

PUBLIC OPINION

1. It refers to the opinion or views of people in a community or country on issues of public interest or concern.
2. A general term for the beliefs held by a number of individual human beings. (Albert Venn Dicey-- a 19th Century Scholar)
3. No ^{صرف} mere aggregate of separate individual judgment, but an organization, a cooperative product of communication and ^{تبادل} reciprocal influence. (Charles Horton Cooley)
4. Opinions on matters of concern to the nation freely & publicly expressed by men outside the government who claim a right that their opinion should influence or ^{تعیین} determine the actions, personnel or structure of their government. (Hans Speier)

For Public Opinion to form, the following three elements must be present.

1. Communication channels (interpersonal or mass media)
Communication links issue with public & may link members of the public with one another.
2. Issues (issue means when there is no right or accepted answer).
3. Public (People who give attention or at least have some interest in an issue).

Public

1. A public is any group of people within which a controversy arises.
2. They are the people who take part in the controversy and who are, or may be, affected by the way in which the controversy is finally settled. *Resolve*

Formation of Public Opinion

The study of the formation of Public Opinion is essentially the study of the way these linkages are created.

Stages

1. An individual forms an attitude about an issue as a result of *exposure* to communication about it. *فرد کا موقف*
2. If this attitude is then expressed in words, action or gesture, it becomes an opinion. If it is never expressed, it does not become an opinion & plays no part in the public opinion process. Some individual attitudes become part of public opinion on an issue only because they are expressed to a public opinion interviewer or in a voting booth. *Confidential* *رہائے دینا*
3. People express their opinion about issues to members of one or more face-to-face groups to which they belong. If members (family, neighbors or friends) agree, a common opinion on the issue may develop. *رفقاء درمیان*

Opinions that meet strong opposition among a person's associates are likely to be changed, or individual holding them may break with the group.

Strong opposition
مضبوط مخالفت
فرد کا موقف

4. Through the mass media or interpersonal networks, people become aware of opinions among larger public. If they find support for their own views, they tend to express these more often and more confidently. If they meet disapproval, they are more likely to remain silent.
5. When individuals become aware of others who share their opinions, a "we" feeling may come into existence. This body of opinion may grow by a snowball or spiral process until nearly everyone who is ready to agree, shares the we feeling.

(In practice, Public Opinion on each issue follows a slightly different course, not all stages can be identified in each case and varying proportions of public may be included in the body of opinion on an issue.)

Whether person-to-person communication or the mass media are more important in the formation of an attitude on an issue depends on individual's social environment and on the nature of the issue. People who have loose-knit networks of friends and acquaintances tend to rely more on the mass media for information about issues & for guidance in forming their own attitudes. Those belonging to close social groupings are more likely to acquire information and attitudes via words of mouth. Usually mass media (including books & magazines) and personal sources complement and reinforce each other. A person may learn about an issue from a radio broadcast, talks about it with friends and then goes to a newspaper for further information. The resulting attitude is likely to be influenced strongly by a person pre-existing attitudes and values and by his/her social & economic situation.

The source of formation of public opinion.

Uses of Public Opinion

1. Public Opinion is an instrument of discipline.
2. Public Opinion can play a role in social control causing individuals and groups to conform to social norms and standard of behavior prescribed by larger or super ordinate societal units.
3. Public Opinion is used for promotion of ideology & religion.
4. Public Opinion is used in social change. If there is a law, public opinion formation is easy, but when there is no law, public discussion leads to establishment ^{of} ~~to~~ norms ^{or} ~~of~~ laws. /

Those who seek to influence or manipulate public opinion frequently, make practical application of what is known about its formation & change.

If they have power, they control and regulate the channels of communications. Emphasize some issues & ignore others and do their best to mobilize publics that will favour their policies. Those who have power can often keep issues under their control.