

BLOCK 5
SOCIAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATIONS

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UNIT 9 SOCIAL WELFARE: CONCEPT, APPROACHES AND POLICIES*

Structure

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9.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept and importance of social welfare;
- Describe the constitutional provisions with regard to weaker sections of society in India; and
- Evaluate the main policies and legislation relating to women and children in India.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

India, like many other countries, is committed to the welfare of its people. The Constitution of India - - through its Preamble, the provisions on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy - - and several central and state legislations and national policies seek to provide to the people of India a wide range of services to meet their social, economic, and educational and health needs.

* Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh

Though law and order and tax collection have been the primary functions of the state social welfare has become its major responsibility in the 20th and 21st centuries, especially in democratic countries. Indeed, the modern state has assumed the role of an agent of social-economic change. The necessity for the state to assume a dominant role in welfare field was recognised in the First Five-Year Plan, which pronounced: “As the social structure becomes more complex, the state is called upon to play an increasing role providing service for the welfare of the people”. In fact, this welfare function absorbs a steadily growing share of the resources of the state. It is, therefore, important for the government to meet basic needs of individuals, especially the weaker sections of society.

9.2 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

The concept of social welfare in theoretical and operational terms has a long tradition in India. All the ancient religious scriptures of India - - the Vedas, the Sutras, the Epics, the Smrities and the Dharma Shastras - -contain verses, slokas and extensive references which emphasise provision of welfare facilities by the state, the community and wealthy persons to the needy individuals and families. The emphasis is on the well-being of the entire society.

The concept of social welfare and its scope of operation vary from country to country, depending upon their stage of historical development, the degree of prominence given to development and welfare goals and the evolution of state structures for delivery of services. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines social welfare as a system of laws and institutions through which a government attempts to protect and promote the economic and social welfare of its citizens, usually based on various forms of social insurance against unemployment, accident, illness and old age. According to Friedlander social welfare consists of the organised services and institutions, designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life and health, and personal and social relationships which permit them to develop their full capacities and to promote their well-being in harmony with the needs of their families and the community (Friedlander, 1967).

Wayne Vasey notes that social welfare includes two main characteristics – (a) the utilisation of welfare measures to support or strengthen the family as a basic social institution through which needs are met, and (b) the intent to strengthen the individual’s capacity to cope with his life situation (Vasey, 1958).

According to a document prepared by the United Nations on “Social Welfare Planning in the context of National Development Plans”, Social Welfare is “a body of organised activities which are basically meant to enable individuals, groups and communities to improve their own situation, adjust to changing conditions and participate in the tasks of development.” Some of the social welfare activities are meant to enable local citizens to participate in self-help projects and help to create social climate that is an essential condition of development. Some other activities are aimed more directly at helping vulnerable groups or categories of people to attain the minimum social standards (Gore and Khandekar, 1975).

To Heywood, social welfare promotes the economic well-being of the individuals with fulfilment of the basic needs necessary for a healthy life. Heywood puts forward following reasons for strengthening of the social welfare system:

- 1) It promotes social cohesion and national unity, in that it gives all citizens a 'stake' in society and guarantees at least some basic social support.
- 2) It enlarges freedom in the sense that it safeguards people from poverty and provides conditions in which they can develop and realise their potential.
- 3) It ensures prosperity by countering the effects of social deprivation and helping those who cannot help themselves.
- 4) It serves as a redistributive mechanism that promotes greater equality and strengthens a sense of social responsibility (Heywood, 2005).

9.3 APPROACHES TO SOCIAL WELFARE

Approach implies a structured institutional response or a framework for policy. Each developed and developing country has its own approach and system of social welfare policies and programmes. Their welfare system reflects, by and large, the values and beliefs about how people's welfare can best be advanced.

We may broadly classify the social welfare approaches as follows: 1. Family-centric approach, 2. Residual perspective, 3. Mixed-economy approach, and 4. Institutional approach.

9.3.1 Family-centric Approach

This is perhaps the oldest approach in which the family plays an active role in social welfare provision. Strong familial bonds tend to be an important source of social capital. For example, in taking care of the children, the aged and disabled, family as a whole has a critical role. In India as well as in an advanced country like England, family structure is still regarded as strong, and several social needs that are elsewhere met by government programmes are still met by the family. In many countries of Asia the joint family continues to be the main support for economic security, especially of the unemployed children and older family members. The family is, therefore, perceived by policy analysts as a significant point for intervention.

This approach is based on conventional wisdom as well as sound sociological theory. Strong family bonds are considered as the source of sustainable social support. Public policy analysts, therefore, perceive the family to be a point of intervention by the state both for meeting the welfare needs and for curbing social ills,

But the family approach has some limitations. One of them is the near extinction of the extended family system, more so in the urban areas. Secondly, it does not look at the role of gender in the family. Thirdly, there are financial and spatial issues, which constrain universalistic reliance on the family approach.

9.3.2 Residual Perspective

The residual approach conceives of welfare provision by government as the last resort. It is based on the idea that people can resolve the problems themselves. The needy can find support through the family, the market (insurance in particular) or non-governmental organisations. Government would step in only when the needy are unable to resolve their problems. In this context, public provision is

made for the residue of the poor only; sick, unemployed, the order people and the other needy.

The residual approach is followed in a few countries only. It suffers from many limitations; chief among them is the ‘means’ or eligibility test. Fulfilling the residency requirements becomes problematic for the beneficiaries if the schemes are intended for the residents of a given state or ‘territory’ in a federal system. The residual approach does not also touch issues like housing shortage. In this approach, the benefits for the needy are very few and even the eligible recipients get discouraged to go after them.

9.3.3 Mixed-Economy Approach

In some countries, including England and Germany, a mixed-economy approach has been adopted in some areas of social welfare. For example, the German Social Insurance System has provided a very successful forum for cooperation between government, social administrators, banks, insurance firms, and individual entrepreneurs. In such a system insurance benefits, linked to individual earnings, cover the bulk of material needs.

In this model, public and private sectors come together in managing welfare policies in a more efficient manner than in a bureaucracy-centric operation. However, a major limitation of this approach is that public-private partnerships do not operate in many countries in the best possible manner.

9.3.4 Institutional Approach

It is a normative approach, It is based on the belief that social welfare can best be promoted though collective action and the pooling of resources. Welfare is provided, according to this approach, for the population as a whole, in the same way as public services like roads or schools might be. It may also be described as a fully saturated model. For example, instead of restricting public health coverage to specific social groups belonging to the weaker sections the coverage of the programme is made universal in this model.

The institutional approach appears to be elegant, but many people would not extend support to this approach and pool their resources, just as the way they do for community works. In practice, the institutional approach to social welfare, therefore, lacks adequate public support, except in the spheres of education and health.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.
- ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Define the concept of social welfare and discuss its significance.

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2) Examine various approaches to social welfare.

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9.4 SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES

In the Indian context, social welfare policy comprises central and state policies based on legislative enactments. These help people (especially those belonging to the weaker sections of the community) in meeting their social, economic, educational and health needs. It is generally noted that the term ‘social welfare’ has been used in a restricted sense. Social Welfare policies are applied to socially underprivileged groups – scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, denotified communities, orphans, widows, unmarried mothers, women in moral danger, aged and infirm, women and children, socially maladjusted, beggars, prostitutes, delinquent, physically and mentally disabled, diseased, mentally retarded or ill and economically backward among upper castes, destitute and unemployed. For such groups social welfare programmes are necessary as they help to ameliorate their distress.

9.4.1 Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs & STs)

The Constitution contains several provisions in the nature of safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The following two Acts specifically aim at curbing (i) untouchability and (ii) atrocities against SCs and STs, and are, therefore, very important for their social uplift.

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955: This Act was enacted in pursuance of Article 17 of the Constitution of India under Fundamental Rights. The Act extends to the whole of India and is implemented by the state governments and union territories.

The Act and the Rules framed under it prescribe the scale of punishments for various categories of offences relating to the propagation or practice of untouchability in any form. The punishments invariably include a prison term and fine. Any person who justifies, whether on historical, philosophical, cultural or religious grounds or any other ground, the practice of untouchability in any form shall be considered as an offender. Repeaters of the offence shall get more stringent punishments.

- i) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, also called the PoA Act, came into force in 1990. This legislation aims at preventing commission of offences by persons other than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Comprehensive rules under this Act, inter-alia, provide norms for relief and rehabilitation of the victims from SCs & STs.

- ii) National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: In addition to these two Acts, the National Commission for SCs and STs (NCSC) which was set up under Article 383 of the Constitution in 1990 was bifurcated into two Commissions, namely, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes after the 89th Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 2003. These two Commissions are responsible for monitoring the safeguards provided for SCs & STs respectively. Further, they have to review issues concerning their welfare.

For the educational advancement of SC & ST students there are schemes such as Pre-matric scholarships, National Overseas Scholarships, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships. In most of the states and UTs hostel facilities are provided for them from KG to PG level. The central schemes are also supplemented by other allowances so that the entire expenditure of SC/ST students is taken care of.

There are also scheduled castes development corporations in states and UTs, besides a National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation, and a National Safari Armchairs Finance and Development Corporation. There are also a Venture Capital Fund and a Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes to extend financial support and seed capital to them in start-ups of enterprises or other industrial ventures.

9.4.2 Welfare of Scheduled Tribes

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up in 1999 after bifurcation of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with the objective of providing more focused approach on the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the most underprivileged of the society, in a coordinated and planned manner. Scheduled Tribes live in contiguous areas unlike other communities.

With a view to safeguarding the interests of Scheduled Tribes with regard to land alienation and other social factors, provisions of the “Fifth Schedule” and “Sixth Schedule” have been enshrined in the Constitution. The Fifth Schedule under Article 244 (1) of Constitution defines “Scheduled Areas” as such areas as the President may by Order declare to be Scheduled Areas after consultation with the Governor of the state. The Sixth Schedule under Article 244(2) of the Constitution relates to those areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram which are declared as “Tribal Areas” and provides for District Councils and /or Regional Councils for such Areas. With a view to later to the welfare of STs. These Councils have been conferred with wide ranging legislative, judicial and executive powers.

Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:

As noted earlier, the purpose of this Act is to prevent commission of offences against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Its scope and operation in the case of STs are similar to that of the SCs.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST): A separate Commission was created in 2004 by amending the Constitution. The main duties of the Commission are to investigate, monitor and evaluate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the scheduled tribes; and to inquire into specific

complaints with respect to the deprivation of the rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Tribes.

In addition to this Commission, there is National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (set up in 2001) for accelerating the pace of economic development of scheduled tribes, and for providing financial assistance as grant for skill and entrepreneurial development of the target group. There is also one federation called Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (set up in 1987) which is now engaged in the marketing of its development of tribal products (natural and organic products, handicrafts, etc.) for direct sale through its own outlets or sale through other shops.

Then there are schemes for the economic development of ST women and micro-credit schemes to provide financial assistance for self-employment ventures/activities by STs. There is also a scheme for providing financial assistance to ST students for pursuing higher studies and for post-doctoral research programmes abroad. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs also provides adequate educational infrastructure for STs and several incentives including scholarships for education of ST students. By enacting the Forest Rights Act, 2006, the STs and other traditional forest dwellers are vested with forest rights and allowed occupation of forest land.

9.4.3 Welfare of Other Backward Classes

The Second Backward Classes Commission (commonly known as Mandal Commission), constituted under Article 340, submitted its Report in 1980. Based on this Report, the Government of India, in 1993, reserved 27 per cent of vacancies in civil posts and services under the Central Government, to be filled through direct recruitment in favour of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The facility of reservation to OBCs was later extended for admissions and employment in Central educational institutions also.

National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC)

The NBCFDC was set up in 1992 with the objective of promoting economic and developmental activities for the benefit of backward classes and to assist the poorer sections of these classes in skill development and self-employment ventures.

Educational Empowerment

There are also schemes such as Pre and Post-Matric Scholarships, National Fellowships and award of interest subsidy to OBC students. A central scheme for provision of hostels to students from De-notified tribes, who are not covered under SC, ST or OBC categories, to enable them to pursue secondary and higher education, has been in vogue.

9.4.4 Welfare of Persons with Disabilities

Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India prohibit discrimination of persons on grounds of disabilities. They are also entitled to all the Rights guaranteed by the constitution.

With a view to give focused attention to different policy issues and meaningful thrust to the activities aimed at welfare and empowerment of the persons with

disabilities, a separate Department of Disability Affairs was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2012. This Department now acts as a nodal agency for matters relating to disability and persons with disabilities besides enabling closer coordination among different stakeholders: related central ministries, state/UT governments, NGOs etc., in matters pertaining to disability. Thus the Indian Constitution protects the interests of, persons suffering from certain disabilities.

Article 41 provides for Right to work, to education and to public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. Besides, the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules of the constitution, which pertain to the powers and responsibilities of the Panchayats and Municipalities respectively with respect to implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice, include welfare and safeguarding the interests of persons with disabilities among the other poor sections of the society. Several statutes enacted at the central level are aimed at the rehabilitation and welfare of persons with disabilities in general and those with specific categories of disabilities. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities initiates legislation relating to the disabled and monitors all the central schemes meant for the disabled persons.

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) is a statutory body and is the apex body of the Union Government to regulate training programmes and courses targeted at disabled, disadvantaged, and special education requirement communities. The Council is required to maintain the Central Rehabilitation Register which mainly documents details of all qualified professionals in this field.

9.4.5 National Policy for Older Persons

The existing National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) was announced in 1999 to reaffirm the Government's commitment to ensure the well-being of the older persons. NPOP envisages state support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and fulfilment of the other needs of older persons, equitable share in development, protection against abuse and exploitation, and provision of services to improve the quality of their lives. The primary objectives of NPOP are to encourage families to take care of their older family members; to extend support to voluntary and non-governmental organisations to supplement the care provided by the family and to provide adequate healthcare facilities to the elderly.

9.4.6 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Policy

Addiction of youth to drugs in India has become a serious problem, especially in some urban pockets. India is a transit point as well as a destination for narcotic substances. According to a recent survey by one of the central ministries India has more than 70 million drug addicts. Realising the gravity of the problem, the Union Ministry of Finance, in consultation with all stakeholders including the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, has come up with the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Policy (NDPS Policy). It spells out the policy of India towards narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. NDPS policy serves as a guide to various Ministries and organisations in the Government of India and to the state governments as well as international organisations and NGOs. Overall, it asserts India's commitment to combat the drug menace in a holistic

manner. Besides legal measures, the prevention of drug menace requires society-based solutions and international efforts.

