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INDIA – A WELFARE STATE

Ramakrishnan and his friend Abdul who were coming from Chennai got down at New Delhi railway station. While they were crossing the road to hire a taxi, Ramakrishnan was hit by a cycle rickshaw. He was immediately admitted in a government hospital for treatment, where Dr. Nirmala handled his case. Worried Abdul phoned Ramakrishnan's uncle and informed his own family also. After about an hour, Dr. Nirmala told Abdul that there was nothing to worry as Ramakrishnan had no serious injury. By then Ramakrishnan's uncle also reached and Ramakrishnan was discharged. Abdul noticed that the doctor did not charge anything for her medical advice and charged nominally for the medicines. He asked Ramakrishnan's uncle, how it was possible? The uncle who is a teacher told that in a country like India which is a welfare state, all this is the responsibility of the government. Now Abdul was confronted by a basic question, "what does a welfare state mean"?

You may also have come across this term while going through newspapers or magazines or watching a discussion on television. You might have noted that whenever India is described as a welfare state, there is a reference to Directive Principles of State Policy. Why? Like Abdul, you may have a number of questions. In the lesson analyse and understand all the important facets of India being a welfare state.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of a welfare state and understand how India is a welfare state;
- identify the factors which led to the inclusion of Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India;

- appreciate the importance of Directive Principles in realizing the objectives of a welfare state of India.
- identify and classify various categories of Directive Principles;
- distinguish between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy; and
- analyse the measures taken to implement Directive Principles to realize the objectives of a welfare state

**Notes**

17.1 WHAT IS A WELFARE STATE?

The basic question i.e. what is a welfare state that bothered Abdul needs to be answered. As we have seen, India is described as a welfare state. There are a number of other nations in the world, which are also described as welfare states. Why are they called so and others are not? What is the meaning of the term, welfare state? It is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of economic and social well-being of its citizens. A welfare state is based on the principles of equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth. It also focuses on the governmental responsibility for those who are unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions of a good life. Under this system, the welfare of its citizens is the responsibility of the state. India was not a welfare state before independence. The British rule was not very interested in protecting and promoting the welfare of the people. Whatever it did was in keeping with the interests of the British colonial government and not in the interests of the people of India.

When India attained independence, it had innumerable problems and challenges. The social and economic inequality was all pervasive. Economically, India's situation was miserable. Socially also India was having a number of problems. There were social inequalities and all the vulnerable sections of the society such as women, dalits, children were deprived of basic means of living. The Constitution makers were very much aware of the problems. That is why, they decided that India would be a welfare state. As you must have seen, India is described as a "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic" in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. Accordingly, the Constitution has extensive provisions to ensure social and economic welfare of the people of India. In this regard two specific provisions have been made, one in the form of Fundamental Rights and the other as Directive Principles of State Policy.

The Fundamental Rights embodied in Part III of the Indian Constitution act as a guarantee that all Indian citizens can and will enjoy civil liberties and basic rights. These civil liberties take precedence over any other law of the land. They are individual rights commonly included in the Constitutions of liberal democracies. Some of these important rights are: equality before the law, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion, and



the right to constitutional remedies for the protection of civil rights. But this was not enough. Indian citizens also needed opportunities for economic and social development. That is why Part IV on Directive Principles of State Policy was included in the Indian Constitution.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1

1. What do you mean by the term welfare state?
2. Why did Constitution-makers decide that India would be a welfare state?
3. Name at least two sections of Indian society that were adversely affected by prevailing social inequalities.

17.2 DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY

As we have seen in the Lesson on ‘Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties’, the fundamental rights provided in the Indian Constitution are primarily political rights. The Constitution makers were well aware that even if all the fundamental rights are truly enforced, the goals of Indian democracy would not be realized unless the people of India could avail of social and economic rights. However, they were also alive to the limitations of the abilities of Indian state which attained independence after centuries of foreign rule and was at a low level of socio-economic development. In that situation, if the economic and social rights had been included in the list of fundamental rights, the Indian state would have failed to enforce these rights because of its own limitations. But at the same time, these rights needed to be given special importance. This was done by including a separate Chapter as Part-IV known as the *Directive Principles of State Policy* in the Constitution.

17.2.1 Characteristics

The Directive Principles of State Policy are guidelines to the central and state governments of India. The governments must keep these principles in mind while framing laws and policies. It is true that these provisions of the Constitution of India are non-justiciable, which means that these are not enforceable by any court of law. But the principles are considered fundamental in the governance of the country. It is the duty of the central and state governments to apply these principles in making laws to establish a just society in the country. The principles have been inspired by the Directive Principles stated in the Constitution of Ireland and also by the principles of Gandhian philosophy.

