NR49 / An Indian Perspective on Public Policy

Topic : Research

Chair : Satyajit Singh (University of California Santa Barbara)

Second Chair : Shailaja Fennell (University of Cambridge)

Third Chair : Namrata Chindarkar (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Panel Proposal for ‘Public Policy Praxis in the Global South: Building Coherence and Capacity for Future Challenges’, 6th India Public Policy Network Conference | June 1 to 4, 2026, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru An Indian Perspective on Public Policy Satyajit Singh, Shailaja Fennell & Namrata Chindarkar Should policy issues in India be analyzed using the same perspectives and standards as those in the developed world? Should policymaking in India be guided by the “best practices” established by the Global North? This panel calls for papers that argue for a different institutional framework to address the trajectory and milestones defining Indian public policy. It notes that the weaknesses seen in Indian public policy originate from adherence to international templates. This approach has led to ignoring the specificities inherent in the country—such as economic resilience, security, gender, and identity—that cannot be addressed through concepts like market failure, which are typical of international public policy approaches. Ideas and measures for Indian development must be grounded in detailed descriptions and robust evidence to improve the provision of legal rights, including property rights, to marginalized communities. It is also crucial to analyze policy failures arising from the adoption of international templates and to shift toward institutional regulations better aligned with access to and adoption of new opportunities, such as digital technology, AI, and international and strategic regional alliances. It can be argued that no other country in the world can match India's diversity and complexity. With its complex history, development path, evolving democracy, deeply plural social fabric, and now high ambitions for growth and global influence, policymaking in India remains a uniquely challenging endeavor. In recent years, India's policymaking landscape has undergone several significant paradigm shifts. First, the narrative has shifted from viewing the government as the primary provider to embracing "more governance, less government," fundamentally changing perceptions of the government’s role in policymaking. There is now increased involvement from non-state actors—such as the private sector, civil society, and citizens—in shaping policies, which has improved state capacity and spurred policy innovation. Second, central planning has been replaced by policy coordination and cooperative federalism, with important implications for policy formulation, implementation, and capacity across sectors. Third, efforts to promote evidence-based policymaking and digital governance aim to enhance transparency, accountability, and agility, although their impact on policy effectiveness still needs full assessment. Lastly, a proactive and risk-taking approach is emerging in policymaking, addressing complex issues like inequality, climate change, and artificial intelligence instead of avoiding them. These paradigm shifts and issues merit closer examination, and this panel aims to provide that.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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