Lesson Objectives

- To understand the Concept of mutual funds,
- Its development in India and
- Mutual fund schemes.

Introduction

A mutual fund is a financial intermediary that pools the savings of investors for collective investment in a diversified portfolio of securities. A fund is “mutual” as all of its returns, minus its expenses, are shared by the fund’s investors.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996 defines a mutual fund as a ‘a fund established in the form of a trust to raise money through the sale of units to the public or a section of the public under one or more schemes for investing in securities, including money market instruments’.

According to the above definition, a mutual fund in India can raise resources through sale of units to the public. It can be set up in the form of a Trust under the Indian Trust Act. The definition has been further extended by allowing mutual funds to diversify their activities in the following areas:

- Portfolio management services
- Management of offshore funds
- Providing advice to offshore funds
- Management of pension or provident funds
- Management of venture capital funds
- Management of money market funds
- Management of real estate funds

A mutual fund serves as a link between the investor and the securities market by mobilising savings from the investors and investing them in the securities market to generate returns. Thus, a mutual fund is akin to portfolio management services (PMS). Although, both are conceptually same, they are different from each other. Portfolio management services are offered to high net worth individuals; taking into account their risk profile, their investments are managed separately. In the case of mutual funds, savings of small investors are pooled under a scheme and the returns are distributed in the same proportion in which the investments are made by the investors/unit-holders.

Mutual fund is a collective savings scheme. Mutual funds play an important role in mobilising the savings of small investors and channelising the same for productive ventures in the Indian economy.

Benefits of Mutual Funds

An investor can invest directly in individual securities or indirectly through a financial intermediary. Globally, mutual funds have established themselves as the means of investment for the retail investor.

1. Professional management: An average investor lacks the knowledge of capital market operations and does not have large resources to reap the benefits of investment. Hence, he requires the help of an expert. It is not only expensive to ‘hire the services’ of an expert but it is more difficult to identify a real expert. Mutual funds are managed by professional managers who have the requisite skills and experience to analyse the performance and prospects of companies. They make possible an organised investment strategy, which is hardly possible for an individual investor.

2. Portfolio diversification: An investor undertakes risk if he invests all his funds in a single scrip. Mutual funds invest in a number of companies across various industries and sectors. This diversification reduces the riskiness of the investments.

3. Reduction in transaction costs: Compared to direct investing in the capital market, investing through the funds is relatively less expensive as the benefit of economies of scale is passed on to the investors.

4. Liquidity: Often, investors cannot sell the securities held easily, while in case of mutual funds, they can easily encash their investment by selling their units to the fund if it is an open-ended scheme or selling them on a stock exchange if it is a close-ended scheme.

5. Convenience: Investing in mutual fund reduces paperwork, saves time and makes investment easy.

6. Flexibility: Mutual funds offer a family of schemes, and investors have the option of transferring their holdings from one scheme to the other.

7. Tax benefits: Mutual fund investors now enjoy income-tax benefits. Dividends received from mutual funds’ debt schemes are tax exempt to the overall limit of Rs 9,000 allowed under section 80L of the Income Tax Act.

8. Transparency: Mutual funds transparently declare their portfolio every month. Thus an investor knows where his/her money is being deployed and in case they are not happy with the portfolio they can withdraw at a short notice.

9. Stability to the stock market: Mutual funds have a large amount of funds which provide them economies of scale by which they can absorb any losses in the stock market and continue investing in the stock market. In addition, mutual funds increase liquidity in the money and capital market.

10. Equity research: Mutual funds can afford information and data required for investments as they have large amount of funds and equity research teams available with them.

History of Mutual Funds

The history of mutual funds, dates back to 19th century Europe, in particular, Great Britain. Robert Fleming set up in 1868 the first investment trust called Foreign and Colonial
Investment Trust which promised to manage the finances of the moneyed classes of Scotland by spreading the investment over a number of different stocks. This investment trust and other investment trusts which were subsequently set up in Britain and the US, resembled today's close-ended mutual funds. The first mutual fund in the US, Massachusetts Investors' Trust, was setup in March 1924. This was the first open-ended mutual fund.

