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| Module Name/Title | Policy Implementation in India: Issues of State capacity, Policy technology and Political contestation |
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**Policy Implementation in India: Issues of State capacity,
Policy technology and Political contestation**

Introduction

In the discipline of public policy, the implementation of policies is increasingly being seen beyond the ability of the state, given the global nature of *problematic of the government*. Still state, even though it has lost its pre-eminent position in terms of role in social transformation, continues to be a unique and important actor in the management of public affairs. However the role it plays has undergone a transformation in terms of role it plays, its presumed capacity, ability or agency in terms of influencing its environment and the political struggles and negotiations it is involved in, while playing its role. The idea of ‘state capacity’ is critically linked to the ability of the state agencies to get people to do what it prescribes through its rule

and laws. The more complex and evolved these agencies were, the greater was the supposed capacity of the state to act upon its environment and autonomously impose collective goals.¹

Within this understanding state agencies were supposed to evolve teleologically in a unilinear fashion and could be studied in terms of effect on society, while completely ignoring the converse. The idea that social reality can be understood, controlled and worked upon towards a common goal has its genesis in the enlightenment era. It is in this context, the art of government emerged as a 'rational' technology of state power that drew its legitimacy through the goals it pursued. However, with the rise of the category of poor amidst mass democracy, the issue of social rights became a constant source of political struggle. Furthermore, the post colonial state revealed the limits and degrees of state capacity, given the tremendous variation across various states. Ever since, policy technology and the politically contentious claims have dialectically expanded the scope of the role of the state as well as its capacity to pursue them. This module looks at some of these concerns by looking at evolution of ideas of state capacity, technologies of rule or policy technology and the politics in its practice. It further argues that this dialectical relation between policy technology and the politics of its place is critical in shaping the capacity of the state to autonomously pursue the goals that legitimise its authority. Therefore evaluating state capacity has to look at not only the impact of state agencies on the society but also that of social actors on the agencies of the state.

Therefore this module first gives conceptual takes on state capacity, outlines the evolution of the various technologies of rule that constitute the institutional assemblage referred as state and the politics and plural political actions that these technologies offer. Having done so, the module turns to these concerns in the Indian context. Here we look at the colonial technology of rule and its contestation by the nationalist, the post colonial consensus on goals of the state and their contestation with the vertical and horizontal expansion of democracy and then conclude with the emerging technology of rule, that of participatory democratic development. Across these concern we will outline the changing goals, institutional mechanism and political negotiation with them to conclude with some pointers on the emerging dialectics between policy technology and its political contestation and the impact it is having on the state.

¹ For details see Bertrand Badie and Pierre Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

State Capacity, Policy technology and its Political contestation

The state has at different points of time in human history sought to legitimise its authority through various goals that it claims to pursue in the name of the collective. In this endeavour, it employed a wide range of technologies to think about and exercise its power. However given the inherent dimension of resistance involved in power relation, the technologies of rule are politically contested and negotiated with in course of its practice. Therefore any evaluation of state capacity has to look at the technologies of rule employed by the state as well as their political negotiation by society. Rational technologies of rule have their genesis in ‘problematic of government’ outlined in Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1532). Herein the sovereign, over and above his subjects, legitimised sovereignty through claims to act as a public power over a tightly delineated geographical territory and directed towards securing the common liberties and commitment to the protection of its subject.

In this scheme of affairs, the ‘problematic of government’ involved two step analyses of identification and categorisation of the danger and the art of manipulating relations of force. Herein, sovereignty remained the basic institution for the exercise of power and art of government involved reconciling sovereignty with the formalisation and ritualisation of consent of social contract. Thus judicial sovereignty operating as ‘state of justice’ operated through a society of law involving reciprocal play between obligation and legislation intended to secure the ‘rule of law’ instead of ‘rule of violence’.² The contestation over the technology of rule of sovereignty hovered over competing understanding of what is to be secured. For Hobbes it was one’s physical life, for Bodin and Montesquieu it was one’s family and home and for Locke it was one’s conscience and property. Also it was increasingly argued that governing involved more than the establishment of the ‘rule of law’. Herein, ‘the art of governing’ was seen as covering 3 distinct, multifarious and fundamental realms: art of self government through morality; art of governing the family through its economy, and; art of governing the state through politics. This section of the module looks at evolution of various technologies of rule and their

² For details on the Machiavellian mode of analysis of the problematic of government see Foucault, 1991: pp 98-104.

contestation to look at the changing understanding about the goals that legitimise state authority since Machiavelli.³

