**Public Policy-Making Mechanism and Way Forward**

[Hafiz Ahsaan Ahmad Khokhar](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/hafiz-ahsaan-ahmad-khokhar/)

October 19, 2022

A sound public policy-making process is always founded in high-quality decisions at the top government level and then to have strong follow-up, a time-bound implementation strategy is devised. The salient features of a successful public policy always require empowerment, accuracy, openness, public participation, transparency, legitimacy and proper time limit execution.

Public policies can generally be defined as system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and showing the funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives for the welfare and betterment of their citizens with the best priorities and its time limit execution.

Under the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Executive is responsible in its respective areas of jurisdiction at federal, provincial and local government levels for conceiving, formulation and development of public policies at different government levels and to ensure its implementation strategy for the wellbeing of citizens of Pakistan.

However, a strong perception prevails in Pakistan that the existing governance and administrative structure has not only failed to evolve and provide a national, provincial and local comprehensive institutional mechanism for making good, result-oriented and consistent policies but has also failed on implementation side both in areas of social and human development in Pakistan. This eventually has resulted in Pakistan being a country lower in ranking in many areas of governance, human & social development sectors, policy making, foreign direct investment and ease of doing business.

There are many factors behind general public policy failures in Pakistan, like weak government, lack of proper institutional legal framework and infrastructure, corruption and absence of strong public oversight mechanism.

There are many factors behind the general public policy failure in Pakistan, which include weak government & lack of proper institutional legal framework & infrastructure, corruption, lack of visionary leadership & political will, absence of strong public oversight mechanism, insufficient or irrelevant financial allocations, deploying incompetent inefficient human resource, lack of continuity in successive government policies, overlapping in government functioning, lack of centralized approach to implementation and last but not the least the poor policy towards preparation, evaluation and monitoring system at different levels. It is an established fact that poor governance and failure in public policies in a number of ways have increased non-transparency in government affairs, increased unbridled discretion of govt officials which has finally lead to corruption, favoritism and huge drainage of public resources.

There is no question in a prudent mind that not only good governance and formulation of public policies are very important for the welfare of citizens but implementing of these are with transparent mechanism simultaneously are very important for their better results. Potential financial and human resources of a country could be used in a better way if there is consistency and prescribed time limit with good productive output while drafting and in implementation of public policies.

There is also urgent need to review the whole process of policy making in Pakistan and to identify as well the areas of policy preparation, efficiency and effectiveness at all levels i.e. federal, provincial and local government levels with strong implementation plan. The planning Commission of Pakistan and the relevant agencies in provinces should take lead on the subject. Training to legislatures and the executives are also very important in areas of formulation and implementation of successful public policies in Pakistan

It is also important for a vibrant, citizens oriented and successful public policies in Pakistan that governments at all levels in addition to their own capacities must utilize the potential of relevant professionals and to adopt best international practices during all stages of public policies.

There is also a need to take action in the best interest of country and for the success of public policies that to have well home work by state institutions before formulation of public polices with considering future impacts, to increase the role of public participation, to get proper professional consultation for proper fixation & utilization of public resources and to enhance the government institutional structure and capacities at all levels of government starts from conceiving the ideas, drafting, preparation, evaluation and execution of public policies with the time-bounded factors of implementation. All these steps can provide best results and would improve Pakistan’s ranking in governance and policy making among community of world, which ultimately would promote the utilization of resources in best way for the citizens of Pakistan.

*The writer is a practicing lawyer at Supreme Court and has served as Chairman, Federal Excise & Sales Tax Appellate Tribunal and Senior Advisor Federal Ombudsman. He can be reached at: hafizahsaan47@gmail.com.*