NR08 / Rights-based Policymaking in India: The Past, Present and Future of Public Policy Praxis in the Global South

Topic : Research

Chair : Ramya C (ASCI Hyderabad)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

One of the significant shifts in the Indian policymaking landscape post-1990s has been the rights-based approach to policymaking. These rights-based legislations- for information, work, forest, and education ushered in a transformation from welfare to legally enforceable entitlements for the citizens, both at the national and sub-national levels. As documented by some researchers, there is an immense contribution of the rights framework to the Indian social security system in India, which was driven by nationwide social movements. The support of organisations like the World Bank and the IMF has further bolstered the rights-based agenda, thus making it a cornerstone of the development agenda. This global shift has also been significantly influenced by the United Nations, which has spearheaded the promotion of human rights through a Rights-Based Approach (RBA) that encompasses social, cultural, economic, and political rights. However, a thorough review of the literature points to the lack of theory-building or scholarly contributions about such trends in countries like India.

In this context, this panel explores how India's rights-based agenda presents the problems and prospects for public policy praxis in the Global South. It attempts to explore the context-specific scenarios of India and the Global South in furthering such approaches to policymaking, far from the Global North. Accordingly, the following research questions are proposed:

i. How does India's rights-based policymaking compare with similar approaches of other countries?

ii. How do rights-based legislations in India influence policy coherence in certain sectors in India?

iii. What are the theoretical lenses that position rights-based approaches to development?

iv. What is the role of politics in formulating and implementing rights-based policies?
v. How can rights-based approaches be adapted to address the new-age challenges, such as climate change, data privacy, and artificial intelligence?
vi. How have rights-based policies reshaped state-citizen relationships and accountability mechanisms in India?
vii. What are the implementation gaps and capacity constraints that hinder the effectiveness of rights-based legislation in India?

CALL FOR PAPERS

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In this context, this panel invites papers that critically examine the rights-based approaches to policymaking to contextualise the broader questions of public policy praxis in the Global South. Accordingly, we welcome contributions on the following themes. The papers can be in the form of theoretical or empirical studies or

case studies on the proposed themes.

§ Comparative approach of rights-based legislation
§ Rights-based legislation and its effect on policy coherence
§ Theorising rights-based approaches to development
§ Politics and Political Economy of adopting, implementing and sustaining rights-based approaches
§ Rights-based legislation and improvement of the quality of life of citizens
§ Applicability of rights-based approaches to other emerging areas
§ State-citizen relationships and accountability mechanisms in India?
§ Implementation gaps and capacity constraints that hinder the effectiveness of rights-based legislation