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“POLICY MAKING IN WELFARE INDIA”

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ABSTRACT: The welfare state means that everyone is taken care of. Everyone should be able to get their basic needs met, no matter how much money they have or where they come from. The main goal is to make society more fair and equal by lowering poverty and inequality. The welfare state is also based on the idea of social justice; A welfare state is a system where the government undertakes the primary responsibility for protecting and promoting the economic and social well-being of its citizens. It operates on the principles of equal opportunity, equitable wealth distribution, and public responsibility for those unable to care for themselves. A welfare state is a system where the government takes responsibility for the well-being of its citizens. It does this by ensuring that essential services such as healthcare, education, housing, and social security are available to everyone, especially vulnerable groups like the poor, unemployed, elderly, and sick. which says that the government should not only protect people from hardship but also give everyone the same chance to grow and do well. Free schooling, for instance, makes sure that kids from poor families can compete on an equal level, and pensions give older people respect.

Introduction :

There is substantial variability in the form and trajectory of the welfare state across countries and regions. All welfare states entail some degree of private public partnerships wherein the administration and delivery of at least some welfare programs occur through private entities. Welfare state services are also provided at varying territorial levels of government.

A **welfare state** is a form of government in which the state or a well-established network of social institutions protects and promotes the economic and social well-being of its citizens, based upon the principles of equal opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for citizens unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.

Emperor Ashoka of India put forward his idea of a welfare state in the 3rd century BCE. He envisioned his dharma religion or path as not just a collection of high-sounding phrases. He consciously tried to adopt it as a matter of state policy; he declared that "all men are my children and "whatever exertion I make, I strive only to discharge debt that I owe to all living creatures." It was a completely new ideal of kingship. Ashoka renounced war and conquest by violence and forbade the killing of many animals. Since he wanted to conquer the world through love and faith, he sent many missions to propagate Dharma. Such missions were sent to places like Egypt, Greece, and Sri Lanka. The propagation of Dharma included many measures of people's welfare. Centres of the treatment of men and beasts founded inside and outside of the empire. Shady groves, wells, orchards and rest houses were laid out. Ashoka also prohibited useless sacrifices and certain forms of gatherings which led to waste, indiscipline and superstition. To implement these policies he recruited a new cadre of officers called Dharmamahamattas. Part of this group's duties was to see that people of various sects were treated fairly. They were especially asked to look after the welfare of prisoners.

However, the historical record of Ashoka's character is conflicted. Ashoka's own inscriptions state that he converted to Buddhism after waging a destructive war. However, the Sri Lankan tradition claims that he had already converted to Buddhism in the 4th year of his reign, although it does not mention the conquest of Kalinga. During this war, according to, with nearly 100,000 killed in the war and another 150,000 deported. Some sources particularly Buddhist oral legends suggest that his conversion was dramatic and that he dedicated the rest of his life to the pursuit of peace and the common good. However, these sources frequently contradict each other, and a few sources like earliest versions ranging from 200 AD to 500 AD describe Ashoka engaging in sectarian mass murder throughout his reign, and make no mention of the philanthropic efforts claimed by earlier legends. The interpretation of Ashoka's dharma after conversion is controversial, but in particular, the texts which describe him personally ordering the massacre of Buddhist heretics and Jains have been disputed by many scholars, since these are directly contradictory to his own edicts, and are legendary in nature.

✓ **Key words:** welfare state, Social Security, welfare of prisoners, from 200 AD to 500 AD, Democratic Foundation, Equal Wealth Distribution, Social Justice and Dignity, Maternity Benefit Act 1929, Garibi Hatao, 2014 Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana.

Features of Welfare State:

