

BLOCK 2
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 5 ISSUES OF DECENTRALISATION*

Structure

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Define decentralisation and specify the advantages of decentralisation;
- Examine the various socio-economic issues that are outlined for local governments in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992;
- Discuss the role of local governments in addressing various social and economic issues;
- Bring out the maladies plaguing Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the Urban Local Bodies; and
- Elaborate the ways to improve governance issues that affect decentralisation and centre-state-local relationships.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of decentralisation of local government attains special importance in the context of developing countries like India, because majority of the poor live here and the aim of decentralisation is to give them voice in the development process (Das, 2017). It is important that people participate in their own development and engage in meeting the basic requirements such as drinking water, health, education, sanitation, etc. In this context, decentralisation serves as a mechanism to empower people to participate in their own development and help them address various socio-economic issues. As noted by the Economic Review document of Kerala, decentralisation is expected to provide closer correspondence between the actual needs of the people and the provision that is made by governments to meet those needs. Thus, 'planning from below' and contextualised resource allocation for

*Contributed by Dr. Poornima M, Assistant Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi.

basic services would be more cost-effective and produce better outcomes (Government of Kerala, 2020).

In such a context, where decentralisation serves as an essential tool to address various socio-economic issues in an effective manner at the grassroots level, it is critical that we know about decentralisation and how local bodies, both at the rural and urban areas, are effectively able to use this mechanism to attain socio-economic development. In this Unit, we introduce you to the concept of decentralisation. The Unit throws light on the socio-economic functions that are described in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 for both the rural and urban local bodies. The Unit further discusses how socio-economic issues are addressed by the local governments by giving examples of various Indian States. It also examines the maladies that plague local governments and suggest ways to improve governance issues that affect effective decentralisation.

5.2 CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION

A recent OECD document on decentralisation regards decentralisation as a ‘silent’ or ‘quiet’ revolution and is among the most important reforms that has been initiated in the past 50 years. However, in the Indian context, decentralisation is not something that is new, and decentralisation in practice was visible through the way the local governments functioned in India since time immemorial.

Decentralisation is not a panacea for all the problems that a country faces, and neither is it an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to achieve the desired end results. For instance, it serves as a means to achieve larger goals of economic and social upliftment of the people. In other words, decentralisation is a tool to achieve the goal of development in terms of welfare and poverty alleviation programmes, literacy rates, infant mortality rates and life expectancy (Das, 2017). Decentralisation is thus helpful to achieve public sector efficiency, democratisation and political stability (OECD, 2019). Decentralisation of political and economic power is regarded a key element in the successful functioning of democracy in any country.

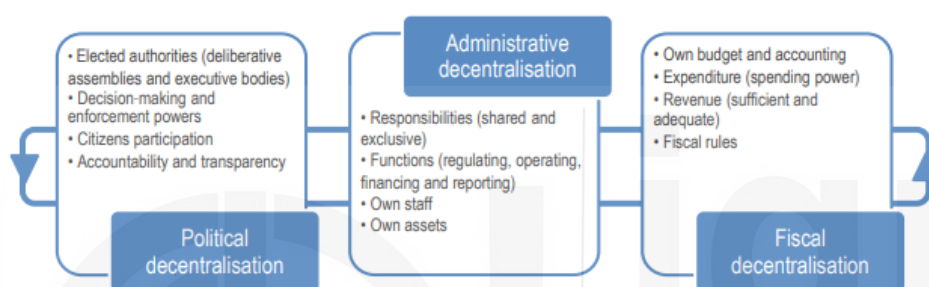
Decentralisation is defined in different ways and is applied in varying degrees in different countries. Decentralisation is defined as the transfer of authority, responsibility and resources through deconcentration, delegation or devolution – from the centre to lower levels of administration (Chakraborty, Chakraborty, & Mukherjee, 2016). According to a World Bank document, decentralisation is the transfer of political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities to locally elected bodies in urban and rural areas, and the empowerment of communities to exert control over these bodies (World Bank, 2000).

Decentralisation is also regarded as “a political process in which there is devolution of resources, tasks and decision-making power to democratically elect lower-level authorities, which are largely or wholly independent of central government” (Kalirajan & Otsuka, 2010). An OECD document on decentralisation regards it as “the transfer of political, administrative and financial powers and responsibilities from the central government level to the sub-national level (regional governments, municipalities, Panchayati

Raj, etc.), having some degree of autonomy” (OECD, 2019).

Based on these definitions it can be understood that there are three elements to decentralisation viz., political decentralisation, administrative decentralisation and fiscal decentralisation (Robinson, 2007a). Political decentralisation is regarded as being synonymous with the term democratic decentralisation or devolution, and in this type of decentralisation, powers and responsibilities are devolved to the elected local governments. Administrative decentralisation, on the other hand, is referred to as deconcentration, and in this type, the functions performed by central government are transferred to geographically distinct administrative units. Finally, fiscal decentralisation entails the transfer of financial resources in the form of grants and tax-raising powers to sub-national units of government.

FIGURE 1. POLITICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL DECENTRALISATION



Source: OECD, 2019.

Thus, while political decentralisation focuses on transfer of powers from central to local authorities, administrative decentralisation focuses on transition of functional responsibilities from central to local governments and fiscal decentralisation aims at transforming financial relations between different levels of government (Sanusi *et al.*, 2017 cited in Chygryn, *et al.*, 2018). However, despite the existence of difference among these components of the concept of decentralisation, as a rule, they are implemented together to ensure positive synergistic effect and maximum benefits for all economic agents (Chygryn, Petrushenko, Vysochyna, & Vorontsova, 2018). These three elements are inter-dependent on each other and there can be no fiscal decentralisation without political and administrative decentralisation and the existence of one form of decentralisation without the other two becomes meaningless (OECD, 2019).

Decentralisation has been the preferred option of reform in many of the countries across the world for a variety of political, historical, and economic reasons. It is thus a necessary precondition for attaining social, economic and political development. It has various advantages, which are as follows:

- Decentralisation helps in establishing more of local democratic control, greater efficiency in public service delivery and accountability of regional and local development policies;
- It can bring about public sector efficiency, democratisation and political stability;
- Decentralisation yields both direct and indirect benefits and challenges. The direct effects of decentralisation include improvements in service levels, quality and efficiency of public services. The indirect effects of

decentralisation include faster economic growth, better stability of the society, direct outcomes of decentralisation such as better education, higher participation in political decision making (OECD, 2019).

- Decentralisation has the potential to support and expand citizens' participation by bringing government closer to citizens and by making government more easily accessible;
- Through decentralisation, effective local development policies can be carried out, as actors at the local level are in a better position to design local policies that respond to local needs;
- Decentralisation also serves as a mechanism to experiment with public policies. An innovative idea implemented at a particular unit, can have a spill over effect from such good practices, which can benefit not only local governments, but also the state and central government, when it provides the opportunity to be scaled up.

Though decentralisation has various advantages, in order to reap the benefits, the prerequisite for effective functioning of decentralisation is the functional autonomy of the local governments supported by appropriate devolution of financial resources. Without that, there will be horizontal and vertical imbalances between the expenditure needs and the available resources of the decentralised layer of the governance, which may hinder the developmental functions at the local level (Chakraborty, Chakraborty and Mukherjee, *op.cit.*).

5.3 DECENTRALISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

Decentralisation is linked to various aspects of socio-economic considerations and it can contribute to increased social welfare of the citizens, in terms of addressing the needs of women, children, marginalised sections such as SCs and STs; improved social indicators such as health, education, etc.; and improved economic situation of the citizens by promoting employment, income generation, alleviation of poverty, etc.

Decentralisation that helps in attaining such socio-economic issues, is an integral part of state administration and is represented through territorial differentiation and dispersion (Bhattacharya, 1978). In political science and public administration, decentralisation has been discussed from the viewpoint of arrangement of government and there is arrangement of the government at the central, state and local levels. At the local level, differentiation and dispersal of units is made at the district, block and village levels for the rural governments. The unit of differentiation for the urban local bodies are the municipal corporations, municipal councils and the nagar panchayats.

In India, though local governments, both urban and rural local governments have been in existence since historical times, the decentralised mechanism lost its sheen ever since colonial times, and the structure and functions of local governments have mostly remained weak till the 1990s. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992 were landmark measures in the history of local governance, which provided a Constitutional status to rural and urban local bodies respectively, to engage in their own socio-economic

development. With the passing of such Constitutional Amendment Act, certain provisions became mandatory for both the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). Some of the key features of both the Acts are as follows:

- At the rural level, establishment of three-tier system of panchayat at village, block and district levels and at the urban level, establishment of nagar nigams (municipal corporation), nagar palika (municipal council) and nagar panchayats;
- Direct elections to panchayats and municipalities at all three levels;
- One-third of reservation for women and reservation to the marginalised communities such as SCs and STs at all three levels in proportion to their population in local bodies;
- Establishment of gram sabhas or village assembly as a deliberative body to decentralised governance;
- Establishment of state election commission in each state and union territories (UTs) to supervise, direct and control regular and smooth elections to panchayats and ULBs;
- Constitution of state finance commission, in every state/UT for five years to suggest measures to strengthen finances of PRIs and ULBs;
- Establishment of district planning committee (DPC) in every district to consolidate plans prepared by panchayats and municipalities in the district;

In Schedules 11 and 12 of the Constitution, about 29 and 18 functions that are considered appropriate for the panchayats and municipalities are entrusted to the local governments. Such functions entrusted to the local governments, have been classified here as the socio-economic functions and other functions, which are tabulated as below:

Table 5.1: Socio-economic and Other Functions of Rural and Urban Government	
XI Schedule - Functions for Panchayats (Article 243G)	XII Schedule Functions for Urban Local Bodies (Article 243W)
<p>Socio-economic Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking Water • Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways, and other means of communication • Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity • Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centers, and dispensaries • Maintenance of community assets • Rural housing 	<p>Socio-economic Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for economic and social development • Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes • Public health, sanitation conservancy and solid waste management • Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded • Slum improvement and upgradation • Urban poverty alleviation

Socio-Economic Issues

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty alleviation programmes • Education, including primary and secondary schools • Technical training and vocational education • Adult and informal education • Libraries • Cultural activities • Family welfare • Woman and child development • Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded • Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the SCs and STs • Public distribution system • Agriculture, including agricultural extension • Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation, and soil conservation • Animal husbandry, dairying, and poultry • Fisheries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens, playgrounds • Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects • Burials and burial grounds, cremations, cremation grounds and electric crematoriums • Public amenities including street lighting, parking lots, bus stops and public conveniences
<p>Other Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-conventional energy sources • Minor irrigation, water management, and watershed development • Social forestry and farm forestry • Minor forest produce • Fuel and fodder • Markets and fairs • Small-scale industries, including food processing industries • Khadi, village, and cottage industries 	<p>Other Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban planning including town planning • Regulation of land use and construction of buildings • Roads and bridges • Fire services • Urban forestry, protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects • Cattle ponds; prevention of cruelty to animals • Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths • Regulation of slaughterhouses and tanneries

Through Article, 243 G and W, the Constitution empowers panchayats and municipalities to function as institutions of self-government for preparing plans and implementing schemes for economic development and social

justice. Though various socio-economic functions and other developmental functions are entrusted for both the rural and urban local bodies, the provision remains vague with respect to the way the responsibilities are spelt out on certain functions and how financing would be made and there is no clear-cut demarcation of functions between the local bodies and the State (Alok, *Ibid.*; Mathur, 2006).

In almost, all the states and union territories, there is execution of the socio-economic functions in varying degrees by the municipalities and the panchayats. The socio-economic functions carried out by local governments, depends upon the strength given by the concerned states in their State Acts for Municipalities and Panchayats. In states, where transfer of functions, along with transfer of adequate finances and functionaries are made, there is effective implementation of socio-economic programmes and schemes by the rural and urban local bodies.

In this regard, the decentralisation experience of Kerala, popularly known as the People’s Plan, is of unique significance. Kerala has led a concerted effort for transferring powers, functions and institutions at one go to the third tier of governance – the Local Governments - accompanied by a simultaneous bottom-up initiative for local-level planning and development through the People’s Plan Campaign. In carrying out the entrusted socio-economic functions, local governments in Kerala are engaged in timely preparation of plans, integration of plan and budget, timely implementation and better utilisation of funds, formulation of innovative projects, increasing allocation of funds to the productive sector, preparation of District Plans, etc. (Government of Kerala, 2020).

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 decentralisation.

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2. What do you mean by political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation?

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3. Enlist some of the socio-economic functions given in the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules of the Constitution.

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5.4 ROLE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

As discussed in the previous sections, decentralisation of rural and urban local governments, helps in addressing various socio-economic issues that are faced by the citizens at the local level. It is for this reason that devolution of adequate powers and resources to the decentralised unit is stressed upon, for effective delivery of socio-economic functions such as citizen's welfare, gender concerns, education, health, employment generation, poverty alleviation, etc. In the current context, where there is emphasis on the sustainable development agenda, the local governments, both the urban and rural local bodies, have a major role to play in localising the various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Section throws light on some of the evidences of local governments in addressing socio-economic issues by discussing the cases and examples of different states. Some of the examples discussed here also shows how efficiency outcomes have improved as a result of decentralisation (Robinson, 2007a).

