar

The Department of Political Science is coming out with a Book of Abstracts & Prelude Volume of the full-length papers submitted by presenters from across the country on the first day of the International Seminar.


Prof. Rumki Basu
Seminar Convenor