Policy technology

The rise of statistics as the science to quantify the governed reality about the *conditions of living* of various categories of population, governments' goals were increasingly defined to be the improvement the conditions, welfare and prosperity of the population, a subject with needs and aspirations. This isolation of the economy and population allowed for an alternative space for thinking, reflection and calculation of power outside the judicial frame of sovereignty. In this context, technologies of rule involved an administrative state bound in territorial of national boundaries corresponding to a society of regulation and discipline and a governmental state defined in terms of mass of its population, its volume and density and the territory over which it is distributed.⁴ In this understanding, 'problematic of government' comes to be concerned about how to introduce economy – which as per Rousseau involved the wise governing of family for the common welfare– into the management of the state. To govern the state therefore implied setting up an economy at the level of the state involving the exercise of power towards its inhabitants and their wealth and behaviour of all and each as a form of surveillance and control.⁵

This was done through the German rubric of '*polizeiwissenschaft*' or the science of police of the state of prosperity based on a detailed knowledge of the governed reality of the state. It extended to touch the existence of its individual members and as a form of pastoral power involves a government 'of all and of each', connecting principles of political action with personal conduct, whereby, as Hobbes notes, man is made suitable for society not by nature but by discipline.⁶ Herein, state's territory and its population were seen as being transparent to knowledge thereby could be specified and scrutinized through detailed regulation of individual and collective behaviour. Two apparently illiberal poles of power over life, discipline over body and bio-politic of population were integral to this liberal governmentality. Mechanisms and devices operating according to disciplinary logic seek to produce a subjective condition of self regulation necessary

³ On the expansion of the idea of the role of the state see Foucault, 1991: 91, 100.

⁴ On the rise of the science of statistics, see Foucault, 1991: 104.

⁵ On the mechanism of surveillance see Foucault, 1991: 92.

⁶ Gordon (1991) however argues that science of policy as a better translation. For details and quote by Hobbes, see Gordon, 1991: 11-13.

for nation of free and civilised citizens. Bio-political strategies are like statistical enquiry that sought to render population as an intelligible domain whose laws are to be respected and known by liberal government.⁷

Towards the close of 18th century, Adam Smith transformed the relation between knowledge and government by displaying the intrinsic boundaries of its bound to know. Herein the limits of state's power were an immediate consequence of its limits to know. Thus, the rationality of government shifts to imparting technical form to government as a mode of technical reflection and elaboration envisaged in terms of security. 'Security' emerges as a broad, self evident requisite of the political as well as its method and practice. It was distinct from those of laws, sovereignty and discipline but capable of various modes of combination of these within the diverse governmental configuration. It involved enframing the population within an 'apparatus of security' and included institutions and practices concerned with defending, maintaining and securing the national population and the economic, demographic and social processes found within it. The method of security has 3 general traits: it deals with a series of possible and probable events; evaluates through calculations of comparative cost; and prescribes the permitted and the forbidden within a tolerable band of variation. While sovereignty extends over territory and discipline works through the body of the individual, security worked on the ensemble of population. The major novelty of the liberal treatment of population and security was the discovery of economic man as a subject of interest.⁸

Prosperity was seen as the necessary condition for state's own security and the capacity to preserve and hold on to and enhance a certain level of existence, where liberty was seen as the condition of security. In this context, two distinct and overlapping tendencies of economic government emerged, namely: to reduce governmental function to a set of economically regulated structures and institutions and to endow existing economic structure and institution with certain function of governmental infrastructure.⁹ These technologies of modern liberal nation state becomes one of most powerful ways of seeking of codify, manage and articulate or alternatively contest, overturn and rearticulate the practices of authority throughout our modern

⁷ For details see Rose, 2006: 148-49

⁸ For details on security as a technology of rule see Gordon, 1991: 20-21; Dean, 1999: 20.

⁹ For details on state's limit to know as interpreted from Adam Smith and the rise of economic government see Gordon, 1991:14-20, 25-26

experience.¹⁰ As ‘conduct of conduct’, liberal government saw the governed to be an actor, the locus of freedom, wherein government shapes freedoms but is not constitutive of it. Government is concerned with shaping human conduct works through freedoms or capacities of the governed. Thus freedom is conceived as a natural attribute of the economic man, rational in the market and a game of competitive freedom whose rules are secured by judicial and bureaucratic officialdom.¹¹

However capitalist economy, accelerating the production of mass poverty, was neither providing political security of the state nor the material welfare of the population. The tension between labourer and citizens in liberal political jurisprudence produced the clash between right to work, making state obliged to provide for minimum conditions of economic existence, and right to property. The ensuing conflict over the meaning of social rights implied a continuous conflict over the role of state with governmental problems reflecting the existence of an economic society which is yet to become a civil society of citizens. In this context, the question of class as a problem for the socially viable industrial market economy became an essential part of the politics of security.¹² Thus, the 19th century saw the rise of democracy and its concerns with social government as mass poverty led to class struggle over the expansion of socio-economic and civic rights. With social rights at stake, collective struggle becomes continuous.