Citizens' Welfare

Decentralisation has a role to play in protecting the welfare of citizens in general and the interest of weaker sections in particular, such as women, SCs and STs, so that they get their fair share of public goods. In this context, reservation of the weaker sections in panchayat and municipality elections serves as an effective tool to safeguard their interests. Such reservation policy in local governments would increase their political participation. In West Bengal and Rajasthan, it was noted that women leaders of panchayats, who emerged from the reservation seats, laid their focus on those aspects that were beneficial for women, such as roads, drinking water, etc., rather than other areas, which are of least interest to women.

In the initial years, though women leaders of panchayats served as puppet candidates, in recent times, significant changes are visible, where women leaders have been able to make real impact on policy decisions. Similarly, it was noted in West Bengal that the needs of SC hamlets were addressed in a better manner with the presence of SC leaders (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). However, despite the success stories, there are certain challenges attached to it. Not all elected representatives are able to voice the preferences and priorities of the marginalised sections. In rural India, non-participation of the socio-economically marginalised in the decision-making process is quite evident (Echeverri-Gent, 1992; Gurtoo & Udayaadhithya, 2014).

Poverty Alleviation

Decentralisation is regarded as a key element in reducing poverty. The decentralisation model followed in Madhya Pradesh has lessons to offer for poverty alleviation in India. In Madhya Pradesh, a plan has been worked out for decentralising urban development and the focus is being laid on developing cities across the state, rather than developing a few large model cities. Thus, focus on development of both rural and urban areas across the state, has reduced the levels of urban dominance in the state. Such a holistic approach to urban development eliminates the scope for regional bias and create employment generation at the local level.

It has been thus stated that urbanisation and rural-urban linkages, poverty linkages and good practices of government would help in poverty reduction (Sridharan, quoted in Raghavendra, 2014). While this is a positive case study of urban government, the rural government in West Bengal has implemented measures such as land redistribution, sharecropper programme (Operation Barga) and the popular mobilisation programmes, which has significantly benefitted the poor. Such measures have improved agricultural performance, leading to a faster growth in agricultural sector, causing a reduction in poverty (Crook & Sverrisson, 2001).

Gender Concerns

In addressing gender concerns, adequate representation to women in local body elections is regarded an effective mechanism, as women will be able to participate in their own development. However, decentralisation alone is not a sufficient condition in a society, in which there is discrimination based on class, caste and patriarchy (Mukhopadhyay, 2005). The experience of women in decentralised water governance in Maharashtra shows a mixed response, wherein, women suffer with addition of patriarchal impositions and while a hand few have been able to raise their voice, many have not had a say in water governance, but still they enjoy the public space, when they get a chance to attend *pani samiti* (water committee) meetings.

In Maharashtra, inefficiency in management of water for domestic consumption and irrigation purposes was addressed through participatory planning and inclusive decision making. For this purpose, the mechanism in place was the water committee for the former and Water User Association (WUA) for the latter. While there was adequate representation of women in *pani samiti*, their representation was quite marginal in WUAs. Though representation of women across caste groups were there in *pani samiti*, women from dalit castes were mostly silent in the meetings and very few upper caste women who were there in WUA, served as proxies and were not even aware that they were members of WUA. Presence of women was visible only in those samitis, where mobilisation of women was taken care of by civil society organisations. In places, where women were victims of patriarchy, they were even prevented from speaking out in public meetings in front of men. However, despite such drawbacks, there are instances, where women have come out and utilised the space to their advantage, overcoming structural constraints (Kulkarni, 2011).

Disaster Management

In order to deal with disasters effectively, the gram panchayat and urban local government in Kerala prepare the local Disaster Management Plans, which consist of components such as: local government profile; hazard and vulnerability profile; capacity and resources of the local government; response plan; and preparedness, mitigation and community resilience plan. In dealing with disaster situations, local governments are always in the forefront. In the aftermath of 2018 and 2019 floods, the local governments in Kerala, both the panchayats and the municipalities played a key role in rehabilitating people and providing timely relief measures. The staff of gram panchayats and municipal corporations were engaged in rescue and relief operations and used their funds to mitigate the disaster. They converted the

community centres into relief camps and ensured the maintenance of the centres with toilets, lights and sanitation facilities (Government of Kerala, 2020).

Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Though many districts in different states did well in containing the corona virus, the Kerala example got the spotlight from the international community and also a special mention by the NITI Aayog. It was recognised that the decentralisation of powers and resources and women empowerment in Kerala were one of the reasons that helped Kerala in fighting against the corona virus. Some of the measures taken by the local governments to handle the pandemic were: setting up and managing community kitchens during lock-down; cleaning and disinfection activities; organising ‘break-the-chain’ social distance campaign and awareness programmes; providing accommodation, food and essential support to migrant labourers; coordination of home quarantine; distribution of free medicines; engaging of personnel in health institutions managed by local governments, etc. (Government of Kerala, 2020).

Urban Housing

Again in Kerala, in order to give recognition to the ‘Green Homes’, in each Urban Local Government, “Haritha Bhavanam” competition was conducted and the parameters for recognition was energy efficiency, waste management, and maintenance of green space. The competition also took into consideration aspects such as rain-water harvesting, kitchen garden, water disposal mechanisms and green energy among Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana’s (PMAY) urban beneficiaries. A cash prize of Rs.10,000 was given to the best homes (Government of Kerala, 2020).

The above cited examples throw light on the way decentralisation is helpful in addressing the various socio-economic issues.

5.5 MALADIES PLAGUING PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS AND URBAN LOCAL BODIES

When decentralisation to local government is adopted in a particular country, there is no automatic assurance that prompts that execution of functions would be undertaken by local representatives (Chakraborty, Chakraborty, & Mukherjee, 2016). Lot of concerns, issues and risks are involved in decentralisation, which plagues both the PRIs and ULBs, some of which are discussed as follows (Chakraborty, Chakraborty, & Mukherjee, 2016; OECD, 2019):

- For both the rural and urban local bodies in India, the structure, legislations and institutions are in place both at the national level and across the states. However, in most of the states, decentralisation mechanism is not designed and implemented in an effective manner;
- Another major concern in decentralisation is the issue of elite capture by local political elites. In such a scenario, power is deeply contested and powerful social groups, control resources and dominate local

politics (Robinson, 2007b). When there is elite capture, power at the local level becomes more concentrated or elitist, and is applied more ruthlessly against the poor. The benefits of decentralised socio-economic programmes would be captured by local elite, which in turn would result in under-investment in public goods and services for poor (Chakraborty, Chakraborty and Mukherjee, *op.cit.*).

- Though various socio-economic and developmental functions are assigned to PRIs and ULBs, there is inadequate devolution of finances and functionaries to carry out the functions assigned to the local governments. When there is a mismatch between the responsibilities assigned and resources allocated, smooth delivery of services, programmes and schemes cannot be ensured; and
- Another concern of decentralisation is the overlap in roles and responsibilities of local governments with the responsibilities of state departments and units. Proper demarcation in roles or proper convergence is needed to ensure smooth functioning of decentralised unit.

5.6 WAY FORWARD ON ISSUES AFFECTING DECENTRALISATION

There have been examples of failures of decentralisation, which is due to reasons such as rigid bureaucracy, too much of centralisation, lack of capacity of elected representatives, lack of accountability, etc., due to which the socio-economic policies and schemes implemented at the local level are not delivered properly. It can be overcome by taking various measures. Dysfunctional decentralisation systems are part of the story behind the crisis of democracies and it is thus critical to find ways to make decentralisation systems more effective (OECD, 2019). Some of the ways to address various challenges are as follows:

Relaxation of central control

When emphasis has been laid on decentralisation with the entrustment of powers and responsibilities to the elected representatives at the local level, it is important to relax the central control. As highlighted by the OECD report 2019, decentralisation reforms involve a shift from a direct role in service delivery to one of enabling, advising and assisting, ensuring consistency, and facilitating the work of subnational governments. This requires building new capacity at central government level to cope with these new functions, which cover a large area of sectors. Impact of decentralisation on the central government are often underestimated. Failing to take full measure of this issue may be detrimental to the reforms, slowing down or modifying the reform process (*Ibid.*).

Integrating local government

In Kerala, integrated Local Self Government Department has been formed by integrating 5 departments, viz., Panchayats, Urban Affairs, Rural Development, Town Planning and Engineering departments, so as to ensure better coordination; strengthen local government system and ensure better service delivery. Similar measures can be undertaken in other states to avoid overlapping, ensure coordination and thereby strengthen local government.

Accountability

Accountability of local governments can ensure that the socio-economic issues are properly addressed. It is important that local government adheres to appropriate safeguards to ensure that it serves the public interest with integrity and thus local governments should be accountable to its electorate (Shah & Shah, 2006). Accountability is promoted through various ways: local government should abide by the citizens' right to know; and performance reports of local governments should be available in public domain (*Ibid.*). In addition, accountability of responsiveness of panchayati raj and municipality can be ensured by conducting periodic elections to the PRIs and ULBs and promoting regular social audits.

Capacitating local governments

In order for the decentralised mechanisms to function effectively, it is important that the elected representatives at the local level are capacitated enough to play the role expected out of them. It is important that the elected representatives of local government have the required economic, political and administrative capacities (OECD, 2019). Without such capacities, the elected representatives of local government will not be able to deliver the responsibilities assigned to them.

Proper devolution of functions, finance and functionaries

One of the major challenges that impact effective decentralisation or the functioning of local governments is the actual devolution of functions, finance and functionaries in practice, though it all exists in paper in terms of Acts, legislations and policies. Mostly, the local governments rely on the funds tied to various schemes. Though local bodies can engage in generating their own revenues, not all are engaged in generating own revenues. As observed by Alok (2006), the various dimensions of decentralisation, viz., legislative, political, fiscal and administrative are interwoven and have to be addressed simultaneously.

Citizens' participation

Decentralisation has the potential to support and expand citizens' participation by bringing government closer to citizens and by making government more easily accessible (OECD, 2019, p. 10). Local governments become more responsive to the needs of the citizens and take preferences into account in determining the type of services to be provided, the level of resources required, and the optimal means of ensuring effective delivery (Robinson, 2007).

Moreover, when there is participation of citizens in the local governance, there is more scope for addressing the socio-economic concerns of the people. For instance, in Kerala, a prominent social movement called Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad – People's Science Movement, played a crucial role in shaping and implementing the People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning in the late 1990s (Robinson, 2007b.). To this day, citizens of Kerala seem to have wider participation in the local development agenda, because of which decentralisation measures of Kerala seems to be quite strong.

On the whole, to ensure smooth functioning of the decentralised units, it is not sufficient to just bring about the central legislation and make the states too come up with conformity Acts. It is equally important that enabling environment is created for the local governments, so that they engage in prompt implementation. Thus, to create such enabling environment, the central governments can encourage the state governments through an incentive or reward structure (Alok, *ibid.*). Such measure is visible in the efforts of the central government, wherein, every year on 24 April, which is regarded ‘panchayati raj day’, awards are given to best performing panchayats, gram sabhas and states that create such enabling environments for panchayats.

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. Explain how poverty alleviation measures have been undertaken by local governments.

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2. Discuss some of the challenges faced by the local governments.

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3. How can the maladies plaguing local governments be addressed?

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5.7 CONCLUSION

As noted by Robinson (2007), to make the most of decentralisation, it is not sufficient to ensure participation and accountability alone. In addition, it is important that attention is laid on political factors viz. commitment, leadership and mobilisation, institutional arrangements, financial resources, technical and managerial capacity. In addition, measuring and monitoring of performance of decentralised forms and roles of elected representatives is needed so that real gains are produced out of the decentralised mechanism, in terms of improved access and quality of services. In this Unit, we learnt about decentralisation mechanism and examined how effective decentralisation of rural and urban governments can lead to effective implementation of socio-economic programmes and schemes. In this process, there are various challenges that are faced by decentralised units and such challenges need to be overcome by addressing governance issues.

5.8 GLOSSARY

Deconcentration: It refers to the transfer of certain planning, financing and management tasks to local units of central agencies, without any inherent transfer of authority.

Delegation: It refers to the transferring of responsibility for decision making and administration of public functions to other organisations that have semi-independent authority, and though not wholly controlled by the central government, are accountable to it.

Devolution: It is the strongest featured form of decentralisation, that results in the transfer of powers, functions and finances to the local government in a way that the local government would be accountable to its voters rather than to the central or state governments.

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5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check your Progress 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Decentralisation is the transfer of political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities to locally elected bodies in urban and rural areas, and the empowerment of communities to exert control over these bodies.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- While political decentralisation focuses on transfer of powers from central to local authorities, administrative decentralisation focuses on transition of functional responsibilities from central to local governments and fiscal decentralisation aims at transforming financial relations between different levels of government.

3. Your answer should include the following points:

- Article 243 G and 243 W of the Constitution discusses the powers and functions of rural and urban local governments.

