

Quadrant II- Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (Third Year)

Subject: Political Science

Course Code: POD 104

Course Title: Indian Administration

Unit: II

Module Name: Role of National Development Council in Planning

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Notes

National Development Council (NDC) or the Rashtriya Vikas Parishad is the apex body for decision making and deliberations on development matters in India presided over by the Prime Minister. National Development Council was set up on August 6, 1952, to strengthen and mobilize the effort and resources of the nation in support of the Plan, to promote common economic policies in all vital spheres, and to ensure the balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country. The National Development Council is one of the key organizations of the planning system in India. It symbolizes the federal approach to planning and is the instrument for ensuring that the planning system adopts a truly national perspective. Notwithstanding the vicissitudes that it has faced during the past decades, its continuing presence in the apex policy structure has always been felt.

The National Development Council was set up by a proposal of the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of India in August 1952. The National Development Council comprises the following members – Indian Prime Minister; All the Union Cabinet Ministers; Chief Ministers of all States or their substitutes; Representatives of the union territories and; The members of the Planning Commission. The secretary of the Planning Commission is also the secretary of the NDC. The administrative assistance is also provided by the Planning Commission. There have been occasions when the Reserve Bank Governor and other experts have been invited to address the meetings.

The Council ordinarily meets twice a year. It is interesting to note that the Council ordinarily passes no resolution formally. The practice is to have a complete record of discussion and gather out of it general trends pinpointing particular conclusions. Decisions are usually unanimous. In October 1967, on the recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission, the Council was reconstituted and its functions were redefined to include a prescription of guidelines for the formulation of National Plan, including the assessment of resources for the National Plan.

The major objectives of NDC can be listed as: To strengthen and mobilize the effort and resources of the nation in support of the Plan. To promote common economic policies in all vital spheres. To ensure the balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country.

In addition to this, NDC provides a platform for all the states to discuss their problems and issues related to development. Thus, it secures the cooperation of the states in the execution of developmental plans. To provide social amenities like education, medical care, social services, to the citizens of the country, to improve in living standard of the people, to increase in per capita income.

Functions of the NDC include the assessment of resources for the Plan; to consider the National Plan as formulated by the NITI Aayog; to make an assessment of the resources that are required for implementing the Plan and to suggest measures for augmenting them. To consider important questions of social and economic policy affecting national development; and to review the working of the Plan from time to time and to recommend such measures as are necessary for achieving the aims and targets set out in the National Plan. To recommend measures for achievement of the aims and targets set out in the national Plan.

NDC provides a platform for all the states to discuss their problems and issues related to development. Thus, it secures the cooperation of the states in the execution of developmental plans. No resolution is passed by the Council. The practice is to have a complete record of the discussion and gather out of its general trends pinpointing particular conclusions. The prime function of the Council is to act as a kind of bridge between the Union Government, the Planning Commission and the State Governments. It helps in the coordination not only of policies and programmes of plans but also other matters of national importance. It provides a good forum for discussion and full and free exchange of views.

The Council has comprised top-level representatives of the central as well as the state governments, along with the members of the Planning Commission. Decisions are usually unanimous but because of the capture of political power by different political parties in the states, the chief ministers have started demanding greater say and autonomy for the constituent units in the framework of cooperative federalism. The large membership of the council reduced the utility of the council, as Indian democracy enters into an era of regional federalism. The council does not take follow-up action and even as a forum for consultations it operates in a partisan frame which hampers the cooperative spirit of federal collaboration. The NDC needs a transformation in the era of coalitional politics for faster regional development.

The Sarkaria Commission recommended "A new nomenclature viz. National Economic and Development Council (NEDC) to become more effective as a supreme institution for Centre-state planning relations." This revised composition is suggested to restructure NDC to become a more powerful and broad-based constitutional authority. Such a body can evolve a national agenda for holistic growth with emphasis on economic development of the nation. The constitutional status will add prestige and the extra constitutional status of the Planning Commission will also get streamlined. Since the inception of NITI Aayog's Governing Council (which has almost the same composition and roles as NDC), the NDC has had no work assigned to it nor did it have any meetings.