The main aim of these principles is to create social and economic conditions under which all the citizens can lead a good life. In other words it is to establish social and economic democracy in the country. These principles act as a yardstick in the

hands of the people to measure the performance of governments in respect of achieving the objective. All executive agencies have to be guided by these principles. Even the judiciary has to keep them in mind while deciding cases.

**Do you know**

- The Directive Principles of State Policy have been listed in the Constitution under articles 36 to 51.
- A new directive was added by Forty Second Amendment. It speaks about the duty of the state to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wild life of the country.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2**

1. Fill in the blanks:
 - (a) The Directive Principles of State Policy are aimed at making India a state.
 - (b) These principles are guidelines to of India, to be kept in mind while framing laws and policies.
 - (c) The idea of Directive Principles is said to be borrowed from the constitution of
 - (d) The directive principles are related to
2. Do you think the Indian Constitution would have failed to reflect the basic tenets of democracy, if it would not have included the Directive Principles of State Policy? Give reasons

17.2.2 Types of Directive Principles

If you go through the directive principles stated in the Constitution, you will find that they are of different types. Some are concerned with socio economic development, some are related to Gandhian thought, and some to foreign policy. The Constitution does not classify them under different heads, but for our better understanding, we may classify them under the following specific categories:

- Principles promoting social and economic equality;
- Principles related to Gandhian thought;
- Principles related to International peace and security; and
- Miscellaneous Principles.



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A. Principles promoting social and economic equality

There are certain principles that are very important for realizing the goals of social and economic democracy in India. Many people in India have been suffering from social and economic inequalities since ages. The following principles, in particular, are aimed at ensuring economic and social equality:



Figure 17.1 *Social and Economic Inequalities*

1. The state should ensure for its people adequate means of livelihood.
2. The state should ensure fair distribution of the material resources of the country for the common good.
3. The state should distribute the wealth in such a way that the wealth is not concentrated in a few hands.
4. There should be equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
5. The state is directed to take steps to impart compulsory and free education to the children up to the age of 14 years.
6. The state should try to secure participation of workers in the management of the factory.
7. Childhood and Youth should be protected against exploitation. Men, women and children should not be forced by economic necessity to enter jobs and vocations not suited to their age or strength.
8. The state should ensure to the people (a) the right to work (b) the right to education (c) the right to state assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement.
9. The state should make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work for the workers and maternity relief for women.



ACTIVITY 17.1

Read the situation given below and do the activity that follows:

There is a factory where men and women are working together and are doing equal work for equal time. The owner pays more wages to men and less to women.

Identify the Directive Principle which is not being observed in this case

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Write a letter to the Editor of a National daily expressing why this is against the principles of a welfare state

Letter to the editor

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B. Principles related to Gandhian thought

Gandhian thinking promotes a non-violent social order. Swaraj (Self-rule) , Sarvodaya (welfare for all) and svavlambam(self-reliance) are the basic principles of Gandhian thought. We are all well aware that Mahatma Gandhi was in the forefront of freedom movement. His philosophy and actions guided not only our freedom movement but also the framing of the Indian Constitution. The following Directive Principles in particular reflect Gandhian thought:

1. The state shall promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society and in particular the interests of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
2. The state shall take steps to organize the village panchayats. These panchayats should be given such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government.
3. The state shall make efforts to prevent the consumption of alcoholic drinks and other harmful drugs.
4. The state shall try to promote cottage industries in rural areas.
5. The state shall take steps to improve the quality of livestock and ban the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle.



ACTIVITY 17.2

1. According to the constitutional provisions, local government bodies should have 33% representation of women. Visit the office of at least one village panchayat



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or a local municipal office and find out whether this provision is being met. Record your observations in the table below.

Total number of representatives in the panchayat/municipal office	Total number of women representatives

2. Talk to any two women representatives and fill in the table given below.

	Elected representative 1	Elected representative 2
3 positive changes that they have contributed to their area	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
3 challenges that they have faced during their work.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

C. Principles related to International Peace and Security

The Constitution makers included some principles which provide guidelines to our foreign policy. These are:

1. The state shall promote international peace and security.
2. The state shall endeavor to maintain just and honorable relations with other nations.
3. The state shall foster respect for international laws and treaty obligations.
4. The state shall encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration, i.e. mutual agreement.

D. Miscellaneous Principles

Besides, there are some notable Directive Principles which do not come under any of the above mentioned categories. These are as follows:

1. The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wild life of the country.
2. The state shall take steps for the maintenance and protection of the historical monuments, places or objects of national importance.