9.4.7 Welfare Measures for the Minorities

Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution of India seek “to protect the interests of minorities and recognise their right to conserve their distinct language, culture and to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice”. Article 350 and 350B give the right to submit representation for redressal of their grievances. Similarly, Articles 347 and 360A provide constitutional safeguards in matters of instruction and language to linguistic minority groups.

Six religious communities viz., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified as minorities as per provisions under the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992. The Union and state governments have taken several following measures for the welfare of minorities. The Ministry of Minority Affairs was created by the Union Government in January, 2006 to ensure a focused approach to the issues relating to the minorities and to play a pivotal role in the overall policy planning, coordination, evaluation and review of the regulatory and development programmes for the benefit of the minority communities. The Ministry is also responsible for the administration and implementation of the statutes relating to the minorities.

9.4.8 Women and Child Development

Women constitute 48 per cent of the population of the country. They suffer from many disadvantages as compared to men in literacy rates, labour participation ratio and earnings. From the first to the fifth Five-Year Plan women and child development was treated as a subject of ‘welfare’ and clubbed together with the welfare of disadvantaged groups like destitute, disabled, aged, etc. The Second Plan to Fifth Plans continued this strategy, besides giving priority to women’s education, and measures to improve material and child health services.

In the Sixth Plan, there was a shift in the approach from ‘welfare’ to ‘development’ of women, with special emphasis on the three core sectors of health, education and employment. The Seventh Plan stressed on raising their economic and social status, with a focus on beneficiary oriented schemes and the generation of both skilled and unskilled employment through proper education and vocational training. One of the objectives of the Eighth Plan was to ensure that the benefits of development would flow to women to enable them to function as equal partners and participants in the development process. Besides a focus on the “Empowerment of Women”, the Ninth Plan worked out a Women’s Component Plan’. Gender budget was introduced in 2007.

Since the development of women and children is considered to be of paramount importance, a separate Ministry of Women and Child Development was created at the Union level, in 2006, with the main responsibility to advance the rights and concerns of women and children and to promote their survival, protection, development and participation in a holistic manner. It is also responsible for initiating legislation and policy implementation besides coordination with other ministries and agencies dealing with the subject.

9.4.9 National Policy for Women

The National Policy for Women, announced in 2018, is expected to guide government action on women's issues on a life-cycle continuum and encompasses a wide spectrum of issues from education, health, economic participation, decision-making, and violence against women to creation of an enabling environment.

9.4.10 Policies and Programmes for the Welfare of Children

Children (0-18 years) are an asset to the country's development. They need to be nurtured in a planned manner. The central as well as state governments have launched several programmes for their development. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has taken up several programmes and initiatives for child development. The Important ones are noted below.

National Policy for Children (2013)

The Government of India adopted a new National Policy for Children (NPC) in April 2013. The NPC reaffirms the government's commitment to the realisation of the rights of children. It recognises childhood as an integral part of life with a value of its own. The NPC has identified survival, health, nutrition, education development, protection and participation as the undeniable rights of every child, and has also declared these as key priority areas that need to be given a good deal of attention by the governmental and non-governmental agencies.

To deal with child abuse cases the Government has brought a special law "The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. The Act provides for stringent punishment, which ranges from simple to rigorous imprisonment of varying periods. The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs) have been made the designated authority to monitor the implementation of the Act.

National Nutrition Policy

The National Nutrition Policy was formulated in 1993, and as a follow up the National Plan of Action was developed in 1995. The National Plan of Action identified the different sectors in the government for taking up coordinated action to combat malnutrition.

For promotion of infant and young children's feeding practices, focus on appropriate feeding and implementation of IMR Act is undertaken. There is also the Food and Nutrition Board in the Ministry of Women and Child Development which is involved in policy-making, strategy development as well as identification of innovative measures for the improvement of the nutritional status of the people of our country.

Comprehensive Adoption Reforms

Under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Adoption Regulations, notified in 2017, on-line registration with Central Adoptions Resource Authority (CARA) was made mandatory to adopt a child from anywhere in India. Central Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (CARINS) is the only official portal of CARA for legal adoption process. Under the 2015 Act any person or agency

indulging in illegal adoption shall be punished. The Act has adequate safeguards for children to ensure their best interests.

Holistic Development of the Child

For holistic development of the child, the Ministry has been implementing the world’s largest outreach programme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) or Anganwadi services, which has been in existence since 1975. It provides a package of services comprising supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-up, referral services, and pre-school non-formal education, with the objective of improving the nutritional and health status of children in the age group of 0 – 6 years. The major policy initiatives undertaken by the Ministry in the recent past include universalisation of ICDS and, launching of a nutrition programme for adolescent girls (11 – 18 years), establishment of the Commission for protection of Child Rights, and enactment of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

In addition to the above, the National Plan of Action for Children (N P A C) was introduced in 2016, which keys upon four priority areas: survival; health and nutrition; education and development; protection; and participation. The Ministry has also been making efforts for a more effective involvement of non-governmental organisations in women and child welfare programmes.

Welfare of people in distress

People affected by the disasters such as flood, cyclone, earthquake, drought, landslide, major fire, major accidents, etc., need immediate rescue & can make legitimate claims on the state for rescue, relief as well as long-term rehabilitation assistance. The Disaster Management Act (2005) has provided the legal framework under which the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) have come into operation to meet rescue and relief expenditure of a notified disaster event. Relief includes items for survival such as food, water, health, medical assistance, clothing, shelter, etc. Relief and other services are provided on an ad hoc basis for a few weeks or months to enable the disaster victims to recover to a state of normalcy. The state government concerned has the primary responsibility for providing rescue and relief. The District Collector/ Magistrate is empowered to take emergency measures to deal with disaster situations. NGOs like Red Cross play important roles in the relief and rehabilitation process.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) What has been done by the Central Government for the welfare of women in India?

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- 2) Enlist the measures initiated towards holistic development of the children.

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9.5 CONCLUSION

The Preamble and the chapters on the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution stand testimony to India’s commitment to the objectives of a welfare state. Successive governments have played an important role in achieving these objectives. Specifically, the judiciary has played a pivotal role in making a liberal interpretation of the relevant statutes and programmes, thereby ensuring that the objectives of welfare-oriented constitutional provisions are realised.

There were apprehensions that after the dawn of liberalisation (1991) in India the state would withdraw from its commitments to the poor and marginalised. Contrary to such fears, the Union government and that of the states/ union territories have accelerated the tempo of welfare programmes. Indeed, new recipes have been added to the welfare menu partly because of the growth of the Indian economy enabling the centre and the states to increase their budgetary commitments for welfare schemes. Another compelling reason is the growing tendency of competitive populism among political parties driving them to embrace more and more new schemes/ freebies, often beyond the notion of a welfare state. An open democratic system with periodic elections makes this possible. There are schemes for free supply of gas stoves for the poor; supply of laptops and bicycles for school and college students freely; subsidised cooking gas, comprehensive health insurance schemes (eg. PMJY); heavily subsidised breakfast and lunch – for Rs 5/-each; free distribution of mobile phones, grinders and other kitchen items; full fee reimbursement for bulk of the school and college students; grant of land (in a few cases), house sites / pucca houses for the poor and slum dwellers; grants in lump sum to meet marriage expenses; special doles of essential goods for festivals, to mention only a few. These and many other welfare schemes have been operational in various states. Those lagging behind have been catching upfast. .Conventional welfare schemes like pensions have been augmented both by increasing the sum (by ten-fold in some states) or by reducing the age limit, or both. Overall, welfarism found a new lease of life in democratic India in which it will only flourish, but not diminish.

9.6 GLOSSARY

Social Services: Social services are those services whose aim is the protection and enhancement of the social welfare of the individual or the community either through social legislation or by social action.

Social Security: In specific terms, social security refers to governmental protection for those who lose their incomes because of disability, old age, unemployment, or the death of the main earning member of the family.

Disaster Relief: Disaster relief refers to help or assistance in cash or kind to persons who are deprived of essential necessities for survival because of disaster such as flood, earthquake, cyclone, or similar catastrophe.

Social Welfare: Concept, Approaches and Policies

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9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following point:
 - Concept of social welfare
 - Social welfare planning in the context of national development
 - Significance of social welfare
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Family centric approach
 - Residual perspective approach
 - Mixed-economy approach
 - Institutional approach

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Approaches of social welfare
 - Social welfare policies for SCs & STs
 - Social welfare policies for the OBCs

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- ICDS
- Nutritional programme for the adolescent girls (11-18 years)
- Commission for protection of Child Rights
- Enactment of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.



UNIT 10 EDUCATION POLICY AND RIGHT TO EDUCATION*

Structure

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- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Developments in National Policy on Education
 - 10.2.1 National Policy on Education, 1968
- 10.3 National Policy on Education (1986) with Revisions (1992)
- 10.4 Problems and Issues of National Policy on Education
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- 10.6 Right to Education (RTE)
 - 10.6.1 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
 - 10.6.2 RTE -Part of Fundamental Rights
 - 10.6.3 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RTE
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 - 10.6.5 Teacher Training
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- 10.7 Critical Observations
- 10.8 National Education Policy 2020
- 10.9 Conclusion
- 10.10 Glossary
- 10.11 References
- 10.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the significance and meaning of Education Policy;
- Describe the developments in National Policy on Education;
- Discuss problems of implementation of National Policy on Education; and
- Appraise the importance and features of the RTE, 2009.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a critical determinant to human development and is vital for the country's progress and prosperity. No other item on the country's agenda for development deserves more priority and attention than education of the masses. Education is an investment on human resources development. It enables the individual to have a better understanding to his environment, critical thinking, and high aspirations. Our leaders have always stressed the significance of education for individual progress and national development. Emphasising role of education, the National Policy on Education, 1986 states:

* Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh

It (education) “refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit...”Education plays a creative role in the development of the human mind. It also contributes immensely to the nation’s progress”.

Significance of Education Policy

The education policy in India recognises the pivotal importance of the goal of ‘education for all’. The policy envisages as its goal the attainment of quality education for all. In the Indian context, education policy is a statement of goals for improving and enhancing educational system through state action, private initiatives and public and private efforts.

Powers of Union and State Governments in Education Policy

The Constitution of India divides the functions of governments operating at the Union, state and local levels into three lists – Union List, State List and Concurrent List. Education, including technical education, medical education and universities (subject to entries 63-66 of List 1) is placed under the Concurrent List. This means that both Parliament and State Legislature have the powers to legislate on ‘education’. The constitutional framework, however, provides more powers to the Union Government to facilitate uniformity in educational standards throughout the country.

Education policy formulation is a complex exercise. It involves many institutions right from citizen forums, media, pressure groups, political parties, legislature and its special committees, Cabinet and its special committee and the concerned ministry e.g. Ministry of Human Resource Development and state Ministries of Education.

There are many other agencies which guide the legislature and executive in the formulation of policy, e.g. NITI Aayog, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), University Grants Commission (UGC) and international agencies like United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). In addition to these, there are advisory committees at all levels of administration which guide in the formulation of the policy at various levels.

10.2 DEVELOPMENTS IN NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

After India’s Independence, a major concern of the GOI and of the State governments has been to give increasing attention to education as a factor vital to national progress. Problems of educational reconstruction were reviewed by several commissions and committees, notably the University Education Commission (1948-49) under the chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) under the chairmanship of Dr. Mudaliar, and the Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari. The Kothari Commission was the first since independence to examine educational developments from all angles.

In its voluminous report, the Kothari Commission recommended that the Government of India should issue statement on the National Policy of Education to guide the state and local authorities. Accordingly, the Union Government issued in 1968 a statement of National Policy on Education.

10.2.1 National Policy on Education, 1968

The National Policy on Education, 1968, stressed that “the educational system must produce young men and women of character and ability committed to national service and development. Only then will education be able to play its vital role in promoting national progress, creating a sense of common citizenship and culture, and strengthening national integration. This is necessary if the country is to attain its rightful place in the comity of nations in conformity with its great cultural heritage and its unique potentialities.

The National Policy on Education (1968) laid stress on: free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14; adequate and satisfactory emoluments to the teachers having regard to their qualifications and responsibilities; development of regional languages and implementation of three-language formula; equalisation of educational opportunities; accelerating the growth of national economy, science education and research; development of education for agriculture and industry; production of quality text books for schools and Universities; facilities for Secondary and University education and spread of literacy and adult education; development of games and sports; protection of rights of minorities to promote their educational interests; and adoption of the 10+2+3 pattern in educational structure. This policy document also recommended a review the progress of education after every five years.

The National Policy on Education of 1968 marked a significant milestone in the history of education in post-Independence India. Besides promoting national progress, and a sense of common citizenship and culture, it aimed at strengthening national integration. It laid stress on the need for a transformation of the education system, to improve its quality at all stages, and gave much greater attention to science and technology, the cultivation of moral values and forging a closer relation between education and the life of the people.

10.3 NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (1986) WITH REVISIONS (1992)

In the formulation of National Education Policy (1986), the previous reports of the national commissions on education were reviewed. The policy formulated in 1968 had served a useful purpose but could not accommodate the new developments. On 5 January 1985, then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi suggested the development of New Education Policy. He remarked that “I would strongly emphasise education’s organic link with the productive forces of society”. On 19th August 1985, the Education Minister K.C. Pant presented a status Report on Education to the Prime Minister entitled, “Challenges of Education – A Policy Perspective”. This was also placed before the Parliament. Wide-ranging discussions among educationists took place on this Report: Based on these discussions, the National Policy of Education (NPE) was adopted by Parliament in May 1986. The Policy was followed up by an elaboration through the Programme of Action (POA), which was adopted by Parliament, in August 1986.

Based on the recommendations of two other committees (The Acharya Ramamurti Committee, Dec. 1990, and the Janardhana Reddy Committee, Jan. 1992) further modifications were introduced. The NPE – Revised Policy Formulations was placed on the Table of the House in May 1992.

Document I – National Policy on Education (1986)

NPE (1986) has been divided into 12 parts, and has the following salient features.

It considers that education “is a unique investment in the present and the future. This cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education (NPE).

The NPE suggests that an era of partnership between the Union and the states should begin for the effective implementation of the policy. The policy states that the nation as a whole will assume the responsibility of providing resource support for implementing programmes of educational transformation, reducing disparities, universalisation of elementary education, adult literacy, scientific and technological research, etc.

