REIMAGINING PUBLIC POLICY IN NEPAL: PROCESS, PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT

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Role of State vis a vis Market and Society

- State as sole actor
- State as a facilitator
- State as regulator
- State as a partner

Nature of State

- Democratic/ Liberal
- Autocratic
- Soft / hard

Q: What type of state is one dealing with?
Concept

- Public Policy:
  - A principled guide to action
  - A purposive and consistent course of action
    - a response to a perceived problem,
    - formulated by a specific political process,
    - adopted,
    - implemented,
    - enforced by a public agency
What is public?
Relating to or involving people in general rather than being limited to a particular group of people (Cambridge Dictionary).

Who is public?
Ordinary people in general; the community.
Is synonymous with: people, citizen, subject, general public, electors, electorate, voters, taxpayers, ratepayers, residents, inhabitants, citizenry, population, populace, community, society, country, nation, world, everyone
What does imagine / reimagine mean?

- Form a mental image or concept of
- Synonymous with— visualize, envisage, envision, picture, form a picture of see, in the mind's eye, conjure up, conceptualize
- Reimagine-- to imagine again or a new especially: to form a new conception of
- Q: Do we agree with these conceptualizations?
Why To Reimagine Policy?

Probably because

- Context has changed (social, economic)
- State people relationship (political)
- New possibilities
- New constraints
- New challenges
- New opportunities
- New knowledge/experience
Theory

Public Policy Making In A Functioning Democracy

- Issues raised/ observed/ identified/ owned
- Agenda set
- Enter political domain--interest / power play
- Convert into program/ action
- Enter into bureauocratic domain
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Input for Agenda / program revision and implementation
Public Policy Making Process

- Policy
- Agenda
- Issues Picked up
- Issues
- Program
- Implementation
- Evaluation
Theory

Issue Identification

- Issues are everywhere
- Some issues are forgotten
- Some issues are observed and picked up
- Issues have life
- Q: Why some issues are picked up and not others?
Theory

Agenda Setting

- Popular agenda
- Expert professional agenda
- Community
- Beurocratic/technocratic agenda
  - Vertical track
  - Horizontal track
- Q: Whose agenda is it?
Theory

Political Influences

- Individuals and groups
- Education, advocacy
- Mobilization of interest groups
- Competing interest groups
- Experts and Politics

Q: How is politics of expertise played out?
Implementation And Evaluation

Bureaucratic Influence

- Rules regulations
- Guidelines
- Capacity
- Accountability

Q: How bureaucracy influences policy making?
Theory

Policy Making Arena

- National
- Sectoral
- Regional (provincial)
- Local
- Community
- International

Q: What level of policy are we making?
Pre B.S 2007 times

- Autocratic, control
- Strong government
- No citizen but subjects-- receivers
- Rulers made / led policies
- Protection of rulers interests
- National interest synonymous with rulers interests
- Subservient Bureaucracy / experts/ influential
Panchayat time

- De-concentration/ decentralization
- Guided people’s participation
- Ultimate decision maker --the sovereign/ crown
- Between Citizen subject
- Technical and Beurocratic influence

Q: How did administrative deconcentration affected policy making and implementation?
Policy Making In Nepal

Post 2047

- Sovereign people
- Plural democracy
- Soft state- civil society power
- Liberal, multiple actors, plural interests, democratic
- State, market and civil society collaboration
- Populist statements without serious cost/ benefit analysis
- Manipulation at the implementation level
- Lobbying influencing/ constituency oriented
- Decentralization/ localization
- International influences– idea / resources/ interests
Policy Making In Nepal

Policy Making Post 2047

State
Facilitate
Regulate
Guide
protect

National
Actors

Civil
Society
Advocacy
Social issues
Justice
equity

Market
Efficiency
Investment
Management
Growth
Policy Making Post 2063

Post 2063 Transition

- Politically Transitional context
- Weak State (Displaced / absent State)
- Weak Civil Society
- Weak Private Sector
- Weak local community
- Strong International Partners
- Weak and Discredited Political Parties
- Bureaucracy/ united / activism / assertive

Q: Did bureaucracy led government/s made better policies?
Policy Making in Nepal

Donors Influence

- International Donors/ partners influence
- Policy Idea
- Design
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Resource
- Expertise
- Interest groups (esp. NGO)
- Q: How much influence do donors exert? How?
The Constitution 2072

- Decentralization
- Regionalization
- Inclusive / proportionally representative
- Regional power and interests
- Stronger State/ more interventionist
- Weaker Civil Society and Private Sector
- Stronger local community
- Weaker International Partners

Q: How will this new structure affect policy making?
Unknown. Can we learn from Panchayat era?
Reimagining Public Policy in Nepal

Political System

- Democratic
- Inclusive
- Participatory
- Consensual
- Diverse and Pluralist
- Sovereign
- Interdependent
- Socialistic
Reimagining Public Policy In Nepal

Aactors After Constitution 2072

State
Active
Regulator
Guide
protective

National Policy Actors

Private Sector
Efficiency
Investment
At the top
Competitive
Outward looking

Cooperatives/
community organization
At the base
Participatory
Social capital

Civil society
Policy Making in Nepal

Assessment

- Model of a democratic country new exercise
- Some are better analyzed for cost and capacity implication – get implemented
- Some sectors do better than others
- Many are populist statements which lack serious analysis – lack implementation
- Democratic exercise in policy making is new
- Issue based politics is recent phenomenon
- Donors influence directly and indirectly esp. through knowledge and resource.
Opportunities

- Technology
- New Tools
- New knowledge
- Experience
- Access to information communication
- Urbanization
- Empowered people
- Globalization
Reimagining Public Policy In Nepal

Understand Predominant Political Culture

- State Back In
- Strong Center
- Smaller civil society (esp. NGOs)
- Decentralized implementation
- Federal, Provincial, and Local
- Consensual at the community level
- Conflictual at the national level
- Anticipatory” not “reactive”
- Reflective
Imagine beyond normal

- “Nepal not a yam between two rocks”
- Prosperity possible
- Remember the diversity and variation
- Build on own experience/what has worked
- Understand opportunities and constraints
- Be prepared to manage “angry”/“empowered” and “informed” public
- Policy Making with issue based politics
End

Thank you for your Attention