3. The state shall aim at establishing a uniform civil code for all citizens throughout the country.
4. The state shall take steps to separate the Judiciary from Executive.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.3

1. Mention the major categories of Directive Principles of State Policy.
2. Match the following Principles with their appropriate category, as done for the first in the following table:

Sl. No.	Directive Principles	Category
a.	The state shall ensure for its people adequate economic means of livelihood	Principles promoting social and economic equality
b.	The state shall take steps to separate judiciary from executive.	
c.	The state shall endeavor to maintain just and honourable relations between nations.	
d.	The state shall take steps to organize the village panchayats.	
e.	There should be equal pay for equal work both for men and women.	
f.	The state shall try to promote cottage industries in rural areas.	

17.3 DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

As you have learnt, the Directive Principles aim at establishing a welfare state. The aim of Fundamental rights is also the same; but there are some basic differences between the two.

First, Directive Principles are not justiciable. No constitutional provision or law binds the government to implement these. Fundamental rights are justiciable and enforceable. Fundamental rights cannot be denied to any citizen. These are protected by the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Second, these principles are only instructions or directions for the state to frame policies to implement them. Such policies should be a step towards realizing the



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goals of a welfare state. Fundamental Rights have been ensured by the Constitution and the state is bound to protect the rights of all its citizens.

Third, even in respect of the placement in the Constitution, the Directive Principles come after the Fundamental Rights. It means that importance of Fundamental rights is more than that of Directive Principles.

However, it is important to appreciate that Directive Principles cannot be ignored even if these do not have the same kind of constitutional sanction as the Fundamental Rights. Implementation of Directive Principle enhances the credibility and popularity of any government, which and as we all know is the basis for regaining power in a democracy. Moreover, it is also apparent that the aim of both the Fundamental rights and Directive Principles is the same. They are not contradictory but complementary to each other. Fundamental Rights guarantee political democracy and Directive Principles are there to establish social and economic democracy. The real strength of the Directive Principles is derived from vigilant public opinion. The policies which are favoured by most citizens are usually implemented with great enthusiasm. No government can ignore the public interest. Each one of us is a vehicle for public opinion. It will be good if you try to create public opinion in favour of implementation of Directive Principles which you feel are important.



Do you know

Shehzad Khan and Seema Dhanu who lead a group of young people, known as the Bal Panchayat in a village near Jaipur, Rajasthan have set a notable example of being catalytic to social development. This group of young people works on a variety of issues such as cleanliness, right to education, rights of the girls of their village and also of the neighbouring villages. They are very actively engaged in preventing child labour. For this cause, they have lobbied with families, the panchayat and block administration to help working children go back to schools. Recently, Shehzad even approached the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to present the concerns regarding the lives of children in the villages. This example indicates that each one of us can raise a voice and make the government act for the betterment of the society?

17.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY

You may now be interested in knowing whether the central and state governments have done anything to implement these Directive Principles. Have you heard about *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*, a massive programme of the Central government being implemented in all the States of India? You may also be aware of *Right To Education Act 2009* passed by the Indian Parliament. These are the outcomes of efforts being



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made to implement the Directive Principles. Some states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have reserved 50 percent seats in Panchayat elections for women. These instances indicate that although there is no legal force behind the Directive Principles and there is no obligation on the state to enforce them, yet the governments have been implementing these principles. Some of the implemented principles are:

- Minimum wages have been fixed in almost all the spheres of employment.
- Equal wages for equal work for both men and women have been enacted.
- Various programmes have been launched to boost rural employment. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yozna are the examples.
- Panchayati Raj has been given constitutional status. Village Panchayats have been set up and are functioning at village level.
- The Eighty-sixth constitutional amendment was adopted to ensure *provision for free and compulsory education for children* and the Right to Education Act was passed in 2009 to make it a fundamental right.
- Many laws have been passed to protect children from exploitation.
- A number of welfare schemes have been implemented for the poor and backward classes and also for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Seats have been reserved for them in the Parliament and Vidhan Sabhas.
- Several laws and welfare schemes have been launched to protect women from exploitation.
- The forty second constitutional amendment added a Directive principle, which ensures *Protection and improvement of environment and safeguarding of forests and wild life*. A number of Programmes like *Save the Tiger* project Rhino, elephant etc. are being implemented in pursuance of the newly added directive principle. Judiciary has been separated from the executive.
- Cottage industries have been established *and protected* by giving tax concessions.
- *Our foreign policy is in consonance with the principles of international peace and security, and maintaining just and honourable relations between nations.*
- The Government of India supports and works for world peace.