The NPE places special emphasis on ‘education for women’s equality’, education of Scheduled Castes and Tribes’ and ‘other educationally backward sections and areas, including minorities, handicapped, and adults.

Removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of the deprived has an important place in the NPE.

Part-V of the NPE Report deals with Reorganisation of Education at Different Stages – Early Child Care and Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education including Non-Formal Education, Vocationalisation, Open University and Distance Learning.

The policy document of the NPE specifically lays emphasis on de-linking degrees from jobs in select areas. Besides, the document calls for starting a Rural University on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi’s revolutionary ideas on education and to take up the challenges of micro-planning at grassroots levels for the transformation of rural areas.

Part-VI of the NPE Report focuses on improving present technologies, developing new indigenous ones and production and productivity”. It also places emphasis on promoting efficiency and effectiveness for staff development programmes at all levels.

As part of its strategy to make the system walk, the NEP Report suggests the following:

- a) Better deal to teachers in terms of status, pay and opportunities for professional growth, and measures for improved accountability;
- b) provision of improved students’ services and insistence on observance of acceptable norms of behaviour;
- c) provision of better facilities to institutions; and
- d) creation of a system of performance appraisals of institutions according to standards and norms set at the national or state levels.

Part-VIII of the NPE Report deals with Reorienting the Content and Process of Education encompassing cultural perspective, value education, development of

languages, media and education technology, books and libraries, population education, sports, yoga education, and role of youth in reforms and extension programmes. It also examines the evaluation process and examination reforms.

The management of education, which is accorded a high priority, has to be guided by the following considerations:

- a) evolving a long-term planning and management perspective of education and its integration with the country's development and manpower needs;
- b) decentralisation and the creation of a spirit of autonomy for educational institutions;
- c) pre-eminence to people's involvement, including association of non-governmental agencies and voluntary effort;
- d) inducting more women in the planning and management of education; and
- e) establishing the principle of accountability in relation to given objectives and norms.

Further, the Policy document emphasises the need for review of the implementation of the various parameters of policy of education. In its projection of the future scenario of education in India the NPE envisages a multifaceted role.

Document II – National Policy of Education: Programme of Action (1986)

This Policy document, after having examined several issues related to education, suggested a series of follow-up measures for effective implementation of the NPE. It focused on

- i) “making the system work”;
- ii) decentralisation of management and establishment of district boards of education, district institutes of education and training (DIET), provision of autonomy and establishing accountability of institutions, systems and teachers;
- iii) working out the details, mechanics, funding arrangements for the national system of education;
- iv) manpower planning and demand forecasting;
- v) media and educational technology with special reference to adult education, non-formal education, open and continuing education;
- vi) development and periodic review of curricula and teaching-learning processes; and
- vii) strengthening the data-base, monitoring and evaluation system.

Besides emphasising the need for training of educational planners, administrators and heads of educational institutions, the Policy document recommended creation of an All India Educational Service.

10.4 PROBLEMS AND ISSUES OF NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

1) Gap between Policy-making and Policy Implementation

Formulating a national policy on education is a difficult exercise in a federal structure. It involves efforts of both the Union and State Governments besides a plethora of agencies. National consensus rarely emerges since members of the legislatures belonging to various political parties, are usually divided on policy issues. Some method has to be devised to resolve such differences. However, in a democratic system the majority decision prevails.

A policy takes concrete shape only in the process of implementation. This is true of education policy also. If those involved with programme planning, resource allocation and the actual operation of the teaching-learning, process do not understand their tasks or take these casually, no worthwhile results can accrue. The NPE has stood the test of time. It is largely because there has been adequate monitoring and political support.

2) FOSTERING Equality In Education

The NPE lays special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity. But in practice this aim has not been achieved. Nearly 35 years after the introduction of NPE the education system has not played its role in abridging the gap between the male and female, between the weaker sections of the community and the upper strata, and between the disabled and the normal Population.

3) Lack of Reliable Data

Inadequate data base has been hampering the formulation of public policies in India. It is also true of the field of education. Recognising this deficiency, the NPE has suggested detailed steps for building up a reliable data base at all levels of the education ladder.

4) Shortage of Trained Teachers and Provision of Infrastructure

The NPE notes that there is an acute shortage of trained teachers in elementary schools, high and higher secondary schools, colleges and universities. This has hampered the realisation of policy goals in education. In addition, deficiencies in school infrastructure, poor hostel facilities for college and university students and poor linkages of educational policy among different levels and allied sectors have a significant impact on enrolment, attendance and retention of students in educational institutions.

10.5 EDUCATION POLICY: NEED FOR CONTINUOUS REVISION

Since the formulation of the National Policy on Education, 1986/92, significant changes have taken place in India and the world at large. India's political, social and economic development is passing through a phase which necessitates a robust and forward looking education system. It, therefore, needs constant revision. An example of such revision is the insertion of Article 21A in the Indian Constitution,

through an Amendment. In 2009, it was made obligatory on the part of the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

The NDA government led by Narendra Modi in 2015 set up a committee under former Cabinet Secretary TSR Subramanian to chalk out a New Education Policy for the nation. The committee submitted its report in May 2016 and thereafter HRD Ministry prepared ‘Some Inputs for the Draft National Education Policy, 2016’. Both these documents are treated as inputs for policy formulation. The Inputs document states that skill development programmes in school and higher education system be reoriented not only for gainful employment of our students, but also to help them develop entrepreneurial skills. It also urges that vocational-oriented activities be infused in the curriculum from early stages to develop positive attitude towards dignity of labour and develop skills in children. It further suggests that academic aptitude tests will be conducted at various stages to assist students in identifying their true potential and areas of interest.

The Government is in the process of framing a New Education Policy (NEP) for meeting the current and future requirements with regard to quality education, innovation and research, with a view to make India a knowledge superpower by equipping its students with the necessary skills and knowledge and to eliminate the shortage of manpower in science, technology, academics and industry.

The need of reforms in education is continuous. A Committee on New Education Policy, under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, has been constituted to make recommendations for reforms.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Critically evaluate the National Policy on Education, 1986.
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- 2) Discuss the problems in the implementation of the National Policy on Education.
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10.6 RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE)

Education is both a goal as well a means to human resource development. It plays an important and remedial role in balancing the socio-economic fabric of the country. In view of its significance most countries have accorded an honoured place for education. India is certainly one of them.

10.6.1 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth) Amendment Act, 2002 has inserted Article 21 A which provides: “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years”. Through a subsequent Amendment (Aug-2009), the Indian Constitution recognised it as a fundamental right of children.

10.6.2 RTE -Part of Fundamental Rights

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 which became operative throughout the country by 2010. The Right to Education Act, 2009 can be enforced in all the schools defined under the Act, except unaided minority and non-minority schools. The Act defines ‘free’ (education) as removal of any financial barrier by the state that prevents a child from completing eight years of schooling.

10.6.3 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RTE

All states and UTs have notified the RTE Rules in their respective jurisdictions. The centrally sponsored scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) supports states and UTs in their efforts to implement the RTE Act. The expenditure on the implementation of the RTE Act is shared in the ratio of 68:32 between the Union and the states. The Centre’s interventions include, inter alia, opening of new schools, construction of schools and additional classrooms, construction of toilets and drinking water facilities, provision of teachers, in-service training for teachers and academic resource support, free textbooks and uniforms, support for improving learning achievement levels, research, evaluation and monitoring.

The RTE as a Fundamental Right provides for the right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school. It clarifies that compulsory education means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and provision of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. ‘Free’ means that no child shall be liable to pay the kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. Thus the RTE is a big step for making parents and their children aware of this fundamental right.

The RTE Act makes a specific provision for special training for age-appropriate admission for out-of-school children. A majority of out-of-school children belong to disadvantaged communities – Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Muslims, migrants, children with special needs, urban deprived children, working children, etc.

10.6.4 Bridging Gender Gaps in Elementary Education

Girls Education: RTE-SSA provides a clear thrust and special focus on education for girls and children belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections. Under SSA, the requirement of school infrastructure facilities, including toilets and drinking water, are worked out by the state based on need at school/village/block and district level. All new schools sanctioned under SSA are composite schools with toilet and drinking water facilities for school children, both girls and boys.

Inclusive Education: RTE-SSA seeks to ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided quality education. The main components of SSA interventions for children with special needs include identification, functional and formal assessment, appropriate educational placement, preparation of individualised educational plan, provision of aids and appliances, teacher training, resource support, removal of architectural barriers, monitoring and evaluation and a special focus on girls with special needs.

10.6.5 Teacher Training

Availability of Teachers: To meet the shortage of teachers in elementary schools, 19.49 lakh additional teacher posts have been sanctioned under SSA up to 2016-17. After RTE it is mandatory that only those people may be appointed as teachers who are able to clear TET. CBSE has conducted eleven rounds of Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs).

In-service Teacher Training: To upgrade the skills of teachers, SSA provides for annual in-service training up to 20 days for all teachers. Apart from this, induction training for 30 days is provided to fresh recruits.

10.6.6 Values-based Education

The RTE Act provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child. It also seeks to provide child-friendly and child-centred learning, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety. The RTE Act prohibits (i) physical punishment and mental harassment; (ii) screening procedures for admission of children; (iii) capitation fee; (d) private tuition by teachers and (c) running of schools without recognition.

10.6.7 Admission under RTE Act

Section 12(1) (c) mandates that all private unaided schools and special category schools to reserve a minimum of 25 per cent of seats for economically weaker sections. Under the SSA, the Government of India will reimburse the expenditure towards 25 per cent admissions to private unaided schools, based on per child cost norms notified by the respective state governments, subject to a maximum limit of 20 per cent of the size of the SSA annual work plan and budget.

10.7 CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

India joined the list of 135 other countries in making education a right. However, there are many issues and problems. Some of the most important ones are cited below.

First, there is an acute shortage of trained and committed teachers. The quality of education provided by the government school system is not good. While it remains the largest provider of elementary education in the country, forming 80% of all recognised schools, it suffers from shortage of teachers and infrastructural gaps. Second, Children admitted to the private schools are seen to be at an advantage, thereby accentuating the inequalities in education. Even most of the children from the lower strata have not been seeking admission in government schools because of their poor standards and deplorable conditions. Some unaided private schools petitioned the Supreme Court of India claiming that the RTE Act violates the constitutional right of private managements to run their institutions without governmental interference. The parties pleaded that providing 25 percent reservation for disadvantaged children in government and private unaided schools is unconstitutional. The apex court, in its judgement (April, 2012) held that providing such reservation is not unconstitutional. In a subsequent ruling the Court held that the Act will not be applicable to private minority schools and boarding schools. Despite the apex court's rulings there are apprehensions that the approach of the RTE Act with regard to quota in private schools will not motivate schools in the public domain to improve their standards or their infrastructure.

10.8 NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

It is believed that Education is the key factor for achieving human potential and developing an equitable and just society, and thus promoting national development. Therefore providing universal access to quality education is the underlying factor to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.

India is supposed to have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and the ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country.

The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. This goal will require the entire education system to undergo an overhaul to support and foster learning, so that all the targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved.

The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge domain with various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, and as a result many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences,

and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand.

Climate change, increasing pollution, and depleting natural resources, and the growing emergence of epidemics and pandemics will also call for collaborative research in infectious disease management and development of vaccines and the resultant social issues will heighten the need for multidisciplinary learning. There will be a growing demand for humanities and art, as India will move towards becoming a developed country and also among the three largest economies in the world.

The aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that has access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background and with the quickly changing employment landscape and global ecosystem, it is certainly important that children not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn. Education Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable.

The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded and useful.

The teacher must be at the helm of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. Education is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system.

The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity. The National Policy on Education 1986, was modified in 1992 and a major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action and the National Education Policy 2020 focuses on creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution.

Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal wellbeing and in developing India as envisioned in its Constitution - a democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all.

Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society, more and more young Indians are likely to aspire for higher education.

The main thrust of this policy regarding higher education is to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/Knowledge Hubs, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students.

This policy also aims at moving to large multidisciplinary universities and HEI clusters which is the most important recommendation of this policy regarding the structure of higher education. A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The following are the major highlights of NEP 2020:

NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3 per cent in 2018 to 50 per cent by 2035 and aims to add 3.5 crore new seats to higher education institutions. The policy envisages broad-based, multi-disciplinary, holistic Under Graduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification. An Academic Bank of Credit is to be established for digitally storing academic credits earned from different HEIs so that these can be transferred and counted towards final degree earned.

National Testing Agency will conduct a common college entrance exam twice a year. This will be implemented from the 2022 session. Bachelor's degree will be of 4 years with exit options as follows. Exit after 1 year will ascertain a Certificate, Exit after 2 years will provide a Diploma and a Mid term drop outs will be given the option to complete the degree after a break.

Bachelor's programmes will be multidisciplinary in nature and there will be no rigid separation between arts and sciences. Indian arts, languages and culture will be promoted at all levels. M. Phil degree will be discontinued and by 2040, all higher education institutions like IITs will become multidisciplinary. There will be greater inclusion of arts and humanities subjects for science students and vice-versa.

Selected universities from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. The system of affiliated colleges will be phased out in 15 years and colleges will be given greater autonomy and power to grant degrees. The deemed university status will end and a new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT.

By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree. A National Mission for Mentoring will be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.

The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to track the progress of students receiving scholarships. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

Measures such as online courses and digital repositories, funding for research, improved student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, etc., will be

taken to ensure distance learning is at par with the highest quality in-class programmes.

A comprehensive set of recommendations for promoting online education consequent to the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics in order to ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional modes of education are not possible, has been covered. NEP recommends setting an Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI), National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit, strengthening of Sanskrit and all language departments in HEIs, and use mother tongue/local language as a medium of instruction in more HEI programmes.

Internationalisation of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked universities to open campuses in India. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities etc will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions. The Policy aims to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy.

A dedicated unit for the purpose of building up of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the HRD ministry now Ministry of Education to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education. An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. All Universities, Govt, Private and Open will have same grading and rules and all UG courses will have major and minor subjects.

The HEI' Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country. The National Research Foundation will be created as an apex body for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.

The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards and institutions will be governed by one authority.

It is evident that the NEP is a tool that will bring about transformation and democratisation of education that will benefit the generations in the coming years.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) What are the distinctive features of the Right to Education Act, 2009?

