

**Question :-**

How policies are formulated and implemented? What are the key issues reside with them in Pakistan?

### 1) Introduction :-

In Pakistan, policy formulation and implementation is a multifaceted process that involves identifying societal needs, formulating strategies and translating them into actionable steps through government agencies. Once a policy is adopted, its implementation requires coordination across various levels of government, allocation of resources and effective execution by relevant institutions. However, the effectiveness of this process is often hindered by challenges such as political instability, corruption, weak institutional capacity and a lack of public participation which create significant barriers to achieve desired outcomes and addressing country's development needs.

## 2) Defining the concept of public policy :-

Public policy is defined as :-

"Whatever government choose to do or not to do."

**(Thomas Dye)**

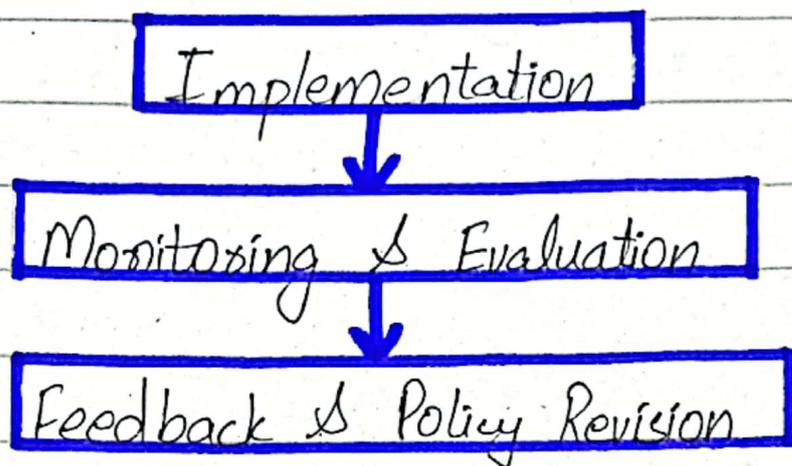
Public policy refers to a set of actions, decisions and laws undertaken by government institutions to address societal issues, meet public needs or achieve specific goals.

## 3) Steps for Policy making :-

Problem identification  
↳ Agenda Setting

Policy Formulation

Decision Making



## i) Problem Identification & Agenda Setting:-

In the first step, policymakers recognize an issue that requires attention. The government, through various institutions like ministries, research bodies, or public opinion, identifies critical issues that need to be addressed.

### **For example - "Education Reform"**

In **2009**, Pakistan's government identified the poor state of education as a significant national issue. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education Commission set the agenda for improving literacy rates and educational infrastructure across the country.

## ii) Policy Formulation:-

In this step, various policy options are developed and debated. Relevant government departments, ministries and stakeholders collaborate to create a framework or blueprint for addressing the identified issue.

### Example :- "Pakistan's National Health Policy (2015)"

After extensive consultations with health-care experts and stakeholders, the government of Pakistan formulated a National Health Policy to address issues such as access to healthcare, infrastructure and shortage of medical professionals.

## iii) Decision Making:-

Once the policy options are on the table, decisions are made by key political figures or bodies, often after consideration of public feedback, expert opinions and party agendas.

## Example:- "The 18th Amendment (2010)"

This amendment granted provinces control over a range of issues, including health and education, and redefined the federal-provincial relationship.

### iv) Implementation:-

After a policy is decided upon, it is put into action through various government agencies. This involves the following steps to execute the policy:-

- creation of detailed plans
- allocation of resources
- coordination among different government bodies

## Example:- "The Benazir Income Support Program (2008)"

It was launched to provide financial assistance to low-income families, especially women. The implementation of this policy involved the establishment

of a national database, payment mechanisms and partnerships with local governments.

## v) Monitoring & Evaluation:-

The effectiveness of a policy is continuously monitored through various evaluation mechanisms; e.g;

Government agencies

NGOs

Research organizations

## Example:- "National Financial Literacy Program"

This program aimed at increasing the financial literacy in Pakistan, government and various organizations monitored the success of training programs by surveys and reports.