In view of the above, it is clear that governments at central, state and local levels are working for the implementation of the Directive principles. A lot of work has been done but still problems of poverty, unemployment, poor health and illiteracy do exist. The spirit of Directive Principles is to improve the quality of life of people. This is a continuous process and the efforts of the government showing some results. There are challenges that need comprehensive response based on the Directives Principles.



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ACTIVITY 17.3

Collect information in respect of four welfare programmes that are being implemented in your State with the support of the Central government or State government. You can get this information from the local newspapers, internet, conversations with teachers/tutors and informed adults.

Sl. No.	Name of the Programme	Period of Implementation	Supported by State/ Central government
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			



INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.4

- Name the Constitutional Amendments that (a) ensures the provision for free and compulsory education for children of 6-14 years; and (b) ensures protection and improvement of environment and safeguarding of forests and wild life.
- Write the Directive Principle of State Policy, that should guide the government to act in case of each of the following incidents given below:

	Incidents	Directive Principles
(a)	A 10 year old boy is washing utensils in a hotel for a small wage.	
(b)	An 8 year old girl is not being given admission to a school.	
(c)	Selling of Alcohols and harmful drugs is being encouraged.	
(d)	Safety of historical monuments is not being taken care of.	



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- A welfare state is one in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. A welfare state is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.
- Directive principals have been included in the Constitution of India for the socio economic development of the people.
- Directive principals are non-justiceable and cannot be enforced by any court of law.
- But these principles are considered fundamental in the governance of the country, making it the duty of the central and state governments to apply these principles in making laws to establish a just society in the country.
- The Directive Principles of State Policy can be categorized as (a) Principles promoting socio-economic equality; (b) Principles related to Gandhian thought; (c) Principles related to International Peace and Security; and (d) Miscellaneous Principles.
- Directive Principles are different from Fundamental Rights; but both are complementary to each other.
- The Central and State governments have been implementing these directive principles, but much more needs to be done to realize the goals of a welfare state.



TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What do you mean by a welfare state? Why did the Constitution-makers decide that India would be a welfare state?
2. What is the purpose of Directive Principles of State Policy?
3. How are Directive Principles of State Policy different from Fundamental Rights? Explain.
4. What are Directive principles of State Policy which reflect Gandhian thought?
5. How have Directive Principles helped in promoting socio-economic development and equality?
6. India and Pakistan have recently had secretary level talks to discuss conventional and nuclear confidence building measures as a part of peace process between



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the two countries. To which Directive Principle of State Policy is this related and how?

7. Describe any three Directive Principles of State Policy which have been implemented.

Read the story given below and answer the questions:-

Bholu is a 10-year old who has come to a city. He has nobody to look after him so he begins working as a rag picker. He is staying on footpath outside the local hospital. He does not go to any school and earns his living by picking rags like plastic, toxic wastes and hospital wastes which are hazardous to health and also a risk to life. He earns about Rs. 20 a day and has no other option but to eat leftover and unhygienic food.

- What can be the possible reasons for Bholu's situation? Write any two.
- List two Directive Principles which are related to situations that children like Bholu may be facing.
- Discuss Bholu's situation with your friends and family and suggest two ways to improve it..

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****17.1**

- A welfare state is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth.
- When India attained independence, it had innumerable problems and challenges. There were social inequalities and all the vulnerable sections of the society such as women, dalits, children were deprived of basic means of living. The Constitution makers were very much aware of the problems. Which is why, they decided that India would be a welfare state.
- Women and Dalits

17.2

- Welfare
 - Central and state governments
 - Ireland
 - Social and economic rights

2. Yes . The main aim of the Directive Principles of State Policy is to create social and economic conditions under which all the citizens can lead a good life. In other words it is to establish social and economic democracy in the country.

17.3

1. We may classify Directive Principles of State Policy under the following specific categories:
- (a) Principles promoting social and economic equality
 - (b) Principles related to Gandhian thought
 - (c) Principles related to International peace and security and
 - (d) Miscellaneous Principles.
2. (a) Principles promoting social and economic equality
- (b) Miscellaneous Principles.
 - (c) Principles related to International peace and security
 - (d) Principles related to Gandhian thought
 - (e) Principles promoting social and economic equality
 - (f) Principles related to Gandhian thought

17.4

1. (a) The Eighty Sixth Constitutional Amendment
- (b) The Forty Second Constitutional Amendment
2. (a) Childhood and youth should be protected against exploitation
- (b) State shall take steps to impart compulsory and free education to children up to the age of 14 years
 - (c) State shall make efforts to prevent consumption of alcoholic drinks and other harmful drugs
 - (d) State shall take steps for maintenance and protection of historical monuments



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