- In the Eleventh Schedule, some of the socio-economic functions assigned for panchayats include drinking water, rural housing, poverty alleviation, education, women and child development, etc.
- Similarly, functions enlisted for the municipalities in the Twelfth schedule include planning for economic and social development, safeguarding interest of weaker sections, slum improvement, etc.

Check your Progress 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Land distribution, sharecropper programme, popular mobilisation programmes are some of the measures taken by panchayats in West Bengal to promote agriculture and reduce poverty.
- On the other hand, in Madhya Pradesh, measures were taken to focus on development of both rural and urban areas across the states to prevent urbanisation and create employment opportunity at the local level.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Some of the key challenges faced by both the rural and urban local bodies include inadequate devolution of functions, finances and functionaries; domination by rural elites, overlap of functions, rigid bureaucracies, etc.

3. Your answer should include the following points:

- The various challenges faced by decentralised units can be addressed by focussing on governance issues and undertaking various measures such as relaxing central control; ensuring accountability, integrating local governments, capacitating local governments and promoting citizens' participation.

UNIT 6 CITIZEN-CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION*

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Concept of Citizen-Centric Administration in India
- 6.3 Initiatives towards Citizen-Centric Administration in India
- 6.4 Barriers to Citizen-Centric Administration in India
- 6.5 Citizen-Centric Administration and Socio-economic Development
- 6.6 Conclusion
- 6.7 Glossary
- 6.8 References
- 6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of citizen-centric administration;
- Discuss the measures taken by Indian government towards citizen-centric administration;
- Examine the barriers to citizen-centric administration; and
- Describe the relationship between citizen-centric administration and socio-economic development.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become top priority for all the democratic governments. Refining governance and administration through pro-active service delivery and citizen-centric administration are the keys for sustainable socio-economic development. Citizen-centric administration is intricately linked with good governance. Accomplishment of any government programme rests on the response of the targeted beneficiaries. The active engagement and participation of citizens in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation will bridge the gap between administration and masses. It will make the administration more responsive to the needs of people and grassroots realities.

Moreover, for the citizens, good governance means quick and equitable access to government services. Citizens are less concerned about different concepts and structures of government, and more with effective socio-economic development. Hence, bringing the citizens at the centre of socio-economic development has attained larger significance around the world. Liberalisation and globalisation have altered the context and content

* *Contributed* by Dr. Daisy Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Rajasthan University, Jaipur.

of governance. Growing predominance of market economy has started giving greater emphasis on citizens' satisfaction. Growth of New Public Management (NPM) initiatives focuses to serve the citizens as clients and customers through institutionalisation of integrated service delivery. NPM has viewed the traditional governance strategies, as too detached from citizens. The traditional strategies, in NPM perspective, could not connect with and respond to the citizens' needs. In order to make government more efficient and more responsive, NPM propagates a change in government's attitude towards citizens. This puts 'citizens first' in governance.

Ever-growing expansion of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has further paved the way for 'citizen-focused' government. Moreover, the economic crisis of 2008 and thereafter has brought the question of 'citizen centricity' on the table of policy makers. People are demanding that governments should work for the larger interest of the people and not only a few. The world is witnessing increased expectations with regard to more government to citizen connectivity. Policy makers are more concerned about lessening the distrust of people in the government and building support system through active citizen-centric measures. Thus, citizen-centric administration is of great importance for any country's socio-economic development. Its importance is even more for an emerging economy like India, where diverse socio-economic needs require citizen-centric measures in order to have efficient and effective service delivery. In this Unit, we will try to understand the need, scope and importance of citizen-centric administration in the socio-economic development of the country.

6.2 CONCEPT OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

The concept of citizen-centric administration is intertwined with concept of good governance. Kautilya in his treatise *Arthashastra* explained the qualities of the king of a well-administered State. He said "*in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself, he does not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he considers as good*". Hence, any administration with a welfare approach has to take citizens into consideration and make optimum efforts to provide effective and efficient service delivery to them. Citizen-centric administration indicates an administration that is effective, efficient, sensitive, participative, transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of the people.

Modern States are Welfare States. Along with maintenance of law and order, they are more concerned with socio-economic development of the people, especially the poor. States can be evaluated for its governance on the basis of satisfaction it provides to its citizens. As a result, the voice of citizens need to be heard in governance. Hence, we can say that citizens are at the core of good governance. Every democratic and Welfare State incorporates the ethos of service to the citizens. It must adhere to and promote ethics i.e., integrity and transparency. It ensures equity amongst the citizens and has empathy for weaker sections of the society.

Moreover, any State which wants to qualify for good governance must ensure efficiency, which is speedy and effective delivery of services. So, the attributes of good governance like rule of law, accountable, transparent and responsive administration, equitable and inclusive growth, effective and efficient service delivery, participatory and consensus-oriented governance are inextricably linked with citizen-centric administration.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) Order, which constituted the second Administrative Reforms Commission expands the concept of “citizen-centric administration” with *five* major components, which are: i) accountable and transparent government, ii) result-oriented administration, iii) citizen-centric decision making, iv) user groups in decision-making, and v) freedom of information. In a broader sense, citizen-centric administration is not only concerned with citizen-oriented service and improved policy delivery, but it gives larger role to the citizens.

It makes citizens more informed and focuses on citizen-designed policy decisions that can meet the needs and aspirations of its people. ‘Individualisation’ of policy and service delivery is highest form of citizen-centric administration. It includes integrating services for citizens, discovering their needs and preferences, engaging citizens in policy and service design and improving public sector capability. So, in citizen-centric administration, needs of citizens are really important. While designing, delivering, implementing and evaluating public policies, needs of people are thoroughly considered. People can be directly involved in policy formulation as well as decision making or their feedback on evaluation of services can be recorded. “People centricity” is main theme of citizen-centric administration in all types of policy making and service design.

6.3 INITIATIVES TOWARDS CITIZEN-CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

There has been a continuous demand for bringing reforms in administration and bridging the gap between citizens and administration. With the socio-economic growth in the country, expectations for better/improved service delivery have risen. Government is making the efforts for efficient public service delivery system. LPG Model, which government adopted in 1990s and which resulted in liberalisation of the economy has further boosted this demand. Government has brought a number of reforms to bring administration closer to the people. It includes Right to Services Act, Right to Information Act, Citizen’s Charters, Institutional Reforms, e-governance, redressal mechanism for citizens’ grievances etc. Let us discuss some of these:

Citizen’s Charter

A Citizen’s Charter is an important mechanism of citizen-centric administration. It connotes the commitment of the organisation to transparency and accountability, quality and time-frame of service delivery and grievance redress mechanism. The Citizen’s Charter scheme in its present form was first launched in 1991 in the UK. In 1998, it was re-launched and rechristened as ‘Service First’. In India, advancements in

economy and literacy led to increased voices for effective service delivery and responsive administration. As a result, 'Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government' was adopted at the Centre and state governments' levels in a Conference of Chief Ministers held on 24 May, 1997 in New Delhi.

It was decided that Central and state governments will frame Citizen's Charters, initially with those sectors that have a large public interface e.g., Public Distribution Systems, Railways, Telecom, and Posts etc. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) was authorized to initiate the task of formulating, coordinating and operationalising Citizen's Charters. The Charters included the following elements:

- i) Vision and Mission Statement;
- ii) Details of business transacted by the organisation;
- iii) Details of clients;
- iv) Details of services provided to each client group;
- v) Details of grievance redress mechanism and how to access it; and
- vi) Expectations from the clients.

Although India has adopted this model of Citizen's Charters from UK, it has an added element of expectations from the clients' to confirm that the Citizen's Charters meet the desires of the users. DARPG launched a comprehensive website of Citizen's Charter in Government of India on 31st May, 2002. It comprises the Citizen's Charters of various Central Government Ministries, Departments and Organisations along with their data and links.

As on August, 2021, there were 98 Central Government's Citizen's Charters, 25 State Government's Citizen's Charters, 110 Citizen's Charters of Central Nodal Officers and 31 of State Nodal Officers. All departments with Citizen's Charters are instructed to advertise their Charters through print and electronic media and awareness campaigns.

The DARPG has constituted various evaluation committees from time to time to know the shortcomings of Citizen's Charters in India and work upon them. In these studies, it was found that in majority of departments, Citizen's Charters were made without any consultative process nor were they given adequate publicity. Funds scarcity for awareness generation for their publicity and staff's orientation on various components of the Charter was also a debatable issue. To overcome these issues, the DARPG has worked immensely. To create awareness, it brought out a Compendium on Citizen's Charters in Government of India in 2003. It provides operative standards and the public grievance redress mechanism of the Charters.

It provides all the essential details of nodal officers for Citizen's Charters in all the Central government institutions like the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address etc., along with the list of Website addresses of concerned Ministry/ Department/ Organisation. From time to time, the DARPG organises Regional Seminars and Capacity Building Workshops for awareness generation. Physical manifestation of Citizen's Charters in

the form of Department-Specific Workshops Information and Facilitation Counters (IFCs) also known as ‘May I Help You’/ Inquiry Counters have also been created. They act as the nodal point for redress of public grievances.

So, one can say that despite a few lacunae, Citizen’s Charters have become essential tools for responsive administration. The Citizen’s Charters is a mechanism, which pursues to make an organisation transparent, accountable and citizen-friendly. Even if these promises are not enforceable in a court of law, they have moral authority. Government should ensure for a suitable compensatory/remedial mechanism in case any organisation does not fulfill its promises. The Citizen’s Charters will ensure that services are demand driven. It will raise quality, increase choice, secure better value and extend accountability and facilitate citizen-centric administration.

Right to Information Act

Indian government brought in The Right to Information (RTI) Act in 2005. It aimed at creating informed citizens who can ensure transparent and accountable administration. RTI is a powerful tool to check corruption and ensure effective, efficient and citizen-centric service delivery. Informed citizens can better avail their rights and fulfill their duties. It helps them in being informed about the activities of the government and offers legal access to inspection of work, documents and records. They can get notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records. Citizens can also take certified samples of material held by the public authority or held under the control of the public authority.

Thus, RTI helps in empowering citizenry who can now ask for timely response to their requests. In such cases, government cannot overlook their demands and work in isolation. It makes the government use its authority for the welfare of the masses and not a few people. It has helped citizens to highlight the gaps and shortcomings in the public service delivery system. As a result, government has to take corrective actions for improving the service delivery. It makes the government cautious for future actions too. Hence, it makes administration accountable to the citizens. Since RTI has uncovered so many corruption cases, the government authorities give due regard to rules and regulations and welfare of masses at large. Right to Information Act (RTI) is now online and is available on mobile also. So, one can say that RTI has acted as a revolutionary tool for the citizen-centric administration.

Right to Service Act

Right to Service Act is a powerful tool in the hands of Indian citizens to avoid any corruption, delay or harassment in effective service delivery. This Act ensures a time bound delivery of certain public services to Indian citizens through different statutory laws and provisions. In case the officers are not able to deliver the requested services within the stipulated time period, it provides the grievance redressal mechanism that could book such officers. Hence, the Act promotes transparency and provides accountability. At present, 20 states in India have implemented this Act to ensure quality services to their citizens. Madhya Pradesh was the first state to enforce the Right to Service Act on 18th August 2010. Bihar was the second state to implement it on 25th July 2011 for some basic services like issuing of birth

certificate, ration card, election card, Voters Identification Document or ID card copy of land records etc.

There are different penalties for failure of providing public services within the said period. If the designated public officer doesn't provide the required services within the said period, the applicant can go to the first appellate authority and then the second appellate authority. The authority has the right to penalize the erring officer. Even the appellate officer can be penalized if he or she fails to do the duty within the stated time period. Central government had proposed Citizen's Charter and Grievance Redressal Bill 2011 for upholding the rights of citizens, the time bound delivery of goods and services and the redressal of their grievances on the lines of this Act. However, it has still not been passed by the Parliament. Right to Service Act ensures that government offices offer the service delivery in an efficient, effective and transparent manner, save the time and energy of the citizens, and provide for responsive administration.

Decentralisation

Economic development and increased literacy rate have led to enhanced awareness in citizens. So, there have been increased demands for service delivery and good governance. As a result, Government of India adopted Panchayati Raj system in 1993, which brought government at the door steps of the people. These Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were given the power to formulate their development plans, prepare their budget, invoke their power of taxation and work on a number of items mentioned in the 11th and 12th Schedules. Panchayati Raj system has reduced the gap between government and people and has had a positive impact on the overall public service delivery.

Social audit undertaken by PRIs helps in the improvement of citizen-centric administration. It gives power to the citizens to discuss the important issues and take corrective measures in case of any discrepancies. Decentralisation helps in quick and fast delivery of services, fast solution of issues and grievances and monitoring of public service delivery. PRIs ensure high level of citizens' participation and accountability through social audit and other institutions like Gram Sabha. Local representatives can take better cognizance of the problems of their area and can take better decisions within minimum time. Hence, it improves the service delivery and also ensures that the matters related with the citizens and their immediate interests are dealt with urgently. Decentralisation is a major catalyst of citizen-centric administration.