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2) Discuss the major challenges facing the Right to Education.

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10.9 CONCLUSION

In essence education plays a significant and remedial role in balancing the socio-economic fabric of our country. Since the children and youth are an asset and a valuable resource, they need careful and systematic nurturing, especially in the sphere of education so as to enable them to achieve a better quality of life. This necessitates an all-round development of our children, which can be achieved by building strong foundations in education. High Quality education is the foundation of new knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship that lead to country’s development and prosperity. The great leaders of the Indian freedom movement realised the vital role of education. Gandhi ji and Sardar Patel were always for reforms in the educational system of the country. In the post-Independence period a major concern of the government of India and of the States has been to give increasing attention to education as a factor vital to individual growth and national development.

10.10 GLOSSARY

Federal system: It describes the distribution of legal authority across national, state and local governments.

Concurrent powers: They are powers or jurisdiction of a federal system of government such as India shared by both the union government and the states and local authorities.

Policy: A statement by government of what it intends to do through a law, regulation or an authoritative decision.

Implementation: The process by which policies enacted by government are put into operation by the relevant agencies.

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10.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Document 1 and 2 of National Policy on Education
 - Girls Education
 - Inclusive Education
 - Availability of Teachers
 - In-service Teacher Training
- 2) Your Answer should include the following points:
 - Gap between policy making and implementation
 - Issues of educational standards and inequalities
 - Lack of reliable data
 - Lack of quality in Teacher Education and Provision of Infrastructure

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your Answer should include the following points:
 - Right of Children to free and compulsory Education
 - RTE - part of Fundamental Rights
 - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RTE
- 2) Your Answer should include the following points:
 - Acute shortage of trained and committed teachers
 - Quality of education provided by the government school system is not good
 - Children admitted to the private schools are seen to be at an advantage, thereby accentuating the inequalities in education

UNIT 11 HEALTH POLICY AND NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION*

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Healthcare System before Adoption of NHP 1983
- 11.3 National Health Policy, 1983
- 11.4 National Health Policy, 2002
- 11.5 National Health Policy, 2017
- 11.6 National Health Mission
- 11.7 Conclusion
- 11.8 Glossary
- 11.9 References
- 11.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the significance and meaning of Health Policy;
- Grasp the various stages in the evolution of National Health Policies; and
- Examine the impact of initiatives under the National Health Mission.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Of the gains including wealth and fame, health is the greatest. Health is man's greatest possession, his source of real happiness. In terms of resources for socio-economic development, nothing can be considered of higher significance than the health of the people. An investment on health is an investment on human resource development on which depends the national security and prosperity. Development of health in terms of improvement of the quality of life is, therefore, imperative. But, in order to ensure that the health programmes move as scheduled, and to bring about the requisite effort and direction in the wide-ranging health activities, and in government machinery itself, it is necessary to indicate the framework of health policy.

The term 'health policy' may be defined as the declaration of a definite course of action for the achievement of health objectives. It is a general directive as to how health tasks should be interpreted and performed. To quote the Executive Board of the WHO: "A national health policy is an expression of goals for improving the health situation, the priorities among those goals, and the main directions for attaining them" (WHO, 2000).

* Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh

11.2 HEALTH CARE SYSTEM BEFORE ADOPTION OF NHP 1983

At the time of Independence, the country inherited a health care system devised during the British imperial rule, essentially to provide services to defence forces and the colonial administrators, including the native gentry. By and large, the health care system was urban-based, elite-centric and curative-oriented; it was not geared even to providing minimum health care services to the mass of the rural people. Broadly speaking, there were four major problems associated with health status of the people: overpopulation, widespread incidence of communicable diseases, malnutrition and inadequacy of health care infrastructure.

Bhore Committee Report (1946)

The present health care system in India has its origin in the recommendations of the Health Survey and Development Committee appointed in 1943 under the chairmanship of Sir Joseph Bhore (GOI, 1946).

Besides recommending certain principles for future development of the health sector, the Bhore Committee laid special stress on provision for safe drinking water, sanitation and housing. The Committee insisted that “medical relief and preventive health care must be urgently provided as soon as possible to the vast rural population of the country”.

PHCs and Village Health Guide Scheme

With the launching of the Community Development Programme in October, 1952, a modest beginning was made to implement a programme of setting up of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) as an integral component for all-round development of rural areas. A PHC with three sub-centres for every Community Development Block covering approximately 60,000 people was designed to provide integrated curative, preventive and promotive services to rural population. The PHCs were envisaged as the focal point from which primary health care services would radiate through sub-centres under each PHC.

A decision was taken in 1973 that each sub-centre would be manned by a trained female health worker (Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife) and trained male health worker known as Multi-purpose Worker to provide health services in the form of a package. Another decision taken by the Government of India pertained to implementing the Village Health Guide Scheme from October 1977 by having a worker from within the community, trained in some basic health work to render assistance in maternal care and to educate mothers about immunisation and family welfare schemes.

Health for All by 2000 AD

An important milestone in India's health services development was reached with the signing of the Alma-Ata Declaration (WHO-UNICEF-sponsored International Conference on Primary Health Care, 12 September 1978) at Kazakhstan, recommending “Health for All by 2000 AD” through Primary Health Care approach.

11.3 NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY, 1983

The National Health Policy (NHP), 1983, which was approved by Parliament, was a response to the commitment to the Alma Ata Declaration to achieve “Health for All by 2000”. It accepted that health was central to development and had a focus on access to health services. It reiterated the resolution of taking health services to community and ensuring cooperation of the community. It recognises nutrition, prevention of food adulteration and maintenance of the quality of drugs, water supply and sanitation, environmental protection; immunisation programme, maternal and child health services and occupational health services as priorities for inputs required for improved health care. Also calls on for re-orientation of the existing health personnel and inclusion of various systems of medicine and health care at the appropriate levels, within specified areas of responsibility and functioning, in the over-all health care delivery system, especially in regard to the preventive, promotional and public health objectives. Through the PHC model, the NHP recognises the value of integrated health services, mentioned in the Alma-Ata Declaration.

The noteworthy initiatives under the NHP 1983 were: (i) a phased, time-bound programme for setting up a well-dispersed network of comprehensive primary health care services; (ii) intermediation through ‘health volunteers’ having appropriate knowledge and simple skills; (iii) establishment of a well-worked out referral system; and (iv) an integrated network of evenly spread specialty and super-specialty services.

Despite marked improvements in certain areas of the health care sector, it still had many deficiencies. Recognition of these trends led to the enunciation of NHP, 2002.

11.4 NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY, 2002

NHP was last formulated in 1983 and since then there has been marked changes in the determinant factors relating to the health sector. The main objective of the NHP 2002 was “to achieve an acceptable standard of good health amongst the general population of the country.” The approach has been to “increase access to the decentralised public health system by establishing new infrastructure in deficient areas, and by upgrading the infrastructure in the existing institutions”.

Overriding importance had been given to ensuring a more equitable access to health services across the social and geographical expanse of the country. Emphasis was given to increase the aggregated public health investment through a substantially increased contribution by the Union Government. Besides, the policy envisaged the involvement of the private sector in providing health services particularly for the population group which could afford to pay for services. Primacy was given to preventive and first-line curative initiatives at the primary health level through increased, sectoral share of allocation. Emphasis was laid on rational use of drugs within the allopathic system. The NHP 2000 also laid emphasis on the practice of tested systems of traditional medicines.

In brief, the NHP 2002 identified many of the gross deficiencies of the existing healthcare scenario, proposed a substantial rise in Central government expenditure on healthcare. It has also proposed regulation of the private sector. However, in

operational terms, it constitutes an abandonment of the Alma-Ata Declaration, and legitimises further privatisation of the health care sector.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Write a note on Health Care System before adoption of NHP 1983.

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2) Briefly discuss the problems in the implementation of the National Policy on Education.

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11.5 NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY 2017

The National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 announced by the Union Government marks the culmination of a complex process. Before the adoption of the NHP 2017, the Government of India formulated the Draft NHP and placed it in public domain in December 2014. Following detailed discussion with the stakeholders and State governments, the Draft National Health Policy was further fine-tuned. It received the assent of the Central Council for Health and Family Welfare in February 2016.

With its focus on preventive and promotive health care and universal access to quality health care services, the NHP 2017 envisages provision of a large package of assured comprehensive primary health care through the ‘Health and Wellness Centres’. The health care package also includes care for major NCDs {non-communicable diseases}, mental health, palliative care and rehabilitative care services.

Goal and Objectives of NHP 2017

The primary aim of NHP, 2017 is to “inform, clarify, strengthen and priorities the role of the Government in shaping health system in all its dimensions – investment in health, organisation of health care services, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health through cross-sectoral actions, access to technologies, developing human resources, encouraging medical pluralism, building knowledge base...” In health care deficit areas in the public domain the

NHP seeks to utilise the services of accredited non-governmental healthcare providers. The policy aims at achieving a significant reduction in out-of- pocket expenditure in healthcare costs of patients; reinforce trust in public healthcare system and influence operation and growth of private healthcare industry as well as medical technologies in alignment with public health goals. The NHP 2017 also proposes free drugs, free diagnostics and free emergency care services in all public hospitals. The NHP envisages private collaboration for strategic purchasing, capacity building, skill development programmes, awareness generation, developing sustainable networks for community to strengthen mental health services, and disaster management. The policy also advocates financial and non-financial incentives for encouraging private sector participation in provision of health care services.

Further, the policy proposes raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP in a time-bound manner. The emphasis in NHP 2017 is on comprehensive primary health care package which includes primary health care, preventive care and rehabilitative care services. The policy advocates allocating major proportion, (up to two-third or more) of resources to primary care followed by secondary and tertiary care.

The policy assigns specific quantitative targets aimed at reduction of diseases. It seeks to strengthen the health surveillance system and establish registries for diseases of public health importance, by 2020. It also seeks to align other policies for medical devices and equipment with public health goals. The policy envisages optimum levels of child and adolescent healthcare, and school health programmes as major focus areas. In order to leverage the pluralistic health care legacy, the policy recommends mainstreaming the different health systems, including better access to AYUSH remedies through co-location in public facilities. It states that Yoga should also be introduced much more widely in school and work places as part of promotion of good health.

Further, the NHP 2017 advocates extensive deployment of digital tools for improving the efficiency and outcome of the healthcare system and proposes establishment of National Digital Health Authority (NDHA) to regulate, develop and deploy digital health across the continuum of care.

The NHP 2017 has also enunciated the long-term health goals for improvement of health care from the current levels. These are as follows:

Health Status and Programme Impact

S.No.	Indicator	Present	Status(year:2017) Target (by)
1)	Life Expectancy at Birth (yrs.)	67.5	70 (2025)
2)	Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	2.43	2.1 children per woman (2025)
3)	Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	40.5	28 (2019)
4)	Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)	174	100 (2020)
5)	Under Five Mortality	35	23 (2025)
6)	Access to safe water and sanitation		To all (2020) under Swachh Bharat Mission.

7)	Public health expenditure (as percentage of GDP)	1.15%	2.5% (2025)
8)	Availability of Doctors	-	AS per IPHS norm in high priority districts (2020)
9)	Primary and secondary care facility	-	As per norms in high priority districts (2025)
10)	National Health Information Network	-	Networks (2025)

Principles of National Health Policy 2017

For the first time the NHP 2017 prescribes ten key policy principles. These are:

- Professionalism, Integrity and Ethics;
- Equity;
- Affordability;
- Universality
- Patient-centered & Quality of Care;
- Accountability;
- Inclusive Partnerships;
- Pluralism;
- Decentralisation; and
- Dynamism and Adaptiveness

NHP 2017 identifies coordinated action in the following seven priority areas for improving the environment for health:

- 1) The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan;
- 2) Balanced, health diets and regular exercises;
- 3) Addressing tobacco, alcohol and substances abuse;
- 4) Yatri Suraksha – preventing death due to rail and road traffic accidents;
- 5) Nirbhaya Nari – action against gender violence;
- 6) Reduced stress and improved safety in the work place; and
- 7) Reducing indoor and outdoor air pollution.

The policy also articulates the need for the development of strategies and institutional mechanisms in each of these seven areas, to create Swasth Nagrik Abhiyan – a social movement for health. It recommends the prescription of indicators, their targets as also mechanisms for realising them.

Implementation Framework

The National Health Policy envisages that an implementation framework be put in place to deliver on these policy commitments. Such an implementation framework would provide a roadmap with milestones and deliverables to achieve the goals of the policy.

Critical Assessment of NHP 2017

The National Health Policy 2017, which the Centre announced on 15 March 2017, appears to be an appreciable measure towards improving health status of the people through concerted policy action. While the policy itself repeatedly states that 'health' is a state subject as per the Indian Constitution, state governments were not meaningfully involved in the process of NHP formulation.

Second, the NHP 2017 faces the challenging task of ensuring affordable and quality health care to every citizen. Although the NHP enunciated ten key principles, they are, in reality, not followed in the course of implementation of the policy.

While India is surging ahead in terms of GDP growth (7.1 per cent in 2018-19), the country's Human Development Index (HDI) ranks at 130 among 189 countries in 2018. The life expectancy at birth of people in India stood at 68.3 years in 2016 and the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita was US\$ 5663 in the same year. But with a fifth of the world's disease burden, a growing incidence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, and poor financial arrangements to pay for care, India is at the rear end among the BRICS countries in health sector performance. Although the NHP 2017 offers an opportunity to rectify well-known deficiencies through national Health Mission, most villages in the country lack sanitation and drinking water facilities causing poor health and high incidence of communicable diseases.

Among the most glaring lacunae is the lack of public funding for health. Rectifying this in partnership with the states is crucial if the Central government is to make the best use of the targeted government spending of 2.5% of GDP by 2025 — up from the current 1.15%. Looking at the health situation in the country, the suggested increase of expenditure on health is unlikely to meet policy goals. More doctors and paramedics would need to be deployed for primary care in rural areas. Availability of trained doctors and nurses would help meet the new infant mortality and maternal mortality goals, and build on the gains from higher institutional deliveries - - the figure exceeded 80% in recent years. Critics point out that rural India is painfully short of doctors, nurses, medicines and hospitals. As such, the regional inequality in the HDI cannot be mitigated unless priority attention is paid to cover this shortage fast.

