

APPROACHES TO PLANNING RATIONALISTIC AND INCREMENTAL APPROACHES, MIXED SCANNING APPROACH

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Abstract - After the Industrial Revolution, people started migrating from rural to urban areas in search of employment. Planning cities became a crucial process to cater the increasing population in urban areas. Rational model of planning used for planning cities has its own limitations. This research paper examines the mixed scanning approach to planning with a focus on the limitations of rationalistic as well as incremental approach. In 1967, Amitai Etzioni gave the concept of mixed scanning as a third approach to decision making to arrive at an effective solution in a time bound manner.

Key Words: Industrial revolution, Rationalistic approach, Incremental approach, mixed scanning approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

After the Industrial Revolution, people started migrating from rural to urban areas in search of employment. Planning cities became a crucial process to cater the increasing population in urban areas. Rational model of planning used for planning cities has its own limitations. It does not involve all the stakeholders and requires a lot of time. In 1959, Lindblom gave the concept of incremental approach to planning. But it was remedial in nature. In 1967, Amitai Etzioni came up with a third approach to decision making. He gave the concept of mixed scanning approach which rationally make decisions with consideration of time, resources and capability of individuals.

2. RATIONALISTIC APPROACH

Rational model of planning is a group-based activity. Goal identification and monitoring of the implemented outcomes are given equal emphasis as finding solutions. Deegan argued that rational approach is viewed as an ideal by the critics which simply can't be reached, due to the difficulty of acquiring accurate information and making decisions fair decisions as stakeholders are often not involved (Deegan, 2017).

2.1 Planning Process

The First step is to define the goals or objective clearly so that all the participant effectively thinks in the right direction. The second step is to come out with all the possible solutions. The each and every solution is assessed on the basis of its consequences when applied to the selected region. Criteria for assessment is also discussed to proceed objectively. Finally, the best plan is selected and implemented. Monitoring of the implementation of outcome is done on a long-term basis to evaluate the plan and modify future decision-making process similar in nature.

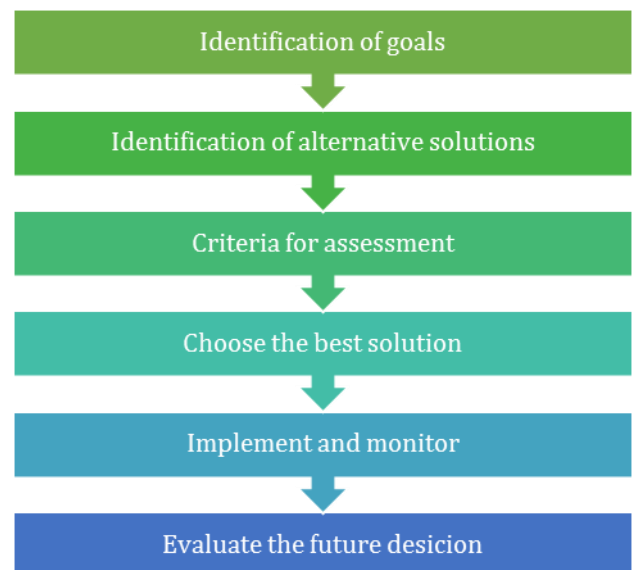


Fig -1: Rationalistic Decision-Making Process

2.2 Limitations

The rationalistic approach to planning has following limitations:

- It does not involve all the stakeholders.
- It assumes the participants have complete knowledge required for the process and all the information is correct (Lindblom, 1959, p. 80)
- It required large amount of time and information.
- It assumes no interference from authority in the decision-making process.

3. INCREMENTAL APPROACH

It was developed in 1950s by Charles E. Lindblom. It focusses on remedial solution for present rather than future oriented solution. It involves all the stakeholders to discuss on solution as well as redefine problem according to them.