- ✓ **Democratic Foundation:** Welfare states function within multi-party democracies, ensuring that welfare programs are driven by the collective, civic needs of the population.
- ✓ **Schemes of Social Security and Services:** The government provides fundamental services such as universal healthcare, free or affordable education, housing, and pensions either for free or at a subsidized rate.
- ✓ **Combined Economy:** Rather than implementing full socialism or unrestrained capitalism, it utilizes a mixed economy where private and public sectors co-exist to balance market growth with regulation.
- ✓ **Economic Protections:** The state intervenes to protect citizens from extreme poverty and market risks like unemployment, sickness, disability, and old age.
- ✓ **Equal Wealth Distribution:** Through progressive taxation and targeted social programs, the state redistributes wealth to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.
- ✓ **Equality of Opportunity and Status :** The state strives to close social divides, ensuring fair access to jobs, public resources, and education regardless of an individual's background
- ✓ The purpose of a welfare state is to protect and promote the economic and social well-being of its citizens. Instead of leaving individuals to fend entirely for themselves in the free market, the government acts as a safety net to ensure everyone has access to basic necessities and equal opportunities.
- ✓ A welfare state operates on two core principles: equality of opportunity and the equitable distribution of wealth. To achieve these, governments use a mix of taxes and public spending to full fill several primary objectives: Social Security and Economic Stability
- ✓ **Safety Nets:** Providing financial assistance for those unable to work due to unemployment, disability, or age.
- ✓ **Crisis Protection:** Preventing extreme poverty and social unrest during economic downturns.
- ✓ **Equal Access to Essential Services**
- ✓ **Healthcare:** Ensuring medical care is available to all, regardless of income.
- ✓ **Education:** Offering free or affordable education and training to give every child a fair chance at success.
- ✓ **Housing and Sustenance:** Assisting with basic living costs, subsidized housing, and food security.
- ✓ **Social Justice and Dignity**
- ✓ Protecting vulnerable populations the elderly, sick, and marginalized communities and ensuring they can live with basic human dignity

Welfare Policies in India Before Independence: Welfare policies in British India were primarily minimal, reactive, and driven by revenue extraction or political stability rather than comprehensive social security. While traditional safety nets were disrupted, the colonial government slowly introduced

basic labour protections, famine relief, and social reforms. The most significant interventions fell into three primary categories:

- **Legal and Social Reforms:** Rather than economic welfare, many of the era's progressive policies centered on social reform, often enacted in response to intense agitation by Indian reformers
- ✓ **1829 Abolition of Sati:** Banned the practice of widow burning.
- ✓ **1856 Widow Remarriage Act:** Legalized the remarriage of Hindu widows.
- ✓ **1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act:** Also known as the Sharda Act, it fixed the minimum age of marriage for girls at 14 and boys at 18 to protect minors. For a broader look at how these historical efforts progressed into the nation's modern security net, you can explore the Evolution of India's Welfare State - IJHSSM.org or read about early administrative steps via the British Policies in India from 1765 to 1857.
- **Famine Relief and Public Works**

The colonial approach to widespread famine was largely reactive, prioritizing public order over proactive welfare. **Famine Codes:** Following recurring catastrophic famines, the British government established Famine Commissions in the late 19th century. This resulted in the Famine Codes of the 1880s, which outlined protocols for state-directed relief, including public works irrigation, canal building and gratuitous relief for the disabled and elderly

➤ **Social Security Policies for Labours**

Industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries prompted the state to reluctantly introduce basic protections for factory workers, driven by both humanitarian concerns and pressure from British textile manufacturers

- ✓ **Factory Acts:** The Factory Act of 1881 regulated child labour, while subsequent acts such as the 1911 and 1934 acts introduced limited working hours and safety provisions.
- ✓ **Trade Unions and Compensation:** The Trade Unions Act of 1926 and the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 provided embryonic social security, offering compensation to workers injured on the job and legitimizing worker representation.
- ✓ **Maternity Benefits:** Early legislation, such as the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act 1929, established foundational rights for female industrial workers

Welfare policies in independence India 1947 to 2026: India's welfare trajectory since 1947 has shifted from state-led industrial socialism to a modern, digitally-targeted safety net. Evolving from basic labour and land reforms to universal health, food security, and direct financial inclusion, the state continually adapts its social contract

1947–1969: State-Led Foundations and Labour Rights : Early post-independence policy focused on building industrial harmony, protecting vulnerable workers, and integrating marginalized communities

Industrial Disputes Act 1947: Established mechanisms for resolving labour conflicts.

- **Employees' State Insurance Act 1948:** Pioneered modern social security by providing medical care and cash benefits to workers.
- **Minimum Wages Act 1948:** Set legal minimums to prevent labour exploitation.
- **Constitutional Safeguards 1950:** Instituted Directive Principles of State Policy to secure a social order that promoted public welfare and mandated reservations for Scheduled Castes SCs and Scheduled Tribes

1970–1990: Poverty Alleviation and The "Garibi Hatao" Era

With economic stagnation peaking, policies shifted toward direct poverty alleviation, targeted rural development, and state-funded welfare.

