

EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment)

EIA is defined as :

- " An environmental impact assessment (EIA) is an analytical process that systematically examines the possible environmental consequences of the implementation of projects, programs and policies.
- " An environmental impact assessment is an assessment of the possible positive or negative impact that a proposed project may have on the environment, together consisting of the environmental, social and economic aspects.

Origin of EIA :

The post - World War II scenario was a period of extraordinary economic development and environmental change. The upcoming development of jobs, housing, transportation, and energy systems were accompanied by widespread negative environmental changes including air and water pollution, destruction of ecosystems, the alteration of farmlands and major redevelopment of historic urban centres.

EIA was firstly used in the 1960s as part of a national decision making process.

It involved a technical evaluation that would lead to objective decision making.

Finally EIA was accepted as legislation in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 1969 of USA.

This was the first legislation to provide a robust framework for allowing all recognized environmental concerns to be addressed simultaneously.

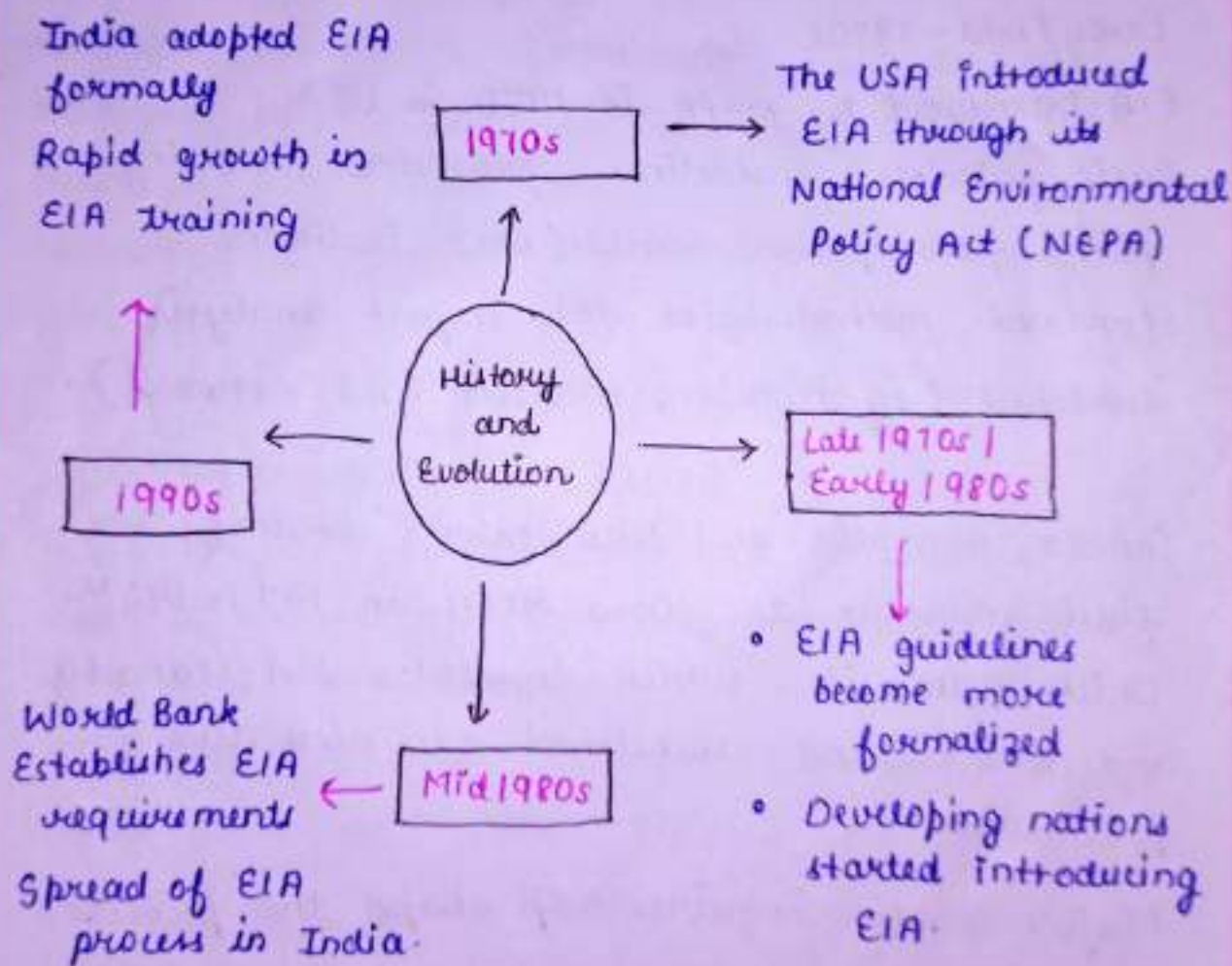
① The work of Lynton Caldwell was a seminal driver of United States environmental policy and legislation. He was one of the authors of NEPA.

② NEPA was designed so dedicatedly that it not only complemented other laws and programs but also not superseded any one.

Thus EIA process was used as a means to integrate the generation and dissemination of environmental information, and foster collaboration among the diverse set of public and private actors and stakeholders which characterize major, environmentally controversial decisions.

Today EIA is practiced as a decision aiding tool rather than decision making tool.

Worldwide, EIA is now practised in more than 100 countries. By the mid-1990s, some 110 countries applied EIA as a major environmental policy. In 1989, EIA was adopted as the major developmental project by the World Bank.



Development of EIA:

Pre-1970

Project review based on the technical / engineering and economic analysis.

Limited consideration given to environmental consequences.

Early / mid-1970s

EIA introduced by NEPA in 1970 in US.

Basic principle: Guidelines, procedures including public participation requirement instituted.

Standard methodologies for impact analysis developed (eg. matrix, checklist and network).

Canada, Australia and New Zealand became the first countries to follow NEPA in 1973-1974.

Unlike Australia, which legislated EIA, Canada and New Zealand established administrative procedures.

Major public inquiries help shape the process's development.

Late 1970 and early 1980s

More formalised guidance

Other industrial and developing countries

introduced formal EIA requirements, began to

use the process informally or experimentally or adopted elements, such as impact statements or reports, as part of development applications for planning permission.

Use of EA by developing countries (China, Brazil, Indonesia)

Strategic Environment Assessment, risk analysis included in EA process.

Provision for public involvement

Coordination of EA with land use planning processes.

Mid 1980s to end of decade

In Europe, EC Directive on EIA establishes basic principle and procedural requirements for all member states.

Increasing efforts to address cumulative effects

World Bank and other leading international aid agencies establish EA requirements.

Spread of EIA process in Asia.

1990s

Requirement to consider trans-boundary effects under Espoo convention.

Increased use of GIS and other information technologies.

Sustainability principal and global issues receive increased attention.

India also adopted the EIA formally

Formulation of EA legislation by many developing countries.

Rapid growth in EA training.

References :

<http://www.cseindia.org>

<https://byjus.com>

<https://www.ukessays.com>