National e-governance Initiatives in India

e-governance is a miracle tool for citizen-centric administration. It creates a direct link between the citizens and the administration thereby removing all the middle persons making the administration transparent and accountable. In order to improve the efficiency and transparency of the administration, Indian government launched National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006. Its purpose was to make the services available to all the citizens online and ensure that all citizens have an equal access to them.

NeGP has a 3 tier system on the requisite level of ownership- Central Mission Mode Projects (CMMPs), State Mission Mode Projects (SMMPs) and Integrated Mission Mode Projects (IMMPs). The delineation has been done on the stakeholders or implementing agency basis and the Constitutional status of the domain. For example, Income Tax, Passport, Visa and Immigration are Central Subjects, as per the Indian Constitution they have been kept under Central Mission Mode Project or MMP. Likewise, subjects like Agriculture, Police and Land Records are state subjects, so these domains have been kept under state MMP. The domains which are in Concurrent List are kept under Integrated MMP. Thus, the whole NeGP work has been broken into three sets of MMPs to ensure its successful implementation and monitoring. Central Mission Mode Projects (CMMPs) are taken up by different ministries and agencies of the Central Government. At present, there are 11 Central Mission Mode Projects.

State Mission Mode Projects are the responsibility of the departments and institutions of state government. The governments in the states and its agencies have undertaken 13 mission mode projects. Integrated MMPs act as catalysts to Central and state MMPs. They include e-Courts, e-Procurements, e-Biz and Common Service Centres. Some successful mission mode projects are Passport Mission Mode Project, MCA 21, Pensions Mission Mode Project, Agriculture Mission Mode Project, Unique Identification (Aadhar) Mission Mode Project (UIDMMP), Common Service Centres and National Portal of India. These MMPs have resulted in a very fast and efficient service delivery system in their respective areas. Ministry of External Affairs Passport Seva Project ensures fast service delivery to its citizens for availing the passport by changing various processes and upgrading new technology. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs launched “MCA21” project with the purpose of developing a secure portal for all registry related services like registration of company filing of different documents etc., in ‘anytime and anywhere’ mode.

UID project also known as the Unique Identification project for Aadhar was launched with the purpose of providing efficient delivery of welfare services to the citizens. Common service centres act as one-stop shops for availing different government services. It is very helpful especially in the rural areas to save on time, costs and efforts of the people for service delivery of essential services. Road Transport Mission Mode Project has led to the computerisation of thousands of road transport officers of the country with the standard software of Sarathi and Vahan. Now, citizens can avail different services from their own place of convenience and at the time most suitable to them.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Grievance redressal system is the backbone of citizen-centric administration. If administration fails to deliver the effective services, then the citizens should be able to take recourse to a mechanism to have their grievances redressed. Although a citizen can complain to any concerned ministry with regard to any unattended service, for the purpose of grievance redressal system, primarily *two* designated nodal agencies are working:

1. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions; and
2. Directorate of Public Grievances, Cabinet Secretariat.

Apart from these two, there are several other Constitutional and statutory institutions, which look into complaints filed by citizens like Central Vigilance Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Lokpal, Lokayuktas, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Tribunals etc.

Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) assisted a quantum shift in Online Government Service delivery across the country. A Computerised Public Grievances Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) was installed by it. This aims to supplement government's efforts at revamping citizen-centric administration and public service delivery. This online Public Grievance Redress Mechanism, ushered in e-Governance and Digital India and provided e-Governance based citizen-centric end-to-end online services. This move has strengthened the people's belief in just and fair administration. CPGRAMS is receiving lakhs of grievances each year.

Intensive monitoring has further helped in increasing the disposal rate significantly. Presently, it is more than the rate of receipt of grievances. All grievances are given unique registration number. They can be tracked with the help of this number. A timeline of two months has been recommended for disposal of grievances. In case it is not disposed off in the stipulated period, an interim reply with reasons for delay has to be provided. So, one can see that governance systems in India are working hard to ensure citizen-centric administration through pro-active public grievance redressal system.

Social Audit

Social audit is another powerful tool for citizen-centric administration. It is a tool to measure, understand, verify and report on the social and ethical performance of any organisation. It provides voice to the marginalised sections of the stakeholders. It is mainly used for enhancing the accountability and transparency of local governments. Social audit helps in community participation and encourages democracy at the grassroots level. Thus, it trains the local community for participatory planning. It is a powerful tool to create awareness among the beneficiaries through which they assess the physical and financial gaps between the desired and actual results.

All the planning and implementation of such plans of local government bodies is covered under social audit. Beneficiaries can ask for budget allocation, certificates issued by local bodies, accounts, list of beneficiaries, muster rolls, bills etc., for verification. In social audit, social development monitoring is further used to enhance transparency and inclusiveness. It is a periodic observation by the disadvantaged groups who are the target beneficiaries of any plan. Gram Sabha is the main agency to carry out the social audit of the development works of PRIs. Social audits have been successfully used under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). There should be more

effective, regular and continuous social audit so that no administration can take the citizens lightly and does work as per the needs, requirements, aspirations and wishes of the citizens. If social audits are carried out regularly then administration will try to improve its efficiency and effectiveness and serve the larger public interest.

Sevottam Model for Citizen-Centricity

Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) suggested to adopt Seven Step Model for citizen-centricity, which will help in improving public service delivery. Accepting these recommendations, the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions conceived the Sevottam Model in 2006. Its literal meaning is “Service Excellence”.

The Model represents the change in attitude within the Government, from administration towards creating more enabling environment in public service delivery. Sevottam Model, now regarded as a standard model for providing services in citizen-centric governance, is a quality management framework applicable to public service delivery organisations. It provides a framework for organisations to assess and improve the service delivery and its quality. It involves the following 7 steps:

- i) Define all services which you use to provide and identify your clients;
- ii) Set standards and norms for each service;
- iii) Develop capability to meet the set standards;
- iv) Perform to achieve the standards;
- v) Monitor performance against the set standards;
- vi) Evaluate the impact through an independent mechanism; and
- vii) Continuous improvement based on monitoring and evaluation results.

The Sevottam Framework is enabled through following *three* modules. They are:

- Citizen’s Charters.
- Public Grievance Mechanism.
- Service Delivery Capability.

Initially, Sevottam Framework was started from April 2009 to June 2010 in ten departments of the government having large public interface. These were Department of Post, Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Railways, and Passport Office, Pensions, Food Processing, Corporate Affairs, Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools and Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). Later, Sevottam Framework has been hurred as a certification scheme. It offers the award of the Sevottam Symbol of Excellence to such public service organisations that implement the seven steps of Sevottam Model.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) developed the standard, known as IS 15700:2005, based on the objectives of Sevottam. It offers an organised way to recognise weaknesses in specific areas and correct them through systemic

changes and process reengineering. India is among the first countries in the world to have a quality standard for public service delivery. For the implementation of Sevottam Quality Management System and its Capability Building, a scheme was initiated during the 12th Five Year Plan 2012-2017. It aimed at strengthening of State Administrative Training Institutes and Central Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs/CTIs) initially in 10 states. This Scheme is still going on.

Recent Initiatives

Government of India is working on the motto 'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government'. So, it is concentrating on "Citizen-First" mantra in most matters of governance. It aims to bring the government closer to citizens in order to make them active participants in the governance process. Simplification of procedures and processes in the government is fundamental for good governance, as it makes the entire system transparent and faster. With this objective, Indian Government has decided to scrap 1,500 obsolete rules and started the self-certification process etc. Central government has identified *four* critical areas for citizen-centric reforms in various sectors:

- Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System;
- Ease of doing business reform;
- Urban local body/ utility reforms; and
- Power sector reforms.

A deadline of 15 February, 2021 was fixed for implementation of these reforms. The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has announced that the states who will implement these citizen-centric reforms will be given special incentives. Such states will get the facility of additional borrowing equivalent to 0.25 per cent of their Gross States Domestic Product (GSDP) for completing each reform. Moreover, on completion of all the four reforms, additional borrowings of up to Rs.2.14 lakh crore is available to the state. It will motivate the states to carry out reforms in various citizen-centric areas. The states who complete three out of the four reforms will get additional funds assistance of Rs.2, 000 crore under the "Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure". So, one can understand that future of citizen-centric administration in India is very promising.

At the time of independence, Indian administration had a leviathan task of nation building and socio-economic development of the country. Poverty alleviation, increasing literacy, infrastructure building were the main priorities in front of newly developing country. It required goal-oriented and result-oriented development administration. Such an administration is closer to the people, sensitive to their needs and responsive to their demands. But even after seven decades of independence, Indian administration has not fully imbibed the citizen-centric orientation. Though some efforts have been made, but administration in India is normally perceived to be unresponsive, insensitive, corrupt and apathetic to the needs of people, especially the vulnerable sections of the society. Rigidities of procedures, over-centralisation of powers, routine and repetitive work, highly hierarchical and top-down working, red tapism and divorce of authority from accountability have created a trust deficit in Indian administration.

Indian administration has somehow valued procedures over outcomes, and form over substance. It has led to lack of accountability and responsiveness of the administration and facilitated abuse of authority. As a result, people couldn't get effective service delivery. People are dissatisfied even with essential services like the Public Distribution System (PDS), hospitals as well as electricity and water supplies. Majority of departments lacked any effective complaint redressal systems. There was a low level of awareness amongst the masses regarding such mechanisms. Moreover, public sector employee's behaviour was also a matter of concern. They were not sensitive to the needs of the people. Let us now take a look at the hurdles or barriers, which have prevented the governance from becoming citizen-centric.

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. What do you understand by citizen-centric administration?

.....

2. Explain the initiatives towards citizen-centric administration in India.

.....

6.4 BARRIERS TO CITIZEN-CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

There are a number of political, social, institutional and behavioural reasons for lack of strong citizen-centric governance in India. The deficiency in the system, loopholes in the laws and lack of awareness on the part of citizens further aggravate the situation. Some of these factors are as follows:

Attitudinal Problems of the Civil Servants

Indian Civil Services and administration are often criticized for being too rigid, inward-looking and self-perpetuating. They are indifferent and insensitive to the needs of people. Given massive authority, they feel themselves as the bosses rather than servants of the society. Due to prevailing poverty, illiteracy, etc., a culture of exaggerated deference to authority has become the norm. This has further widened the gap between administrators and society.

Lack of Accountability

Misuse of authority is often cited as a result of lack of accountability within the system. They often hide behind the mask of political responsibility. Rarely any disciplinary proceedings get initiated against offending civil servants. Imposition of penalties is even rarer. Authority is fully linked with matching responsibility and accountability. Cumbersome disciplinary

procedures provide ample chance for apathy towards a rightful conduct. Safeguards provided to them are often misused. Performance evaluation systems are not efficient and hence facilitate mediocracy.

Red Tapism

Written rules and regulations provide the base for impartial bureaucracy. It is important for good governance that they adhere to such rules. But, it is also equally important to acknowledge that rules and procedures don't become cumbersome and derail the purpose of administration, which is service of the people. In India, civil servants often become overly preoccupied with rules and procedures and view these as an end in themselves. The rules are used as an excuse for delay of work and corruption.

Low levels of Awareness of the Rights and Duties of Citizens

When citizens are not aware about their rights, they cannot hold administration accountable to them. When they are not aware of their responsibilities, they infringe on the freedom and rights of other citizens. Hence, good governance needs vigilant citizenry, fully aware of its rights as well its duties. Indian citizens are very low on this awareness. They hardly know their rights, different working procedures of the departments, redressal mechanism etc. So, they are not fully able to ensure that officials as well as other citizens, discharge their duties effectively and honestly.

Ineffective implementation of Laws and Rules

India has one of the best legal systems in the world. Indian Constitution directs the policy makers to ensure a just and welfare society in India. Moreover, there are different legislations to protect the rights of Indian people, especially the weaker sections like women, disabled, SCs and STs etc. However, implementation of these laws is very weak. Justice often surrenders to cumbersome procedures and loopholes in implementation. Weak institutional structure lacks the capacity and resources for better implementation of laws. This also erodes the trust of the people in administration.

6.5 CITIZEN-CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recent developments like simplification of IT Returns, one-stop window systems for corporates, RTI, use of ICT and facilitation of e-governance in various sectors of economy, modifications in the outdated laws through law commission and amendments, etc., confirm that government is committed to mould the administration to the demands of the 21st century, which holds citizens at its core of socio-economic development. These citizen-centric measures have brought efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, transparency and participation in the administration. This has boosted the development of the society and economy as a whole. Citizens who were hitherto neglected in the development process, especially poor and vulnerable sections of the society have witnessed ease of access to various public services. This has facilitated mainstreaming of underprivileged sections of the society. When administration serves the needs of people and deliver the services accordingly, it increases satisfaction and reduces

cost. The government working with citizen-centric approach creates huge economic value and empowers citizens across all walks of life.