1970Five-Year Plans: The Fifth Plan introduced the

Minimum Needs Programme to provide basic services like rural water, health, and education.

- **1978 Integrated Rural Development Programme:** Created to provide income-generating assets to the rural poor

Following the 1991 economic liberalization, India experienced massive growth, allowing the government to fund large, rights-based social programs.

1995 Mid-Day Meal Scheme: Expanded nationally to boost school enrolment and combat child malnutrition.

- **2005 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act:** Guaranteed 100 days of wage employment per year to rural households.
- **2009 Right to Education Act:** Made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for children aged 6 to 14.
- **2013 National Food Security Act:** Provided highly subsidized food grains to up to two-thirds of the population.

2014-2026: Digital Targeting, Financial Inclusion and Universalization: Over the last decade, policy shifted from generalized subsidies to digital, technology-driven direct benefit transfers, expanding access to finance, housing, and healthcare

- **2014 Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana:** Massively drove financial inclusion by opening hundreds of millions of zero-balance bank accounts.
- **JAM Trinity Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile:** Eliminated middlemen by routing subsidies directly into citizens' bank accounts.
- **2015 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** Aimed at providing affordable housing "Housing for All" for the urban and rural poor.
- **2018 Ayushman Bharat:** Established the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, providing ₹5 lakh \$6,000 in health cover per vulnerable family
- **PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana:** Scaled up extensively during and after the pandemic, providing free food grains to 80 Crore vulnerable citizens.
- **Viksit Bharat Goals:** Current policy focuses heavily on expanding basic infrastructure and welfare reach as India targets developed-nation status.

Would you like to explore specific aspects of this welfare timeline? I can provide detailed insights into:

- **The structural impact** of Direct Benefit Transfers DBT on subsidy leakages.
- **Eligibility and benefits** of any specific current scheme Ayushman Bharat, PMAY.

Indian Constitution Mention as Welfare State

Part of the Constitution	Article wise
Preamble of Indian constitution	to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political EQUALITY of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation are the first, third and fourth goals, respectively, mentioned in the Preamble.
Fundamental Rights (12-35)	23. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour - Traffic in human beings and begar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. - Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from imposing compulsory service for public purposes, and in imposing such service the State shall not make any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste or class or any of them. 24. Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
Directive Principles of State Policy (36-51)	37. Application of the principles contained in this Part – The provisions contained in this Part shall not be enforceable by any court, but the principles therein laid down are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws. 38. State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people – - The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life. - The State shall, in particular, strive to minimize the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

39. Certain principles of policy to be followed by the State –

The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing –

- ✓ that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;
- ✓ that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;
- ✓ that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment;
- ✓ that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women;
- ✓ that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;
- ✓ that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

39A. Equal justice and free legal aid –

The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

46. Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections –

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Process of Policy Making : Public policy in India is made through a structured, multi-stage process driven by government bodies, the bureaucracy, and public consultations. It transforms a socio-economic problem into an implemented law or directive.

I. Agenda Setting : The government identifies a pressing public issue requiring intervention. This can be driven by political manifestos, media scrutiny, or public demands setting up the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign to address the declining child sex ratio.

II. Policy Formulation : Ministries, think tanks like the NITI Aayog, and policy professionals draft the proposals. This involves research, stakeholder consultations, economic forecasts, and cost-benefit analyses.

III. Adoption & Legitimation: The policy must be legitimized through the appropriate constitutional framework. Major policies are introduced as Bills in the Parliament, requiring debates and majority votes in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha before receiving the President's assent.

IV. Implementation: This is the longest and most operational phase. The executive machinery IAS officers, state departments, and local bodies translates the policy into actionable programs by allocating budgets, training staff, and rolling out field services.

V. Evaluation & Maintenance: Once implemented, the government assesses the policy's effectiveness. Feedback from citizens, independent audits, and impact assessments decide if a policy should be maintained, tweaked like the constant adjustments to MGNREGA, or terminated.

