PREFACE

Public policy analysis has emerged as an important sub-area of social inquiry as every modern society seeks to reshape and regulate itself on the basis of policy interventions and directions set by formal as well as informal institutions and groups. Every modern society, irrespective of the nature of its political regime, gives adequate attention to the process of formulating suitable policies and to their proper implementation. The proper formulation as well as implementation of policies contributes to socio-economic progress and in the long run, provides legitimacy to the political regime.

Apart from constitutional provisions and governmental organs such as the legislature, the bureaucracy and the judiciary, the policy formulation process also involves various non-governmental and extra-constitutional forces like political parties, pressure groups, social organizations, mass media and international agencies. These forces influence the functioning of formal state organs and thus influence the policy formulation process. Though the role of these non-governmental forces varies from society to society depending upon the character of the existing political regime in that society, their contribution to the policy making process can not be minimized. Their involvement helps to
build a consensus within the society on the ideology and policies of the ruling elite. They influence the official policy maker's perceptions of the needs of society and also the subsequent decision-making process. They are seen as the instruments of popular participation in the policy formulation process, thus providing legitimacy to the regime.

As regimes differ from each other in their governance style, the processes as well as the environment of policy formulation differ from regime to regime. In authoritarian regimes, where a single political party dominates and controls the whole political spectrum, the policy-making process is very much a top-down, unified, highly centralized and integrated one. In such regimes policy-making access, influence and resources are highly concentrated in the hands of a very few top leaders and central decision making organs of the Party. Policies formulated in these regimes often ignore the needs of certain crucial sections and interests of the society and, therefore, become ineffective in the long run. However, many factors such as the dismal performance of a regime because of policy failures, the emergence of several new constituencies, social groups and interests, empowerment of government organs and other political institutions, the need for policies to have broad societal support many authoritarian systems including the People's Republic of China have started to decentralize their policy-making
process. This has paved the way for a transition to a more open, consultative and perhaps more democratic process of policy-making where a wider array of actors such as political and economic elites, political and bureaucratic institutions, social groups and even individuals have access to the policy-making process. But an enduring transformation of the policy process requires institutionalization of such decentralization processes without which transformations of the policy making process tend to fall into cycles of decentralization and re-centralization as has been happening in most authoritarian regimes.

The present endeavor is an effort towards exploring the dynamics of public policy formulation process in contemporary China and the relative importance formal state institutions as well as non-governmental forces in such a process. Chapter one analyses the concept of public policy and various theoretical perspectives including models and approaches related to public policy analysis. The chapter also explores the approaches adopted by sinologists to explain the policy making process in contemporary China. Chapter two examines the nature and environment of the policy making process during Mao's regime and their subsequent changes and continuities in post-Mao China. Chapter three deals with the stage of policy initiation involving the process of agenda-setting and inter-agency bargaining. Chapter four
analyses the corresponding role of the NPC and central apparatus of the CCP during the policy approval stage. Chapter five explores the processes and dynamics of policy implementation and the role of various formal and non-formal organs in it.

Research of such a nature is never complete without a visit to China for interactions with the concerned authorities, agencies and the people involved in the policy making process. However, the inability to undertake a field trip, in view of a resource crunch, limits the area and depth of analysis. With a limited available material, it's been a handicap to deal with such a sensitive and important topic. However, every attempt has been made to garner all available resources and to understand them keeping the general nature of the political regime in mind. Care has been taken to maintain quality and originality.