Directive Principles in India

[2007 Schools Wikipedia Selection](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/index.htm). Related subjects: [Politics and government](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/index/subject.Citizenship.Politics_and_government.htm)

The **Directive Principles of State Policy** are guidelines to the central and state governments of India, to be kept in mind while framing laws and policies. These provisions, contained in Part IV of the Constitution of India, are not enforceable by any court, but the principles laid down therein are considered fundamental in the governance of the country, making it the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws to establish a just society in the country. The principles have been inspired by the Directive Principles given in the Constitution of Ireland and also by the principles of Gandhism; and relate to social justice, economic welfare, foreign policy, and legal and administrative matters.

They aim at achieving social and economic democracy for establishing a welfare state. Directive Principles are classified under the following categories: Gandhian, economic and socialistic, political and administrative, justice and legal, environmental, protection of monuments and peace and security.

History

The concept of Directive Principles of State Policy was borrowed from the Irish Constitution. The makers of the Constitution of India were influenced by the Irish nationalist movement. Hence, the Directive Principles of the Indian constitution have been greatly influenced by the Directive Principles of State Policy. The idea of such policies "can be traced to the Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaimed [Revolutionary France](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/f/French_Revolution.htm)and the Declaration of Independence by the American Colonies." The Indian constitution was also influenced by the [United Nations](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/u/United_Nations.htm) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under the educational system of British Raj, students were exposed to ideas of democracy, human rights and European political history. The Indian student community in England was further inspired by the workings of parliamentary democracy and British political parties.

In 1919, the Rowlatt Acts gave extensive powers to the British government and police, and allowed indefinite arrest and detention of individuals, warrant-less searches and seizures, restrictions on public gatherings, and intensive censorship of media and publications. The public opposition to this act eventually led to mass campaigns of non-violent civil disobedience throughout the country demanding guaranteed civil freedoms, and limitations on government power. Indians, who were seeking independence and their own government, were particularly influenced by the independence of [Ireland](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/i/Ireland.htm) and the development of the Irish constitution. Also, the directive principles of state policy in Irish constitution were looked upon by the people of India as an inspiration for the independent India's government to comprehensively tackle complex social and economic challenges across a vast, diverse nation and population.

In 1928, the Nehru Commission composing of representatives of Indian political parties proposed constitutional reforms for India that apart from calling for dominion status for India and elections under universal suffrage, would guarantee rights deemed fundamental, representation for religious and ethnic minorities, and limit the powers of the government. In 1931, the Indian National Congress (the largest Indian political party of the time) adopted resolutions committing itself to the defense of fundamental civil rights, as well as socio-economic rights such as the [minimum wage](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/m/Minimum_wage.htm) and the abolition of untouchability and serfdom. Committing themselves to [socialism](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/s/Socialism.htm) in 1936, the Congress leaders took examples from the constitution of the erstwhile USSR, which inspired the fundamental duties of citizens as a means of collective patriotic responsibility for national interests and challenges.

The chairman of the constitution drafting committee — B. R. Ambedkar

When India obtained independence on 15 August 1947, the task of developing a constitution for the nation was undertaken by the Constituent Assembly of India, composing of elected representatives under the presidency of Rajendra Prasad. While members of Congress composed of a large majority, Congress leaders appointed persons from diverse political backgrounds to responsibilities of developing the constitution and national laws. Notably, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar became the chairperson of the drafting committee, while Jawaharlal Nehru and [Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/s/Sardar_Vallabhbhai_Patel.htm) became chairpersons of committees and sub-committees responsible for different subjects. A notable development during that period having significant effect on the Indian constitution took place on 10 December 1948 when the [United Nations](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/u/United_Nations.htm) General Assembly adopted theUniversal Declaration of Human Rights and called upon all member states to adopt these rights in their respective constitutions.

Both the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy were included in the I Draft Constitution (February 1948), the II Draft Constitution ( 17 October 1948) and the III and final Draft Constitution ( 26 November 1949), being prepared by the Drafting Committee.

Characteristics

DPSPs aim to create social and economic conditions under which the citizens can lead a good life. They also aim to establish social and economic democracy through awelfare state. They act as a check on the government, theorized as a yardstick in the hands of the people to measure the performance of the government and vote it out of power if it does not fulfill the promises made during the elections. The Directive Principles are non-justiciable rights of the people. Article 31-C, inserted by the 25th Amendment Act of 1971 seeks to upgrade the Directive Principles. If laws are made to give effect to the Directive Principles over Fundamental Rights, they shall not be invalid on the grounds that they take away the Fundamental Rights. In case of a conflict between Fundamental Rights and DPSP's, if the DPSP aims at promoting larger interest of the society, the courts shall have to uphold the case in favour of the DPSP. The Directive Principles, though not justiciable, are fundamental in the governance of the country. It shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws. Besides, all executive agencies should also be guided by these principles. Even the judiciary has to keep them in mind in deciding cases.