Thus, as Polanyi argues, 19th century was a period of ‘double movement’, between two opposing principles of free market championed by liberal capitalist’s industrial power and social protection championed by socialist labour’s with mass suffrage.¹³ The philosophical discussion on the rights in modern state amidst mass democracy produced a distinction between citizens and population. Citizens inhabit the domain of theory with ethical connotation of participation in the sovereignty of the state and population, lying in the domain of policy, is descriptive, empirical, identifiable, classifiable, and amenable to statistical techniques. In this context the legitimacy of the regime of government is secured not by the participation of the citizens in the matters of the state but by claiming to provide for the well being of the population.¹⁴

¹⁰ For details see Rose, 2006: 145

¹¹ For details on ‘conduct of conduct’ see Dean, 1999: 13-15.

¹² For details see Gordon, 1991: 32-31

¹³ For details on Double movement see (Polanyi, 1944: 132-34).

¹⁴ For a discussion on the distinction between citizen and population see Chatterjee, 2004, especially chp. 1.

In this context, civil society encompassed multiple transactions encoding a mobile interface between the governor and the governed and 'the social' is a field of governmental action wherein politics shift from the legitimation of state action to the governability of the social. The resultant Keynesian welfare state was characterised by a perpetual convention over manner of fulfilling state's socio economic roles based on the interdependence of political and social security.¹⁵ In this context, social work and social insurance emerged as the two axes of the welfare state. Social insurance, an inclusive and solidaritic technology, collectivizes the management of individual and collective danger of risks to wage labour or employment, diseases, housing, health, education which weakens the autonomy of the individual and family. Social work operates to ensure security by imposing responsibilities of citizenship upon individual by acting upon specific problem cases seen as pathological in relation to social norms. Through these technologies, individuals and family were assigned social duties, accorded their rights, assured their natural capacity and educated of the authority of expert to responsibly assume their freedom.¹⁶

Welfare was the formula of recoding, along a number of different dimensions of relation between the political field and the management of economic and social affairs based on the authority of the expert. However, this formula of welfare was most contested in the economic domain where logic of interventionist state was seen as inefficient and self defeating by being subversive to freedom, democracy and liberties that it sought to enhance. Social expertise itself was fractured into different specialisations as mass media and commodity advertisement regime contested the power of the expert. The changing relation between government, subjectivity and expertise sought to engage with a multitude of different problems of welfare, efficiency and undercut power of vested interest through a monetarist approach. In the name of social and personal well being, complex apparatus of health and therapeutic has been assembled for the management of individual and social body by managing problems of the living through techniques of advice and guidance.¹⁷

Political contestation and negotiation with the Technologies of rule

¹⁵ For details on social security see Gordon, 1991:33-35

¹⁶ For more on social work and social insurance as technologies of rule and power of expertise see Rose, 2006: 152-53.

¹⁷ On the rise of advanced liberal monetarist technologies see Rose, 2006: 144, 152-55.

Technologies of rule involve the construction of a subject of rule with rights and duties that capacitates collective decision and action. However rights and duties ascribed by the technology of rule are not accepted as it is by the subject of rule who negotiate with these in light of their historical experience. Therefore, the subject do exercise a meaningful degree of autonomy as exercise of social power involves voluntarism and participation in shaping everyday interactions through social values and norms, produced and given material form by social actions. Thus, civil society becomes the institutional location for hegemony, historically contested and unfinished process concerned with maintaining the necessary degree of ideological unity that secures the consent of the governed.¹⁸ In this light, scholars have argued that social power and resistance work through a continual process of discursive hegemony involving social construction of political identities as collective identities through relation of equivalence between subject positions. Thus, political subjectivity can be the loci of resistance as constructing claims of equivalence offers scope for multiple form of political action.¹⁹

Therefore, forms of subjective positions are negotiated with, embraced, adapted or discarded amidst encounters between new forms of knowledge, techniques and subjectivity and and the habitual practices and historical identification.²⁰ In this light, scholar have started speaking of 'amodern' subject positions that are hybrids composed of multiple and overlapping identity positions. Further, it is increasing being argued that counter hegemonic politics requires constructing linkages across multiple sites of subalternity as marginality is a subjective position as well as a site of resistance.²¹ In this process, social justice becomes central to the politic of governance as well as its strategic reversibility with the remedies including redistribution and representation as well as, recognition. This has been integrated into single comprehensive paradigm with the notion of participation parity at its core. Herein, participatory parity serves as

¹⁸ For details on hegemony see Gramsci, 1971: 328-323; 1996: 22-53.

