

A Comparative Study of Public Policies of India and China

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Introduction

The international power equation was altered in the last decade with the rise of Asian giants China and India. The world's political, economic and social structure has been restructured, and its impact can be seen in everything. China and India account for about 36% of the world population, and using their massive human and natural resources; both these countries could achieve unprecedented development and a shift of power towards the East. Even though both these countries achieved remarkable social and economic development, the trajectory and nature of growth, along with how these development policies were carried out, are fundamentally different compared to each other. On the other hand, India is a parliamentary democracy and is not trying to counter western capitalism but to establish a symbiotic relationship.

There is a radical difference in the ideologies of both countries about how they perceive the idea of a state, the idea of welfare and the history which shaped the present political milieu. One common factor is the effect sought out by public policies by both countries. Hence, this paper seeks to understand the dynamics of economic and social development of both nations with a further comprehension of the power equations of the region through a comparative analysis of public policies.

A Comparison of the Administrative Processes

Political philosophy is the base of administration and sets a layout for the government in dealing with policy-making and carrying out administrative businesses. Both India and China favour a socialist state because they believe that socialism is the right path to achieve development for colonized and underdeveloped countries, as this model would help them ensure equitable distribution of resources, which the citizens were long deprived. Therefore, both countries have incorporated the word socialism in their constitution. However, the idea of socialism is different in both contexts. Indian socialism is Fabianism which advocates a gradual reformist model of growth, whereas China's socialism was influenced by Marxism and Leninism, which is more radical and revolutionary in nature (Arora,1993). This fundamental philosophy determines the eventual course of social revolution, justice, governance and public policies. Analyzing both countries' public policies further down will help us find some fundamental similarities and differences in how the administration is carried out and the priorities their governments set.

The Nuances of Policy-making

Fundamentally, India and China have had a similar policymaking sequence, including proposal, drafting, consulting, legislation and implementation. Only the institutions assigned for each process differ along with the procedures. Secondly, India and China have been working on agendas to be completed over a targeted period of growth called the five-year plan. During Nehru's time, it was carried out by the planning commission, but now it is done by the Niti Ayog in India. Another essential similarity lies with the delegation of administration to regional governing authorities. In India, the Panchayats and Municipalities play a significant role in the development and the majority of central funding is distributed through these local governments (Yadav, 2010). Similarly, China also entrusts responsibility to local governing bodies for distributing funds and carrying out development projects because they have a better idea about the specialities of the locality.

The highest legislative body of China is the national people's congress which is similar to the parliament of India, which carries out all significant legislations and delegations. Apart from this, various ministries in both countries carry out administration concerning individual portfolios.

Despite the structural similarities, differences exist, especially in the method and implementation of policymaking in both these countries. In China, the Communist Party of China holds complete control over policymaking, and the party leadership supervises it. Almost all the bills introduced by the party are passed during the legislation, and this process needs more transparency. In China, the public is not a policy actor, even though, in some instances, general public sentiments affect decisions because, ultimately, the stability of any political system lies with the public. But on the contrary, India has a much more systematic and complicated procedure for policy making as the cabinet, headed by the democratically elected Prime Minister, plays a significant role in policy making and has to prioritize various needs. Once the bill is made, it is introduced in the parliament, which goes through a series of debates and delegations at different levels (bi-Cameral parliament), to eventually get signed by the President of India to be in effect. As a result, the rate at which bills are passed in India is much lower than that of China, and this entire process is a reflection of the transparency involved since, to obtain joint consensus, one has to solve arguments, disagreements and several adjustments before having bills come to pass.

Analysis of Policies across Four Crucial Sectors

Upon juxtaposing both countries' policies across the sectors of health, education, environment and agriculture, one can infer that colonialism has influenced the policies of both these nations to this day. The result of colonists being unable to hold political power over the Chinese mainland is palpable, as they are disengaged from western influence and were able to preserve their solitary identity (Zhu, 2013). Another detrimental factor that shapes policies and administration is the challenges undergone by the state in its history. For India, colonialism and the independent struggle continues to influence policies and administration, thereby holding freedom and fundamental rights at its very core of interest. At the same time, for China, it is the century of humiliation that architected the same, thereby sowing a fierce ambition of having to prove itself or compensate for all the slacks. This history is so stubborn and deeply rooted in both these nations, and the idea of a nation is built upon this history. India and China have a rich heritage and cultural solid roots with ancient scriptures and religious beliefs.

This also affects policymaking in these countries. Ancient philosophies like Chinese Buddhism, Nonjiga, Et Cetera., in the case of China, and Gandhi's teachings, Vedic culture influence, Et Cetera, for India continue to be the base philosophies for policies in some instances. Hence, it is evident that the driving motives are different, although both countries have strong roots in their historical and cultural background.

Conclusion

Over the past century, China has been driven by its economic ambitions, whereas for India, economic development is essential, yet one among its many goals. This difference in priority also determines the policy-making process in these nations. For China, every developmental project concerning health and education falls under its more significant economic ambition. This is because there is a fundamental difference in how the state perceives its citizens. Chinese thoughts are shaped by the human capital theory, which considers the population as a resource. Hence, providing good health care means better health for its citizens and increased productivity (Anderson, 2013). Similarly, China delivers quality education to create more working professionals that can add to the national GDP. On the contrary, India is more like a welfare state and ensures a healthy demography for the good of its citizens.

India and China are in a race to establish their influence in the region, and economic development is crucial. However, this road to a developed country could be smoother considering the existing situation because both countries still face many challenges at the ground level. Prioritizing environmental protection over economic growth and incorporating renewable energy sources to meet increased demands will be a significant challenge for India and China (OECD, 2022).

But this alternative development path requires high investment and effectively sought-out policies to meet the growing demands. Moreover, challenges caused by the urban-rural divide will continue to bother China and could lead to instability within the country. Thus, development is a long-drawn process for India and China, but if effectively tackled with creative policies, these nations would be far ahead in the superpower race.

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About the Author

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