

[Part - II]

Q.2. Answer:

Short Termism in Pakistan's Development Planning: An Administrative Appraisal

Introduction

Pakistan possesses an elaborate and formally structured development planning apparatus, comprising constitutional provisions, statutory institutions, and periodic planning instruments. From the planning commission and five year plans to vision 2025 and sectoral frameworks, the architecture of long term development is neither absent nor conceptually weak. Yet, despite this extensive planning mechanism, governments are persistently criticized for prioritizing short term, ad hoc objectives at the expense of sustainable long term development. This criticism is largely valid. The core problem does not lie in the absence of plans, but in systemic administrative, political,

and institutional failures that undermine continuity, implementation, and strategic commitment.

Evolution and Strength of Pakistan's Planning Mechanism

Pakistan adopted centralized economic planning soon after independence, inspired by developmental state models. The Planning Commission was designed as a technocratic body responsible for long term visioning, resource allocation, and coordination among federal and provincial entities. Early Five Year Plans, particularly during the 1960s, reflected a coherent long term orientation toward industrialization, infrastructure development, and human capital formation. In later decades, medium and long term frameworks such as vision 2010 and vision 2025 continued this tradition on paper, demonstrating that Pakistan's planning mechanism is institutionally robust and intellectually capable.

However, Planning in Public Administration is meaningful only when it translates into Sustained policy execution. In Pakistan, the gap between Planning and performance has widened over time, giving rise to a pattern of short shifting long term development needs.

Political Instability and Discontinuity of Policy

The foremost fault lies in Chronic Political Provincial instability and frequent regime changes. Successive governments often abandon or dilute long term plans initiated by their predecessors, replacing them with politically visible, short term projects aimed at electoral gains. Development planning becomes a partisan exercise rather than a national commitment. Large infrastructure schemes are launched for symbolic impact, while long gestation investments in education, health, water management, and climate

resilience remain neglected.

For instance, Education Sector reforms and Population Planning Strategies have been repeatedly redesigned without being allowed sufficient time for maturation. This discontinuity erodes institutional memory and disrupts the cumulative benefits that long term development requires.

Politicization of Administration and Weak Implementation Capacity

Another critical fault lies in the politicization of the civil service and the erosion of administrative autonomy. While planning documents emphasize evidence based decision making, implementation is often compromised by political interference in postings, transfers, and procurement decisions. Senior administrators are incentivized to deliver quick, visible outputs rather than long term outcomes that may only materialize beyond their tenure.

From administration perspective, this reflects a failure of results oriented management. Performance evaluation systems rarely reward long term developmental impact, encouraging a culture of short term compliance rather than strategic governance.

Fiscal Myopia and Development Recurrent Imbalance

Pakistan's fiscal structure also contributes significantly to short termism. A large portion of public expenditure is consumed by debt servicing, defense, and administrative overheads, leaving limited fiscal space for development spending. Even within development budgets, allocations are often revised mid-year to meet immediate political or economic pressures.

Long term projects in water shortage, urban planning, or public health require sustained financing across multiple years. However, the practice of annualized budgeting, coupled

With unstable revenue streams, lead to project delays, cost overruns, or outright abandonment. The result is a planning mechanism that articulates long term goals but finances them in a fundamentally short term manner.

Center Province Coordination and Post Devolution Challenges

The Eighteen Constitutional Amendment significantly altered Pakistan's administrative landscape by devolving key social sectors to the provinces. While devolution aimed to enhance responsiveness and efficiency, it also weakened national level long term planning due to poor coordination and capacity disparities among provinces.

The Planning Commission's was reduced, yet no equally effective intergovernmental planning mechanism emerged. As a consequence, long term national priorities in education standards, healthcare systems, and environmental policy

became fragmented, reinforcing short term, localized decision making over integrated development planning.

Donor Dependence and crisis Driven Governance
Pakistan's reliance on external financing further reinforces short termism. Engagements with international financing institutions often prioritize stabilization measures and quick fiscal adjustments over structural reforms.

Development planning becomes reactive, shaped by balance of payments crises rather than proactive long term strategy.

Energy sector reforms offer a clear example. Instead of sustained investment in renewable energy, transmission infrastructure, and governance reforms, successive governments have relied on emergency power projects to address immediate shortages, perpetuating inefficiencies and circular debt.

Conclusion

The criticism that Pakistan's governments short shift long term development despite an elaborate planning mechanism is well founded. The fault does not lie in the absence of planning institutions or technical expertise, but in political instability, administrative politicization, fiscal myopia, weak intergovernmental coordination, and a crisis driven governance culture. From a public Administration stand point, meaningful reform requires insulating planning institutions from political disruption, strengthening implementation capacity, aligning budgeting with long term objectives, and restoring continuity in development policy. Without addressing these structural and administrative deficiencies, Pakistan's planning will remain ambitious on paper but constrained in practice, perpetuating the cycle of short termism in public governance.