Citizen-centric administration provides access to information, integrates various systems and services between government and citizens. Thus, it empowers and enhances citizen's social, environmental and economic values. Citizen-centric programmes help in solving various problems persisting in the society. For example, Jan Dhan Yojana of the government has not only provided financial inclusion to non-banked people, but has also facilitated banking, pension, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and insurance (Atal Pension Yojana) facilities to common citizens. This was made possible only when government could comprehend the needs of poor people and think and plan from their perspectives.

Aadhaar, is one of the examples of the citizen-centric measures, which has facilitated speedy service delivery to the citizens with ease of access. It has brought huge number of users on a common digital platform. The data generated through Aadhaar-based identification is used by government for providing various services like healthcare programme under Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Scheme, COVID vaccination etc., making it accessible to all citizens. Citizen-centric measures can encourage economic growth in many other ways. Fewer regulatory and tax barriers have helped in promoting business environment in the country. This has increased India's global ranking in 'Ease of Doing Business' and attracted FDI. So, this way citizen-centric measures encourage business creation and improve efficiency.

Various programmes of the government have helped in curbing the middlemen and providing services directly to citizens. This has especially helped the disadvantaged sections of the society. For example, Mobile Seva provides different government services through mobile phone. Now citizens need not be at the mercy of different officers and middlemen for availing their basic services. The m-App store has over 200 live applications. These can be used to avail numerous government services. Computerisation of land records helps the landowners to get digital and updated copies of their property's documents. This has reduced corruption and bribery to some extent.

In the citizen-centric measures, various state governments' initiatives also find a special mention. *e- Seva* of Andhra Pradesh enables payment of utility bills, issuance of certificates, licenses and permits online. It connects citizens directly to various government departments and provides online information at the point of service delivery. *Khajane* Project of Karnataka has digitalized the entire state treasury. *FRIENDS* (Fast, Reliable, Instant and Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services) is a citizen-centric programme of Kerala. It is a single-window facility to pay all financial dues to the state including taxes. *Lokvani* of Uttar Pradesh is another single-window solution for citizens. It handles all grievances, land record maintenance and also provides various essential services. *SUWIDHA* (Single User-friendly Window Disposal and Helpline for Applicants) project of Punjab has also facilitated ease of access to essential government services.

e-Mitra Project in Rajasthan also provides maximum services of state government departments through Lokmitra-Janmitra Centers/Kiosks. MCA 21 is the flagship e-governance initiative of the Ministry of Company Affairs. It provides easy and secure online access to all registry related services to the companies and business firms. The e-Procurement Project in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat has reduced the time and cost of doing business for both vendors and government. Other programmes like the *Sakala* experiment in Karnataka and Rajasthan Guaranteed Delivery of Public Services (RGDPS) Act 2011, have adopted a bottom-up approach and involved the beneficiaries for timely delivery of services. Direct Benefit Transfer scheme has cut down the middle people and corruption. Government now directly transfers the subsidies in beneficiaries' bank accounts. This has further strengthened the citizens.

The government has adopted a citizen-centric approach, which takes special care of the disadvantaged sections of the society. For example, for the empowerment of women in economic field, government has come up with various women-centric plans in entrepreneurship. Mahila-e-Haat launched in 2016 is a citizen-centric model for the empowerment of marginalised women. It facilitates direct contact between the vendors and buyers and helps the aspiring women entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services. *Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)* imparts skills related to employability and entrepreneurship and empowers them for their contribution to the society and economy. In this way, citizen-centric measures help in socio-economic development of the country, providing satisfaction and empowerment to the people.

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. Examine the hindrances to citizen-centric Indian administration.
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 2. Bring out the relationship between citizen-centric administration and socio-economic development.
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6.6 CONCLUSION

India being a developing country has to deal with massive challenge of poverty alleviation, illiteracy, infrastructure building etc. It needs to be a goal-oriented, and result-oriented development administration. This administration should bring development closer to the people, so that they can contribute their optimum potential in nation building. But even after 75 years of Independence the mind-set of bureaucracy is still colonial.

This rule-oriented approach which focuses more on means than ends is not in line with the requirements of modern economy and its citizens. It has been felt that rules of 19th century would not work in 21st century India. Hence, government has started taking various citizen-centric measures like RTI, use of ICT in governance, Goods and Services Tax or GST and facilitation of e-governance in rural India etc. Still there is a long way to go. Government needs to have a sound legal framework in sync with today's requirements. It needs to update the existing laws and enact new laws as per the emerging needs of the society. Indian Penal Code and Police Act need to be amended. For citizen-centric administration, country needs a robust institutional mechanism for enforcing citizens' rights and promotion of the same.

India needs to have a pro-active stand against corrupt and erring officials. The corrupt or inefficient bureaucrats should be identified and sent home through service rules and guidelines. Administration should adopt more participatory and technology driven approach so that it can enhance the transparency and make civil servants accountable to people. Citizen's charter should be further elaborated and serve as instruments for citizen-centric decision-making. We can conclude that Indian administration has made considerable strides in citizen-centric administration. It needs further promotion and encouragement with massive awareness building for the same. Apart from government, non-state actors like NGOs, Trusts, Civil Society Organisations and Private Corporates should also come to the forefront to advance the cause of citizens.

6.7 GLOSSARY

Administrative Reforms: It is a deliberated change in the structure and procedures of any public institution to improve its economy, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of services, as well as quality of workforce. These can be personnel, financial or organisational. Normally, these are brought about on the recommendations of Administrative Reforms Commission.

Citizen's Charter: It is a written document in which an organisation spells out its voluntary commitment towards standard, quality and time-frame of service delivery along with grievance redress system. It enhances transparency and accountability in the administration.

e-government: It is the application of Information and Communication Technology to government procedures and functions in order to provide various government services and information online.

Governance: It means structures and decision-making processes by which a State carries out its affairs in such a manner that it ensures transparency, accountability, rule of law, equity and participation.

Individualisation of Policy: It is a concept that came up in the late 1980s to promote individual attention to certain sections and segments in policy that were hitherto neglected. The planner called for the need for specific focus on certain individual areas and people through systematic planning, be it women's empowerment, rural housing, adult literacy and so on.

New Public Management: New Public Management or NPM is an approach that strives for citizen-centric administration by de-bureaucratisation,

decentralisation and minimum government. It is based on market-orientation of public services and paves the way for privatisation.

Right to Information Act (RTI): RTI stands for Right to Information Act. It was implemented in 2005 and it calls for timely response to citizens' requests for government information from any government agency.

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6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Citizen-centric administration brings the citizens at the centre of socio-economic development.

- It ensures active engagement and participation of citizens in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.
- “People centricity” is main theme of citizen-centric administration in all sorts of policy making and service design.
- Citizen-centric administration indicates an administration that is effective, efficient, sensitive, participative, transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of the people.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- It bridges the gap between administration and masses.
- It makes the administration more responsive to the needs of people and realities of the grassroots.
- It provides quick and equitable access to government services.
- It lessens the distrust of people in the government and builds support system through active citizen-centric measures.
- Attributes of good governance like rule of law, accountable, transparent and responsive administration, equitable and inclusive growth, effective and efficient service delivery, participatory and consensus oriented governance are inextricably linked with citizen- centric administration.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Attitudinal problems of the civil servants.
- Lack of accountability.
- Red tapism.
- Low levels of awareness of the rights and duties of citizens.
- Ineffective implementation of laws and rules.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Recent developments like simplification of IT Returns, one-stop window systems for corporates, RTI, use of ICT and facilitation of e-governance in various sectors of economy, modifications in the outdated laws.
- They have brought efficiency, and facilitated mainstreaming of underprivileged sections of the society.
- Citizen-centric administration provides access to information, integrates various systems and services between government and citizens.
- Citizen-centric programmes help in solving various problems persisting in the society.
- Aadhaar, is one of the examples of the citizen-centric measures, which has facilitated speedy service delivery to the citizens with ease of access.
- Citizen-centric measures can encourage economic growth in many other ways. Fewer regulatory and tax barriers have helped

in promoting business environment in the country. This has led to uplift in India's global ranking in 'Ease of Doing Business' and attracted Foreign Direct Investment or FDI.

- Government's various programmes have helped in curbing the middlemen and providing services directly to citizens.
- Mobile Seva provides different government services through mobile phone.
- e- *Seva* of Andhra Pradesh enables payment of utility bills, issuance of certificates, licenses and permits online.
- *FRIENDS* (Fast, Reliable, Instant and Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services) is a citizen-centric programme of Kerala.
- *SUWIDHA* (Single User-friendly Window Disposal and Helpline for Applicants) project of Punjab also facilitated ease of access to essential government services.
- *e-Mitra* Project in Rajasthan also provides maximum services of state government departments through Lokmitra-Janmitra Centres/Kiosks.
- *MCA 21* is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- *e-Procurement* Project in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat has reduced the time and cost of doing business for both vendors and government.
- Mahila-e-Haat launched in 2016 is a citizen-centric model for the empowerment of marginalised women.

UNIT 7 TOWARDS SOCIAL CAPITAL: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL WELFARE CONCERNS*

Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Meaning and Types of Social Capital
- 7.3 Theories of Social Capital
- 7.4 Social Justice and Welfare State
- 7.5 Social Capital as a Response to Social Welfare Concerns
- 7.6 Conclusion
- 7.7 Glossary
- 7.8 References
- 7.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning, types and important theories of Social Capital;
- Understand the conceptual meaning of social justice and Welfare State; and
- Discuss the evolution of Social Capital as a response to social welfare concerns.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Welfare States are an important milestone in the progressive evolution of modern States. Welfare States, with a well-established network of public institutions play a key role in the promotion of socio-economic conditions of its citizens through extensive provisions of welfare measures. Globally, the modern Welfare States have developed a number of policy instruments to realign its distributional outcomes with the broader objectives of social justice.

Social justice concerns with fair distribution of goods and services within a society. Hence, social justice is treated as synonymous with distributive justice. Basically, social justice often refers to ideological or ethical concerns, leading to programmes that are developed to redistribute resources and alleviate human sufferings. Social policies in a Welfare State remain one of the most powerful tools to achieve the central objectives of social justice through the equitable distribution of resources in society.

*Contributed by Dr. Kannan Ambalam, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Public Administration and Development Management, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia.

However, the oil crises in the 1970s dramatically changed the socio-economic conditions in different countries across the world. The global economy experienced a number of critical challenges. These include slowing down of productivity, rising unemployment and inflation, growing competition among national economies and increasing foreign debt ratio. These challenges compelled the Welfare States to subject their social expenditures to much more stringent economic scrutiny.

As a consequence, many countries introduced a series of reform measures as a response to these unprecedented crises. These extraordinary conditions in public governance have significantly affected the Welfare States in the distribution of wealth in society and the process of achieving the basic goals of social justice. Throughout the world, the responsibility for the promotion of people's welfare was reassigned from the State to the individuals as a result of continued reduction of public spending on welfare measures. In these changing circumstances, the need for a new developmental framework was intensely felt to uphold social justice and empower people.

In this context, Social Capital has emerged as an alternative development paradigm. Social Capital, as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and the values that govern the interactions among people and contribute to socio-economic development. It is based on the notion that social relations, networks, norms and values greatly matter in the development of a society. Recently, Social Capital has been widely used to explain the dynamics of various economic and social outcomes, as it has become an appealing concept in developmental discourse.

Today, Social Capital is seen as being rooted in local communities. Also, it systematically incorporates socio-cultural factors that significantly influence the nature and direction of developmental process in a society. A growing number of empirical evidences show that Social Capital has immensely contributed to development. In this Unit, the meaning and types of Social Capital is discussed along with its different theories. Apart from analysing the conceptual meaning of social justice and Welfare State, this Unit examines the way Social Capital has emerged as an alternative development paradigm in response to the concerns of Welfare State.

7.2 MEANING AND TYPES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social Capital represents one of the most powerful metaphors in public governance. Social Capital is about the value of social networks, bonding similar individuals and bridging diverse people, with norms of trust and reciprocity. Today, Social Capital has been used to explain a wide range of socio-cultural phenomena that significantly determine the process of development.

The first documented use of the term Social Capital is attributed to Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916). Hanifan referred Social Capital as a property of communities that could be utilised to improve the well-being of people in the society. Social Capital started to be used more frequently in academia in the 1980s. However, it gained popularity and spread beyond academia during the last three decades. Today, it has become a familiar term in community development, business and politics.

Conceptualising Social Capital is a very difficult task because it remains as an abstract idea rather than a firmly tangible phenomenon. Social Capital does not have a clear and undisputed meaning. For this reason, despite voluminous literature, there is no single, universal and commonly accepted definition of Social Capital. Growing interest in recent years has fine-tuned the concept of Social Capital. Now, at least, there seems to be some agreement among the scholars on the conceptualisation of Social Capital and standard tools for its measurement.

Broadly, Social Capital is defined as a multidimensional phenomenon, which encompasses a number of social norms, values, beliefs, trusts, obligations, relationships, networks, friends, memberships, civic engagement, information flows, and institutions that foster cooperation and collective actions for mutual benefits. Now, it has been recognised that the traditional capital contribute only a part in the achievement of developmental process. The ways in which the social actors interact and organise themselves to achieve the core objectives of development are not fully taken into account. The missing link is Social Capital.