The 21st century witnessed the major epidemic outbreak in the entire world. The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Novel Corona virus Disease (COVID-19) a pandemic on 11th March, 2020. It made the entire world to realise the importance of investing in the healthcare sector. It also brought the realisation that health is a major indicator of human capital's productivity. After the major outbreak of this pandemic, the Government of India initiated preparedness and response measures. It included measures such as lockdown, social distancing, surveillance, contract tracing, testing and checking the community spread, community participation, preparedness of hospitals, infection prevention and control and implementation of containment plans at the national, state and district levels. On 24th of March 2020, the first phase of lock down was implemented in India, after which it was extended in a phased manner, depending upon the intensity of COVID-19 impact. India also came up with specific rules and regulations under the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897. For effective management of COVID-19 crisis, the hospitals were segregated into three categories, i.e.,

Dedicated COVID Hospital (DCH), Dedicated COVID Health Centre (DCHC) and Dedicated COVID Care Centre (DCCC).

Reliance on health services from the private sector is indispensable given the fact that 70% of all out-patient treatments are provided by it. But this raises the question of accountability, both on the quality and cost of care provided by the private sector. It is, therefore, necessary to setup regulatory and accreditation mechanisms for health care at the national level. Without such oversight, unethical commercial entities would find easy access to public funds. To prevent unhealthy practices it should be mandatory for all health institutions to be accredited, and to publish the approved cost of treatments. There is also need of securing balance between the primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare.

11.6 NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

National Health Mission (NHM), representing the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM), is an initiative undertaken by the Central Government to address the health needs of the under-served areas. Initially, the RHM was launched in 2005 and was tasked with addressing the health needs of 18 states that had been identified as having weak public health indicators. With the launch of National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) in 2013 RHM got merged into the National Health Mission (NHM). The duration of the NHM was extended till March 2020.

NHM seeks to achieve of universal access to equitable, affordable and quality healthcare services that are accountable and responsive to people's needs. The main programmatic components include the strengthening of healthcare in rural and urban areas, Reproductive-Maternal-Neonatal-Child and Adolescent health (RMNCH+A) interventions and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases. The focus of the Mission is on establishing a fully functional, community-owned, decentralised health delivery system with inter-sectoral convergence at all levels, to ensure simultaneous action on a wide range of determinants of health such as education, clean water, sanitation, nutrition and gender equality.

Major Initiatives of NHM

Some of the major initiatives under the National Health Mission (NHM) are as follows:

- 1) **Increase in Funding for Healthcare:** Untied Grants to Sub-Centers have been used to fund grass-root improvements in health care. Examples include: (i) improved efficacy of Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) in the field that can now undertake better antenatal care and other health care; (ii) Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC) have used untied grants to increase their involvement in the respective local communities to address the needs of poor households and children.
- 2) **Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs):** Community Health volunteers called Accredited Social Health Activists are engaged under the mission for establishing a link between the community and the health system. These volunteers take care of demands of deprived sections of the population, especially women and children, who find it difficult to access health services in rural areas. ASHA Programme is expanding across States and has particularly been successful in bringing people back to public health system

for outpatient services, diagnostic facilities, institutional deliveries and inpatient care. Main activities of ASHAs include intensification of advocacy activities, awareness generation activities, diarrhea management service provision, establishing ORS-zinc demonstration sites, ORS distribution through home visitation, etc.

- 3) Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram: Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) scheme entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to absolutely free delivery, services, including caesarean operations.
- 4) Janani SurakshaYojna: Janani SurakshaYojna (JSY) is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Health Mission. The objective is to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among poor pregnant women.
- 5) Health Care Contractors: National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has provided health care contractors to underserved areas, and has been involved in training to expand the skill set of doctors at strategically located facilities identified by the state governments. Similarly, due importance is given to capacity building of nursing staff and auxiliary workers, NHM also supports co-location of AYUSH services in PHCs, CHCs and District Hospitals.
- 6) Free Drugs: The initiative has been launched with an objective to put in place systems such as facility wise Essential Drug List (EDL), robust procurement system, IT backed logistics and supply chain management, proper warehousing and necessary drug regulatory and quality assurance mechanism, standard treatment guidelines, prescription audit and grievance redressal systems, etc. to ensure provision of quality free essential drugs.
- 7) Free Diagnostic Services: To improve the quality of care, support is provided to states for providing essential diagnostics free of cost in public health facilities. Five states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, J & K and Tripura, have already adopted the model as per the national guidelines.
- 8) National Ambulance Services: Provision of basic transport to patients has been one of the components of NRHM. Ambulances operating under Dial 108/102 ambulance service have been part of this.
- 9) National Mobile Medical Unit: Objective of MMU is to take health care to the door step of the people in the rural areas, especially in under-served areas. There are 1122 MMUs operating across 335 districts in the country. A whole range of health care services meant for treatment of minor ailments, communicable and non-communicable diseases, reproductive and child health, family planning services are provided.
- 10) Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (National Child Health Scheme): This initiative, launched in 2013, entails provision for child health screening and early intervention services through early detection and management of 4 Ds, that is, defects at birth, diseases, deficiencies, development delays including disability and free management of 30 identified health conditions. Children between 0-18 years of age are expected to be covered in a phased manner across the country.

- 11) District Hospital as Knowledge Centre for Clinical Care & Training: Under this scheme district hospitals are being strengthened to provide multi-specialty health care, including dialysis care, intensive cardiac care, cancer treatment, mental illness, emergency medical and trauma care, etc. These hospitals would provide knowledge, support for clinical facilities down the line through a tele-medicine center located in the district head-quarters. They also serve as centers for training of paramedics and nurses.

Critical Evaluation of NHM

Firstly, it is found that the utilisation of untied funds and other grants are not being properly monitored. Second, lack of coordination between key functionaries like ASHA, ANM and poor involvement of Village Health and Sanitation Committees (VHSCs) have affected the healthcare services under the National Health Mission. Third, inadequacy of ambulances or their non-functioning at the PHCs, sub-centres and community health centres for strengthening outreach of healthcare in the rural and urban areas has affected the healthcare services. Fourth, ASHA’s mentoring and training for updating skills are weak. Additional training of ASHAs for vaccinations would further strengthen antenatal care and children’s complete immunisation programme.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of NHP 2017?
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- 2) State the principles and priority areas for improving health care under NHP 2017
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11.7 CONCLUSION

A number of developing countries, including India, have shown that broad reforms in the health sector are possible when there is sufficient political will and when changes in the health care system are designed and implemented by capable policy-makers and policy-implementers.

In the current phase of governance, competition can improve quality and bring down costs. It is important that governments foster competition and diversify efforts in the supply of health services and inputs, particularly drugs and medical equipment. However, strong government regulation of privately-delivered health services is necessary to ensure quality of services and their affordability. While government itself has a major role to play in healthcare, there is much advantage to be gained through a genuine partnership between private business and government. The present reforms (initiated since May 2014), will help to augment the management of the health care services, implement the social accounting and adhere to the prerequisite that health is of prime importance to the human resource development. And finally, it may be concluded that significant improvements in the health of our people cannot be brought about unless we achieve a high level of success in our efforts in the promotion of the small family norm and in containing the growth of population.

11.8 GLOSSARY

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): The total value of all goods and services produced in a country.

Mortality Rate: Number of deaths in a given area or period.

Life Expectancy: It means the average period (in years) that a person may expect to live.

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11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - The present health care system in India has its origin in the recommendations of the Health Survey and Development Committee appointed in 1943.

- Setting up of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) as an integral component for all-round development of rural areas.
- Each sub-centre would be manned by health workers.
- Signing of the Alma-Ata Declaration recommending “Health for All by 2000 AD”.

2) Your Answer should include the following points:

- Brief description of NHP 1983.
- Brief description of NHP 2002.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Healthcare system prior to adoption of NHP 2017.
- Strengths of NHP 2017.
- Deficiencies of NHP 2017.

2) Your Answer should include the following:

- Principles of NHP 2017.
- Priority areas for improving the environment of health care.
- Critical assessment of NHP 2017.

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UNIT 12 FOOD POLICY AND RIGHT TO FOOD SECURITY*

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 National Food Policy
 - 12.2.1 Increasing Foodgrains Production
 - 12.2.2 Procurement of Foodgrains
 - 12.2.3 Storage of Foodgrains
 - 12.2.4 Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)
 - 12.2.5 Export and Import of Food Grains
- 12.3 Right to Food Security
 - 12.3.1 National Food Security Act, 2013
- 12.4 Critical Observations of NFSA
- 12.5 Conclusion
- 12.6 Glossary
- 12.7 References
- 12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the salient features of the NFSA, 2013;
- Discuss emerging challenges of national food security; and
- Offer a critique of the NFSA, 2013

12.1 INTRODUCTION

India's food policy evolved in the wake of the Bengal Famine of 1943, which caused deaths of more than one million people. This famine was attributed partly to lack of adequate supplies of food grains and partly to lack of purchasing power of the victims. A Foodgrains Policy Committee was appointed in 1943 under the chairmanship Sir George Theodore. The Committee recommended rationing of foodgrains to overcome similar grave situations in future. Since then successive governments have been trying to (i) increase the level of food grains production in the country through offering minimum support price (MSP) to the farmers and (ii) to create mechanism for supply of grains to consumers. Public Distribution System (PDS) has been evolved to safeguard the interests of the consumers, particularly the weaker and vulnerable sections of society.

It is evident that since India's Independence food and agricultural policies in the country have aimed at reducing hunger, food insecurity and poverty. At the same time attention has also been given to raise food grains production and maintaining adequate stocks of food grains as a measure of food security (Tyagi, 1990). Attainment of food security is, therefore, a big challenge for India.

* Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh

Based on the estimates made by the Ministry of Agriculture in its Draft Document 'Indian Agriculture: Vision 2020 AD', the demand for food grains is estimated at 324 million tonnes to meet the food grains demand of 1350 million people, that is, the poorer strata of the population.

12.2 NATIONAL FOOD POLICY

To meet the above objectives the Department of Food and Public Distribution of the central government has been striving to ensure food security for the country as a whole through: efficient procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP); storage and distribution of foodgrains through appropriate policy measures, including maintenance of buffer stocks of foodgrains; making foodgrains accessible at reasonable prices, especially to the weaker and vulnerable sections of society under a Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). This food policy, in brief, has been the mainstay for the country.

The following measures have been accorded top priority in the Food Policy:

12.2.1 Increasing Food Grains Production

In view of the shrinking land and water resources, an optimum strategy for India to meet the future demand for foodgrains, fibre and other needs is through increase in productivity. The only way to achieve this goal in a sustainable manner is through improved technologies in production (i) providing support to farmers through subsidies and guarantee of minimum support prices for essential foodgrains and (iii) improved irrigation facilities.

12.2.2 Procurement of Food Grains

The Government of India has set up, in 1965, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to put this policy into operation. With the help of state government agencies, the FCI procures wheat, paddy and coarse grains in various states in order to provide price support to the farmers. The FCI has been playing an important role in the procurement and distribution of food grains. Before each Rabi/Kharif crop season, the central government announces the Minimum Support Prices (MSP), based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CACP takes into account the cost of various agricultural inputs and a reasonable margin to the farmers for their produce. Farmers are now getting C2+50 MSP as per the recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee.

State governments are encouraged to adopt decentralised procurement (DCP) systems in order to maximise procurement, reduce transportation costs and increase the reach of MSP operations. With the substantial increase in production of food grains in recent years and with an emphasis on bringing Green Revolution to Eastern-India, the procurement operations have expanded to many states. As a result, the accumulated Central Pool Stock of food grains had reached a record level and much beyond the buffer stock norm of 319 lakh tonnes. Therefore, a balanced approach for procurement, distribution and disposal of food grains is now being adopted to provide adequate price support to the farmers, to have an optimum level of procurement for meeting TPDS requirement, maintaining buffer stock and to dispose of surpluses without distorting the market.

12.2.3 Storage of Foodgrains

The FCI has its own grid of covered go-downs in all states to safely stock the central pool food grains. In addition, it hires capacity from Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and state agencies like State Warehousing Corporations as well as private parties.

Sufficient storage capacity is, therefore, available. Against a target of 783.17 lakh MTs capacity, the central stock of food grains stood at 555.40 lakh MTs (2017). In order to cope with the increasing production and follow-up procurement of food grains, the Department has launched the Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) scheme (2008) for augmenting the covered storage capacity in the country. Under the PEG scheme, go-downs are constructed in PPP mode and the land and construction cost is borne by the selected partners. As part of the modernization of storage facilities, steel silos are also being created under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

12.2.4 Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)

With a view to maintain supplies and secure the availability and distribution of essential commodities, in tune with the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), the central government has notified the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) Control Order, 2015. The TPDS is adopted to meet the needs of the consumers.

The TPDS empowers the state governments to issue an order under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 for regulating the sale and distribution of the essential commodities. However, the orders issued by the state government shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of the TDPS order.

12.2.5 Export and Import of Food Grains

At the international level it becomes imperative for the country to maintain steady supply of export and import of food grains. Consequently, the Government of India has allowed free export of non-basmati rice by private parties from privately held stocks from 2011 onwards. State Trading Enterprises (STEs) and a few others are also permitted to export privately held stocks of non-basmati rice and wheat. Export of non-basmati rice and wheat is permitted through Customs EDI ports. Export is also permitted through the non-EDI Land Custom Stations (LCS) on Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-Nepal border subject to registration of quantity with DGFT. Export of rice of seed quality and other [rice in husk (paddy or rough) other than seed quality] is permitted under licence.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) 'Rationing of Foodgrains was recommended prior to India's independence'. Elaborate.

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2) Briefly discuss the measures accorded top priority in the Food Policy.

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12.3 RIGHT TO FOOD SECURITY

Ensuring the food security of India’s fast growing population (estimated at 1330 million (June, 2019) is a challenging task. A strategy for food security based largely on self-sufficiency in food production is, therefore, required to reduce hunger and malnutrition – a source of many unwanted deaths. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) recognizes that everyone has the right to food security and to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family.

12.3.1 National Food Security Act, 2013

With a view to further strengthen the commitment to food security of the people; the Government of India has enacted the National Food Security Act, in September 2013. Its main objective is to ensure nutritional serenity by providing access to adequate quantity of food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act marks a paradigm shift in approach to food security: what was hitherto treated as a welfare measure is now made an entitlement.