¹⁹ For details on subjectivity as a rite of resistance and relations of equivalence see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 128-40, 171-176.

²⁰ On negotiation with subjective position see Inda 2005, for detail on the encounter between new and old forms of subjectivity see Coombe 2007.

²¹ For details on amodern identities see Haraway, 1991: 148-51; for the politics of counter hegemonic blocs see bell hooks, 1990: 51-52, 150

the principal idiom of public reason, the preferred language for conducting democratic political argumentation on issues of both distribution and recognition.²²

In light of this subsection, it becomes increasingly clear that technologies of rule, while to enhance the ability of the state to pursue its goals and thereby legitimise its authority but it also offer scope for strategic reversibility whereby technologies of rule can be converted into loci of resistance and political negotiations. Therefore analysis of state capacity has to include this dimension of political struggle into its fold in order to have any realistic evaluation. Still the fact that the state has become an institution assemblage with wide range of technologies of rule assembled over the course of its historical evolution, it is pertinent that we delineate what state capacity would imply in such an analysis.

On State Capacity

The rise of liberal technologies of the state, the administrative structure was geared towards the development and sustenance of free market through 'internal pacification', involving introduction of monetary relations based on wages and rent. Thus, providing safe and secure basis for market involved improving tax raising capacities, limiting corruption, regulating banking system and credit creation, and establishing non-violent means to established justice and law and order. The implicit social contract here, between the state and its citizen was of tax in return for protection of property and market.²³ And at the same time, as a consequence of its growing powers, state was also the focal point for the demands of and struggle for the extension of the rights of citizenship. In this 'dialectics of control', increasing state's capacity instituted by public education, legal system and bureaucracy also had the potential to be used by its subjects and their social movements as channels of communication to campaign for their rights. This implied that the states had to rely more on consensual means of governance and less on its coercive means.²⁴

In this wake, scholar started seeing state capability and its administrative capacity in terms of its ability to a set of activities. Thus, capabilities or the overall performance of the political system

²² For details on politics of recognition, redistribution and representation as well as the idea of participation parity, see Fraser 2003:35-69.

²³ For details on internal pacification see Giddens, 1985; and on the link between centralisation of army and improved rational bureaucracy for tax collection and financial management see Tilly 1985; Kaldor, 1999.

²⁴ On the dialectics of control and persuasive form of power see Giddens, 1985.

in its environment was a cluster of 5 activities: extractive, regulative, distributive, symbolic, and responsive.²⁵ However, given the hope and hype around the idea of modern nation state, in the post colonial world, the degree to which this capacity could be exercised was rarely brought to question. It was presumed that that state has the capability to bring about social change through state planning, policies and action. This allowed the state to penetrate society, regulating social relationships, extracting resources and appropriating them autonomously in a determined ways. In this context, the state was seen as the mediator of social justice and the engine of economic growth and development; autonomous actor, influencing, disciplining and coercing entrenched interests; and a democratic representative political space– through adult franchise, party system, trade unions, competitive politics and local self governance – in pursuit of improvement in their living conditions. And conflictual interests that do emerge from such pursuit were to be addressed through transformative policies.²⁶

While the states across the world have been successful in penetrating society and extracting resources and changing the very nature of institutional life but their ability to regulate social relation and appropriate resources has been limited at best. This dual nature of strong-weak state is at the heart of the understanding of state capacities in the third world wherein the states have formidable presence in societies but face stiff challenges in regulating social behaviour towards decided goals leading to the issues of policy gaps.²⁷ Thus state's ability to uphold a socially just public order and productive process was compromised from below by the social resistance to technocratic bureaucracy.²⁸

With economic slowdown of the 1970s, the capacity of even the most advanced states was questioned as the globalised environment impaired the state's capacity. In this context, the approach of New Public Management (NPM) to state capacity stressed efficiency, economy and effectiveness by the application of private sector principles to public administration and state's functioning.²⁹ Therefore, liberalisation, decentralisation and privatisation were introduced to empower citizens in improving the quality of services offered. These changes were further

²⁵ Gabriel Almond and G Bingham Powell Jr., in, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston, Little Brown, 1966)

²⁶ On the presumption about state ability see Migdal, 1988 especially 'Induction' and Kothari, 2002.

