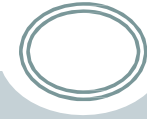# Policy Papers

STRUCTURE, PURPOSE AND CONTENT

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Definition

POLICY

What is Policy

- A set of ideas
- Set of plans
- Overall Plan
- Set of Principles
- Guidelines

What is a Policy paper

- White paper – Public access – Advocating a certain position

- Briefing paper - Overview

- Discussion paper – Ideas to be discussed

- Position paper – Arguing for a specific opinion

- Working paper – sharing ideas to collect opinion

What is a Policy paper

- Ideas
- Plan
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Measuring Impact

- Stakeholder mapping

Policy paper

CORE COMPONENTS

Inside a Policy paper

- Define the problem or issue. Highlight the urgency

- Analyze—do not merely present—the data. Your data should be replicable. •

- Summarize your findings or state recommendations. Provide specific recommendations

- Generate criteria for evaluating data. Explain the key assumptions and methodology

Inside a Policy paper

- Recommendations, develop a theory of change, and analyze the options and tradeoffs according to your methodology

- What are the pros and cons? What is feasible? What are the predictable outcomes?

- Address—and when appropriate rebut—counterarguments, caveats, alternative interpretations, and reservations

- Summarise

How

- Executive summary
- Structure
- Abstract
- Literature survey
- Data
- Conclusion

- The full paper – 6000 words plus 12 slides
- Format – APA

Examples

- **UK**

1. Introduction of New Digital Services Tax

2. Introduction of New Plastic Packaging tax/ Policy Paper

- **Singapore**

1. Public Consultation on Draft Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020

- **OECD**

1. Digital Tax Draft Proposal

Examples

- Abbott, R., & Bogenschneider, B. (2018). Should robots pay taxes: Tax policy in the age of automation. *Harv. L. & Pol'y Rev., 12*, 145.

- Garrett, D. G., Ohrn, E., & Suárez Serrato, J. C. (2020). Tax Policy and Local Labor Market Behavior. *American Economic Review: Insights, 2*(1), 83-100.

- Etim, R. S., Jeremiah, M. S., & Jeremiah, O. O. (2019). Attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria through effective tax policy incentives. *International Journal of Applied Economics, Finance and Accounting, 4*(2), 36-44.

- Bansal, C. N. K. Demonetisation and Its Impact on Direct Tax in India.

Income tax

- Ballard-Rosa, C., Martin, L., & Scheve, K. (2017). The structure of American income tax policy preferences. *The Journal of Politics, 79*(1), 1-16.

- Hoynes, H. W., & Patel, A. J. (2018). Effective policy for reducing poverty and inequality? The Earned Income Tax Credit and the distribution of income. *Journal of Human Resources, 53*(4), 859-890.

- Gerber, C., Klemm, A., Liu, L., & Mylonas, V. (2018). Personal income tax progressivity: Trends and implications.

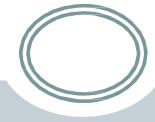- Oakes, N. (2018). Progressive Income Tax: The Tax Policy America Needs.

Other issues

- Insolvency
- Banking
- Employment
- Labour laws
- Farm sector reform
- Gender issues in tax reform
- Demand stimulus
- Evasion
- Innovation
- Education

- Healthcare financing
- Land reform

Abstract

- The Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the United Nations in September 2015 comprise 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at integrating matters related to sustainable development into the overall economic, environmental and social frameworks of countries. Whereas the SDGs have a global dimension, their action implementation depends on the level of priority different countries give to them, and on how sustainability issues compete with a country's main problems. The aim of this paper was to identify the main Sustainable Development Goals approached by experts from different geographic regions, according to their experience and research area, and to discuss the relation between these goals and the main local issues and challenges of each region. The methodology starts with snowball sampling to collect information from experts from all geographic regions, through contact networks of universities in different countries. With the information about the goals researched by the participating experts, an analysis of the relation between the study focus and the geographical regions of origin was conducted. A total of 266 specialists from North America, Latin America/Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe and Oceania participated in the survey. Based on the sample used, it can be said that there is a relation between the local problems or challenges observed in some regions and the main areas of interest of the surveyed experts, with a general emphasis on the study of goals 4, 11 and 13. Based on the data gathered, the paper presents a set of examples of positive and negative situations in the various regions, and considers the extent to which some Sustainable Development Goals are being pursued by research on a worldwide basis.