The Act also provides for “coverage of up to 75 per cent of the rural population and up to 50 per cent of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System, thus covering about two-thirds of India’s 1.3 billion population. This coverage for receiving highly subsidized foodgrains is under two categories – households covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and the remaining households as priority households. AAY was launched in 2000 to provide focus on food security of the poorest of the poor, and covers 2.5 crore households. Such households are entitled under the Act to receive 35kg of foodgrains per household per month, @Rs. 1/2/3 per kg. for coarse grains/wheat/rice. Priority households are entitled to receive 5 kg. of foodgrains per person per month at the above mentioned highly subsidized prices.” Further, the NFS Act recognizes maternity entitlements, pregnant women, lactating mothers and certain categories of children are eligible for free cereals on each day. The aim is to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable sections of society under a targeted Public Distribution System.

Needless to mention here that the Act also contains provisions for setting up of grievance redressal mechanism at the district and state levels. Separate provisions have also been made for ensuring transparency and accountability.

The National Food Security Act (2013) is now being implemented in all the states/UTs covering about 80.55 crore beneficiaries, as against the intended coverage of 81.34 crore persons. In Chandigarh, Puducherry and urban areas of

Dadra and Nagar Haveli, the Act is being implemented in the cash transfer mode under which food subsidy is being transferred into the bank accounts of beneficiaries—who then have a choice to buy food grains from the open market.

It may be mentioned here that Targeted Public Distribution System notified under the Department of Food and Public Distribution (Control Order 2015) empowers the state governments to issue an order under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 for regulating the sale and distribution of the essential commodities and foodgrains.

In addition to the implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme in the government schools and government-aided schools for the students of primary and upper primary classes, the Department of Food and Public Distribution (GOI) also helps the SABLA scheme which aims “at empowering adolescent girls of 11-18 years by improvement of their nutritional and health status and upgrading various skills useful to them. The SABLA scheme also aims at educating them in matters of family welfare, health, hygiene, etc. and guiding them on existing public services. Nutritional standards (100 grams of grains per day for each beneficiary for 300 days in a year) are adhered to in the operation of the Mid-day meal scheme.

Further, provisions have been made for disclosure of records relating to PDS, social audits and setting up of Vigilance Committees in order to ensure transparency and accountability in the distribution of the essential commodities.

12.4 CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS OF NFSA

In its Twenty Seventh Report, The Lok Sabha Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (2012-13), stated that the proposed legislation marks a paradigm shift in addressing the problem of food security – from the current welfare approach to a right-based approach. About two-thirds (approx. 67%) of the population are entitled to receive subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System. In a country where almost 40% of children are undernourished, the importance of the scheme increases significantly.

However, there are criticisms and apprehensions about this policy measure. One senior opposition politician of the BJP described the National Food Security Bill as a measure for ‘Vote Security’ rather the ‘food security’ (Hindustan Times, 31 August 2013). The Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices warned that enactment of the Bill could be expected to induce severe imbalance in the production of oilseeds and pulses, and “...will create demand pressures which will inevitably spill-over to market prices of foodgrains. Furthermore, the higher food subsidy burden on the budget will raise the fiscal deficit, exacerbating macro level inflationary pressures.” The Commission argued further that the Bill would restrict private initiative in agriculture, reduce competition in the marketplace due to government domination of the grain market, shift money from investments in agriculture to subsidies, and continue focus on cereals production when shifts in consumer demand patterns indicate a need to focus more on protein, fruits and vegetables

Professor Jean Dreze, reputedly one of the architects of the original, 2011 version of the Bill, wrote, “...the Bill is a form of investment in human capital. It will bring some security in people’s lives and make it easier for them to meet their

basic needs, protect their health, educate their children, and take risks (Tehalka, 22 March, 2013). Critics point out that the implementation of the NFSA is riddled with inefficiencies, which are common to other subsidy and welfare schemes. Leakages have been abundant. In some states it was found that the number of households under the NFSA was more than the estimated census households or the population covered is more than the estimated total population. Instances of diversion of NFSA foodgrains, even before they reach the PDS outlets, are legion. Serious lapses in the operation of the scheme are also evident from the fact that at least 25 to 30 percent of the card holders are duplicate or non-existent. It was estimated in 2016 that the amount of money drained out due to all such leakages and inefficiencies was about Rs 30,000 corers per year.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Discuss the salient features of National Food Security Act, 2013.

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2) Bring to light the criticism of National Food Security Act, 2013.

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12.5 CONCLUSION

Man’s health is important not only for longevity but also for happiness. To a large extent, good health depends upon one’s intake in the form of food. Supply of foodgrains (wheat, rice and maize) and cereals at affordable prices has been an essential component of food policy in India. Chronic food insecurity is being addressed through subsidized food distribution (particularly for weaker and vulnerable sections of society), food for work, and employment generation and guarantee programmes. The recent decision (2019) of the central government to provide a subsidy of Rs. 6000 per annum to farmers is intended to motivate them to produce more foodgrains. It is expected that the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sammn Nidhi would improve the lives of farmers.

Agricultural and food policies have been formulated and implemented to increase foodgrains production. Further, in order to strengthen the commitment to food security of the people, the central government enacted the National Food Security

Act, 2013. The Act aims to provide for food and nutritional security to enable people to live a healthy life and with dignity. Yet, it should be noted that the scheme floated under the Act suffers from serious deficiencies and ineffectiveness in implementation.

12.6 GLOSSARY

Food Security: Food security is defined as access to all people, at all times, to the food, needed for a healthy life.

Food: Any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink in order to maintain life and growth.

Entitlement: The fact or belief of having a right to something.

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12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- India's food policy was evolved in the wake of the Bengal Famine of 1943, which caused deaths of more than one million people.
- A Foodgrains Policy Committee was appointed in 1943 under the chairmanship Sir George Theodore.
- It recommended rationing of foodgrains to overcome similar grave situations in future. Since then successive governments have been trying to (i) increase the level of foodgrains production in the country through offering minimum support price (MSP) to the farmers and (ii) to create mechanism for supply of grains to consumers.

2) Your Answer should include the following:

- Increasing Foodgrains Production
- Procurement of Foodgrains
- Storage of Foodgrains
- Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)
- Export and Import of Foodgrains

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Rationale of the NFSA
- Features of NFSA

2) Your Answer should include the following:

- Considered as a measure for ‘Vote Security’ rather the ‘food security’.
- Higher food subsidy burden on the budget will raise the fiscal deficit, exacerbating macro level inflationary pressures.
- Restrict private initiative in agriculture; reduce competition in the marketplace due to government domination of the grain market.
- Riddled with inefficiencies, which are common to other subsidy and welfare schemes.

UNIT 13 EMPLOYMENT POLICY (MGNREGA)*

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 New Initiatives on Employment Policy and Programmes
 - 13.2.1 Ministry of Labour and Employment
 - 13.2.2 Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
 - 13.2.3 Child Labour Prohibition
 - 13.2.4 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
 - 13.2.5 Pradhan Mantri YuvaYojana (PMYY)
 - 13.2.6 Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI)
- 13.3 Demographic Profile of Rural India
- 13.4 Significance and Salient Features of MGNREGA
- 13.5 Activities Covered under MGNREGA
- 13.6 Evaluation of the MGNREGA
- 13.7 Conclusion
- 13.8 Glossary
- 13.9 References
- 13.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the meaning and initiatives of Employment Policy;
- Discuss the importance and Objectives of MGNREGA; and
- Explain the issues relating to the implementation of MGNREGA.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is a major problem in a country of 1330 million Indians. Estimates of unemployment and those seeking work in India vary widely among different agencies (governmental, private and international). The international Labour Organisation predicts that India will have close to 19 million jobless persons in 2019. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) places the figure around 31 million. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO, Government of India) Report unemployment has risen to a record 6.1 percent in 2017-18. The CMIE places it at 7 per cent for April 2019. Azim Premji University study estimates unemployment in 2018 at 5 per cent. The NSSO states that unemployment was the highest among urban educated persons. In this context, many commentators suggest caution and state that the employment data should not be taken at its face value. Swaminathan S. A. Aiyar, a leading analyst of economic affairs, notes that the formal sector jobs may be improving fast and

* Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh

that many people counted as unemployed were actually looking for the best jobs (The Economic Times, 2019). Former Infosys CFO, T.V. Mohandas Pai argues that India is not producing good jobs, but creating a lot of Rs. 10000-15000 (per month) category low paid jobs which one not fancied by degree holders. India has a wage problem, not a job problem, Pai asserts, (Business Standard, 16 June 2019).

Ever since India's Independence, the central government, seized with the problem of alarming rates of unemployment, has announced various policies and programmes for improving employment opportunities. As a result, unemployment rates have come down. Yet, the problem continues to persist and, in some years, even gets worse.

Meaning of Employment Policy

The success of the employment plans and programmes depends on numerous factors, among which the choice of a balanced policy must be regarded as crucial. The term 'employment policy' consists of (a) setting the goals for improving the employment situation (from unemployment or underemployment rates); (b) establishing priorities among those goals; and (c) providing guidance or directions for achieving the goals. The employment policy also involves deliberation on issues of development, and employment generation programmes.

13.2 NEW INITIATIVES ON EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

13.2.1 Ministry of Labour and Employment

The Ministry of Labour and Employment is one of the important and oldest ministries of the Government of India. The main responsibility entrusted to the Ministry is to protect and safeguard the interests of workers in general. Further, the Ministry aims to create a healthy work environment for higher production and productivity and to develop and coordinate vocational training and employment services. These objectives are sought to be achieved through implementation of various labour laws, which regulate the terms and conditions of service and employment of labourers. Labour being the subject in the concurrent list under the Constitution of India the state governments are also empowered to enact laws.

13.2.2 Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) was introduced and implemented in 2016-17 with the objective of promoting employment generation. Under the scheme, the Government of India would pay the Employees Pension Scheme (EPS) contribution of 8.33 per cent for all new employees enrolling in EPFO for the first three years of their employment. This will promote the employers to recruit unemployed persons and also to formalise informal employees. The PMRPY scheme is applicable to employees with earnings up to Rs. 15,000/- per month.

13.2.3 Child Labour Prohibition

Under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, there is a complete prohibition on employment or work of children below 14 years of age in all occupations and processes. This Act also makes provision for linking the age of the prohibition of employment with the age for free and compulsory education under the Right to Education Act, 2009. In addition, the Act provides for prohibition on employment of adolescents (14 to 18 years of age) in hazardous occupations or processes. Violation of the provisions of the Act attracts penalties / punishments. The primary aim of the Act to allow the children to get education and enjoy the essence of life is thus fulfilled.

13.2.4 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

PMKVY, an outcome-based skill training and certification scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), was launched in 2015. The objective of this skill training and certification scheme is to mobilise and enable a large number of youth to take up outcome-based skill training to become employable and earn their livelihood.

13.2.5 Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana (PMYY)

The PMYY is a centrally sponsored scheme on entrepreneurship education and training, launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2016. The objective behind the introduction of this scheme is to create an enabling eco-system for entrepreneurship promotion among youth through entrepreneurship education and training. It advocates easy access to entrepreneurship support network and promotion of social enterprises for inclusive growth. Its target is to cover 7 lakh students in five years 2016-17 to 2020-21.

13.2.6 Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI)

It has been decided by the Union Government to set up one Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI) in each district of the country. RUDSETIs are bank-lead initiative with the active support of the state government concerned. The Government of India provides one-time infrastructure support of Rs. 1 crore to each RUDSETI besides reimbursing the cost of training of candidates from the rural poor. The state government provides land free of cost or at nominal charges and the banks are responsible for day to day functioning of the training institute. Each RUDSETI is expected to train 750 rural poor youth per annum to take up self-employment in the area they reside. RUDSETIs also provide doses of skill up-gradation training through one to six-weeks programmes. Currently 583 RUDSETIs are functioning in the country.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Define the term 'employment policy'.

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2) Briefly discuss various initiatives on employment policy and programmes.

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13.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RURAL INDIA

According to official statistical data (2017-18) about 7.7 per cent of the persons in India lived in rural areas. Persons of working age (15 years and above) accounted for 71.5 per cent of rural male and 73.8 per cent of rural females. Agriculture’s share in employment was 44.1 per cent. About 52.2 per cent of rural households had major source of income from self-employment. The share of rural households with major source of income from casual labour was 25 per cent and that of regular wage salary earning was 12.7 per cent.

Rural Employment: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREGA)

The MGNREGA programme was introduced by an Act of Parliament in Aug.2005. The Act provides a legal guarantee for not less than one hundred days (in rain hit areas: 150 days) of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to put in unskilled manual labour at the statutory minimum wage. The Central Ministry of Rural Development monitors the implementation of the programme in association with state governments. However, the direct responsibility for the administration of the programme is with the Gram Panchayats. The programme provides a strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups in times of employment scarcity. At the same time, it helps to create assets for the community such as soil conservation, water harvesting, afforestation, land development, rural roads, etc. MGNREGA programme presently covers all the rural areas of the country. The programme has been a life line to millions of rural poor.

13.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND SALIENT FEATURES OF MGNREGA

The significance of the MGNREGA lies in that it aims to reduce poverty by providing a statutory guarantee of wage employment. Some of the features of the Act are as follows:

- 1) The Act provides a rights-based framework for wage employment. Employment is dependent upon the worker exercising the choice to apply for registration, obtain a Job Card, and seek employment for the time and duration that the worker desires. There is a 15-day limit for fulfilling the legal guarantee of providing employment. If work is not provided within the stipulated 15 days applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. The work entitlement of ‘120 days per household per year’ may be shared

between different adult members of the same household. The employment will be provided within a radius of 5 km and if it is above 5 km extra wage will be paid.

- 2) It is to found that the Act is designed to offer an incentive structure to the states for providing employment as ninety percent of the cost for employment provided is borne by the Centre. There are built-in incentives and disincentives to state governments in the operations of scheme.
- 3) The legislation specifies the role of the state in ensuring transparency and accountability through upholding the right to information and disclosing information proactively, preparation and submission of annual reports for Parliament and state legislatures, undertaking mandatory financial audit by each district along with physical audit, taking action on audit reports, establishing vigilance and monitoring committees and developing grievance redressal system. The Act recommends establishment of 'Technical Resource Support Groups' at district, state and central levels and active use of information technology, for monitoring and other purposes of MGNREGA.
- 4) A distinctive feature of MGNREGA is that $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of all employment is reserved for women. Besides, they are entitled to wages analogous to men. These important aspects of the Act have increased the potential for women's empowerment. There is also a provision for child care facilities at worksite.
- 5) The bulk of the funding for the scheme is borne by the Central government. The latter would make payments of wages for unskilled manual workers under the scheme, up to three-fourths of the material costs of the scheme, including wages to skilled and semiskilled workers. The state government shall pay the unemployment allowance, one-fourth of the material costs, and some other minor administrative expenses.

