

Advanced Management Program in Public Policy (AMPPP)

Policy Walk Report

23-25 September 2021, New Delhi

A walk in the 'Policy Corridors'

Policy walk is a significant component of the AMPPP which is organized after the completion of all the four terms of the program. The aim of the program is to provide the cohort an intellectually stimulating exposure to the real policy making ecosystem through visits to various public offices. The cohort of 33 individuals consisted of 16 government officials from IAS, IPS, IRS, IRTS etc. and 17 policy professionals from the private sector. This year's Policy Walk was 3-day long event held from 23rd to 25th September 2021 at Taj Palace, New Delhi and various public offices based in New Delhi.

The Policy Walk experience had 9 sessions from eminent dignitaries consisting of legislators, ambassadors, senior bureaucrats, political experts, consultants, heads of think tanks of the government etc. This experience enabled the AMPPP cohort to build an understanding of complex policy issues and provided them a platform for engagement with policymakers to learn about the nuances and multifaceted nature of public policy making in the ever evolving political and socio-economic context. The nature of all the sessions was interactive which fuelled interesting discussions, giving rise to practical insights into various dimensions of public policy.

DAY - 1

On 23rd September (Day 1), the Policy Walk began with an interactive discussion with **Shri. Ram Madhav, Member, Board of Governors, India Foundation**. While speaking in detail about democracy, role of Parliament and judiciary in democracy and the type of governance / government essential for India, Shri. Ram Madhav highlighted the dire need for a perfect balance between the organs of the state to achieve the results that democracy is meant to bring in. There were insights shared about the emerging challenges of narratives on recent global trend of the Legislative wing becoming all powerful and controlling the policy narrative. He leveraged examples from the philosophy of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Gandhiji advocating the actual need of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' along with his emphasis on decentralization of power, right up to the last mile, for the democracy(s) to survive and thrive. He interacted with the government officials on how policies can be shaped and formulated for empowering the citizens at the grassroots of India. The issue of gender neutrality was also discussed in a completely new light viewed from a Policy lens. He emphasized the need to view things through a gender-neutral lens and inculcate the same values in the younger generations.

The second session of Day 1 was held at British High Commission, New Delhi. As the key speaker, **Ms. Katy Budge, Minister Counsellor, Political Strategy and communication, FCDO, British High Commission** spoke about how UK views India within the region and referred to the 10-year vision document on collaboration that was signed by India and UK Prime Minister with three prime focus areas of UK government in India – climate, health, and trade. Moreover, information on the coordination work being done by British High Commission in India and common agenda for both the countries for cooperation was discussed with special focus on the multiple cultural interfaces between the two countries, such as scholarships - STEM, British Council, Chevening among others. Ms. Katy Budge also emphasized upon the importance of understanding the problem, role of the country in solving it and benefits of problem solving through multiple routes of culture, grants, arts, and education. It was an enriching session providing insight into the relevance of foreign policy and power of people-to-people connect in strengthening diplomatic relations.

The AMPPP students keenly participated in the most awaited third session of Day 1 wherein the key speaker was **Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister State (I/C) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Science & Technology, MoS - Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance, Government of India**. The session was organized at the Civil Services Officers' Institute (CSOI), New Delhi. Hon'ble Minister took keen interest in the composition of the AMPPP cohort and highly appreciated the AMPP programme and the idea that civil servants along with private sector professionals jointly exploring fresh ideas and governance deliberations. Hon'ble Minister emphasized how such courses are essential as they are great levellers and allows a free flow of learning across parties and break barriers that exist. In line of these views, he highlighted how 'lateral entry' into civil services can prove to be a path-breaking reform and booster for governance and policy making in India. Dr Jitendra also spoke about the 'Karmayogi programme' started by Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) of the current government that has led to upskilling of public servants across and geographies. He mentioned the extent of consideration of details while designing such a revolutionary learning program, so that it becomes great leveller for the Indian bureaucrats. He also emphasized the importance of technology in education and research and pointed out that technology has given the option to everyone to learn and become an expert in any field. Now in government too, project planning is becoming theme-based, cutting across multiple sectors with inter-departmental coordination, in place of the earlier approach of individual departments working in their own silos. Since, Hon'ble Minister is a medical doctor himself, he also discussed the importance of the 'Make in India' concept for manufacturing of medical equipments and medicines along with the challenges in the medical domain. He concluded the session with his inputs on the advancements in technology and a recent initiative which he has undertaken as the Minister of Department of Science & Technology (DST). He mentioned that theme-based stakeholder meetings have been initiated wherein new developments in the field of Engineering, Medical sciences and R&D efforts in Science, Biotechnology, Atomic Energy, Space technology through CSIR have been brought under one roof and discussed as a single theme.

Day 1 ended with an immensely enriching panel discussion moderated by **Shri. Rakesh Bharti Mittal**, Vice Chairman, Bharti Enterprises and Member, ISB Executive Board. The panel discussion was driven by distinguished panellists like **Dr Sanjaya Baru**, Distinguished Fellow, United Service Institution of India (USI); **Mr Shyam Saran**, Former Foreign Secretary of India; **Mr Vinod Duggal**, IAS (Retd.), Former Governor of Manipur and **Mr RP Singh**, IAS (Retd.), Former Chairman NHAI.