The term '*social*' in Social Capital refers to or implies that these resources are not personal assets; no single person owns them. These resources reside on the social structures and the networks of relationships. Similarly, the word '*capital*' in Social Capital indicates that Social Capital is productive in nature like other capitals including human or financial. Social Capital enables individuals to create value and achieve collective goals.

The commonalities of most definitions of Social Capital are that they focus on social relations that have productive benefits. The variety of definitions come from the highly context-specific nature of Social Capital, which is being considered as the glue that holds societies together, since it creates an elaborate structure of social relationships in which people participate and interact.

Types of Social Capital

Based on different characteristics and functions, Social Capital is classified into different groups:

Structural Social Capital

It is related to the pattern of structures and networks such as associations, clubs, cultural groups, and institutions supplemented by the rules and procedures that govern them. The objective and externally-observable structural Social Capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective action through social networks.

Cognitive Social Capital

It primarily consists of a set of shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals relating to trust, reciprocity, and cooperation. The subjective, intangible and cognitive Social Capital predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective action through shared values, social norms and attitudes.

Bonding Social Capital

It refers to the interaction among people who are very close. Bonding capital

is localised and found among people who live in the same or adjacent communities. It is in the nature of more inward-looking and protective close membership. Moreover, it mainly influences the creation and nurturing of community organisations.

Bridging Social Capital

It is more outward-looking and engaged in a civic way. It narrows the gap between different communities and exercises open membership. Bridging Social Capital is crucial for solving people's problems through encouraging individuals to know each other for building strong relationships, sharing information and mobilising resources.

Linking Social Capital

It refers to interactions and networks among individuals and groups who occupy different social positions and power. It reaches out to unlikely people in dissimilar situations. Also, it involves networks and interactions of a particular community with states or other agencies that are at the macro levels.

Horizontal Social Capital

It refers to lateral relations between people of similar status and power in a community. It operates through shared norms and values with diverse group of people. It serves to establish connection among community members through constructive civic engagement for the welfare of public.

Vertical Social Capital

It refers to relations and interaction among people of different hierarchy and unequal power. It operates through formal hierarchical structures. It establishes a link between citizens and community leaders as well as decision makers.

7.3 THEORIES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The conceptualisation of Social Capital is the biggest challenge facing proponents of the Social Capital theory. This problem largely stems from the fact that Social Capital is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with each dimension contributing to the meaning of Social Capital.

Bourdieu's Theory of Capital

Pierre Bourdieu has been an important contributor to the contemporary idea of Social Capital. He used the term Social Capital to describe the resources to which individuals have access as a result of their membership in groups. Social Capital is a virtual resource that is acquired by individuals or groups through the possession of "more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Therefore, Social Capital resides in the individual and is linked to social connections that a person can utilise for advancement.

Bourdieu saw Social Capital as a property of the individual, rather than the collective, derived primarily from one's social position and status in society. Social Capital enables a person to exert power on the group or individual who mobilises the resources. The relationships and interactions are important in accessing resources. Social Capital is not uniformly available

to members of a group, but available to those who provide efforts to acquire it by achieving positions of power and status, and by developing goodwill.

Coleman's Rational- Choice Approach to Social Capital

James Coleman proposed his concept of Social Capital in the context of the Rational Choice theory. Coleman termed Social Capital as a collective asset of the group, which is essentially residing in the social structure of relationships among people. Coleman saw Social Capital as a public good, where the actions of individuals benefit the whole.

For Coleman, individuals engage in social interactions, relationships and networks for as long as the benefits are available. This logic stems from the rational choice theory, which explains human behaviour through rationality. These actions are set in a particular social context accounting for not only the actions of individuals, but also the development of social organisation.

Social Capital, like other forms of capital, is productive and facilitates the achievement of certain ends that would be impossible to attain in its absence. Social Capital is valuable in facilitating certain actions. A unique nature of Social Capital is that unlike other forms of capital, Social Capital is inherent in the structure of relations among individuals. Social Capital comes through changes in relationships among persons that facilitate action. This means Social Capital is less tangible than physical or human capital. It exists in relations and interactions of individuals and groups.

Robert D. Putnam's Civic Perspective on Social Capital

Robert David Putnam's idea of Social Capital is that social networks contain value for individuals. Social Capital refers to 'features of social organisations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit'. Like physical and human capital, social interactions influence the productivity of individuals and groups. Physical capital remains in physical objects, human capital is a property of individuals and Social Capital essentially exists in relations among individuals through social structures and networks. The relations between individuals and their constant interactions form social networks, norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. These characteristics of social life revolve around building Social Capital. They allow the participants to act together more effectively to achieve collective goals.

Putnam treated Social Capital as a public good- the amount of participatory potential, civic orientation, and trust in others available to cities, states or nations. Social Capital is essentially the 'amount' of 'trust' available and is the main stock characterising the political culture of modern societies. Putnam follows Coleman's belief that Social Capital is a quality that can be a facilitator of interpersonal cooperation. Social Capital is more important for stability, effectiveness of governments and economic development than physical and human capital.

Ronald S. Burt's Network Approach to Social Capital

Working like Coleman in the Rational-Choice perspective, Ronald S. Burt proposed his concept of Social Capital in the structural theory of action. This theory assumes that an actor performing a social action can be a single person or a group pursuing individual goals to maximise their benefits. The

actor has specific resources that determine the frame in which the goals can be achieved. Similarly, the interests of the actor are determined by the surrounding social structure. Accordingly, the social action involves several components- the actor is the source of action, the resources are the conditions of action, and the motivation of the actor is the reason for an action.

Check Your Progress 1

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

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

1. Discuss the different types of Social Capital.

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2. Explain some of the important theories of Social Capital.

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7.4 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WELFARE STATE

Social Justice

Social justice is a normative concept centred on the notion of fairness and the principles of equality, equity, rights and participation. Social justice often refers to an ideological or ethical concern, leading to programmes that are developed to redistribute resources. While there is no consensus on the meaning and scope of social justice, it is commonly associated with the creation of a just society. There is generally no accepted definition of social justice. Though the contemporary understanding of this normative concept has its roots in political philosophy, different disciplines have contributed to its theoretical underpinnings.

Today, the notion of social justice is often linked with the idea of distribution of resources in a society. Yet, prevalent conceptions of distributive justice are divided between the material goods such as income and resources and the non-material goods such as rights, opportunities, power and self-respect. Generally, distributive justice is often closely linked to the concepts of human dignity, the common good and human rights.

Distributive justice refers to what society owes individuals in proportion to the individual's needs, the availability of resources and the society's responsibility to the common good. All individuals are entitled to equal access to the basic necessities for humane living. Most of the contemporary issues related to social justice have their direct roots in economic and political systems. Social justice is based on the principles of equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth and resources.

However, the implementation of social justice policies is not governed by any single principle. Throughout the world, governments are applying different criteria to implement social justice policies. Welfare State

policies are among the most important mechanisms devised to ensure and uphold the central principles of social justice that requires the adoption of comprehensive welfare measures that can safeguard social justice values through ensuring fair redistribution of resources.

Welfare States

In ideological terms, the Welfare State is centrally an expression of certain ethical ideals. Basically, Welfare State refers to a State that has assumed some responsibility for benefits of individual through the provision of different services. These social policies mainly emphasise certain key principles of social justice, which is reflected in fundamental human rights, equality of opportunity, equity in access to resources, developing human capacities and improving living standards for all.

The emergence of Welfare State dates back to 1601, when Elizabethan Poor Law, first legislative initiative, was enacted in UK to protect the elders, patients, and wounded people. Losing its original religious and moralistic overtones, the term Welfare State became popularised in UK after the World War II. Prior to World War II, only few nations implemented welfare programmes. The oldest of these can be traced back to social insurance scheme implemented in Germany in the 1880s. France set up similar pension plans in 1910 and the UK introduced a number of insurance plans for different sections of its people in 1911. As a landmark initiative, Sweden launched the first compulsory and universal pension system in 1913.

In the 20th century, almost all states provided at least some kind of welfare measures. Significantly, the welfare arrangements in Europe continuously expanded after the World War II. The imperative of post-war reconstruction justified the allocation of resources towards social welfare measures at an unprecedented scale. The social programmes were transformed into more comprehensive systems of universal benefits. In UK, the comprehensive social insurance plan was adopted in 1948 on the recommendation of the Beveridge Report. In fact, the Beveridge Report (1942) laid the foundation for a Welfare State that is concerned with large-scale provisions of social measures for the entire population. Such a universal coverage of welfare measures ensures the achievement of social justice through equitable distribution of wealth.

7.5 SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A RESPONSE TO SOCIAL WELFARE CONCERNS

The Welfare State is a set of government programmes aimed at ensuring citizens' welfare. The early programmes were limited in scope. However, after World War II, these programmes were expanded to become more comprehensive in nature and universal in its application. This unprecedented level of public spending on welfare measures was strengthened by the Keynesian hypothesis, which advocated the need for large public investment to stimulate aggregate demand in the society.

The development process of Welfare State can be categorised in three major phases. The first period was between 1870 and 1913. This was from the late seventeenth century when the industrial revolution took place in Europe

to the early nineteenth century. During this period, insurance plans were selectively introduced for the benefits of industrial workers. The second phase was between World War I and World War II, where governments gradually expanded the welfare measures to include other sections of people. The third phase was between 1950 and 1973, which is referred as the “Golden Age of Welfare States.” During this stage, the Welfare States witnessed massive investments in social welfare measures and extensive provisions of different services to people.

After expanding steadily during the “Golden Age”, most Welfare States suffered a critical shock from the oil crises, economic recession, deindustrialisation and high unemployment rates. These factors highly affected the financial base of the Welfare State. The concept of welfare itself was widely considered to have contributed to the economic collapse. Thus, the large-scale expansion of Welfare State came to a halt.

A number of research found that the high involvement of government with welfare expenditures was a misallocation of resources that might otherwise have gone into more productive investments. These arguments found their intellectual culmination in neo-liberal thinking. In the 1990s, it was generally accepted that the Welfare State would need to roll back in order to enhance the competitiveness of the economy. The critical challenge was how to balance competing goals of securing social justice, individual welfare, economic growth and fiscal discipline.

During this period, the neo-liberal ideas began to enter the mainstream to provide solutions for the failure of Keynesian policies. Accordingly, governments adopted a number of neo-liberal policies in the form of different reform measures. The neo-liberal policies broadly reflected the changes made to the funding and delivery of welfare services. The neo-liberal policies broadly denote a preference for markets over government, economic incentives over cultural norms and private entrepreneurship over collective action. In other words, the economic principles took precedence over equity and social policy.

Throughout the world, the neo-liberal policies have failed to address the critical challenges of development. For instance, more than 736 million people – or one out of every ten people on the planet – currently live in extreme poverty. Globally, millions are experiencing the situation of food insecurity, hunger and famine. One in nine people in the world go hungry each day, and suffer from nutritional deficiencies as a result. Climate change, along with other environmental problems is threatening the livelihoods of millions across the world, mostly in developing countries. Access to clean water and sanitation remain one of the critical challenges for a significant number of global populations. Similarly, an unbalanced trade is highly prevalent in global trade affecting the number of poor countries. The underlying use of Social Capital as a new metaphor for community is an acknowledgment of the inadequacies of a pure neo-liberal market-oriented development model as a basis for social policy.

Social Capital is seen as being rooted in local communities. Also, it systematically incorporates socio-cultural factors that significantly influence the nature and direction of developmental process in a society. Globally, a number of empirical studies have established the positive effect of Social Capital on development. Social Capital can shape the developmental outcomes at both the micro and macro levels. There is a need to apply the concept of Social Capital to public policy. The policy makers must understand the relationship between self and society, the ground dynamics surrounding social action and the power of collective participation and negotiation. Mechanisms need to be devised to apply Social Capital in addressing community problems in specific situations. In the recent past, we have seen many protests by society whenever any policy has not been in consonance with their interests, be it Citizen Amendment Act 2019, or Farmers' Protests against unjust farm laws, which forced the government to repeal them. The power of Social Capital is the future of policy implementation and monitoring. It will have to be integral to all policy processes.

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. Explain the relationship between social justice and Welfare State.

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2. Discuss the way social capital has emerged as a response to address social welfare concerns.

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7.6 CONCLUSION

Welfare States are an important milestone in the progressive evolution of modern States. Welfare State, with a well-established network of public institutions plays a key role in the promotion of socio-economic conditions of its citizens through extensive provisions of welfare measures. Globally, modern Welfare States have developed a number of policy instruments to realign its distributional outcomes with the broader objectives of social justice.

Social justice concerns itself with fair distribution of goods and services within a society. Hence, social justice is treated as synonymous with distributive justice. Basically, social justice often refers to ideological or ethical concerns, leading to programmes that are developed to redistribute

resources and alleviate human sufferings. Implementation of social justice policies are not governed by any single principle. Globally, governments are applying different criteria to implement social justice policies. Welfare State policies are among the most important mechanisms devised to ensure and uphold the principles of social justice.