²⁷ For details see Migdal, 1988:5-9

²⁸ For details see Kothari, 2002: 74-76

²⁹ For details on NPM see Peters and Pierre, 1998: 223-43

facilitated by the Thatcher-Reagen regime that saw government as ‘the part of the problem’.³⁰ These attempts led to market and civil society playing a central role in organising social life within political communities. The new emerging function of the state and its capacity to perform these roles has increasingly focussed on the embeddedness of its autonomy and the synergies it creates with the market and civil society.³¹

Thus, the emerging governance discourse probed into issues of state capacity with ‘output oriented’ rationality, by looking at issues of transparency and accountability; institutional design, participation; sustainability and much more. It emerged as governing styles amidst blurred boundaries in a pluralised policy environment and involves coordinating and managing self-governing, reflexive policy networks to facilitating dialogue and consensus for better collective decisions. State capacity continues to be about organising public affairs democratically as well as encouraging economic growth through institutional mechanism that facilitate the mechanism for securing the welfare of the population as well as upholding the right of citizens. Thus, in contemporary times, the role of the state has been increasing seen in terms of its role in regulating and guiding various societal actors towards common goals of development. It is with such understanding of administrative capacity being dependent of the role and goals pursued by the state’s administrative structure that we comment upon the Indian state.

In this light, the state is understood as a *field* or ‘relationships in a multidimensional space’ with struggle as the central phenomenon³² and marked by the use and threat of violence. Also, society is a web of multiple rule-making loci with hidden and open conflict between them in their pursuit of dominance in social control. Social actors, including the state, use a variety of sanctions and rewards along with symbols to induce people to behave in their interactions directed towards the satisfaction of their needs by developing strategies of survival. The choice of the component of strategy is determined by the available resources, ideas and organizational means available to individual. Therefore, state capacity seen in terms of the struggle for dominance in social control reflects variation in terms of three indicators. Compliance, conformity with the demands of the organization, is dependent on sanctions of force as well as the ability to control the dispersal of

³⁰ For details on citizens empowerment see Kjaer, 2004: 19-58; on government being a part of the problem see Pierre and Peters, 2000: 3

³¹ For details see Evans, 1995.

³² For details on state as a field of power see Bourdieu, 1985: 734

basic resources and services. Participation, the second indicator, involves organizing the population for specialized tasks and adds to the institutional strength the organization. Legitimacy, last but the most potent indicators, involves acceptance of a particular social order and its justification.³³

On the Indian State capacity, Policy technology and its Political contestation

Analysing and appreciating Indian state capacity has to keep in mind that the process of rise of liberal modern nation state and the functions ascribed to it have been different from the typical historical trajectories. In India, structures of social power that disciplined everyday behaviour of individual and groups through caste system without much dependence on the state. Herein, political power was distributed across several layers making structure of dominance fractured and limits the ability of the state to bring about social transformation. Therefore the administrative structures of the state in India have always had a limited role in shaping its political environment. It was within such social milieu that colonial structures of power introduced the ideas and practices associated with state sovereignty and its absolutist demand. This colonial discourse, rooted in post enlightenment rationalist belief in the ability of detailed knowledge to facilitate technical control, gradually instituted an enormous discursive project to grasp the Indian society and bring it under intellectual control.³⁴

To do so, the colonial state introduced the logic of modernity and the Liberal rationality of rule to secure the welfare of the colonised population. For these purposes, it introduced the technologies of economic reforms, new legal system based on rights, bureaucratic language of English and a system of education.³⁵ However, even though these colonial technologies penetrated rural India to create an India political economy, it failed to create a 'cultural counterpart' despite its disciplinary power. This failure has been attributed to emerged from anti colonial nationalism that strategically reversed the colonial ontology of distinguish political and social activity to demarcate its own autonomous realm.³⁶ In doing so, argued for a distinctive Indian national identity based on its superior spiritual realm of culture. Therefore, the Indian

³³ For details on social control and strategies of survival, see Migdal, 1988: 25-27; Migdal, 2005: 37, 52-55.

³⁴ On the limited role of sovereignty in the Indian context see Kaviraj, 2000: 141- 44

³⁵ Infact scholars have argued that attempt to cognitively grasp the Indian governed reality was infact the discovery of India. For details see Khilnani, 1998.

³⁶ On strategic reversibility of the colonial discourse by the nationalist, see Kaviraj, 1990; 1994; 2000.

state, its technology of rule and its roles were constituted of ideas that tried to construct a distinctive autonomous discourse of self while emulating the social values and organisation of an alien culture.³⁷ The interaction between these forces has established the state's role to be the establishment of a resolutely modern, secular and developmental centre in the face of traditional and parochial forms of politics in the periphery.³⁸

The Post colonial Indian state and its Policy technology

The leaders of the Indian national movement justified their claims from independence by arguing that the exploitative colonial state was the root cause of India's backward economy and wide spread poverty. Therefore independence was seen as the historical necessity for the development of the Indian nation state and industrialisation as crucial for building a modern India. It was historical possibilities of a modern independent India and its feasibility as well as the modus operandi of realising it. Thus, the post-independence Indian state was conceived as planning authority that undertook the task of reforming the exploitative colonial authority to allow for incorporation of organised demands of particular groups within the general rational strategy of development.³⁹