3.1 Planning Process

The policy in discussion is first analysed to see the incremental change in it from the existing policy. Then only that change is discussed and solutions are proposed. Only some alternative solutions are selected to be discussed further among various stakeholders. Problem is redefined also in discussion among various stakeholders as the nature of this approach is to provide remedial solution applicable in present. As per the time the alternative solutions are discussed further. Finally, one solution is chosen and implemented in the concerned field (Etzioni, 1967)

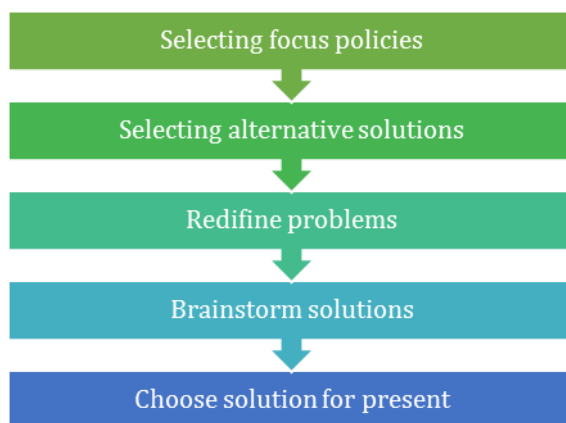


Fig -2: Incremental Decision-Making Process

3.2 Limitations

The incremental approach to planning has following limitations:

- The plan is not applicable in the long run.
- Redefining problem by one set of stakeholders may result in ignorance of other stakeholders, environmental factors, etc.
- The decision-making process is dependent on communication skills and power to influence.
- The plan is not monitored to check the efficacy of this approach.

4. MIXED SCANNING APPROACH

Rationalistic approach and incremental approach to planning are at two extreme ends in terms of time consumed in the process. Rationalistic decision making requires greater resources and incremental approach neglect various aspects which are not the interest area of stakeholders.

4.1 Concept

Mixed scanning sets the basic directions first covering all the aspects and then it involves stakeholders as per the need to avoid any assumption based decisions. This approach can be used in planning, sport, policy making etc. because in every field the objective has to be achieved in the given time frame. The principle of this approach is based on the quote “A good plan executed today is better than a perfect plan developed tomorrow” by George S Patton.

4.2 Examples

(Etzioni, 1967) describes mixed scanning with an example. Assume we are about to set up a worldwide weather observation system using weather satellite. The rationalistic approach would involve exhaustive survey of weather conditions capable of detailed observations but it will be costly to set up all the satellites with high resolution. Incremental approach would focus only on those areas and their surrounding where similar pattern was recorded in the recent past. It will not cover any area showing unexpected weather conditions. Mixed scanning approach would set up cameras at two levels. One broad angle camera will cover the whole earth but not at great detail. The level of cameras will zoom in on those areas revealed by first camera requiring more attention. This approach might miss to identify areas where a high resolution camera could only reveal the weather condition but it will not miss any obvious spot needed to be study for the present situation that incremental approach would have missed.

Another example could be of designing curriculum for school. Rationalistic approach would require all the teachers and experts to discuss what the topics to be included in the syllabus are. But educational experts may not be familiar with the expectation of students and teachers. In a fast-developing world, the monitoring and evaluation of plan implemented for the concerned area will not be useful. Incremental approach will consider only on that part of the syllabus which needs to be changed or added. Even after involving parents and students in designing curriculum, they could miss the demands of the society. Mixed scanning approach would set the basic guidelines and present it to be discussed among as many stakeholders as possible. Some societal level or environmental level demands if missed can be further added as per the discussions. Finally, a curriculum will be decided and the result will be evaluated for further decision-making process.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Rationalistic approach to planning came after the industrial revolution when people were migrating from rural to urban areas and population density was increasing in the cities. This approach did not give the importance to stakeholders’

opinion. In 1950s a new approach to planning was given by Charles E. Lindblom which was called incremental approach. Soon after, Amitai Etzioni gave a third approach to planning in the next decade. Rationalistic model which was in use for about a century was not completely wrong. An approach completely rejecting the preceding approach in use have many flaws in itself but it forms the basis for future more efficient approach. The sharing of ideas in the research community has led to quickly coming up with the corrected approaches and using them. Modern approaches to planning assert the importance of context directly or indirectly. Therefore, planners and concerned professionals must make themselves acquainted with modern as well as old approaches to come up with a unique decision-making process for every policy.

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BIOGRAPHIES



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