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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework (NFC) 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-tables is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or problem. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hardwork done by the textbook development committee responsible for this textbook. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in Social Sciences, Professor Hari Vasudevan, and the *Chief Advisor* for this textbook, Professor Tapas Majumdar, for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers

contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

New Delhi 16 February 2007 Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

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contents

F ORE	WORD	iii
1. In	TRODUCTION	1
1.1	Emergence of Macroeconomics	5
	Context of the Present Book of Macroeconomics	6
2. NA	ATIONAL INCOME ACCOUNTING	9
2.1	Some Basic Concepts of Macroeconomics	9
2.2	Circular Flow of Income and Methods of	
	Calculating National Income	14
	2.2.1 The Product or Value Added Method	17
	2.2.2 Expenditure Method	21
	2.2.3 Income Method	22
	2.2.4 Factor Cost, Basic Prices and Market Prices	24
2.3	Some Macroeconomic Identities	25
2.4	Nominal and Real GDP	29
2.5	GDP and Welfare	30
3. M	ONEY AND BANKING	36
3.1	Functions of Money	36
3.2	Demand for Money and Supply of Money	37
	3.2.1 Demand for Money	37
	3.2.2 Supply of Money	38
3.3	Money Creation by Banking System	39
	3.3.1 Balance Sheet of a Fictional Bank	40
	3.3.2 Limits to Credit Creation and Money Multiplier	40
3.4	Policy Tools to Control Money Supply	42
4. D E	ETERMINATION OF INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT	53
4.1	Aggregate Demand and its Components	53
	4.1.1 Consumption	54
	4.1.2 Investment	56
4.2	Determination of Income in Two-sector Model	56
4.3	Determination of Equilibrium Income in the Short Run	57
	4.3.1 Macroeconomic equilibrium with price level fixed	57
	4.3.2 Effect of an autonomous change in aggregate	
	demand on income and output	60

	4.3.3 The Multiplier Mechanism	61
4.4	Some More Concepts	64
5. G c	OVERNMENT BUDGET AND THE ECONOMY	66
5.1	Government Budget – Meaning and its Components	66
	5.1.1 Objectives of Government Budget	67
	5.1.2 Classification of Receipts	68
	5.1.3 Classification of Expenditure	69
5.2	Balanced, Surplus and Deficit Budget	70
	5.2.1 Measures of Government Deficit	71
6. Open Economy Macroeconomics		85
6.1	The Balance of Payments	86
	6.1.1 Current Account	86
	6.1.2 Capital Account	88
	6.1.3 Balance of Payments Surplus and Deficit	88
6.2	The Foreign Exchange Market	91
	6.2.1 Foreign Exchange Rate	91
	6.2.2 Determination of the Exchange Rate	92
	6.2.3 Merits and Demerits of Flexible and Fixed	
	Exchange Rate Systems	95
	6.2.4 Managed Floating	95
	CLOSSARY	105