- Salvia, A. L., Leal Filho, W., Brandli, L. L., & Griebeler, J. S. (2019). Assessing research trends related to Sustainable Development Goals: Local and global issues. *Journal of cleaner production, 208*, 841-849.

Writing a Policy Paper

Policy Paper: An overview

Planning Checklist

- Which stage of policy making process are you trying to influence or address?
- Have you identified a clear policy problem to be addressed?
- Do you have substantial amount of evidence and literature available to support your claim?
- Do you have a set of possible policy options /solutions to provide to solve the identified problem?
- Do you have sufficient evidence to effectively argue for your chosen policy alternative over the others?

Purpose and audience

- What is the purpose of your paper?
- What do you/your institution want to achieve through the writing and publishing of this paper?
- Who is the primary audience for your paper?
- Who are the secondary audiences for your paper/policy ideas?

The Policy Paper: Structural and Textual Elements

Creating an Outline for the Policy Paper

1. Writing a working statement of intent/ purpose for the paper.
2. Problem description section of the paper
3. Next, note what points will be raised under each of these issues and what evidence could support these points.
4. Following the problem description, continue in the same manner for the policy options and conclusion sections.

Title of the paper

An effective title should be a combination of the following:

1. Descriptive, i.e., define the subject and problem addressed in the paper.
2. As clear as possible.
3. As concise as possible.
4. Contain important keywords.
5. Interesting for your readers.

Illustration

1.Benefits of Meditation for the Nursing Profession: A Quantitative Investigation
2. Why Mindful Nurses Make the Best Communicators
3. Meditation Gurus
4. Nurses on the Move: A Quantitative Report on How Meditation Can Improve Nurse Performance

All four of these titles may describe very similar studies—they could even be titles for the same study! As you can see, they give very different impressions.

Title 1 describes the topic and the method of the study but is not particularly catchy.
Title 2 partly describes the topic, but does not give any information about the method of the study—it could simply be a theoretical or opinion piece.
Title 3 is somewhat catchier but gives almost no information at all about the article.
Title 4 begins with a catchy main title and is followed by a subtitle that gives information about the content and method of the study.

Table of Contents

It is skeleton or an overview of the structure of the policy paper

A good table of contents should be easy to read, accurately formatted and completed last to be 100% accurate

The effectiveness of the table of contents in showing

1. The writer's organisation of the paper;
2. The system used to make a distinction between the main sections and subsections of the paper;
3. The effectiveness of headings and sub-headings.

Table of Contents

Abstract	Executive Summary
The abstract is a concise overview	The executive summary is a synopsis of the whole paper
It mentions the goals, method, and findings briefly.	An executive summary contains a far more detailed discussion than an abstract
The abstract *aims to gain readers' interest by providing a concise overview of the main topic and issues addressed in the paper.*	Overlap in this function exists because the executive summary also aims to interest readers in reading the whole paper.
Thus the abstract supports the paper, and the writers of the sample lead readers into the paper by referring directly to the paper throughout the abstract, from the beginning ("..this study examines qualitatively...") to the end ("These findings suggest that ...").	However, the primary function of the executive summary is to *satisfy the needs of those readers who will not read the entire paper and readers whose main interest is in the outcomes of the study findings and proposed policy recommendations, especially decision-makers*. Towards achieving this aim, the executive summary represents the whole paper by providing a synopsis of all principal parts and findings, as is the sample case.

