

Geopolitics, risk & reform: Importance of public policy



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GEOPOLITICS, RISK AND reform are crucial in shaping strategies, managing risks, and fostering trust across government, business and civil society in today's global uncertainty and transformative domestic shifts. Public affairs has evolved from a closed-door practice to a strategic, inclusive, and trust-based discipline, reflecting India's dynamic growth driven by digital advancements, economic reforms and social movements.

The rise of digital platforms and data-driven governance has amplified public voices, making stakeholder engagement critical. Professionals in public affairs and public policy navigate the complex intersection of geopolitics, geoeconomics, and domestic policy, impacting India's economy through geopolitical rivalries, global trade tensions, fluctuating tariffs, disrupted supply chains, and climate change.

Risk management, an integral part of public affairs, helps organisations anticipate challenges and build robust buffers against supply chain vulnerabilities and reputational threats. This approach ensures businesses are prepared for uncertainties.



Policy advocacy has evolved beyond traditional lobbying, raising awareness, amplifying diverse perspectives, and providing evidence-based solutions to governments.

In India, regulatory reforms and the professionalisation of public affairs have transformed the field. The outdated "liaison officer" model has been replaced by transparent strategic advisors. Structured consultations, position papers, and knowledge-driven dialogues foster accountability and inclusive policymaking.

The private sector has also redefined its role, embedding social and environmental goals into core strategies. Forward-looking companies recognise that inclusive growth and shared value are prerequisites for long-term success. Public affairs and advocacy teams increasingly integrate communications, CSR, and risk management to establish trust and credibility.

Geopolitics, trade, and strategic public affairs have become central to public affairs

and policy due to globalisation's intensified economic interconnectedness. Rising protectionism, tariff shifts, and export restrictions affect India's manufacturing, IT, and energy sectors. Public affairs professionals help businesses and governments anticipate these risks, diversify markets, and pursue meaningful reforms.

The semiconductor shortage and tariff disputes over critical raw materials are strategic issues with implications for national security and competitiveness. Public affairs and advocacy teams analyse these dynamics to inform policy interventions, ensuring India remains resilient, investment-friendly and aligned with global norms.

Building trust and collaborative federalism is crucial for sustainable reform. Transparency, humility, and shared responsibility are essential for cultivating trust across government, business, civil society, and citizens.

Complex challenges like

employment generation, urban planning, climate resilience, and digital governance require collective action. Governments need the innovation of startups, the expansive reach of corporations, the credibility of civil society organisations, and the lived experiences of citizens.

The next wave of reforms must deepen federalism. Many critical levers, such as healthcare, skill development, and education, fall under state jurisdiction. Empowering states with fiscal tools and policy flexibility is imperative. Competitive federalism should evolve into collaborative federalism, where innovation is shared, and successes are amplified nationwide.

Looking ahead, India must shape its future through effective public policy. India's trajectory towards 2047, its centenary, hinges on today's decisions. Will our cities become inclusive hubs or unequal pockets? Will digital governance bridge divides or deepen them? Will institutions foster trust or enforce compliance?

Answering these questions requires courage, collaboration, and a commitment to the public good. Public affairs, policy, and advocacy are no longer confined to influence. They're instruments of foresight, risk management, and collective action—strategic forces shaping India's future.

(The author is co-founder of PAFI and a public affairs veteran with over four decades of experience)