13.5 ACTIVITIES COVERED UNDER MGNREGA

The Union Ministry of Rural Development has notified works under MGNREGA, majority of which are related to agricultural and allied activities, besides the works that will facilitate rural sanitation projects in a major way. The works have been divided into 10 broad categories like Watershed, Irrigation and Flood management works, Agricultural and Livestock related works, Fisheries and works in coastal areas and the Rural Drinking water and Sanitation related works. With the second generation reforms for the rural job scheme, the priority of the works will be decided by the Gram Panchayats in meetings of the Gram Sabha and the Ward Sabha. Rural sanitation projects, as for the first time toilet building, soak pits and solid and liquid waste management have been included under MGNREGA. Further, since August 2015, construction of buildings of Anganwadi Centres has been included as an approved activity under the MGNREGA scheme. Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat approve the shelf of works under MGNREGA and fix the priorities.

Geo-tagging under MGNREGA

Geo-tagging is a process of adding geographical identification of metadata to a medium such as a website. In this case of MGNREGA geo-tagging is helpful to users to identify location specific information on assets created under the

programme. The geo-tagging exercise commenced from 1 September 2016. In January 2017, Kangra district (HP) became the first district in the country to geo-tag all the assets created under MGNREGA.

MGNREGA has reached a major milestone by geo-tagging one crore assets created under it. The scale of assets created under MGNREGA is massive and is estimated to be about 2.82 crore assets since the financial year 2006-07. The assets created under MGNREGA include water harvesting structures, plantations, rural infrastructure, flood control measures, individual assets for sustainable livelihood, community infrastructure, etc. As per the Union Ministry of Rural Development, the assets created under MGNREGA will be geo tagged and special focus would be given to geo-tagging of Natural Resource Management works primarily the water-related works. The geo tagging exercise is expected to usher in greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of MGNREGA

13.6 EVALAUTION OF THE MGNREGA

The Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India, in its audit of 3,848 gram panchayats (GPs) in 28 states and 4 union territories (UTs) from April 2007 to March 2012 revealed some lapses in the implementation of MGNREGA. The main problems identified in the audit included: a fall in the level of employment, low rates of completion of works, poor planning, lack of public awareness partly due to poor communication by the state governments, and partly due to shortage of staff. It was further pointed by the CAG that there were five states which had not even notified the eight-year old scheme. (Subsequently, these states have also joined the scheme).

The Minister of Rural Development, Jairam Ramesh, tried to defend the programme by stating: “It is perhaps the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world ... soundness and high potential of the MGNREGA are well established...” (Ministry of Rural Development, 2012). It is further stated that the high popularity of the scheme is evident from the fact that about one-fourth of all rural households participate in the programme every year.

R.K Laskar, another defender of MGNREGA, claimed that the scheme has multifarious benefits including “reduction in poverty, reduction in migration, women empowerment, improvement of productivity of agricultural land and regeneration of water resources” (Financial World).

There have been demands from supporters of MGNREGA to increase the Central allocation for the scheme so that the number of work days can be increased to 200

- 1) Issue job cards for everyone who demands employment;
- 2) Ensure minimum 150 days of work to all card holders.
- 3) Strictly implement the minimum Wage Act, reduce the delays in wage payment;
- 4) Extended MGNREGA to urban areas; and

Another suggestion was to activate Gram Sabhas to monitor proper implementation of the scheme and also to check corruption. (Peoples Democracy’ on 14 September 2014).

In the budget for 2018-19 the Union Government increased the allocation to MGNREGA, signalling the government’s continued intent to address concerns of rural distress, unemployment in particular. While the MGNREGA has generated more employment than any other government scheme or private sector initiative, it has also its share of criticisms such as fuelling inflation, delaying payments to workers and households in drought-hit areas in the country, and not getting 100 days of work.

A sharp criticism that is levelled against the functioning of the MGNREGA is that a lot of money disbursed by the government gets siphoned off by middlemen, thus leaving a number of MGNREGA workers either with unpaid wages or less than standard wages. It is noted that in Mahuadand, Jharkhand, most of the people who had worked under the MGNREGA did not get paid, while some others got paid less than the stipulated wage (Narayanan, 27 June, 2017).

There is also a criticism from farmers: landless labourers have become lazy and they don’t want to work on farms as they can get money without doing any work at MGNREGA worksites. The agricultural labourers are also demanding abnormally high wages, thereby making farming very expensive and unprofitable. Economists like Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya have described MGNREGA as an inefficient instrument of shifting income to the poor.

A study by Rodrigues (2017) on MGNREGA notes that there is widespread corruption at the local government level. The author says that “more people have received job cards than people who actually work in order to generate more funds than needed, to be then embezzled by local officials”. Bribes have to be paid even to receive the job cards, it is reported (2017).

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Discuss the significance and salient features of the MGNREGA.
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- 2) Evaluate the functioning of the MGNREGA and state its weaknesses.
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13.7 CONCLUSION

Unemployment in a country like India is a serious concern to the policy-makers as well as the people, more so to the poor and underprivileged. It poses a serious threat to the stability of the economy and polity. Most problems of underdevelopment such as poverty and hunger are attributed to the unemployment phenomenon. The Government of India has been attempting positive changes in employment-related programmes with new initiatives. Several measures have been taken to strengthen the overall implementation of MGNREGA. Besides increasing the budget allocation (Rs. 55000 crore in FY 2018-19) to meet the objectives of the Act, measures like electronic fund management system, Aadhar seeding, and strengthening of social audit system have been initiated to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the programme. It is also said that the chances of corruption in payment to labour have been reduced after the introduction of the Direct Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) scheme by the NDA Government.

MGNREGA is a flagship rural employment programme of the government. It is the most ambitious employment programme for Indian's rural poor. It enhances livelihood security of the rural poor by generating wage incomes. Incidentally, it also creates community assets by developing the infrastructure base of the countryside.

13.8 GLOSSARY

Geo-tagging: Geo-tagging is a process of adding geographical identification in the form of metadata to various media like websites, SMS, QR Codes, etc.

Employment: The act of providing wage-based work to someone.

Guarantee: A formal assurance (typically in writing) that certain conditions will be fulfilled.

Livelihood Security: A means of securing the necessities of life.

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13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Unemployment is a major problem in a country of 1330 million Indians.
 - Ever since India's Independence, the central government, seized with the problem of alarming rates of unemployment, has announced various policies and programmes for improving employment opportunities.
 - The term 'employment policy' consists of:
 - a) setting the goals for improving the employment situation (from unemployment or underemployment rates);
 - b) establishing priorities among those goals; and
 - c) providing It causes a response to be attached to a stimulus that did not induce the same response before conditioning.
 - Employment policy also involves deliberation on issues of development, and employment generation programmes.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Initiatives on employment policy and programmes initiated under:
 - ♣ Ministry of Labour and Employment
 - ♣ Pradhan Mantri Rojgar ProtsahanYojana
 - ♣ Child Labour Prohibition
 - ♣ Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
 - ♣ Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana (PMYY)
 - ♣ Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI)

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - The Act provides a rights-based framework for wage employment

- It is to found that the Act is designed to offer an incentive structure to the states for providing employment as ninety percent of the cost for employment provided is borne by the Centre.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of all employment is reserved for women.
- The bulk of the funding for the scheme is borne by the Central government.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- CAG has revealed some lapses in the implementation of MGNREGA.
- Five states which had not even notified the eight-year old scheme.
- A lot of money disbursed by the government gets siphoned off by middlemen, thus leaving a number of MGNREGA workers either with unpaid wages or less than standard wages.
- It is stated to be an inefficient instrument of shifting income to the poor.



UNIT 14 ENVIRONMENT POLICY*

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Challenges for Environment Policy
 - 14.2.1 Poverty and Population Explosion
 - 14.2.2 Pressure on Land, Desertification and Deforestation
 - 14.2.3 Pollution
 - 14.2.4 Institutional and Policy Failures
 - 14.2.5 Global Environment Issues
- 14.3 Objectives and Principles of National Environment Policy, 2006
- 14.4 Policy and Legislative Framework
- 14.5 The Challenges of Economic Growth and Urbanisation to Environment
- 14.6 Conclusion
- 14.7 Glossary
- 14.8 References
- 14.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the importance and scope of environment policy;
- Comprehend the legal and constitutional provisions pertaining to environment protection; and
- Discuss the impact of economic growth and urbanisation on environment.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

National Environment Policy 2006 (approved by the Union Cabinet in May 2006) is a response to an international commitment to the protection of human environment, and the national commitment to a clean environment, mandated by the Indian Constitution. It has been further strengthened by a number of judicial verdicts.

Concept of Environment and Role of Human beings

Environment refers to the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal or plant lives or operates. It also refers to the natural world as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity. The environment has several components. Each of these components constitutes a resource on which man depends for his well-being and survival. There is a difference between human beings and other species with regard to their impact on the environment. The former exerts greater influence upon the environment than the latter. Healthy ecosystems or environments are essential for the growth and survival of humans and other organisms. It is, therefore, necessary to see

* Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh

that human actions and public policies are in harmony with the goal of maintaining the quality of the environment.

The dominant theme of this policy is that while protection and conservation of environmental resources is necessary to secure livelihood and well-being of all. Degradation of natural resources leads to imbalances in the ecosystem, loss of biodiversity and eventually extinction of life on planet earth. To avoid such a calamity the national environment policy should mainstream environmental concerns in all development activities.

14.2 CHALLENGES FOR ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Research findings in environmental monitoring of development programmes and projects combined with harsh experiences in international economic development efforts have made the world community (peoples, nations) realise that its own health and well-being and the fate of future generations depend on actions to avert environmental catastrophe. The 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (attended by representatives of 113 nations) pronounced: “Both aspects of man’s environment, the natural and man-made, are essential to his well-being and to the enjoyment of basic human rights – even the right to life itself”.

Of the challenges facing India, environmental despoliation is by far the most serious and perhaps irrecoverable. The key environmental challenges that India faces are largely attributed to the nexus between the economic and social problems and environmental degradation. These challenges are intrinsically linked with the state of natural resources, such as land, water, air and their flora (plant life) and fauna (animal life). The point is that economic and social problems cause environmental despoliation which, in turn, makes the goal of economic and structural reforms more difficult to achieve. Breaking the vicious circle requires not only increasing attention by the governments at all levels, but also by the people. Following are some of important development aspects of the present situation which have negative consequences on the human environment.

14.2.1 Poverty and Population Explosion

Poverty in its many dimensions is the worst polluter. Poverty not only degrades the human environment but also obstructs development. The dependence of the rural poor, in particular, tribal societies, on natural resources (their excessive collection and exploitation for commercial use) contributes to environmental degradation which, in turn, adversely affects the soil fertility, and sustenance of forests, wildlife, fisheries and water and air quality. Moreover, degraded environment can accelerate the process of impoverishment again because the poor depend directly on natural assets. Further, urban environmental degradation, through lack of waste treatment and sanitation, industry and transport related pollution, adversely affects not only the natural resources (mainly water, air and land) but also the health of the urban poor. Therefore, it affects their earning capacity, the health and education of their children.

Poverty and environmental degradation are also reinforced by and linked to population growth. The urban slum dwellers and rural poor have a major stake in the large families. The demographic pressure of nearly 1337 million people

(estimate for May 2019) has an enormous impact on the quality of life and on access to natural resources.

In the urban areas, environmental problems are related to the onslaught of population growth and migration of the poor from small towns and villages. India's urban population which was 11.4 per cent in 1911 increased to about 35 per cent by 2019. Rapid increase in urban population in India is leading to many problems like housing shortage, proliferation of slums and squatter settlements and decay of the urban environment. The worst affected are, of course, the poor.

In the rural areas, the situation is equally unsatisfactory. Problems like sanitation, housing, water supply and electricity continue to grow. The denudations of vegetative cover due to indiscriminate collection for firewood, and the overgrazing by cattle and other livestock population, have resulted in the depletion of natural resources for sustenance. Again, the lack of facilities for disposal of community wastes in rural areas has led to the contamination of water courses and the creation of insanitary living conditions. All these problems have compounded the environmental concerns.

14.2.2 Pressure on Land, Desertification and Deforestation

In India, high population density coexists with a high level of poverty. India has a land mass of about 329 million hectares (nearly 2.4 per cent of the total land area of the world). Of this, 170 million hectares are arable and 130 million hectares are currently under cultivation. Because of topographical and ecological constraints and increased demand for non-agricultural uses, there is little scope to increase the area under cultivation. Due to population growth the per capita availability of land in India has declined from 0.89 hectares in 1950 to less than 0.24 hectares in 2018 and with the assumed rate of population growth, that figure will decline further to about 0.20 hectares by the year 2020.

The availability of land has become a major constraint on expansion of infrastructure, development of mineral resources, industrialisation and urbanisation. More than 60 per cent of country's arable land suffers from environmental degradation. Vast tracts are in danger of becoming wasteland from the pressure of twin forces: on the one hand, misappropriation of natural resources by the rich for luxury consumption and on the other, the struggle for survival that leads poor farmers to extend outward to marginal farmlands, destroying forests and encroaching on the limited grazing lands. Massive shifts in land use, generated both by a rapidly growing population seeking subsistence, and by commercial interests demanding land, had equally deleterious results.

Industrialisation and urbanisation have added to the agricultural scramble. Rapid population growth, agricultural stagnation, and environment degradation are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Agricultural development in India provides food for human sustenance and employment for its growing population but it does not maintain sustainable production. While the country as a whole produces enough food to meet the present needs of its population (over 1.3 billion), inequality in food distribution leaves millions of people near the subsistence level. Inappropriate agricultural practices and varied land problems have not only produced less than optimal yields, but have also contributed to land exhaustion as well as to soil erosion, desertification and salinisation. Excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides combined with large-scale irrigation has to, a

great extent, affected the agricultural potential of land. Agricultural stagnation and environmental degradation also affect population growth. High infant and child mortality rates caused by food shortages and malnutrition induce men and women to have more children, partly to ensure that at least some survive to support them in old age.