## vi) Feedback and Policy Revision:-

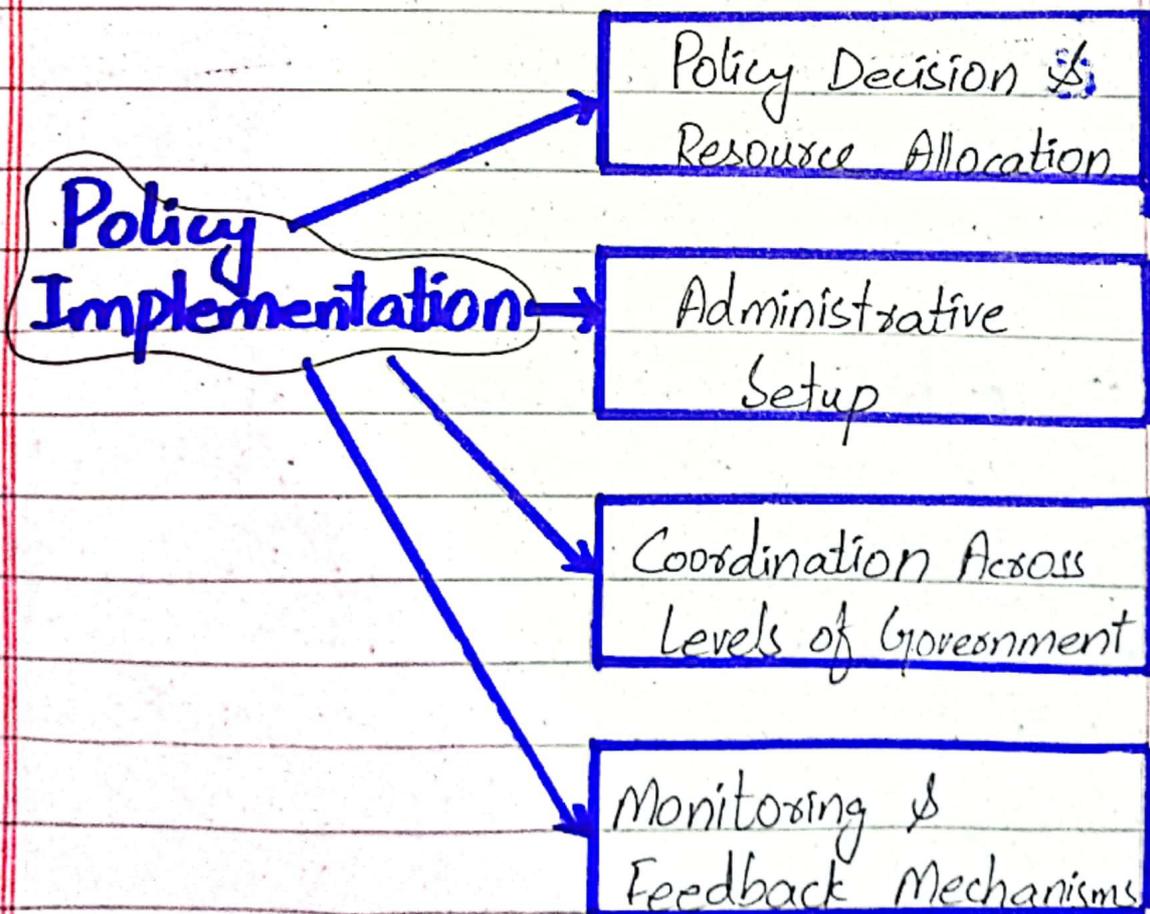
Based on the evaluation results, policies may be revised or updated. Feedback from citizens, experts and

media also plays a critical role in shaping how a policy is adapted or adjusted over time.

## Example - "The Ehsas Program (2020)"

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan revised its earlier social welfare policies to provide cash support to millions of families.

### 4) Explaining the process of Policy Implementation:-



## i) Policy Decision and Resource Allocation:-

It involves the resource allocation to relevant ministries, departments or agencies. This includes budgetary allocations, staffing and planning for infrastructure needed to carry out the policy.

### Example:- "Ehsas Program (2020)"

This program aimed at providing financial assistance to low-income families during COVID-19 pandemic. The program required:-

- a) allocation of substantial funds
- b) setting up disbursement mechanisms
- c) ensuring that the target population was accurately identified and reached.

## ii) Administrative Setup:-

The government sets up administrative machinery, including the assignment of responsibilities, to specific ministries and departments. These entities are tasked with ensuring

practical implementation of policies.

### Example:- "Polio Eradication Campaign"

It is a national program to combat polio. Local authorities and healthcare workers were involved in execution of vaccination campaigns. This step included:-

- a) creating mobile vaccination units
- b) designing awareness campaigns
- c) tracking progress in eradicating the disease.

### iii) Coordination Across Levels of Government:-

The federal government may devise a policy, but its implementation is often carried out by provincial or local authorities.

### Example:- "National Education Policy"

Provincial governments are responsible for implementing policies at regional

levels, e.g., Sindh government might adapt national policy to suit local needs, such as adjusting curriculum or teachers training programs.

#### iv) Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms:-

Government bodies collect data, monitor outcomes and assess whether the objectives of policy are being met.