The stock market crash in 1929, the Great Depression, and the outbreak of the Second World War slackened the pace of growth of the mutual fund industry. Innovations in products and services increased the popularity of mutual funds in the 1950s and 1960s. The first international stock mutual fund was introduced in the US in 1940. In 1976, the first tax-exempt municipal bond funds emerged and in 1979, the first money market mutual funds were created. The latest additions are the international bond fund in 1986 and arm funds in 1990. This industry witnessed substantial growth in the eighties and nineties when there was a significant increase in the number of mutual funds, schemes, assets, and shareholders. In the US, the mutual fund industry registered a ten fold growth in the eighties (1980-89) only, with 25% of the household sector's investment in financial assets made through them. Fund assets increased from less than $150 billion in 1980 to over $4 trillion by the end of 1997. Since 1996, mutual fund assets have exceeded bank deposits. The mutual fund industry and the banking industry virtually rival each other in size.

**Growth of Mutual Funds in India**

The Indian mutual fund industry has evolved over distinct stages. The growth of the mutual fund industry in India can be divided into four phases: Phase I (1964-87), Phase II (1987-92), Phase III (1992-97), and Phase IV (beyond 1997).

**Phase I:** The mutual fund concept was introduced in India with the setting up of UTI in 1963. The Unit Trust of India (UTI) was the first mutual fund set up under the UTI Act, 1963, a special act of the Parliament. It became operational in 1964 with a major objective of mobilising savings through the sale of units and investing them in corporate securities for maximising yield and capital appreciation. This phase commenced with the launch of Unit Scheme 1964 (US-64) the first open-ended and the most popular scheme. UTI’s investible funds, at market value (and including the book value of fixed assets) grew from Rs 49 crore in 1965 to Rs 219 crore in 1970-71 to Rs 1,126 crore in 1980-81 and further to Rs 5,068 crore by June 1987. Its investor base had also grown to about 2 million investors. It launched innovative schemes during this phase. Its fund family included five income-oriented, open-ended schemes, which were sold largely through its agent network built up over the years. Master share, the equity growth fund launched in 1986, proved to be a grand marketing success. Master share was the first real close-ended scheme floated by UTI. It launched India Fund in 1986-the first Indian offshore fund for overseas investors, which was listed on the London Stock Exchange (LSE). UTI maintained its monopoly and experienced a consistent growth till 1987.

**Phase II:** The second phase witnessed the entry of mutual fund companies sponsored by nationalised banks and insurance companies. In 1987, SBI Mutual Fund and Canbank Mutual Fund were set up as trusts under the Indian Trust Act, 1882. In 1988, UTI floated another offshore fund, namely, The India Growth Fund which was listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSB). By 1990, the two nationalised insurance giants, LIC and GIC, and nationalised banks, namely, Indian Bank, Bank of India, and Punjab National Bank had started operations of wholly-owned mutual fund subsidiaries. The assured return type of schemes floated by the mutual funds during this phase were perceived to be another banking product offered by the arms of sponsor banks. In October 1989, the first regulatory guidelines were issued by the Reserve Bank of India, but they were applicable only to the mutual funds sponsored by FIIs. Subsequently, the Government of India issued comprehensive guidelines in June 1990 covering all mutual funds. These guidelines emphasised compulsory registration with SEBI and an arms length relationship be maintained between the sponsor and asset management company (AMC). With the entry of public sector funds, there was a tremendous growth in the size of the mutual fund industry with investible funds, at market value, increasing to Rs 53,462 crore and the number of investors increasing to over 23 million. The buoyant equity markets in 1991-92 and tax benefits under equity-linked savings schemes enhanced the attractiveness of equity funds.