Q.3. Answer:

Purposes of Public Policies and Their Performance in Pakistan: An Analytical Perspective

Introduction

Public Policy constitutes the core instrument through which the State translates its vision, values, and priorities into concrete action. In Public Administration, policies are not merely statements of intent; they are authoritative decisions that allocate resources, regulate behavior, and shape socio-economic outcomes. The purposes public policies serve extend far beyond problem solving, encompassing governance, legitimacy, and societal transformation. An examination of these purposes, followed by an assessment of specific public policies in Pakistan, reveals how policy design, implementation capacity, and political commitment determine success or failure.

Purposes Served by Public Policies

At the most fundamental level, public policies exist to address collective problems that individuals or markets cannot resolve on their own. Policies provide structured responses to issues such as poverty, unemployment, public health, security, and environmental degradation. For instance, health policies aim to manage disease burdens and ensure access to basic healthcare, while education policies seek to enhance human capital and social mobility.

Public policies also serve a regulatory purpose by defining acceptable behavior and setting standards for individuals, firms, and institutions, and environmental safeguards. Industrial and environmental policies, for example, regulate emissions, labor conditions, and competition to align private activity with public interest. Another critical purpose of public policy

is distributive and redistributive justice.

Policies determine how resources, opportunities, and services are distributed across regions and social groups. Social protection policies, tenancy regimes, and subsidy structures are instruments through which the state attempts to reduce inequalities and promote social cohesion.

Public policies further function as tools of strategic direction and long term national development. Through development planning, innovation policies, and infrastructure strategies, governments signal priorities and coordinate public and private actors toward shared goals. In this sense, policy is a means of steering society toward a desired future rather than merely reacting to immediate problems.

Finally, public policies contribute to

political legitimacy and state credibility.

Effective policies enhance citizens' trust

in government by demonstrating capacity, responsiveness, and fairness. conversely, poorly designed or weakly implemented policies undermine institutional legitimacy and fuel public disillusionment.

Public Policies in practice: Illustrative Examples

The National Education Policy illustrates how public policy seeks to build human capital, promote equity, and foster national integration. Similarly, environmental policies such as the climate change policy aim to regulate resource use while preparing society for long term ecological risks. Economic policies, including industrial and trade frameworks, serve to stimulate growth, enhance competitiveness, and manage external balances. These examples demonstrate that public policies are multidimensional instruments addressing economic, social, and political

objectives simultaneously.

A Public Policy Success Story in Pakistan:

The Benazir Income Support Programme
one of the most frequently cited success
stories in Pakistan's public policy landscape
is the Benazir Income Support Programme.

Launched in 2008 as a social safety
net, its primary purpose was poverty
alleviation through targeted cash transfers
to vulnerable households, particularly
women. Over time, the program evolved
into a more structured and data
driven policy intervention.

The success of the Benazir Income
Support Programme lies in its relatively
sound policy design and institutionalization.

The adoption of a Poverty Scorecard and
later integration with the National Socio
Economic Registry improved targeting
accuracy, reducing political discretion
in beneficiary selection. By transferring

cash directly to women, the policy enhanced household welfare while contributing to female empowerment. Strong donor support, continuity across successive governments, and gradual administrative learning further strengthened the program's credibility and sustainability.

From a public administration perspective, the program succeeded because it combined political commitment with bureaucratic capacity and evidence based targeting, aligning policy objectives with implementation mechanisms.

A public Policy Failure in Pakistan :

Population Planning Policy

In contrast, Pakistan's population planning policy represents a clear case of policy failure. Despite being recognized as a critical development challenge since the 1960s, population growth remains persistently high, placing immense pressure

on education, health, employment, and natural resources.

The failure of Population Policy stems from multiple administrative and political

shortcoming. Policy goals were often ambiguously defined and weakly

communicated, leading to poor public ownership. Implementation suffered due to

fragmented institutional responsibilities

between federal and provincial governments, especially after devolution.

Cultural sensitivities, inadequate community engagement, and inconsistent political

backing further undermined effectiveness.

Moreover, Population Policy was rarely

integrated with education, health, and

women's empowerment strategies, reducing

its transformative potential.

This failure highlights a classical public

administration dilemma: Policy formulation

without sustained political will,

administrative coordination, and societal

but in results in limited impact, regardless of how long the policy has existed.

Conclusion

Public policies serve vital purposes in governance by addressing collective problems, regulating behavior, redistributing resources, guiding long term development, and enhancing state legitimacy. In Pakistan, the contrast between the relative success of the Benazir Income Support Programme and the failure of population Planning Policy underscores a critical lesson of public Administration. Policy outcomes depend not merely on intent, but on coherence between design, implementation capacity, political continuity, and social context. Strengthening this coherence remains essential for transforming public policies into effective instruments of national development.