However, during transfer of power the negotiation over structure of state, form of society and allocation of resources led to polarisation within the Congress over the strategy of social transformation between the socialist and the bourgeois factions. The untimely death of Patel in 1950 ended the debate, leading to the adoption of the Nehruvian model, without resolving the struggle.⁴⁰ However it isolated Nehru within Congress forcing him to look for alternative source for support in modern bureaucratic elite, the thinly dispersed modern sector, that was carry forth India's social transformation.⁴¹ With their support, Nehru pursued his vision to feed and clothe its naked and hungry masses in order to give every Indian the equality of opportunity to develop himself according to his capacity.⁴² It proposed to secure adequate means of livelihood, minimization of inequalities of income, status and opportunities, free and compulsory education,

³⁷ On the nationalists carving a distinct identity in the spiritual realm, see Chatterjee, 1986, 1993; Prakash, 1999.

³⁸ Mehta, 1991/1992: 539

³⁹ For details on the post colonial Indian state as a rational planning authority, see Chatterjee, 1993: 209- 214

⁴⁰ For details see Kaviraj, 1988

⁴¹ For details on Nehru support base in the bureaucratic elite see Kaviraj, 1988; Khilnani, 1998; Chatterjee, 1986; 1993

⁴² Constituent Assembly Debates: 22 January 1947

improvement of public health, and social justice. These policies proposed a close link between the remaking of India and the making of modern citizens.⁴³

However the rational embodiment of the state as a planning authority did not reduce its importance as the 'site' at which 'free' citizens to engage in political process. So, the post colonial 'primitive accumulation' had to content with the democratic processes of representative government. This implied that planning had to avoid the class struggle involved in industrial transformation as well as be the positive instrument of resolving social conflict.⁴⁴ This led to what has been referred as 'congress system' as institutional mechanism for negotiating power, resources and mandate. This was done through network local elites capable of mobilising their caste peers and economically dependents to allow for a 'vertical disaggregation' social and elite conflict, to be negotiated and contained at local level.⁴⁵ Thus, even though there were disagreements over the direction of social transformation and its modality of practice, but the rationality of welfare state and centralised planning were widely acknowledged by all.

The death of Nehru and the subsequent decline of the congress system marks a distinctive turn in Indian historiography. Political observers on their part have argued that the roots of this turn lay in the limitedness of Nehruvian reforms.⁴⁶ Also, the ambiguities of legitimising the 'violent' primitive accumulation within democratic framework increasingly constrained, moulded and distorted the institutions of rational planning by politics in the name of producing consent.⁴⁷ Therefore, political developments like split in Congress in 1969, the delinking of State and national elections in 1971, and rise of regional opposition parties riding the new wave of popular mobilisations expanded politics vertically as well as horizontal. At the same time, food crisis of the 1960s and economic stagnation of the 1970s created a serious crisis for planning as the institutional mechanism for accumulation. All this led to what has been seen as the populist turn in Indian policy technology and its increasing contestation by new mobilised groups yet to be incorporated within the fold of rational planning.

The populist turn to policy technology and its increasing contestation

⁴³ On the nehruvian model, see Corbridge et. al., 2005: 55-56

⁴⁴ Chatterjee, 1993: 203-04; 208-09

⁴⁵ For details on Congress System see Kothari, 1970; on its being an institutional mechanism see Hansen, 1999: 135; and on vertical disaggregation see Mehta, 1991/92: 537

⁴⁶ For discussion the limitedness of Nehruvian reforms see Kaviraj, 1984; Corbridge and Harriss, 2000

⁴⁷ For details see Chatterjee, 1993: 219

The administrative capacity of the Indian state has been analysed in terms of its developmental autonomy, the class coalitions it expresses, and its class embeddedness. Across these analysis state has been seen in terms of the contradictions between planned (socialist) development and an accommodative, formally democratic 'the soft state'; between democratic politics, based on universal suffrage, and the politics ruling class coalition and between planned development and the interests of private capital.⁴⁸ What pervades across these contradictions is the blurred and porous boundary between the state and society. In the context of the agreement over the blurred nature of the boundary between state and society in India and its relative autonomy vis-a vis the dominant class, the debate has been over its implications for politics and political economy of India.