- Mr. Duggal, Advisor to WHO in Geneva during the Ebola epidemic spoke about the impact of Covid on India and India's response.
- Mr. Shyam Sharan spoke on India-China conflict and how India responded proactively from a position of strength. He also talked about India's Atmanirbhar Bharat plan and how the current time is an opportune moment to focus on manufacturing sector to galvanise out India's economy, while taking advantage of the western countries' conscious attempt at reducing their supply chain dependence on China.
- Mr. R.P. Singh's perspective interestingly was on the various provisions like SARFEASI, IBC among others that could be explored by banks to take control of assets and recover NPAs of defaulting companies.
- Dr. Sanjaya Baru's discourse was on crony capitalism and role of Media in a democracy in an Indian context.

DAY - 2

The second day of the Policy Walk commenced with a session at Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. The key speaker for the session was **Lt. Gen. SL Narasimhan, Dir. General, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies and Member, National Security Advisory Board**. He provided the details of the Centre wherein he highlighted that the Centre has 6 verticals which focus on various aspects of China. The Centre works with all the government departments and offers recommendations. Broadly, the crucial role of the Centre in publishing customised research reports for targeted audience within the government was the central focus. The further discussion ranged from trade relations between India- China, role of India's intent to invest in emerging technologies for strengthening the Indian Defense and manufacturing capabilities. The discussion also revolved around how role of ideology in a country and its contribution towards the narrative building process in the context of evolving geopolitical scenarios. India's standing and potential role was also discussed ahead of a scenario where in the coming years, there is likelihood of a 'New World order' with multiple power centres rather than just one or two superpowers. He also emphasised upon the need of the hour where it is time for India to encourage technology-based entrepreneurship.

After discussion on role of 'Hard power' in policy narratives, the AMPPP cohort was exposed to the role of 'Soft power' in policy narratives. The next session was held at Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The key speaker was **Dr. Vinay Sahasrabudhe, President- Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Government of India**. He spoke about soft diplomacy where the country's cultural prowess is used to spread influence. Dr. Sahasrabudhe also spoke of how Bollywood and music spread across the world and now education scholarships are also being used to bring more such instances into its softer power. He informed of the various activities of ICCR in detail like scholarships to study in India (for African countries, neighbouring countries and Giritiya countries). Moreover, the efforts of setting up cultural offices in other countries, awards, annual conference on Indology, sending cultural troops to other countries, and organizing exhibitions. He also informed that ICCR has a publication division, which is working on translating Indian Books in foreign languages and have plans developing their own OTT platforms for faster spread of relevant content. He explained how it was evident that India is more misunderstood than understood, and therefore the importance of cultural relations in changing the misconceptions leveraging the impactful tool of 'Soft power'.

To explore new avenues of progress from a policy perspective, the AMPPP cohort was taken for session at Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) where they were familiarized with the path-breaking work being done in the Technology Policy domain in India. **Mr. Ajay Prakash Sawhney, Secretary, MEITY** was the key speaker of the last session of Day -2 of Policy Walk. He spoke of the Ministry's groundwork for Aadhar card and digital payments and growing dominance of IT and ITES industry in India. He drew analogy of how technology is the "Toli (group) of new kids on Holi", bubbling with ideas and energy to colour the world with new possibilities and how India can be test bed for the world. Moreover, he highlighted the galloping startup ecosystem of India which is producing 'Unicorns' at a rapid pace facilitated by the efforts of the Ministry in providing them a tech-driven and growth-conducive space to excel. He summarised by emphasizing on the role technology played in transforming India into 'Digital India' which fought an unprecedented challenge like COVID with resilience. He mentioned that as COVID accelerated the speed of adoption of digital technologies and India with its technology prowess emerged at the heart of this change and 'New Normal'.

DAY - 3

On the last day of the Policy Walk, the AMPPP cohort was taken to the Invest India office where two sessions were held, one with the Invest India team and another with Director, Social Impact practice at Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Mr. Vishal Kumar, AVP, Project Monitoring Group of Invest India along with his team members from different verticals gave an overview of Invest India and its objectives of providing consultation to Government of India in the fields of investment promotion and facilitation. He highlighted that Invest India has 4-5 main verticals-Investment Promotion and facilitation, Waste to Wealth, AGNII (igniting ideas), Startup India and the Project Monitoring Group. The AMPPP cohort was familiarized with the unique function and pivotal role served by Invest India as a first reference point for any investors looking at market entry support.

Ms. Seema Bansal, Partner and Director, Social Impact practice, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in her session primarily focused on the work being done by BCG in the public sector and covered projects pertaining to systematic transformation that her team has implemented in various states. She presented BCG's work in the education sector in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and made an interesting observation that India has the largest safety net programs. Moreover, she shared her learnings of where their strategy didn't meet ground realities of policy making. Ms. Seema Bansal extensively elaborated upon the behavioural interventions in the Delhi Schools under its new Education model that has been gaining positive traction among public policy practitioners and enthusiasts.

The key to effective and sustainable policy making lies in gauging and understanding the lasting impact any policy is going to have in the stakeholders' lives after the policy is implemented. Hence, a nuanced outlook is required to be fostered among the policy makers and practitioners. The policy walk served the exact purpose of polishing the outlook of the cohort by exposing them to experienced personalities who have over the years navigated through complex terrains of policy making. The policy walk also served as a platform for interactive discussion on emerging challenges in the public policy sphere and how these can be approached in the years to come by leveraging the past learnings. In all, the last leg of the AMPPP program i.e. the 'Policy Walk' was a perfect culmination experience blending the year-long theoretical learnings with a practical experience in the policy corridors of New Delhi.