Illustration

1. ABSTRACT: *Citizen participation in local government is usually considered to be an important mechanism for achieving development gains, strengthening local accountability, and empowering citizens. Using exploratory interviews and focused discussions, this study examines qualitatively the role of citizen participation in local government decision making and its contribution towards strengthening local planning and accountability systems in Nepal. The findings show that participation strengthened local planning and accountability systems, but that it was also linked to some potential negative outcomes. Outcomes varied depending on the participation structures and other factors, for example, local power and politics, incentives for participation, the capacity of citizens and local governments, and the level of support from elected representatives. These findings suggest that the relationship between citizen participation and participation outcomes is rather complex and dynamic, and that effective participation often depends on the building agency of marginalised groups, the mobilisation of citizens, and on the establishment of vibrant social networks, all of which produce forces that may have various impacts on the effectiveness of participation.*

Pandeya, G. P. (2015). DOES CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING LOCAL PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS? AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS'PERCEPTIONS IN NEPAL. International Public Management Review, 16(1).

2. ABSTRACT: *Empowerment is often a goal of community development projects aimed at poverty reduction; yet, ascertaining whether empowerment occurs can be elusive. This case study research examined the empowerment process. Thirty community partners participated in a three-year community-led initiative to improve public education in a rural northwest Tanzanian village. The initiative included capacity-building activities to enhance personal and collective agency. The findings from the analytic framework of self-determination theory indicated that the initiative simultaneously nurtured and satisfied community partners' innate basic psychological needs of relatedness, competence and autonomy: hence affirmed their feelings of empowerment. Implications for the theory and practice are presented.*

Keywords- Human agency, empowerment process, sustainable community development, participatory video, most significant change, self-determination theory

Rwebugisa, L. J., & Usinger, J. (2021). Empowerment Through Genuine Participation: Giving Voice to the Neglected Majority. *Journal of Development Policy and Practice*, *6*(2), 144-167.

Introduction

When writing this element of the policy paper, the following questions may help enhance effectiveness:

Writing checklist

• Have you included all features to construct a coherent introduction (context and definition of the policy problem, statement of intent, methodology and limitations, road map)?

• Is the context brief and focused on the problem?

• Have you clearly communicated the nature and urgency of the policy problem?

• Is the purpose of the paper clearly stated?

• Have you introduced your methodology and limitations in scope of the study?

• Is the organisation of the paper presented

Introduction

Data and evidence-based policy and programming have emerged as a global development paradigm, with an ever-increasing interest in applying rigorous research methods to answer public policy questions. The trend of experiments in international development and government policy boomed in the 2000s, deriving from the early interest of such application in US welfare and employment programs during the 1980s and 1990s (Baron, 2018). In India, as in many other developing countries, the effort to make this shift towards decisions data-driven decision- making in the development ecosystem has been led by a plethora of development actors, including aid agencies, donors and research institutes, among others. But there are fundamental problems with the evidence ecosystem as things stand today. This article critically looks at two broad themes regarding the evidence ecosystem and its architecture: (a) the approach and technique towards generating evidence and research findings2 and (b) the uptake and utility of such evidence and findings for policy. Both are distinct but interrelated in a number of ways.

*This is an introduction to a commentary piece/article

Bhunia, A. (2021). Evidence-based Policy in India: Crossing the Long, Uphill Bridge. Journal of Development Policy and Practice, 6(2), 137–143. https://doi.org/10.1177/24551333211035566

Problem Description

Building the problem description
Background of the problem
- When and how did the problem arise?
- What were its causes?
- What has been the historical, legal, political, social and economic context of the problem?
- How did the problem come to public attention?
- Who has been affected by the problem?
- What past policies have been implemented to try to address the problem?
- What were the outcomes of these policies? The problem within its current policy environment

Problem Description

- What are the current legal, social, economic, political contexts and impacts of the problem?
- What is the current extent of the problem?
- What is the current policy being implemented to try to address the problem?
- What are the differing opinions on the problem and the current approach?
- In what ways is the current policy succeeding/failing?
- What is wrong with the current approach?

Organising the problem description

- What aspects of the problem need to be included in the problem description section to present a comprehensive and convincing picture?
- How to organise the section to make it as understandable and readable as possible

Constructing the Problem: Text and Argumentation

Building a coherent argument that is both convincing and easy to follow.