Directives

Gandhian philosophy, originally propounded by [Mahatma Gandhi](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/m/Mahatma_Gandhi.htm) has great influence on the Directive Principles.

The directive principles ensure that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by promoting a social order in which social, economic and political justice is is informed in all institutions of life. Also, the State shall work towards reducing [economic inequality](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/e/Economic_inequality.htm) as well as inequalities in status and opportunities, not only among individuals, but also among groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations. The State shall aim for securing right to an adequate means of livelihood for all citizens, both men and women as well as equal pay for equal work for both men and women. The State should work to prevent concentration of wealth and means of production in a few hands, and try to ensure that ownership and control of the material resources is distributed to best serve the common good. Child abuse and exploitation of workers should be prevented. Children should be allowed to develop in a healthy manner and should be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

The State shall provide free legal aid to ensure that equal opportunities for securing justice is ensured to all, and is not denied by reason of economic or other disabilities. The State shall also work for organisation of village panchayats and help enable them to enable them to function as units of self-government. The State shall endeavour to provide theright to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, within the limits of economic capacity, as well as provide for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

The State should also ensure living wage and proper working conditions for workers, with full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural activities. Also, the promotion of cottage industries in rural areas is one of the obligations of the State. The State shall take steps to promote their participation in management of industrial undertakings.

Also, the State shall endeavour to secure a uniform civil code for all citizens, and provide free and compulsory education to all children till they attain the age of 14 years. This directive regarding education of children was added by the 86th Amendment Act, 2002. It should and work for the economic and educational upliftment of scheduled castes,scheduled tribes and other weaker sections of the society.

The directive principles commit the state to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health, particularly by prohibiting intoxicating drinks and drugs injurious to health except for medicinal purposes. It should also organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines by improving breeds and prohibiting slaughter of milch and draught [cattle](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/c/Cattle.htm) It should protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wild life of the country. This directive, regarding protection of forests and wildlife was added by the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976.

Protection of monuments, places and objects of historic and artistic interest and national importance against destruction and damage, and separation of judiciary from executive in public services are also the obligations of the State as laid down in the directive principles. Finally, the directive principles, in Article 51 ensure that the State shall strive for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, just and honourable relations between nations, respect for international law and treaty obligations, as well as settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

Critical analysis

The State has made many efforts to implement the **Directive Principles**. The Programme of Universalisation of Elementary Education and the five year plans has been accorded the highest priority in order to provide free education to all children up to the age of 14 years. The 86th constitutional amendment of 2002 inserted a new article, Article 21-A, into the Constitution, that seeks to provide free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years. Welfare schemes for the weaker sections are being implemented both by the Central and state governments. These include programmes such as boys' and girls' hostels for scheduled castes' or scheduled tribes' students. The year 1990-1991 was declared as the "Year of Social Justice" in the memory of B.R. Ambedkar. The government provides free textbooks to students belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes pursuing medicine and engineering courses. During 2002-2003, a sum of [Rs.](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/r/Rupee.htm) 4.77 crore was released for this purpose. In order that scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are protected from atrocities, the Government enacted the *Prevention of Atrocities Act* in 1995, which provided severe punishments for such atrocities.

Several Land Reform Acts were enacted to provide ownership rights to poor farmers. Up to September 2001, more than 200 lakh acres of land had been distributed to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the landless poor. The thrust of banking policy in India has been to improve banking facilities in the rural areas. The [*Minimum Wages Act*](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/m/Minimum_wage.htm) of 1948 empowers government to fix minimum wages for employees engaged in various employments. The *Equal Remuneration Act* of 1976, provides for equal pay for equal work for both men and women. The *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* was launched in 2001 to attain the objective of gainful employment for the rural poor. The programme was implemented through the Panchayati Raj institutions.

Panchayati Raj now covers almost all states and Union territories. One-third of the total number of seats have been reserved for women in Panchayats at every level; in the case of Bihar, half the seats have been reserved for women. Legal aid at the expense of the State has been made compulsory in all cases pertaining to criminal law, if the accused is too poor to engage a lawyer. Judiciary has been separated from the executive in all the states and Union teritories except Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland.

India's Foreign Policy has also to some degree been influenced by the DPSPs. India has in the past condemned all acts of aggression and has also supported the [United Nations](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/u/United_Nations.htm)’ peace-keeping activities. By 2004, the Indian Army had participated in 37 UN peace-keeping operations. India played a key role in the passing of a UN resolution in 2003, which envisaged better cooperation between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. India has also been in favour of nuclear disarmament.