Against this backdrop, scholars like Bardhan (1984), Rudolphs (1987) and Vinaik (1990) saw the working of Indian state as the result of a 'compromise of power' while others like Kaviraj (1984) and Chatterjee (1986) who saw its working as the result of a 'passive revolution'. As a response to the crisis off the late 1960s, Mrs. Gandhi's adopted a highly populist rhetoric of socialist transformations through direct appeal for popular support. This deinstitutionalised the congress system to the detriment of its mainstay, local elites as growth and equity became the rhetoric to justify as well as contest policies making planning central to populist democracy and its vote bank politics. Particular interest, based on class and identity, were recognised and incorporated in planning strategy by prioritising beneficiaries and relative allocation in redistribution. Social mobilisations with territorial solidarities were incorporated through the idea of federalism while those with identity based mobilisation were incorporated through the ideology of protective discrimination.⁴⁹

Moreover as the policies failed, it perpetuated further frustration among the masses and dissent among the elites. At the same time, success of green revolution empowered the rich peasant to mobilise ethnic and kinship based support in the rural areas. The rise of caste based peasant

⁴⁸ For details on the soft state see Myrdal 1968; on ruling class coalition see Bardhan 1984; and for interests of private capital see Byres 1996.

⁴⁹ For detail on Mrs Gandhi's populist agenda and its impact on local elite, see Corbridge and Harriss, 2000; on the politicisation of rational planning see Chatterjee, 1993.

leader and that of lower and scheduled caste mobilisation based socialist parties focussing on reservation was a key moment in India's post independence political history.⁵⁰

The extension of reservation to the category of 'other backward classes' (OBC), on the recommendation of the Mandal commission, transformed reservation into one of the dominant themes of Indian politics. The rise of regional parties, especially in North India, further increased fractured the Indian politics that was slowly moving towards the rise of coalition politics. The 1980s also saw the rise of hindu nationalism under the leadership of BJP, with issue of Ram janam bhoomi in the 'Ramayana age', communal politics of Congress and anti reservation sentiments of post-mandal politics that added to its electoral advantage and dramatic rise to power at the turn of the century.⁵¹ However, the declining ability to accommodate the demands of the newly mobilised groups has been seen as the primary reason behind the growing political crisis of the 1980s.⁵²

Furthermore, the excessive bureaucratisation of social life in the absence of structure of civil society created conditions whereby poverty was to be solved by bureaucrats and experts. Increasing political demands and limited resources trivialised development planning and simultaneously increased state resources and patronage leading to the production of violent strains leading to a crisis of structures in this 'late, backward, increasingly un-reformist capitalist order. The rising societal conflict led the state to make citizens the object of three projects: development, security and secularism that saw all conflict being rooted in unbalanced development. The discourse transforms conflict into law and order situation and further perpetuates horizontal and vertical violence leading to a crisis of institutions.⁵³ A compromise was struck through India's liberal democratic form, as civil and political rights of its citizens were sanctified by the constitution but their development, both redistribution and growth was to be achieved through economic planning. Concession to the propertied class slowed the rate of institutional change and governments' capacity to raise rural resources for industrialisation. As

⁵⁰ For details on green revolution and rich peasants, see Corbridge and Harriss, 2000; for caste mobilisation see Jefferlot 2003.

⁵¹ On expansion of reservation see Chotray, 2011; Jefferlot, 2003; on the rise of hindu nationalism see Hansen, 1999; Corbridge and Harriss, 2000; and on the rise of regionalism see Rudolph and Rudolph, 1987.

⁵² For details on inability to incorporate newly mobilized group see Frankel and Rao, 1989/90; Kohli, 1990, Kothari, 1988; Frankel, et al, 2000; Shah, 2004.

⁵³ For details on excessive bureaucratization see Kaviraj, 1984; 1988; 1991; on the crisis of institutions see Kothari, 1988 especially chapter 1.

matter of socio economic reforms were left to regional legislatures with the federal structure, elite could mount local pressures on redistributive policies.⁵⁴

Therefore no attempt was made towards agrarian reorganisation even as massive state led heavy industrialisation were carried on, leading to a 'weak-strong state' that grew in size, with the expansion of bureaucracy, but not in capacity. Also the breakdown of consensus on centralisation with the decline of the congress system and the pluralisation of politics transformed Indian political economy into an elaborate network of patronage and subsidies which seriously deteriorated the ability of the state to manage conflict and achieve policy targets.⁵⁵ Thus politics of recognition, redistribution and representation within the context of 'political society' led to the emergence of a 'functioning democracy exists amidst increasing political violence'. This was seen by scholars the 'crisis of governability', the 'Indian paradox' and the 'puzzle of India's governance'.⁵⁶ In this light of limits to state capacity, attention shifted to the manner in which 'technologies of rule' are put to practice determined by the manner in which they are interpreted and put to play by grassroot level government agents.