Coherent and focused development of each element of the argument in the sub-section

The claim is the statement of the position/argument.

The support is the evidence presented to back up the claim.

The warrant explains the connection between the claim and the support. This warrant may not be explicitly stated, as the writer may consider that explanation of the connection is evident for the audience

Effective use of paragraphing to help develop the argument and help the reader follow it.

Illustration | Shifting expenditure responsibilities. In some countries, budgetary responsibility for social expenditures and the social safety net is transferred to the subnational government. In Hungary, for example, responsibility for welfare expenditures was transferred to the localities in 1993 under the Social Assistance Law. In Ukraine, too, the social safety net is a subnational responsibility. In Russia, the central government transferred social expenditures equivalent to some 6 per cent of GDP to localities in the 1992 budget, pushing the deficit down. The hope seems to have been that sub-national governments would perform the politically painful cutting required, even though the demand for these services is likely to grow with the worsening economic situation. Moreover, in 1993, in Russia, responsibility for key national, inter-jurisdictional investments (such as in transport) was transferred to the subnational sector. | Claim

Support

Warrant

Considering these basic elements of argumentation is essential in effectively developing the individual arguments that make problem description, and therefore, in constructing a convincing overall argument.

A second key issue in effective paragraphing is coherence.

On the paragraph level, this entails establishing clear links between the sentences in the paragraph. Standard techniques that are used in making such coherent links are:

The repetition of keywords;

The use of parallel structures, i.e., similar phrases and sentence construction;

The use of transition phrases, e.g., next, for example, in addition, also, however

The effective use of sources to build a credible and convincing argument.

Effectively choosing the type of sources to include as evidence

Effectively incorporating sources into the argument

Deciding when secondary sources included in the argument need to be referenced/cited

Following the referencing/citation styles

Deciding how to include secondary sources in the problem description effectively

Making references to tables/figures included and commenting on their significance

Policy Options

Outlines evaluate and compare the possible policy alternatives.
Provides a convincing argument for the preferred policy alternative
Focuses on reporting a decision made.
Builds a clear and coherent link to the conclusions and recommendations element of the policy paper.

Abstract: *The Indian central government is pursuing state governments to replace free power supply to agriculture with the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). This article examined the free power policy from the perspective of various stakeholders and suggested alternate policies based on a field survey in the state of united Andhra Pradesh (AP), India, in the year 2018. The team interviewed all stakeholders: farmers, economists, policy experts, power distribution companies and administrators. The study team also visited four villages in AP and conducted focus group discussions with farmers to record their perceptions and alternative policy choices. The opinions are substantiated and cross-checked with the published sources. Free electricity for agriculture is seen as a lifeline in drought- prone areas as it helped them to expand the area under irrigation and increase incomes. However, many experienced huge capital expenditures in drilling-failed borewells. Other stakeholders opine that free power leads to overexploitation of groundwater, lowering groundwater levels, rising cost of drilling deep and piling up of power subsidies, and expanding water-guzzling crops like paddy even in water scarce areas, failure of borewells leading to farmer's distress. The study suggests that replacing free power with DBT to farmers will help them maintain their incomes without overexploiting water resources.*

Alternative Approaches (excerpt)

E. Revathi of CESS opined that the state government's emphasis on irrigation has increased since 2004, but it did not pay enough attention to tanks. She added a need for a focus on percolation tanks, which will raise the water table and recharge the local small ponds and tube wells in line with the Mission Kakatiya of the Telangana government. This means that both surface water and groundwater should be looked at in an integrated plan (Massuel et al., 2014). D. N. Reddy of Central University, Hyderabad, supported this view saying that depletion of groundwater can be reduced by improving the surface storage. He stressed that there is a need and a potential for public investment in the development of percolation tanks, which conserve water and reduce environmental damage, which is more important than removing the subsidy (Badiani-Magnusson & Jessoe, 2018).