**Phase III:** The year 1993 marked a turning point in the history of mutual funds in India. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued the Mutual Fund Regulations in January 1993. SEBI notified regulations bringing all mutual funds except UTI under a common regulatory framework. Private domestic and foreign players were allowed entry in the mutual fund industry. Kothari group of companies, in joint venture with Pioneer, a US fund company, set up the first private mutual fund the Kothari Pioneer Mutual Fund, in 1993. Kothari Pioneer introduced the first open-ended fund Prima in 1993. Several other private sector mutual funds were set up during this phase. UTI launched a new scheme, Master-gain, in May 1992, which was a phenomenal success with a subscription of Rs 4,700 crore from 631akh applicants. The industry’s investible funds at market value increased to Rs 78,655 crore and the number of investor accounts increased to 50 million. However, the year 1995 was the beginning of the sluggish phase of the mutual fund industry. During 1995 and 1996, unit holders saw an erosion in the value of their investments due to a decline in the NA V s of the equity funds. Moreover, the service quality of mutual funds declined due to a rapid growth in the number of investor accounts, and the inadequacy of service infrastructure. A lack of performance of the public sector funds and miserable failure of foreign funds like Morgan Stanley eroded the confidence of investors in fund managers. Investors perception about mutual funds, gradually turned negative. Mutual funds found it increasingly difficult to raise money. The average annual sales declined from about Rs 13,000 crores in 1991-94 to about Rs 9,000 crore in 1995 and 1996.

**Phase IV:** During this phase, the flow of funds into the kitty of mutual funds sharply increased. This significant growth was aided by a more positive sentiment in the capital market, significant tax benefits, and improvement in the quality of
Investible funds, at market value, of the industry rose by June 2000 to over Rs 1,10,000 crore with UTI having 68% of the market share. During 1999-2000 sales mobilisation reached a record level of Rs 73,000 crore as against Rs 31,420 crore in the preceding year. This trend was, however, sharply reversed in 2000-01. The UTI dropped a bombshell on the investing public by disclosing the NAV of US-64-its flagship scheme as on December 28,2000, just at Rs 5.81 as against the face value of Rs 10 and the last sale price of Rs 14.50. The disclosure of NAV of the country’s largest mutual fund scheme was the biggest shock of the year to investors. Crumbling global equity markets, a sluggish economy coupled with bad investment decisions made life tough for big funds across the world in 2001-02. The effect of these problems was felt strongly in India also. Pioneer m, JP Morgan and Newton Investment Management pulled out from the Indian market. Bank of India MF liquidated all its schemes in 2002.

The Indian mutual fund industry has stagnated at around Rs 1,00,000 crore assets since 2000-01. This stagnation is partly a result of stagnated equity markets and the indifferent performance by players. As against this, the aggregate deposits of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) as on May 3, 2002, stood at Rs 11,86,468 crore. Mutual funds assets under management (AUM) form just around 10% of deposits of SCBs.

The Unit Trust of India is losing out to other private sector players. While there has been an increase in AUM by around 11% during the year 2002, UTI on the contrary has lost more than 11% in AUM. The private sector mutual funds have benefited the most from the debacle of US-64 of UTI. The AUM of this sector grew by around 60% for the year ending March 2002.

**Types of Mutual Fund Schemes**

The objectives of mutual funds are to provide continuous liquidity and higher yields with high degree of safety to investors. Based on these objectives, different types of mutual fund schemes have evolved.

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**Functional Classification of Mutual Funds**

1. **Open-ended schemes**: In case of open-ended schemes, the mutual fund continuously offers to sell and repurchase its units at net asset value (NAV) or NAV-related prices. Unlike close-ended schemes, open-ended ones do not have to be listed on the stock exchange and can also offer repurchase soon after allotment. Investors can enter and exit the scheme any time during the life of the fund. Open-ended schemes do not have a fixed corpus. The corpus of fund increases or decreases, depending on the purchase or redemption of units by investors.

There is no fixed redemption period in open-ended schemes, which can be terminated whenever the need arises. The fund offers a redemption price at which the holder can sell units to the fund and exit. Besides, an investor can enter the fund again by buying units from the fund at its offer price. Such funds announce sale and repurchase prices from time-to-time. UTI’s US-64 scheme is an example of such a fund.