#### Example:-

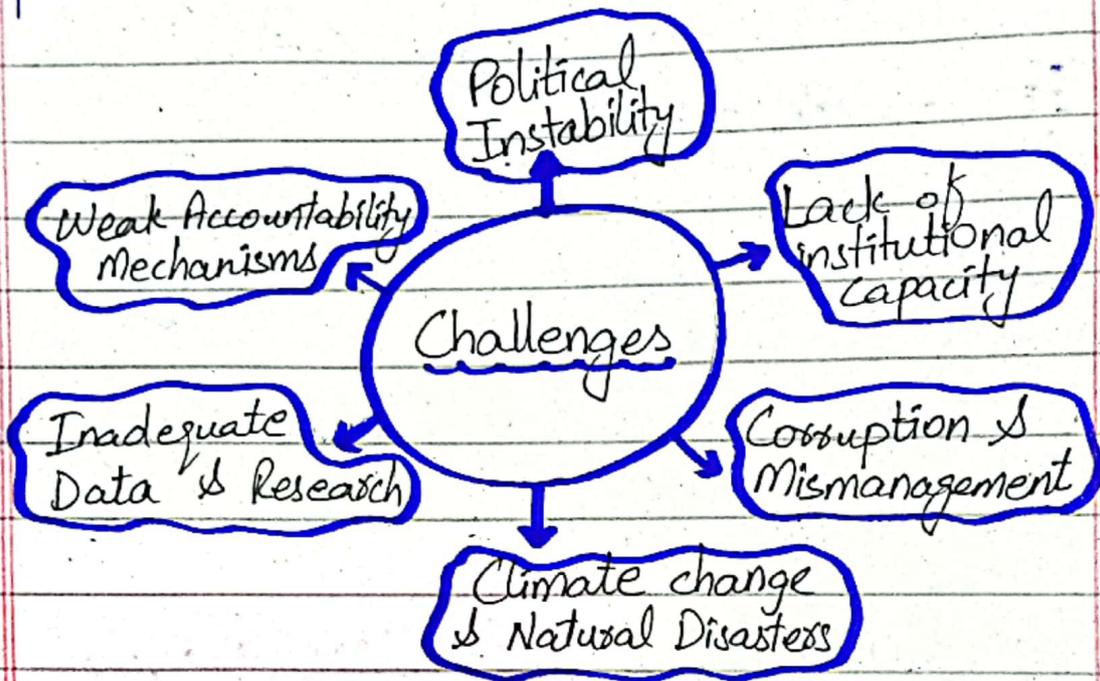
#### Benazir Income Support Program

The collected data helps in ensuring correct distribution of funds and in adjusting policy as needed to improve its efficiency.

#### 5) Challenges to Policy making and implementation in Pakistan:-

Policy making and implementation in

Pakistan face numerous challenges due to a combination of structural, political and socio-economic factors.



### a) Political Instability :-

Frequent changes in governments disrupt long-term policy continuity. Different political parties often reverse or abandon policies initiated by their predecessors.

**For example :-**

The back-and-forth stance on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects under successive governments caused delays in their execution.

## b) Lack of institutional capacity:-

Limited technical expertise and overlapping responsibilities hinder policy formulation and implementation.

### For example:-

The "water crisis" in Pakistan is exacerbated by poorly managed water resources and overlapping authorities between federal and provincial agencies.

## c) Corruption & Mismanagement:-

Corruption undermines the efficient allocation of resources, with funds often diverted from intended projects.

### Example:-

According to Transparency International's 2023 report, Pakistan ranks poorly in Corruption Perceptions Index (140 / 180 countries), reflecting widespread governance issues.

## d) Climate Change & Natural Disasters :-

Pakistan is highly vulnerable to the climate change, which often derails development plans and necessitates emergency responses.

**For example :-**

The **2022 floods** displaced over 33 million people and caused an estimated \$ 30 billion in damages, severely impacting policy focus on long-term infrastructure development.

## e) Inadequate Data & Research :-

Lack of reliable data hinders evidence-based policymaking.

**For example :-**

The absence of accurate population data before 2023 census led to discrepancies in planning for urban infrastructure and public services.

## f) Weak Accountability Mechanisms:-

Absence of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks resulted in poor execution of policies.

### For example:-

The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), despite its success in reducing poverty, had faced criticism for issues like mismanagement and beneficiary misidentification.

## 6) Conclusion:-

The policy formulation and implementation process in Pakistan faces significant hurdles, ranging from political instability and bureaucratic inefficiency to lack of resources and external dependencies. Pakistan needs a transparent and inclusive policy-making process with a robust monitoring and accountability framework. In this way, poor situation can be improved.