Contemporary policy technology and its political contestation

Off late, an anthropological turn has come about in the study of the Indian state as reflected in the work of Kohli (1987; 1990), Wiener (1989), Corbridge (2005) Harris White (2004) and others. These works focus on the politics of practices and processes associated with the state and its perception among the people of the state. At the same time, state's goal were increasingly directed towards expansion of the 'capabilities' to influence public policy, shaped by processes that allow freedom of action and decision and the actual opportunities that people have, given their personal and social circumstances.⁵⁷ At the same time, inspired by Putnum's work, analysts and development practitioners also turned to society as the anchor of development amidst

⁵⁴ On the compromise of Indian liberal democracy see Frankel, 1978: 18-23, 202; on local pressure on planning see Khilnani, 1998: 36

⁵⁵ On weak/strong state see Rudolph and Rudolph, 1987; on the network of patronage and subsidy see Kohli, 1990; Bardhan, 1992

⁵⁶ On Indian paradox see Wiener, 1989; the crisis of governability see Kohli, 1990; on Indian puzzle of governance see Mitra, 2006.

⁵⁷ For details on capability approach, see Sen, 2000.

pluralisation of actors as well as levels of governance, which leads to a significant impact on the conception of liberal rights and a democratic state.⁵⁸

In the context of depoliticised development of the 1990s, the newly-mobilised marginal groups started using politics as the logic defining the meaning of development, creates new political actors, public authority and institutional forms to anchor differentiated notion of development. And, the state emerges as a significant actor in the politics of social justice and its realisation by focusing on issues of coverage, efficacy and reach of governance initiatives, its political contestation in the name of social justice and its institutional anchor.⁵⁹ Therefore state continued to be the only social actor capable of declaring, implementing and adjudicating universal obligations and enforcing redressal and accountability. States have decisively influenced the economic context and are key determinant of regional developmental dynamics.⁶⁰

At the same time, with the shift of attention to bottom's up, participatory approaches to development, it is the panchayati raj institutions (PRI)⁶¹ that have generated a lot of expectations. Seen as institutions of local democracy as well as anchors of development,⁶² they structure the access to state institution and shape the implementation of developmental policies.⁶³ In addition to formal institutions of local governance, new institutional forms clubbed as civil society have begun to populate local arenas. However, in the resource-constraint political economy of India, the question of development has always been central to political mobilisation and contestation between various politically active groups. And this fact has also led to the contestation of the India's technologies of rule, epitomised in its development discourse, which has even manifested itself in an increasingly violent manner. In the Indian case, the two quests – that of identity recognition and that of socio-economic change – have been inextricably intertwined in the political process and anchor much of India's democratic experience as well as its contestation.⁶⁴

Governmental policy documents continue to follow the assimilationist ideology of balancing economic growth with capability-based human development. So while the 10th five year plan

⁵⁸ For work of civil society see Chandhoke: 2003; Prakash and Selle: 2004; Krishna: 2003; Bhattacharya: 2004, amongst many others

⁵⁹ For details on contemporary debates in Indian developmental discourse see Prakash, 2013.

⁶⁰ For detailed on continued primacy of state as a developmental actor, see Harriss-White, 2004; Kohli: 2004; 2009.

⁶¹ emerged only after the 72nd and 73rd Amendments to the Constitution in 1992

⁶² as reflected in the powers and functions delegated to them under Article 243G

⁶³ For details on the PRIs see Jayal, Prakash & Sharma, 2006; Kumar, 2006; Gellner & Hachethu, 2008

⁶⁴ For details of the twin challenges in India, see Prakash, 2001; 2012.

saw economic growth as the means to the end of enhancement of human well-being, the 11th pursued faster, more broad-based and inclusive growth to reduce poverty. On the other hand, the National Human Development Report (NHDR) argues stresses on three critical indicators of well-being: longevity, education and command over resources. However, such claims of universality of the development discourse are thus contested by claims of differentiated notions of development based on politics of social justice. Thus Indian technology of rule display contra-trends to the global discourse as India takes on the path of neo-Keynesian through policies like NREGA, RTE and NRHM.

Thus irrespective of the technologies of rule in India, the goals pursued by the state has always pursued dichotomous goal of economic growth with democratic empowerment and social justice. In this pursuit the Indian state has several distinct stages that have evolved through the dialectic between technologies of rule and its political contestation. In this evolution, the technology of sovereignty was introduced by the colonial master will exploitative intent and was contested over the cultural realm, to begin with, by the nationalist leadership in India. With independence, the post colonial Indian state used the technologies of centralised planning and universal suffrage that became increasing contested as policies failed and democracy deepened. This paved the way for decentralised and liberalised technologies of power that sought to engage and intervene at the grassroot level. Thus, I agree with Rudolph and Rudolph view that Indian state capacity can be summarised as 'weak/strong' but this categorisation emanate from the concerns of balancing populist electoral democracy with industrialisation based economic growth.