The key feature of open-ended funds is liquidity. They increase liquidity of the investors as the units can be continuously bought and sold. The investors can develop their income or saving plan due to free entry and exit frame of funds. Open-ended schemes usually come as a family of schemes which enable the investors to switch over from one scheme to another of same family.

2. **Close-ended schemes**: Close-ended schemes have a fixed corpus and a stipulated maturity period ranging between 2 to 5 years. Investors can invest in the scheme when it is launched. The scheme remains open for a period not exceeding 45 days. Investors in close-ended schemes can buy units only from the market, once initial subscriptions are over and thereafter the units are listed on the stock exchanges where they dm be bought and sold. The fund has no interaction with investors till redemption except for paying dividend/ bonus. In order to provide an alternate exit route to the investors, some close-ended funds give an option of selling back the units to the mutual fund through periodic repurchase at NAV related prices. If an investor sells units directly to the fund, he cannot enter the fund again, as units bought back by the fund cannot be reissued. The close-ended scheme can be converted into an open-ended one. The units can be rolled over by the passing of a resolution by a majority of the unit-holders.

3. **Interval scheme**: Interval scheme combines the features of open-ended and close-ended schemes. They are open for sale or redemption during predetermined intervals at NAV-related prices.

**Portfolio Classification**

Here, classification is on the basis of nature and types of securities and objective of investment.

1. **Income funds**: The aim of income funds is to provide safety of investments and regular income to investors. Such schemes invest predominantly in income-bearing instruments like bonds, debentures, government securities, and commercial paper. The return as well as the risk are lower in income funds as compared to growth funds.

2. **Growth funds**: The main objective of growth funds is capital appreciation over the medium-to-long term. They invest most of the corpus in equity shares with significant growth potential and they offer higher return to investors in the long-term. They assume the risks associated with equity investments. There is no guarantee or assurance of returns. These schemes are usually close-ended and listed on stock exchanges.
3. **Balanced funds**: The aim of balanced scheme is to provide both capital appreciation and regular income. They divide their investment between equity shares and fixed interest-bearing instruments in such a proportion that, the portfolio is balanced. The portfolio of such funds usually comprises of companies with good profit and dividend track records. Their exposure to risk is moderate and they offer a reasonable rate of return.

4. **Equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS)**: In order to encourage investors to invest in equity market, the government has given tax-concessions through special schemes to cater to the special needs of investors. UTI has launched special schemes such as Children’s Gift Growth Fund, 1986, Housing Unit Scheme, 1992, and Venture Capital Funds.

5. **Gilt funds**: Mutual funds which deal exclusively in gilts are called gilt funds. With a view to creating a wider investor base for government securities, the Reserve Bank of India encouraged setting up of gilt funds. These funds are provided liquidity support by the Reserve Bank.

6. **Money market mutual funds**: They specialise in investing in short-term money market instruments like treasury bills, and certificate of deposits. The objective of such funds is high liquidity with low rate of return.

Geographical Classification

1. **Domestic funds**: Funds which mobilise resources from a particular geographical locality like a country or region are domestic funds. The market is limited and confined to the boundaries of a nation in which the fund operates. They can invest only in the securities which are issued and traded in the domestic financial markets.

2. **Offshore funds**: Offshore funds attract foreign capital for investment in the country of the issuing company. They facilitate cross-border fund flow which leads to an increase in foreign currency and foreign exchange reserves. Such mutual funds can invest in securities of foreign companies. They open domestic capital market to international investors. Many mutual funds in India have launched a number of offshore funds, either independently or jointly with foreign investment management companies. The first offshore fund, the India Fund, was launched by Unit Trust of India in July 1986 in collaboration with the US fund manager, Merril Lynch.

Others

1. **Sectoral**: These funds invest in specific core sectors like energy, telecommunications, IT, construction, transportation, and financial services. Some of these newly opened-up sectors offer good investment potential.