The oil crises in the 1970s dramatically changed the socio-economic conditions in different countries across the world. The global economy experienced a number of critical challenges. As a consequence, many countries introduced a series of austerity measures as a response to the immediate crisis. The crises of Welfare States have significantly affected the distribution of wealth in the society and the process of achieving the goals of social justice.

In these changing extraordinary circumstances, the need for a new developmental framework was highly felt to uphold social justice and empower people. Today, the responsibility for the promotion of people's welfare was reassigned from the State to the community as a result of continued reduction of public spending on welfare measures under the neo-liberal regime.

In this context, Social Capital has emerged as an alternative development paradigm. Social Capital, as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern the interactions among people and contribute to socio-economic development. Underlying the use of Social Capital as a new metaphor for community is an acknowledgment of the inadequacies of a pure neo-liberal market-oriented model as a basis for social policy. Globally, a number of empirical studies have established the positive effect of Social Capital on development. Social Capital can shape the economic outcomes at both the micro and macro levels.

7.7 GLOSSARY

Distributive Justice: Distributive justice is concerned with the fair allocation of resources among diverse members of a community. Fair allocation typically takes into account the total amount of goods to be distributed, the distributing procedure, and the pattern of distribution.

Social Action: Social action is about people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It can include volunteering, giving money, community action or simple neighbourly acts. Taking part in social action is also associated with higher levels of well-being, and can improve people's confidence and skills.

Welfare Dependency: The use that people make of publicly provided cash benefits or human services. Welfare dependency, therefore, is a feature of advanced industrial societies with developed welfare states, whose citizens enjoy specific "social" rights.

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7.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

Based on different characteristics and functions, Social Capital is classified into different types:

- **Structural Social Capital:** The pattern of structures and networks supplemented by the rules, procedures, and precedents that govern them.
- **Cognitive Social Capital:** It consists primarily of a set of shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals relating to trust, reciprocity, and cooperation.
- **Bonding Social Capital:** It is localised and found among people who live in the same or adjacent communities.
- **Bridging Social Capital:** It is more outward-looking, engaged in a civic way, narrows the gap between different communities and exercises open membership.
- **Linking Social Capital:** Interactions and networks among individuals and groups who occupy different social positions and power.
- **Horizontal Social Capital:** It is lateral relations between people of similar status and power in a community.
- **Vertical Social Capital:** Relations and interaction among people of different hierarchy and unequal power.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

Bourdieu's Theory of Capital:

- Pierre Bourdieu has been an important contributor to the contemporary idea of Social Capital.
- Bourdieu saw Social Capital as a property of the individual, rather than the collective, derived primarily from one's social position and status.
- The three basic kinds of capital occurring in a society are economic, cultural, and social. These capitals can be converted into one another using transformation labour.
- Social Capital resides in the individual and is linked to social connections that a person can utilise for advancement.

Coleman's Rational- Choice Approach to Social Capital:

- James Coleman embeds his concept of Social Capital in the context of the Rational Choice theory.
- A unique nature of Social Capital is that unlike other forms of capital, Social Capital is inherent in the structure of relations among individuals.

Robert D. Putnam's Civic Perspective on Social Capital:

- Robert David Putnam's idea is that social networks contain value for individuals. Like physical and human capital, social contacts influence the productivity of individuals and groups.
- Social Capital becomes a collective trait functioning at the aggregate level.
- Putnam treated Social Capital as a public good—the amount of participatory potential, civic orientation, and trust in others available to cities, states, or nations.

Ronald S. Burt's Network Approach to Social Capital:

- Working like Coleman in the Rational-Choice perspective, Burt embeds his concept of Social Capital in the structural theory of action.
- The actor can be a single person or a group pursuing individual goals to maximize their utility.
- The interests of the actor are determined by the surrounding social structure that emerged from the division of labour.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Social justice often refers to an ideological or ethical concern or it can be a pragmatic force, leading to programme that are developed to redistribute resources and alleviate human sufferings.
- Many contemporary issues related to social justice have their direct roots in economic and political systems.
- Today the notion of social justice is often linked with the idea of distribution of resources.
- Social justice requires the adoption of comprehensive welfare measures that can safeguard social justice values through ensuring fair redistribution of resources.
- Welfare State has assumed some responsibility for benefits of individual through the provision of different services.
- Social policies mainly emphasise certain key principles of social justice, which is reflected in fundamental human rights, equality of opportunity, equity in access to resources, developing human capacities and improving living standards for all.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- After expanding steadily during the “Golden Age”, the Welfare State suffered a critical shock from the oil crises, economic recession, deindustrialisation and high unemployment rates. These factors highly affected the financial base of the Welfare State.
- These developments, which also affected social policies led to adoption of Neo-liberal approach for decreasing social expenditures.

Socio-Economic Issues

- The large-scale expansion of Welfare State has come to a halt, and the last few decades have seen a phase of profound Welfare State calling for restructuring and retrenchment during which benefit levels have been cut and social rights have been curtailed.
- Social Capital has emerged as an alternative development paradigm.
- It is based on the notion that social relations, networks, norms and values greatly matter in the development of a society.
- Globally, growing number of empirical evidences show that Social Capital has immensely contributed to development.



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UNIT 8 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION: A CASE FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ADMINISTRATION*

Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Meaning and Concept of Social Exclusion
- 8.3 Concept of Social Inclusion
- 8.4 Social Inclusion Policies from a Gender Perspective
- 8.5 Women's Participation in Administration
- 8.6 Conclusion
- 8.7 Glossary
- 8.8 References
- 8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of social exclusion.
- Discuss the concept of social inclusion in its various aspects.
- Examine the social inclusion policies, particularly women's participation in administration.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Humanity has reached unprecedented levels of socio-economic development over the past few decades. Poverty has declined dramatically across the nations and people are healthier, education has reached the many deprived and the world is better connected than ever before. However, these socio-economic transformations have been uneven. Inequalities are highly prevalent in almost every part of the world. Today, virtually everywhere, people are confronted with daunting challenges that prevent them from fully participating in economic, social and political life.

People are being excluded from different domains of life and the relative importance of each domain depends on its local context. The process through which individuals or groups who are being excluded from fully participating in all aspects of life in society because of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, language, physical, economic and social disadvantages is generally termed as social exclusion.

*Contributed by Dr. Kannan Ambalam, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Public Administration and Development Management, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia.

Social exclusion is taking place in different societies at various levels. It is a dynamic process, which reduces the capabilities of people to achieve their personal and collective goals. As a multi-dimensional phenomenon, social exclusion largely plays out through both tangible and intangible practices. Although it is most evident in “tangible” outcomes, it is deeply rooted in socially constructed intangible norms and beliefs that in turn lead to stereotypes, prejudices, and stigmas on particular sections of people.

No single set of policies or strategies is applicable across all countries to tackle social exclusion. Instead, successful examples point to several important imperatives to address the structural causes of social exclusion. These policy measures broadly reflect the inclusionary nature of developmental processes that have been undertaken by the states at different levels in numerous fields. This comprehensive long-term approach is broadly known as social inclusion.

Social inclusion is the process of improving the levels and nature of participation of people who are disadvantaged in society on the basis of their age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, as well as economic and migration status. Beyond the foundational role of social inclusion to address structural imbalances in society, there are also a number of practical reasons to ensure that no one is left behind in the developmental mainstream of a nation. Overall, the outcome of this long-term social inclusion process is to enhance the well-being of people and the shared prosperity of nations.

On the process of social exclusion, women are one of the most excluded members from the developmental process in different ways in all the societies. More women than men live in absolute poverty and when this imbalance begins to grow, it has serious consequences for women. Women carry a disproportionate share of the societal problems of coping with poverty, social disintegration, unemployment and environmental degradation. Women consistently earn less than men with only few countries in the world having reached gender wage parity. Similarly, women remain heavily concentrated into lower-paying jobs, less-productive works and less-profitable entrepreneurship than men. Globally, significant gaps also persist in women’s representation in administrative, leadership and decision-making positions.

In order to promote social inclusion, governments across the world are working in collaboration with different stakeholders including the United Nations, civil society organisations and private business enterprises within a larger legal framework of creating an inclusive society. Though these inclusionary measures mainly focus on number of issues for different individuals and groups who are excluded on various reasons, this Unit briefly reviews the policies that were initiated for the welfare of women in relation to access to employment opportunities particularly women’s participation in administration. Besides, this Unit also explains the conceptual meanings of social inclusion and exclusion.

8.2 MEANING AND CONCEPT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion relates to exclusion from mainstream society. Social exclusion or being ‘set apart’ or excluded from resources or opportunities

confers formidable disadvantages on certain groups. Though social exclusion as a practice has existed for centuries in different societies, the term “social exclusion” is of relatively recent origin in academic domains and policy-making arenas. It was first used in France in the mid-1970s in the context of individuals’ inability to access governments’ welfare entitlements. The notion has, however, already made substantial inroads into the developmental policy discussions on poverty, deprivation and social inequalities. Today, the concept of social exclusion is seen as covering a remarkably wide range of contemporary social and economic problems.

Social exclusion prominently figured in the policy discourse in France in the mid-1970s. It was later adopted by the European Union in the late 1980s as a key concept in social policy. Today, social exclusion has become an important part of the United Nations’ standard policy tools to address a broad range of developmental issues related to global poverty and social inequality. The concept of social exclusion was first popularized in 1974 in France, by René Lenoir the then Secretary of State for Social Action in his book *One in Ten French People*. He used social exclusion to refer to the conditions of people who were “physically disabled”, “mentally disabled” and “socially maladjusted.” Social exclusion was also used to describe the situation of social and economic divide that was extensively prevalent in French society at that time.

Social exclusion is both an outcome and a process. It has different manifestations that include lack of voice, lack of recognition, or lack of capacity for active participation. Social exclusion mainly leads to lower social standing, often accompanied by poor outcomes in terms of income, human capital endowments, access to employment and services. The process of social exclusion occurs at various levels. At the societal level, it reflects inadequate social cohesion or lack of integration, which are prevalent in the society. At the level of individual, it refers to the incapacity of individuals or groups to participate in social activities.

Although there is no universally agreed definition or benchmark for social exclusion, lack of participation in society is at the heart of nearly all definitions of social exclusion put forth by scholars, governmental institutions, non-governmental organisations and others. Despite the novelty and ambiguity of the concept, definitions of social exclusion vary in different national contexts and socio-economic conditions. Overall, social exclusion describes a state in which individuals and groups are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural lives.

More than one billion people in the world live in abject poverty. A large proportion, the majority of whom are women, have very limited access to income, resources, education, health care or nutrition, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries. This clearly shows the connections between poverty and exclusionary processes, which create and reinforce impoverished conditions. Poverty is seen as an outcome of social exclusion. Also, social exclusion is being considered as an important factor in the cause of poverty. Today, poverty can be seen as the deprivation of both material needs and opportunities. In the same way, social exclusion affects the poor and rich across the world. The magnitude and the nature of these impacts mainly depend on the socio-economic conditions of the excluded people.

In terms of basic needs, the inability of people to exercise their social rights of citizenship, including the right to a decent standard of living is a kind of social exclusion. Different dimensions of social exclusion can intersect with poverty, deriving from a set of multiple, interrelated factors that result in both economic and social deprivation. Equally, even at the higher end of the income distribution, people face social exclusion. For instance, in developed societies, the importance of individual choice and opportunities are emphasized as part of achieving developmental goals. Any deprivation of these individual choice and opportunities is being considered as social exclusion.

Major Dimensions of Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process in which one domain leads to or reinforces exclusion in another domain. Generally, there is little consensus over what are the most important dimensions of social exclusion. The relative importance of each domain mainly depends on local contexts and conditions. Notably social exclusion always remains a cumulative process of interrelated disadvantages. The following are the major dimensions of social exclusion:

Political Exclusion

It includes the denial of citizenship rights such as political participation and the right to organise, and also of personal security, the rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity. Besides, there are other rights which include voting rights, right to legal recourse, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, right to hold public offices etc. Denial of these rights comes under political exclusion.

Economic Exclusion

It includes lack of access to finance, credit, labour markets and other forms of material resources to function appropriately in society. Lack of skills to access labour market, job insecurity, economic vulnerability to financial risks and isolation from opportunity due to economic segregation are some of the examples of economic exclusion.

Social Exclusion

It reduces the opportunity of people to gain access to different social services. It includes a combination of interrelated problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing and poor health. It creates a situation in which people cannot exercise their voice or interact with each other. Also, rights and dignity of people are not accorded equal respect and protection.

Cultural Exclusion

It refers to the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living by people that are accepted and respected by others. Lack of freedom and opportunity to exercise the right to cultural identity, lack of participation in cultural life, inability to conserve and diffuse culture, lack of protection of cultural property, and inability to exercise the rights of creators, transmitters and interpreters of artistic and other cultural works are some of the examples of cultural exclusion.

