

Policy Decision Making Process

- a) Describe the steps in the policy making process giving reference to any public policy that the government has made recently.

Policy making is the process that governments commit to take actions to solve a particular issue. Policy decision making process could be changed according to legal process, institutes involved with and many other reasons. One of the key policy decisions Sri Lanka made in recent past is that introducing mandatory quote of 25% for women in local governments in 2018 local government election. This is the result of long social and legal process.

Sri Lanka is among the countries which are female representative in political arena is the lowest in the world. Considering female representation in the world, Sri Lanka is ranked 182 place out of 190 countries according to Inter parliamentary union (Dissanayaka, 2019). Similarly, in the local governments, female representation is lesser than 2%. There was long standing demand from civil society and women's organizations to introduce a mandatory quota for women representation in local governments (Bandara, 2018). Suggestions of women's organizations presented to the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform (PSCER) which is appointed in 2003 to reform the election system of Sri Lanka. Based on the report, ministry of local government and provincial council was drafted two bills as an amendment to Municipal Councils Audience, the Urban Councils Ordinance and Pradeshiya Sabha Act. No 15 of 1987 (Kodikara, 2014). Even though, there were no any suggestions related to women representation in first time, the bill which was gazetted and tabled in parliament second time suggested a combined discretionary quota for youth and women after the immense pressure put by activists (Kodikara, 2014). However, this bill was challenged by women's organizations in the Supreme Court. Supreme Court decided that bill is valid according to constitution.

Latter, in 2017, government decided to ament the local authority election act again. Cabinet decided to introduce long standing demand which is mandatory 25% quota for women's representation in local government authorities (Bandara, 2018). Then it went through legislation process to bill becomes a law. Bill need to be published in gazette at least 7 days before enter it to order paper of parliament to aware the public about new act (Siriwardhana, 2011). Their perspective and opinion can be considered to change the bill. Then the bill need to be presented to the parliament by the minster long title of the bill is read by secretary general of parliament which is called as first reading (Siriwardhana, 2011). In second reading, general principles of the bill are

discussed. Committee stage is the next stage of law passing process. Bill is referred to a committee of whole parliament. In this stage, details of the bill are comprehensively discussed and parliament may amend, delete, or add new clauses to the bill (Siriwardhana, 2011). Next stage is the reporting stage which only consider the change made in the committee stage (Siriwardhana, 2011). In final stage of law making process is third reading. In this stage bill is read third time and passed. Once the speaker endorse it, bill becomes a law of the country (Siriwardhana, 2011). Having passed through this process, Local Authorities Election (Amendment) Act was passed as act no. 16 of 2017. Once, it became a law, then government service take actions to implement it. Election commission is the main responsible authority to implement this.

According to new law, political parties need to submit two nomination papers. One paper includes members for wards within each local authority area. 10% of that need to be allocated for women. Second one is additional persons list and 50% of it need to be allocated for women (Dissanayaka, 2019).

- b) Distinguish the national policy making model and the incremental approach to policy making. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of the rational policy making model in applying to countries like Sri Lanka.

There two main policy making models called rational policy making model and the incremental approach. According to Cairney (2012), rational policy making model can be identified as a method that elected policy makers identify issues, clarify aims and objectives, study different options before select the suitable solution. Perfect information are available and solutions are made based on them (Dunn, 2007). Further, there is no resistance from the non-elected state officials who implement the policies. In this method. Policy makers follow pre-defined logical process. There need to be key factors in rational policy making model which are identifying the goals, prioritizing the goals, identifying the different options to achieve the goals and conduct cost benefit analysis for different options (Hayes, 2017).

Incremental approach of policy making refers that making policy decisions marginally different from the past practices (Lindblom, 1964). Therefore, this approach can be identified as continuation of previous policy with limited changes. Further, incremental approach involve negotiation and mutual adjustment. This method is considered more efficient, practical and democratic approach for policy making.

When it comes to rational policy making model, there are both advantages and disadvantages in applying to country like Sri Lanka. Main advantage of rational model is that it can make influential transformation. Further, rational model is well organized mechanism which develops comprehensive analysis and it could eliminate many barriers which create bureaucratic processes of Sri Lanka. Rational model is a centrally managed approach which is applicable for a unitary state like Sri Lanka which make the most of the laws and polices centrally and hierarchical state sector. Rational model is a long term approach and possibility provide long lasting solutions for the issues.

Main disadvantages of rational models are that it is costly and time consuming. Therefore, practically, it is difficult approach to follow in a developing country. In Sri Lanka, policy decision making is highly volatile and politically influenced. Therefore, it is difficult to implement a time consuming approach like rational model in inconsistence policy making environment. Further, in current dynamic environment, there may not be continuous relationship between issues and

solutions which create time consuming model. Significant changes could also create uncertainty in more conservative society like Sri Lanka. On the other hand, incremental approach provide opportunity to review the effectiveness of outcomes overtime. Considering both advantages and disadvantages of rational policy making model, incremental approach can be identified as the most suitable approach to country like Sri Lanka.

c. Explain the role of the political executive and the administrative executive in the content of policy making, giving special reference to Sri Lanka

Three main pillars of state are executive, legislator and judiciary. Executive consists with two parts; political executive and administrative executive. Political executives are appointed among elected representatives. Their responsibility is to make national policies. Political executives are not permanent they are changed time to time based on sovereignty of the people. Political executive links legislature to administrative executive. Administrative executive is the body which administrating and implementing polices passed by the legislature (Buchanan, 2013). Their main responsibility is to assist to political executives to implement their policies. Administrative executive should be consistent despite the changes of political executive. It is also called as technical executive since it provide technical support to political executive.

In Sri Lanka, executive consists with executive president, cabinet of ministers and public service. Executive president and cabinet of ministers including other ministers such as state ministers and deputy ministers are come under political executive and public service is come under administrative executive. Executive president is elected by people of the republic and whole country becomes one electoral division when it comes to presidential election. The president is the head of state, the head of the government, the head of the cabinet, the head of the executive and the commander in chief of the armed forces (Siriwardhana, 2011). President tables his or her policy statement which has mandate at inaugural session of the parliament. President has the executive power and president delegate executive powers to cabinet ministers. Presidents appoints prime minister, cabinet ministers and other ministers. Ministers are selected among parliament ministers. President decides on the number of ministers and their portfolios, if necessary with the consultation of prime minister. Cabinet ministers are responsible to develop policies under their portfolios. Cabinet meeting held in every week headed by the president and prime ministers. Cabinet papers are prepared with the support of administrative executive and tabled by cabinet ministers. Ministers are collectively responsible for cabinet decisions and answerable to parliament (Siriwardhana, 2011).

Sri Lanka has considerably higher numbers of administrative executives. Administrative executives are selected through formal process which consider education and professional qualifications. Secretaries for ministries are appointed by the president and they are the

administration heads of the ministries. There is independent commission called public service commission to appoint, promote, transfer, dismiss or take disciplinary actions to other officers (Siriwardhana, 2011). There is hierarchical structure in public service in Sri Lanka. They technically assist to political executives to develop policies. There is a guide called establishment code for public services to follow(Siriwardhana, 2011). Further, circulars are issues to provide guidance to public service.

Both political executives and administrative executives need to work together to achieve the goals and objectives. Further, there need to be proper coordination and communication between political executives and administrative executives to develop policies. Policy inconsistency is one of main issue of Sri Lanka. Therefore, there need to be national policies which keep consistence despite of political changes. While having mutual understanding between both parties, administrative executive should not be controlled by political executives.

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