2. **Tax saving schemes**: Tax-saving schemes are designed on the basis of tax policy with special tax incentives to investors. Mutual funds have introduced a number of tax-saving schemes. These are close-ended schemes and investments are made for ten years, although investors can avail of encashment facilities after 3 years. These schemes contain various options like income, growth or capital gains. The latest scheme offered is the Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP) which enables investors to reduce their tax incidence on dividends from as high as 30% to as low as 3 to 4%.

3. **Equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS)**: In order to encourage investors to invest in equity market, the government has given tax-concessions through special schemes. Investment in these schemes entitles the investor to claim an income tax rebate, but these schemes carry a lock-in period before the end of which funds cannot be withdrawn.

4. **Special schemes**: Mutual funds have launched special schemes to cater to the special needs of investors. UTI has

7. **Index funds**: An index fund is a mutual fund which invests in securities in the index on which it is based BSE Sensex or S&P CNX Nifty. It invests only in those shares which comprise the market index and in exactly the same proportion as the companies/weightage in the index so that the value of such index funds varies with the market index. An index fund follows a passive investment strategy as no effort is made by the fund manager to identify stocks for investment/disinvestment. The fund manager has to merely track the index on which it is based. His portfolio will need an adjustment in case there is a revision in the underlying index. In other words, the fund manager has to buy stocks which are added to the index and sell stocks which are deleted from the index.

Internationally, index funds are very popular. Around one-third of professionally run portfolios in the US are index funds. Empirical evidence points out that active fund managers have not been able to perform well. Only 20-25% of actively managed equity mutual funds out-perform benchmark indices in the long-term. These active fund managers track 80% of their money in an index and do active management on the remaining 20%. Moreover, risk
averse investors like provident funds and pension funds prefer investment in passively managed funds like index funds.

8. **PIE ratio fund**: PIE ratio fund is another mutual fund variant that is offered by Pioneer IT! Mutual Fund. The PIE (Price-Earnings) ratio is the ratio of the price of the stock of a company to its earnings per share (EPS). The PIE ratio of the index is the weighted average price-earnings ratio of all its constituent stocks.

The PIE ratio fund invests in equities and debt instruments wherein the proportion of the investment is determined by the ongoing price-earnings multiple of the market. Broadly, around 90% of the investible funds will be invested in equities if the Nifty Index PIE ratio is 12 or below. If this ratio exceeds 28, the investment will be in debt/money markets. Between the two ends of 12 and 28 PIE ratio of the Nifty, the fund will allocate varying proportions of its investible funds to equity and debt. The objective of this scheme is to provide superior risk-adjusted returns through a balanced portfolio of equity and debt instruments.

9. **Exchange traded funds**: Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) are a hybrid of open-ended mutual funds and listed individual stocks. They are listed on stock exchanges and trade like individual stocks on the stock exchange. However, trading at the stock exchanges does not affect their portfolio. ETFs do not sell their shares directly to investors for cash. The shares are offered to investors over the stock exchange. ETFs are basically passively managed funds that track a particular index such as S&P CNX Nifty.

Since they are listed on stock exchanges, it is possible to buy and sell them throughout the day and their price is determined by the demand-supply forces in the market. In practice, they trade in a small range around the value of the assets (NAV) held by them.

ETFs offer several distinct advantages.

- ETFs bring the trading and real time pricing advantages of individual stocks to mutual funds. The ability to trade intra-day at prices that are usually close to the actual intra-day NAV of the scheme makes it almost real-time trading.

- ETFs are simpler to understand and hence they can attract small investors who are deterred to trade in index futures due to requirement of minimum contract size. Small investors can buy minimum one unit of ETF, can place limit orders and trade intra-day. This, in turn, would increase liquidity of the cash market.

- ETFs can be used to arbitrate effectively between index futures and spot index.

- ETFs provide the benefits of diversified index funds. The investor can benefit from the flexibility of stocks as well as the diversification.