The protection and strengthening of our natural forests is another critical area. They impact on availability of energy for the economy since most of the country's coal resources lay under forest. Throughout India, the area of the environment most depleted in the present century has been forest land. The paucity of India's forest cover is apparent from the fact that of 75 million hectares classed as forest, 64 million hectares sustain actual forest cover, and out of this, only 30 million hectares have adequate cover, which at present accounts for only about 9 percent of the geographical area of the country. The major cause of deforestation is illegal felling of trees for commercial use, conversion of forest land to agriculture, settlement and industry and, to a lesser extent, for fuel.

Deforestation has caused immense loss to the living natural resources. An estimated 15000 plant species out of a world total of 250000 and 75000 animal species out of a world total of 1.5 million are threatened by the gradual expansion of human activity on land and forest. The Indian desert ecosystem (covering 127.3 mha of India's geographical area) which is extremely rich in species, diversity of mammals and winter migratory birds is under pressure of a rapidly increasing population.

14.2.3 Pollution

Environmental pollution resulting from air, water, land, mines, radiation or odour impinges upon every citizen's life. Water pollution is by far the most serious in its implications for the health of the people. It is estimated that a staggering seventy per cent of the water available in India is polluted owing mainly to the discharge of community wastes from cities, towns and industries.

Water is a relatively scarce resource in India since we have 16 per cent to the world's population and only 4 per cent of the usable fresh water. The implications of water pollution for the health and well-being of the people are serious. According to one estimate, two-thirds of all illnesses in India are related to water-borne diseases, such as typhoid, infective hepatitis, cholera, diarrhoea, and dysentery. India's rivers, including large rivers like the Ganges, are today heavily polluted, largely contributed by industrial production and domestic consumption of low-grade fuels. This has become an increasingly important aspect of environmental despoliation. As a result of this and poor maintenance, they emit large quantities of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen and other pollutants, which are major health hazards. Besides water and air pollution, environmental noise is becoming another area of major concern. Noise pollution is caused by transport, industrial, recreational and religious activities – with the latter using loudspeakers.

14.2.4 Institutional and Policy Failures

Institutional failures, referring to unclear or insufficiently enforced regulations setting limits on the use of, environmental resources, result in environmental degradation. Such regulations are critical to the relationship between humans

and the use of environmental resources. Further, policy failures may stem from various sources, including the use of fiscal instruments, such as explicit and implicit subsidies for the use of various resources. Inappropriate policy can also lead to unanticipated changes in commonly managed systems, with adverse environmental outcomes.

14.2.5 Global Environmental Issues

Another major set of challenges arises from emerging global environmental concerns relating to climate change, depletion of ozone layer and biodiversity loss. The build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and industrial and transportation emissions are contributing to global warming. It is feared that carbon dioxide concentration would double from its current level of about three hundred fifty parts per million (ppm) to seven hundred ppm by the years 2030 to 2075 causing an increase in global mean temperatures by between 1.5 and 4.0 degrees Celsius and raise sea levels by twenty centimetres to a meter. Further, this doubling will increase the incidence of flooding, typhoons, hurricanes, and other natural calamities.

Environmental problems also occur because of the inappropriate application of technology. Examples of such problems are arms race, toxic wastes, threats to the ozone layer, possible climate changes, etc. The economic effects of such problems could be disastrous. The impact of technology on the environment is crucial. While in the developed countries, the capacity to evaluate its impact is growing, only a small percentage of the world scientific and research capacity is found in the developing countries. For the developing world to be tied to environmentally imprudent technologies is ultimately counter-productive not only for their environments and economies but also for the global environment.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Define environment.

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2) ‘Environment policy faces a number of challenges’. Discuss.

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14.3 OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY (NEP), 2006

Objectives

The principal objectives of the National Environment Policy (NEP) 2006 are given below:

- i) Conservation of critical environmental resources.
- ii) Promotion of intra-generational equity: livelihood security for the poor.
- iii) Inter-generational equity.
- iv) Integration of environmental concerns with schemes of economic and social development.
- v) Efficient use of environmental resources.
- vi) Environmental governance.
- vii) Enhancement of resources for environmental conservation.

Principles

The National Environment Policy (2006) lays down certain principles for guiding the activities of different actors in relation to this policy:

- i) Human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature (Human beings are placed at the centre of sustainable development).
- ii) The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet development and environmental needs of present and future generations (Right to development).
- iii) In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process.
- iv) Lack of full scientific manpower shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation (Precautionary approach).
- v) In various public actions in favour of environmental conservation, economic efficiency would be sought to be realised through the application of the principles of: (a) polluter pays (b) cost minimisation (Economic efficiency as yardstick).
- vi) Significant risks to human health, life, and environmental life-support, systems, which may impact the well-being of large numbers of persons, may be considered as 'Incomparable' (Entities with Incomparable Values).
- vii) Human beings cannot be treated differently in process of decision-making over use of environmental resources (Equity).
- viii) Policy speaks of the principles of legal liability which may be viewed as an embodiment in legal doctrine of the polluter pays approach (Legal liability).

- ix) The State is a trustee of all natural resources, which are by nature meant for public use and enjoyment, subject to matters of strategic national interest (Public trust doctrine).
- x) In order to address particular environmental issues at the state and local levels, the Central Authority transfers and decentralises its power (Decentralisation).
- xi) Formulation, implementation and evaluation of environmental policies require linkages among various agencies at the Central, State, and Local Self government levels (Integration).
- xii) Environmental standards must reflect the economic and social development situation in which they apply (Environmental standard setting)
- xiii) It is preferable to prevent environmental damage from occurring in the first place, rather than attempting to restore degraded environmental resources after the fact (Preventive action).
- xiv) If for exceptional reasons of overriding public interest it is difficult to protect threatened or endangered species and natural systems that are of special importance to sustaining life, cost-effective offsetting measures must be undertaken by the proponents of the activity (Environmental offsetting).

14.4 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

India is one of the few countries of the world that refer specifically in their constitutions the need for environmental protection. Articles 48A and 51A (g) of the Indian Constitution provide the legal basis for sustainable development: The “State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country”. It is the duty of the citizen “to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife and to have compassion for the living creatures”. The judicial interpretation of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution has widened the scope of the right to life and personal liberty to include the protection of the environment as the duty of the state.

The concern for arresting and reversing land degradation, desertification and environment despoliation gets reflected in many of the national policies (for e.g., National Water Policy 2012; National Forest Policy 1988; National Agricultural Policy 2000; National Environmental Policy 2006; National Policy for Farmers, 2007; and National Population Policy 2000. Besides constitutional provisions and national policies enunciated in central statutes more than two hundred central and state laws have been enacted over the years, which relate, directly or indirectly, to environmental protection and management. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the main national environmental statutes.

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1974), pursuant to the enabling resolution of twelve states under Article 252 (1), and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1981) under Article 252 of the Indian Constitution, were passed by the Union Parliament to prevent and control water and air pollution. These statutes created the apparatus for implementation, through central and state pollution control boards. Parliament also enacted the Water (Prevention

and Control of Pollution) Cess Act (1977) to create incentives for pollution control. The Act requires local authorities and certain designated industries to pay a cess (fee) for water consumption.

The Act was perhaps a sequel to the fallout of criticisms to the Bhopal disaster of 1984, pointing to lack of legal framework for monitoring and regulation, besides inadequacy of expertise. Keeping in view these criticisms and the demand for protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, the Government of India enacted the Environment (Protection) Act (1986).

The Environment Protection Act, 1986 establishes the framework for studying planning and implementing long-term requirements of environmental safety and laying down a system of speedy and adequate response to situations threatening the environment. It is an umbrella legislation designed to provide a framework for the coordination of central and state authorities established under various statutes relating to air, water and land and hazardous substances. It also promotes laws for guiding central and state pollution control boards in fixing standards and setting limits for industrial pollution as well as water, air and noise pollution.

In the field of conservation of natural resources, including forestry and wildlife, a few statutes have been enacted. The Indian Forest Act (1927), enacted during the British period, is being amended to bring it into conformity with the new National Forest Policy (1988). Alarmed at India's rapid deforestation, the Central Government enacted the Forest (Conservation) Act in 1980, which requires approval of the Central Government before a state de-reserves a reserved forest or uses forest land for non-forest purposes, or clears forest land for reforestation. The Wild Life (Protection) Act (1972) provides for establishing state wildlife advisory boards; promulgating regulations for hunting and trading wild animals and birds; and establishing a Zoo Authority, sanctuaries and national parks. Mention may also be made of the Insecticides Act (1968), which regulates all aspects of use of insecticides and pesticides. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002, aims at conservation, sustainable utilisation and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources and associated knowledge.

In addition to legislative measures that provide for a system of regulation there are judicial pronouncements relating to civil and criminal laws, and Public Interest Litigation, which strengthen regulation in this regard. A few sections of the Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Penal Code provide effective and speedy remedies to prevent and control public nuisance and air, water, and noise pollution, etc.

The Public Liability Insurance Act (1991) provides immediate relief to victims of accidents that arise from handling hazardous substances. This Act is an addition to such legislative measures as the Factories Act (1948), the Mines Act (1952), and the Motor Vehicles Act (1939), prescribe measures to promote environmental safety in factories and control and prevent vehicular pollution.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change (MoEF&CC) also has prescribed Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 that are applicable in municipal and non-municipal areas. Under the Rules, the segregation of waste at source has been mandated. Similarly, the Ministry has also notified the Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016) and Construction & Demolition Waste Management Rules in order to regulate waste disposal. For conservation and

wise use of Wetlands, the MoEF&CC has notified the Wetlands (Conservations and Management) Rules, in 2010. Under the Rules a Central Wetland Regulatory Authority has been constituted for conserving and controlling wetlands.

Role and Objectives of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

The MoEF&CC plays a pivotal role in environmental conservation. It appoints expert committees to undertake environmental impact assessments of projects that require approval of agencies such as the Central Water Commission, Central Electricity Authority, and Public Investment Board. The criterion of investment was the basis for projects requiring environmental clearance in different sectors. The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is the nodal agency in the central government for overseeing the implementation of India's environment and forest policies and programmes relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forest and wildlife, ensuring the welfare of animals and prevention and abatement of pollution. While implementing these policies and programmes, the Ministry is guided by the principle of sustainable development. The Ministry is also the nodal agency for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other international / multinational bodies pertaining to environment.

Besides the state departments of environment and the central and state pollution control boards, several other central institutions play significant roles in implementing environmental policies and laws. In spheres such as solid waste management, water treatment, health, and sanitation the state governments and urban and rural local bodies perform the mandated functions in protecting the environment.

14.5 THE CHALLENGES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND URBANISATION TO ENVIRONMENT

The relationship between economic growth and urbanisation on the one hand and environmental quality on the other is extremely complex. The natural environment is central to economic activity and growth, providing the resources and raw materials (such as water, timber, minerals, etc) required to produce goods and services and for processing and absorbing unwanted waste industrial effluents and other pollutants. However, current policies and activities aimed at economic growth and urbanisation have been causing environmental destruction at a scale and pace unprecedented in human history. Environmental destruction poses severe threats to the health and survival of the human and other species. Deforestation in India has been endangering flora and fauna. In December 2018 worsening air quality has engulfed the Delhi - NCR in a thick blanket of fog, forcing people to stay indoors for 3-4 days at a stretch, thereby bringing all activity to a standstill.

Long-term environmental policy framework of the government should therefore, identify all contours of activity. It should take into consideration three major components: (a) the imperatives of economic activity, (b) the challenges to the environment and (c) the availability of low carbon and resource efficient technologies. There are both short-term and long-term trade-offs between the first and second components. The condition of the natural assets of the environment is a key factor in sustaining growth for the longer term. Inventions

of new technologies are helpful to both economic productivity growth and for managing the natural resources. Decisions on environmental policy should also consider a wide range of public and private interests; the costs of alternative policy and technical solutions; the cross- sectoral nature of environmental problems; and the roles and capabilities of public institutions in implementing policies or enforcing regulations (Bartone, 1994).

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Write a note on the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

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2) Enumerate the statutes enacted in the field of conservation of natural resources.

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14.6 CONCLUSION

Worldwide the challenge has become how to minimise the damaging effects of human activity that degrade human and non- human elements of the ecosystem. As such, environment issues became more wide-ranging and deeper today than at any previous time. With a view to improving the quality of environment on which the present and future generations depend statutory and regulatory frameworks have been created by countries all over the world. The effectiveness and adequacy of this framework in India has come for criticism. It is pointed out that there are serious conceptual problems in India’s environmental policy design, namely the lack of coherent overall objectives, the poor identification of priorities, and inappropriate methods and policy tools. Moreover, unlike in the western countries, implementation lags behind in India. Critics also refer to the tendency of Indian policy makers to open their eyes and became wise after a disaster event.

The policies, plans and programmes related to energy and food security expanding industry, urbanisation, transportation require careful balancing between environment and development. In order to achieve any given objective, one needs information and a framework for analysis before initiating action and

implementation. This applies to environment to a greater extent than to other areas. It is vital that we preserve and improve water, air and soil quality. At the same time, it is necessary to improve government capabilities to monitor, design and make focused and timely interventions. Environmental policies must also aim at regeneration of used or lost natural resources, and reliance on renewable enemies. Policy interventions should facilitate protection and improvement to ensure quality of life of natural resources for the present and future generations.

14.7 GLOSSARY

Biodiversity: It generally refers to the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat.

Sustainable Development: A process of change in which exploitation of resources, orientation of technological development and institutional changes are made consistent with future as well as present needs.

Pollution: The presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance which has harmful effect.

Solar Energy: It is a radiant energy emitted by the sun.

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14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:

- Environment has several components.
- Environment refers to the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal or plant lives or operates.
- There is a difference between human beings and other species with regard to their impact on the environment.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Poverty and Population Explosion
- Pressure on Land, Desertification and Deforestation
- Institutional and Policy Failures
- Global Environmental Issues

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- The Indian Forest Act (1927)
- The Wild Life (Protection) Act (1972)
- Insecticides Act (1968)
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- The Environment Protection Act, 1986 establishes the framework for studying, planning and implementing long-term requirements of environmental safety.
- It also promotes laws for guiding central and state pollution control boards in fixing standards and setting limits for industrial pollution as well as water, air and noise pollution.
- It is an umbrella legislation designed to provide a framework for the coordination of central and state authorities established under various statutes relating to air, water and land and hazardous substances.

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