8.3. CONCEPT OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

There is a growing recognition that some people in different societies face critical challenges that prevent them from fully participating in the social, economic and political lives of their communities on equal terms with others. To varying degrees, development is leaving them behind. In order to address these growing exclusionary trends, the governments are promoting the policy of social inclusion.

The concept of social inclusion gained prominence in the World Summit for Social Development (1995) held in Copenhagen where the governments reached a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. This Summit, the largest gathering ever of world leaders at that time, pledged to make the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration as the overriding objectives of development. The main reason for this renewed focus on social inclusion is the realization that the benefits of developmental achievements have not been equitably shared across the societies.

Social inclusion, a multi-dimensional process, reflects societal capacities to eliminate causes of exclusion and ensure equal opportunities for all. In the long-term, it improves the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status. This comprehensively enables the people to achieve their full potential in life. While various definitions have been developed to describe social inclusion, they all have been grounded on the idea of promotion of a society, in which people are interconnected within a wider social system, and their relationships are maintained in a harmonious way.

Conceptual Interpretation of Social Inclusion

Comprehensively, social inclusion is being considered as a goal, process and outcome.

As a universal goal:

Social inclusion aims to achieve an inclusive society that entails respect for human rights, cultural diversity and democratic governance, and upholds principles of equality and equity.

As a process:

Social inclusion enables citizens' participation in decision-making activities that affect their lives, allowing all groups to take part in this process, especially the marginalised sections of society.

As an outcome:

Social inclusion ensures the reduction of inequalities, elimination of any forms of exclusion and discrimination, and achievements of social justice and cohesion.

Nature of Social Inclusion

An inclusive society is a society that collectively addresses the exclusionary practices and provides equality of opportunity for all members of the society. There are different views which explain on how social inclusions

are achieved. Based on the way in which the objectives of social inclusion are achieved, it can be categorized into two views:

Broader View:

Social inclusion encompasses a broader set of concerns. Hence, it requires both addressing the drivers of exclusion, including certain policies and institutions as well as attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, the process of social inclusion needs to take place simultaneously at multiple levels, from the individual, community and local levels, to the regional and national levels.

Narrow View:

People, living in remote areas, are not able to fully participate in social, cultural or political life at higher levels due to various reasons. The spatial exclusion also plays an important role in this. Therefore, implementation of social inclusion at the local level is useful, as it addresses exclusion at manageable and feasible levels. In a smaller geographic region than the nation, there is much greater opportunity to develop inclusive systems, economically and socially as well as politically.

Check Your Progress 1

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

1. Discuss the major dimensions of social exclusion.

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2. Explain the meaning and nature of social inclusion.

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8.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICIES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Addressing social exclusion is a policy priority for the governments across the world. However, the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion requires different perspectives in understanding its causes and consequences, and in initiating appropriate policy measures to address it. Social inclusion has emerged as an appropriate policy response to address social exclusion.

Though, globally, the inclusionary measures taken by the governments in collaboration with other developmental stakeholders mainly focus on number of issues for people who are excluded on various reasons, this Section briefly explains the policies that were initiated for the welfare of women in relation to access to employment opportunities, particularly women’s participation in administration. The policies of reservations and affirmative actions are part of these measures.

In order to ensure gender equality, governments across the world have taken a number of measures, which include:

- Establishing appropriate mechanisms for women's equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process and public life;
- Eliminating violence against women;
- Promoting women's potential through education, skill development and employment;
- Eradicating all practices that discriminate against women;
- Adopting appropriate measures to improve women's ability to earn income beyond traditional occupations, achieve economic self-reliance; and
- Ensuring women's equal access to the labour market and social security systems.

The implementation of these initiatives varies from country to country and region to region. Despite the various Constitutional provisions and international instruments that proclaim equal rights for women and men, there are many instances in which equal rights to personal status, security, land, inheritance and employment opportunities are denied to women. For example, only in five countries in the world women have reached or surpassed gender parity with men in such occupations as legislators, senior officials, and managers; namely, Colombia, Fiji, Jamaica, Lesotho, and the Philippines. In terms of senior political posts or senior public officials, only 28 per cent of such posts are occupied by women in the world.

With respect to women's equal access to the labour market, the gender differences are striking, extensive and enduring. Women on an average earn between 10 and 30 per cent less than working men. Women's economic activities remain highly concentrated in poor quality, low-wage, low-productivity jobs. For example, women constitute 60 to 80 per cent of total informal employment, which have limited access to job security and few social benefits. Globally, over 60 per cent of people working in family enterprises without pay are women. Work done as household chore is also unpaid and often little valued.

In fact, public employment services are a crucial means for women's equal participation in work, since they are one of the main ways to implement employment policies. Greater number of women are involved in public services. Significantly, when women have equal participation in administration, public resources are more likely to be allocated to investments in human developmental priorities such as education, health, nutrition and access to employment.

8.5 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ADMINISTRATION

Women's empowerment is a complex process, which takes place in mutually reinforcing psychological, political, social and economic domains. This significant process enables women to individually and collectively

gain power to make meaningful choices and take control over their lives. Women's participation in administration and leadership is the key for achieving women's empowerment.

Women's participation in administration is important for equity reasons, as it brings more and more women's perspectives to public policy and developmental outcomes. Also, today, women are altering the public governance framework through improving public health services and access to clean water and expanding the provision and quality of education. Equally, women are also bringing collaborative and inclusive leadership in the functioning of government institutions.

If public institutions are to be representative of society and inclusive of women, viable pathways must exist for women to enter and advance to leadership positions at all levels and in all sectors. However, the public institutions around the world have not yet tapped the full talents and potential of women. For example, in India, women's participation in administration is very low.

Women at Administrative Positions in India

Though the Constitution of India ensures equality, the share of women in the civil services is very low. Most of the women work at lower levels of administrative hierarchy, where they are disproportionately represented. According to the Fifth Pay Commission (1997), women employees constitute 7.51 per cent (2.83 lakh) of the total government employees, but 98 per cent of the women employees occupy posts in groups C and D (that is, lower levels) of the official hierarchy. Women's participation at the policy level is extremely negligible. No woman has ever held any top-level position in the civil services. So far there have been very few woman secretaries in administration.

In terms of women's participation in All India Services, for Indian Administrative Services (IAS), in the year 1951 only one woman got into the services, after ten years that is in the year 1961 also only one woman entered the service. In the last decade that is in the year 2000, only 9 women got into IAS. Women constituted only 22.55 per cent (on an average) for the years 2014 to 2017. For Indian Police Service (IPS), women were barred from recruitment till 1971 and only in the year 1972, this discriminatory rule was removed. The representation of women in IPS is also less in number. Same is the case with Indian Forest Service (IFS), the entry of women into the IFS was very late, compared with other All India Services and it was only in the year 1980, the first woman got into the Forest Service. The number of women in Indian Foreign Service is also very low. According to a 2022 data, there were only 14 per cent (13 women) appointed as secretaries out of total 92 secretaries to the Centre.

However, despite the State's effort to narrow down the gender gap in the civil services, the situation is still not very encouraging. The following measures will ensure greater participation of women in administration:

- Providing quality education and harmonizing the curricula in line with civil service examinations;
- Creating awareness pertaining to job opportunities in civil services among women and changing the social attitudes of parents;

- Establishing a national academy for coaching women aspirants from all over the country;
- Creating counseling centres in all the schools and colleges;
- Alleviating poverty among girls and providing financial and material support in the form of scholarships;
- Highlighting the success stories of women and the role models from the serving officers; and
- Providing for a harassment-free work environment.

A growing number of women aspire for leadership on the same terms as men and have made the same choices as their male counterparts, but they continue to confront daunting obstacles. Even in countries where women have equal access to education, increased representation in administration, particularly in decision-making positions, is not always ensured. Women remain underrepresented at the top levels of administration or governance.

Barriers to women's advancement in administration undermine the fundamental principles of equal opportunity and social justice in society as a whole. Multiple strategies need to be developed to break these barriers down. Achieving greater gender equality requires changes at many levels, including changes in attitudes and relationships, changes in institutional and legal frameworks including the political decision-making structures.

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. Explain the different aspects of Social Inclusion policies.
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2. Examine the nature of women's participation in administration.
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8.6 CONCLUSION

Humanity has achieved unprecedented levels of socio-economic development over the past few decades. Today, virtually everywhere, many people are confronted with daunting challenges that prevent them from fully participating in economic, social and political life. The process through which people who are excluded from fully participating in all aspects of life in society because of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, language or physical, economic and social disadvantages is generally termed as social exclusion. Social exclusion is taking place in different societies at various levels.

The policy measures to address the structural causes of social exclusion broadly reflect the inclusionary nature of developmental processes that have

been undertaken by the states at different levels in numerous fields. This comprehensive, long-term approach is broadly known as social inclusion. On the process of social exclusion, women are one of the most excluded members from the developmental process in different ways in all the societies. More women than men live in absolute poverty and the imbalance continues to grow, with serious consequences for women.

With respect to women's equal access to the labour market, the gender differences are striking, extensive and enduring. Over the last few decades, women have made significant progress in educational achievements. This has not necessarily translated into a better labour market outcome for women, both in terms of quantity and quality of employment. Occupational segregation and wage gaps between men and women are highly prevalent across all societies.

Women's participation in administration is important for equity reasons and also because it brings more women-oriented perspectives to public policy and developmental outcomes. Today, women are altering the public governance framework through improving their access to public health services and clean water, and expanding the provision and quality of education. Though the Constitution of India ensures equality, the share of women in the civil services is very low. Women are disproportionately represented at all levels of administrative hierarchy.

Barriers to women's advancement in administration undermine the fundamental principles of equal opportunity and social justice in society as a whole. Multiple strategies need to be developed to break these barriers down. Achieving greater gender equality requires changes at many levels, including changes in attitudes and relationships, changes in institutional and legal frameworks, including political decision-making structures.

8.7 GLOSSARY

Affirmative Action: It is known as "positive discrimination." It pertains to a government policy that is designed to help minorities and disadvantaged groups. It refers to a number of positive steps taken by government to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and culture from which they have been historically excluded.

Gender Equality: Gender equality does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities should not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality entails that both men and women are free to make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally.

Gender Parity: Gender parity is a statistical measure that provides a numerical value of female-to-male or girl-to-boy ratio for indicators such as income or education. It may also refer to the proportionate representation of men and women.

Social Integration: Social integration is the process of bringing together various ethnic groups irrespective of language, caste, creed, etc., without

losing one's identity. It gives access to all areas of community life and eliminates segregation. In a broader view, social integration is a dynamic and structured process in which all members participate in a dialogue to achieve shared goals and maintain peaceful social relations.

Social Justice: Social justice is the process of fair treatment to all people in a society, including respect for the rights of minorities and equitable distribution of resources among members of a community. Social justice pertains to the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities.

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8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- **Political Exclusion:** It includes the denial of citizenship rights such as political participation and the right to organise, and also of personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity.
- **Economic Exclusion:** It includes lack of access to finance, credit, labour markets and other forms of material resources to function appropriately in society.
- **Social Exclusion:** It reduces the opportunity for people to gain access to different social services. It includes a combination of interrelated problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, etc.
- **Cultural Exclusion:** It refers to the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living by people that are accepted and respected by others. Lack of freedom and opportunity to exercise the right to cultural identity, lack of participation in cultural life, etc.
- Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process in which one domain lead to or reinforces exclusion in another domain.
- Generally, there is a little consensus over what are the most important dimensions of social exclusion.
- The relative importance of each domain mainly depends on local contexts and conditions.
- Notably social exclusion always remains as a cumulative process of interrelated disadvantages.

2. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- Social inclusion is a multi-dimensional process.
- It reflects societal capacities to eliminate causes of exclusion and ensure equal opportunities for all.
- In the long-term, it improves the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status.

- There are different views, which explain on how social inclusions are achieved. Based on the way in which the objectives of social inclusion are achieved.
- It can be categorised into two views: Broader View: Social inclusion encompasses a broader set of concerns, and Narrow View: People living in remote areas may not be able to fully participate in social, cultural or political lives at higher levels due to various reasons.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Considering its multi-dimensional nature, a broader range of policy measures in social, economic, cultural and political fields is required to address social exclusion.
- Establishing appropriate mechanisms for women's equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process and public life.
- Eliminating violence against women
- Promoting the fulfilment of women's potential through education, skill development and employment.
- Eradicating all practices that discriminate against women.
- Adopting appropriate measures to improve women's ability to earn income beyond traditional occupations, achieve economic self-reliance.
- Ensuring women's equal access to the labour market and social security systems.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Women's participation in administration is important for equity reasons and also because it brings more and more women's perspectives to public policy and developmental outcomes.
- The public institutions around the world have not yet tapped the full talent and potential of women. For example, in India, women's participation in administration is very low.
- Though the Constitution of India ensures equality, the share of women in the civil service is very low.
- Women are disproportionately represented at lower-level of administrative hierarchy.
- Women employees constitute 7.51 per cent (2.83 lakh) of the total government employees, but 98 per cent of the women employees occupy posts in groups C and D (that is, lower levels) of the official hierarchy.
- Women's participation at the policy level is extremely negligible.