Models of Welfare Policies in Other Countries

- ✓ Sweden and Norway Scandinavian Model: Known for their strong worker protections, generous welfare benefits, universal healthcare, and free education.
- ✓ United Kingdom: After World War II, the UK introduced the National Health Service NHS and expanded education, housing, and social security.
- ✓ Germany: The welfare measures implemented by Bismarck, such as health insurance, pensions, and labour laws, date back to the 1880s. Germany still maintains a robust social market economy.
- ✓ One of the first nations to implement a comprehensive system of welfare services, including pensions and unemployment payments, was New Zealand in the 1930s.
- ✓ Canada also features a universal health care system and welfare assistance schemes that have often been compared to those in Europe.
- ✓ USA limited welfare Features welfare services, such as Social Security and Medicare, though not as comprehensive as those in the European welfare states.

Importance of Welfare State

A welfare state makes sure that every citizen is cared for by providing support in health, education, jobs, and social security. Its main goal is to reduce inequality, improve living standards, and build a fair and compassionate society.

- A. Access to Healthcare: It makes sure that even poor families can get medical care, helping reduce illness and allowing people to live longer, healthier lives.
- B. Education for All: Free or affordable education gives equal opportunities, helping children from all classes build better futures.
- C. Support in Unemployment: It gives financial support or social security to people who lose their jobs, helping them survive tough times and protecting them from falling into extreme poverty.
- D. Care for Elderly & Sick: Pensions, medicines, and care programs ensure dignity for those unable to work.
- E. Better Living Conditions: It provides housing support, clean water, and food security so that people can live healthier and more comfortable lives.
- F. Social Equality: Reduces the gap between rich and poor, giving everyone a fairer chance in society.
- G. Economic Stability: By helping people during tough times, the welfare state prevents frustration from turning into unrest and keeps the economy steady and balanced

The welfare state developed through an extended time period. The government started to offer fundamental support to impoverished people by providing them with food and housing services. Leaders recognized that people needed on-going support which included health care and employment and educational assistance after they had recognized the basic requirements of people. The initial small efforts developed into larger systems which created the present welfare state that the government now operates to protect its citizens' health and safety needs.

1. Early Ideas 1800s: Governments began small relief programs for the poor, unemployed, and sick, showing the first signs of state responsibility.
2. Bismarck's Germany 1880s: Chancellor Otto von Bismarck introduced health insurance, pensions, and worker protection marking the birth of the modern welfare state.
3. Post-World War 2 Period 1940s: Nations such as the UK adopted the concept of the Beveridge Report that helped increase welfare initiatives such as health care, education, and housing to reconstruct the society post war.

4. Spread of Social Security around the Globe 20th Century onward): Countries such as Sweden, Norway, Canada, and New Zealand adopted their own welfare programs.

Aspect	Early Welfare	Modern Welfare Post WWII onwards
Purpose	Basic relief for the poor and unemployed	Comprehensive social security and equality
Scale	Small, limited programs	Large-scale, nationwide systems
Key Example	Bismarck's Germany: health insurance, pensions, worker aid	UK's NHS, education, housing, Scandinavian models
Focus	Protecting workers and poor from extreme poverty	Ensuring healthcare, education, jobs, and social justice for all
Nature	Minimal state role	Strong state responsibility in welfare

Here's the summary table for the Origin of Welfare State

Period	Key Development	Example
1800s-Early Ideas	Basic relief for poor, food and shelter aid	Poor Laws in UK
Industrial Revolution	Social problems poverty, unsafe work need for state role	Factory Acts, public health reforms
1880s Bismarck Era	First modern welfare programs: health, accident, pension insurance	Germany under Otto von Bismarck
1940s Post WWII	Comprehensive welfare systems introduced	Beveridge Report UK, 1942 NHS
Modern Times	Universal welfare models adapted to new challenges	Sweden, Norway, Canada, New Zealand

Conclusion: It operates on the principles of equal opportunity, equitable wealth distribution, and public responsibility for those unable to care for themselves. A welfare state is a system where the government takes responsibility for the well-being of its citizens. It does this by ensuring that essential services such as healthcare, education, housing, and social security are available to everyone. The government started to offer fundamental support to impoverished people by providing them with food and housing services. Leaders recognized that people needed on-going support which included health care and employment and educational assistance after they had recognized the basic requirements of people.

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