NPD01 / Pathways Towards Indianizing Public Policy Curriculum for Unique Needs of Indian Society

Topic : Pedagogy

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Education has social functions. This position was restated in the 2025 Conference organized by the International Public Policy Association. The question is whether social science education is providing students with contextually relevant science and effectively aligning them with right values. This question is more pertinent to public policy education because it intends to train students to assume professional positions and exercise power to shape our society, nation, and beyond. This objective requires paying close attention to the problems of our society, facilitating critical thinking, enabling relevant values, and training students to address those issues by applying relevant knowledge. However, to follow this path, there is a need to begin discussions with policy scholars on generating useful policy science that has been taught and effectively applied to resolving our social problems. To achieve this broad objective, the panel modestly aims to invite public policy scholars to participate in this critical conversation. The panel frames the broad research question of how to prioritize contextually relevant public policy education, avoiding the pitfalls of Western policy literature. In short, the panel focuses on Indianizing our policy education to make it relevant and effective for addressing our immediate social problems. Indianizing means using vocabulary, concepts, practices, and frameworks that reflect the lived experiences of the immediate society outside of campus boundaries and carry knowledge on resolving social problems. The panel advocates for an inner-to-outer spatial journey, focusing our scientific lens, classroom discussions, cases, or examples that critically reflect on established academic practices to serve the social functions effectively.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The rapid expansion of public policy education in Indian educational institutions (Mukherjee and Maurya, 2022) warrants a careful assessment of Western abstract and sometimes irrelevant concepts and frameworks that are often laden with assumptions, which are often adopted in the policy discipline without much critical scrutiny. While other disciplines are struggling to decolonize their curricula, policy educators

can avoid colonizing evolving public policy education in India. Several dangers are associated with adopting Western literature. First, the borrowed material and concepts might not be relevant to the Indian context, which is characterized by colonial history and widespread socio-cultural and political diversity. Second, without a thorough examination of inherent assumptions, such material is likely to produce students who are skilled at verbalizing concepts but would be less effective in practising in Indian situations. Third, overall, the opportunity to train policy students with an appropriate curriculum for the effective transitioning of Indian society through policy education would be lost. In light of these concerns, this panel categorically asserts the importance of critically examining Western theories before adopting them in policy education in India.

The panel aligns with the conference theme, as it aims to initiate a discussion on how future policy challenges can be addressed. The panel expects a discussion on emerging classroom experiences of how Western course material, particularly in theoretical, methodological, or empirical contexts, is found to be inappropriate for Indianizing policy education. It calls for critical reflection on the emerging public policy curricula in India and how they can be made relevant to the Indian educational needs. The panel contributes by developing a basket of public policy education experiences from teachers or practicing teachers who have experienced and identified the pitfalls of adopting Western policy education designs and have avoided or revised their curricula to make them effective for Indian contexts.