- ETFs being passively managed, have somewhat higher NAV against an index fund of the same portfolio. The operating expenses of ETFs are lower than even those of similar index funds as they do not have to service investors who deal in shares through stock exchanges.

- ETFs can be beneficial for financial institutions also. Financial institutions can use ETFs for utilizing idle cash, managing redemptions, modifying sector allocations, and hedging market exposure.

The first exchange traded fund-Standard and Poor's Depository Receipt (SPDR-also called Spider)-was launched in the US in 1993. ETFs have grown rapidly with around US$100 billion in assets as on December 2001. Today, about 60% of trading value on the American Stock Exchange (AMEX) is from ETFs. ETFs were launched in Europe and Asia in 2001. Currently, more than 120 ETFs are available in US, Europe, Singapore, Hongkong, Japan, and other countries. Among the popular ones are SPD Rs (Spiders) based on the S&P 500 Index, QQQs (cubes) based on the Nasdaq-100 Index, iSHARES based on MSCI Indices and TRAHK (Tracks) based on the Hang Seng Index. The ETF structure has seen over $120 bn pouring into it in more than 220 funds. It has become the fastest growing fund structure. In year 2001 alone, the number of funds doubled from 100 to 200.

The first ETF to be introduced in India is Nifty Bench mark Exchange-Traded Scheme (Nifty BeES). It is an open-ended ETF, launched towards the end of 2001 by Benchmark Mutual Funds. The fund is listed in the capital market segment of the NSE and trades the S&P CNX Nifty Index. The Benchmark Asset Management Company has become the first company in Asia (excluding Japan) to introduce ETF.

**Net Asset Value** The net asset value of a fund is the market value of the assets minus the liabilities on the day of valuation. In other words, it is the amount which the shareholders will collectively get if the fund is dissolved or liquidated. The net asset value of a unit is the net asset value of fund divided by the number of outstanding units.

Thus NAV = Market Price of Securities + Other Assets - Total Liabilities + Units Outstanding as at the NAV date.

NAV = Net Assets of the Scheme + Number of units outstanding, that is, Market value of investments + Receivables + Other Accrued Income + Other Assets - Accrued Expenses - Other Payables - Other Liabilities + No. of units outstanding as at the NAV date.

A fund’s NAV is affected by four sets of factors: purchase and sale of investment securities, valuation of all investment securities held, other assets and liabilities, and units sold or redeemed.

SEBI has issued guidelines on valuation of traded securities, thinly traded securities and non-traded securities. These guidelines were issued to streamline the procedure of calculation of NAV of the schemes of mutual funds. The aggregate value of illiquid securities as defined in the guidelines shall not exceed 15% of the total assets of the scheme and any illiquid securities held above 15% of the total assets shall be valued in the manner as specified in the guidelines issued by the SEBI.

Where income receivables on investments has accrued but has not been received for the period specified in the guidelines issued by SEBI, provision shall be made by debiting to the revenue account the income so accrued in the manner specified by guidelines issued by SEBI.
Mutual funds are required to declare their NAVs and sale-repurchase prices of all schemes updated daily on regular basis on the AMFI website by 8.00 p.m. and declare NAVs of their close-ended schemes on every Wednesday.

According to SEBI (Mutual Funds) (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2000, a mutual fund can now invest up to 5% of its NAV in the unlisted equity shares or equity related instruments in case of open-ended schemes; while in case of close-ended schemes, the mutual fund can now invest up to 10% of its NAV.

**Mutual Fund Investors**

Mutual funds in India are open to investment by

a. Residents including
   - Resident Indian Individuals, including high net worth individuals and the retail or small investors. Indian Companies
   - Indian Trusts/ Charitable Institutions
   - Banks
   - Non-Banking Finance Companies
   - Insurance Companies
   - Provident Funds

b. Non-Residents, including
   - Non-Resident Indians
   - Other Corporate Bodies (OCBs)

c. Foreign entities, namely, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) registered with SEBI. Foreign citizens/ entities are however not allowed to invest in mutual funds in India.