Irrigation in upland areas is done with private investment, and it has a potential for enhanced cooperation among farmers by sharing borewells, as suggested by A. Ravindra of Watershed Support Service and Activities Network, an NGO working in policy advocacy (Ravindra & Raina, 2012). One alternative to increase the area under irrigation without increasing the number of borewells is installing micro-irrigation sets like drip and sprinklers (Palanisami et al., 2011). According to Yella Reddy of Water and Land Management Training and Research Institute, 0.7 million farmers have converted to micro-irrigation in Telangana state, which is irrigating more than one million hectares of land through drips and sprinklers, which has enhanced the water use efficiency (Surendran et al., 2016). The state authorities are trying to convert existing pumps into micro-irrigation and aim to convert up to
50% of the existing pumps (Reddy, 2011).

Fosli, J. K., Reddy, A. A., & Rani, R. (2021). The Policy of Free Electricity to Agriculture Sector: Implications and Perspectives of the Stakeholders in India. *Journal of Development Policy and Practice*, *6*(2), 252-269.

During focus group interactions and field visits, the farmers from the four villages under study mentioned that construction of check dams and other water harvesting structures under watershed programmes had recharged the borewells surrounding the watershed. This observation of the village members is supported by S. P. Wani, a scientist at ICRISAT (Garg et al., 2012). He says the experience of the Kothapalli village, where ICRISAT implemented watershed development programme, is that the groundwater availability has increased in the village because of watershed management. As a result, the income of farmers has also increased in that area. Wani said that if managed properly, micro watersheds can contribute to restoring the groundwater levels.

Conclusion (excerpt)
The practice of providing free electricity may justify the populist undertone of political agenda but it is often misconstrued as a panacea for farmer's problems. Instead, the government should channelise its efforts towards water-shed management, rainwater harvesting and micro-irrigation and ensure quality power supply to the farmer with necessary charges for resource use, be it canal water or electricity. Most importantly, a market-driven and economically viable option for resource use should be the pivot for policy actions.

Fosli, J. K., Reddy, A. A., & Rani, R. (2021). The Policy of Free Electricity to Agriculture Sector: Implications and Perspectives of the Stakeholders in India. *Journal of Development Policy and Practice*, *6*(2), 252-269.

Constructing the Policy Options: Text and Argumentation

In the policy options element, the writer's voice should dominate
Less prominent use of primary or secondary sources in the argument

- Conclusion and Recommendations

  - Synthesis of major findings
  - Set of policy recommendations
  - Concluding remarks

Bibliography

Policy study usually follows author-date citation conventions. The APA and Chicago style is the most popular style conventions. This document and the sample below follow the APA style for citations.

References

Achenbach, T.M., & Edelbrock, C. (1987). Manual for the Youth Self-Report and Profile. Stowe, VT: University of Vermont, Department of Psychiatry.

Anderson, A. K. (2005). Affective influences on the attentional dynamics supporting awareness. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 154, 258–281. doi:10.1037/0096-3445.134.2.258 Blout, R.L., Piira, R., & Cohen, L.L. (2003). Management of pediatric pain and distress due to medical procedures.

In M.C. Roberts (Ed.), Handbook of pediatric psychology (3rd ed.) (p. 216–233). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Curry, N. (1985). Cognitive coping processes as predictors of adaptive functioning in children visiting the dentist. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH

Timeline

25 January 2022

Submit 1 Policy Area Preference
•Any policy area/sector can be chosen basis personal preference.

08 February 2022

300 words Abstract
•Abstract – articulation of what the policy paper will contain.

18 February 2022

Briefing Paper
•To essentially include a literature survey on the chosen topic, including a theoretical component and a practical / case study-based analysis.1500 – 2000 words limit preferred.

15 March 2022

Submission of final PPT and draft paper
•Follow up for discussion and comments

01 April 2022

Submission of the final policy papers. Some of the papers submitted can be presented in the last session. Can be initiated as a discussion paper which can be converted into a position paper. 6000 words policy paper in APA format

Last week of April (Dates TBA)

Final Presentations: To be accompanied with a presentation – 10- 12 slides (which presents the policy paper contents)