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Editorial

The public policies, as the factor of socio-economic growth and democratic politics, invite examination in context of – pushing an issue on policy agenda, its formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and making it to reach the real beneficiaries. The process involves several queries like - why an issue is brought on policy agenda? Who took decisions and in what political conditions? Who would be the beneficiary and how? These queries make an imperative to look into the nature of policies made in India in last two decades.

The scholarship on ‘policy’ has categorised the policies into four major categories - namely State-centered that refers to the policies taken under influence of political management, institutions and personality of reformers, Contingencies-centered refers to identity politics for diverting electorate from the main issue, Society-centered refers to reconciliation of dominant interest groups for political mileage and finally Centered to external pressures (globalisation, Bretton Woods institutions etc). Now the question is - which one of the above categories are implied in policy process in India in the present century? It is quite difficult to make water-tight compartments of this classifications, however, these factors can be examined in the policy process in recent socio-economic and political conditions in India.

Further, paradigmatic shifts in the policy process have been witnessed in India in present century, particularly owing to conditions of globalisation, IT revolution and new social movements. Some Western scholars like R Rorty, Colin Crouch, Dommett and others have ventured to define the policy formulations in context of post-democracy features and working of democratic political institutions. They argue that the policy process, even in developing nations, have been heavily influenced by two major factors - accelerating the economic growth by considering the corporate sector as engines of growth and secondly, introducing policies on the advice of experts instead of people’s choices. As such, tough policies are initiated without considering its conduciveness to the given socio-economic milieu. Now the question is whether the policy initiatives in India have been influenced by these narratives?

In the light of the above conditions and queries, the present issue of Bihar Journal of Public Administration has been devoted to ‘Policy Reforms in 21st Century in India’. Even after wider circulation of the theme, we could get analysis of only few of the policies. The policy initiatives like ‘Make in India’, ‘Digitalizing India’, ‘Swaksha Bharat Abhiyan (SBA)’, ‘Skilling India’, etc could not be covered by this issue of the Journal. Policy reforms in context of governance, environment, clean energy, food security, rural livelihood, consumer right protection, tax policy like (GST), demonetization, broader economic reforms, part of foreign policy reforms etc have been covered by the present issue in terms of policy process in the present century. Needless to mention the details of examination of the individual contributions on the policies covered by the present issue. It will not be out of place to mention that analysis of some policies like SBA, women empowerment, good governance, dalits’ plight etc. have been published in the previous issue of the Journal.

Finally, the editors express gratitude to the referees and contributors. However, the editors take the sole responsibility of the mistakes, if any. Suggestions for improvement in the journal are solicited.

Dr. R.K. Verma
Editor

Contents

Editorial	iv - v
1. Public Governance and Reforms: Reinventing the Bureaucracy <i>Sushma Yadav</i>	1-12
2. Policy of Rural Livelihoods in Asia: A Cross-Country Analysis <i>S.K. Singh</i>	13-25
3. Policy of Consumer Protection (CP) in India: Effectiveness of CP Act 1986 and Prospects of CP Bill 2015 <i>Suresh Misra and Sapna Chadah</i>	26-41
4. Politics of Economic Reforms in India: A Review of Interpretations <i>Jos E. Mooij</i>	42-59
5. Change in the System of Governance: India's Dominant Policy Imperative <i>T. Prasad</i>	60-69
6. Tax Policy Reforms in India in 21st Century: A Study of Goods and Services Tax <i>Nihora Prasad Yadav</i>	70-76
7. Food Policy Reforms in 21st Century: Some Aspects of Food Security Act 2013 in Bihar <i>Archana Kumari</i>	77-84
8. Policy on Environment in India: A Study of Politics and Economics of the Process <i>Ravindra Kumar Verma</i>	85-98
9- भारतीय विदेश नीति : विश्व राजनीति में भारत की बढ़ती भूमिका <i>रामकुमार</i>	99-104
10. भारतीय विदेश नीति एवं दक्षेस : एक समीक्षा <i>शंकरप्रसादसाह</i>	105-109
Book Review <i>Professor L.N. Sharma</i>	110-111