

## **EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA- CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION AND WAY FORWARD.**

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The term “Social Security” originated in the United States and spread out subsequently across the world. Political leaders, economists, social workers and researchers have put emphasis on the significance of social security differently. Now, the concept of social security and its importance have been universally recognized. It has been acknowledged on principle that social security is one of the most important objectives of social welfare activities of all countries though the countries are different from one another on political ideologies, socio-economic policies and conditions as well as cultural practices. Scope, coverage and procedures for implementation of various social security programmes may be different in different countries but the rationale is the same.

The basic concept of social security refers to a “minimum standard of living” to every citizen of the society against various adverse circumstances of the life. It is predicated on the idea that the state should shoulder the burden of securing a decent quality of living for all citizens, no matter what might happen to them. Contrarily, social security is the state's major tool for promoting social and economic fairness. The poor and helpless members of society who are unable to support themselves through their own efforts have a fundamental right to and need for social security. To alleviate poverty and inequality and to ensure a basic living standard, social security is a must. Social security is founded on the principles of social justice and respect for the inherent worth of every individual, with a special focus on the most disadvantaged and helpless members of society who live Below Poverty Line. Although not explicitly guaranteed by the Indian Constitution, the right to social security is universal and its realization will aid in the pursuit of many national development objectives.

Throughout their lives, people of all backgrounds, classes, religions, cultures, and social standings require assistance in the areas of social, economic, physical, mental, and emotional well-being. You need other people at certain points in your life if you want to keep on living. This assistance or reliance is mostly economic in nature, since it entails providing for basic needs such as food, clothes, and a roof over one's head. One's primary dependency lasts for two distinct periods of time: the first, from birth until the individual begins earning on his own to fulfill basic requirements; the second, upon the individual's cessation of employment or the end of his working life. Unemployment, job loss, disability, illness, and other unforeseen circumstances can all be difficult periods of dependence. Those who are financially dependent on their families' breadwinners include minors, women who are unable to work, and widows who cannot find employment. Support was traditionally supplied by extended families, clans, groups, communities, and religious organizations. We also see those social groupings,

membership institutions, the market, and the state provide such forms of assistance. Therefore, if one institution fails to provide necessary assistance or provides inadequate care, it is the responsibility of the other institutions to ensure the individual's well-being. You may call the safety net that society provides for the disabled and elderly a form of social security.

### **DEFINITION OF SOCIAL SECURITY:**

"a number of developing countries have set up social assistance schemes that are aimed at people in need who cannot be reached by employment or other social policies and who have not been able to protect themselves through social insurance," ILO says. Most social assistance programs in developing nations are need-based, meaning they provide financial and other forms of aid only to those who can prove they are in dire straits. This includes persons who are widowed, orphaned, or aged without other means of support.

"The basic idea of Social Security is to use social means to prevent deprivation and vulnerability to deprivation," Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze (1991) said.

Social security has been further explored by Robin Burgers and Nicholas Stern (1991) in the context of precarity and weakness. That "deprivation and vulnerability are integral to the lives of many in poor countries" is a central argument in their theory. Unfavorable economic results may cause actual suffering in rich countries, but often lead to death or destitution in underdeveloped ones. For many people, abject poverty is not the result of a one-time setback from a more secure position, but rather a permanent condition brought on by factors like the lack of access to capital or other resources necessary to support oneself. How people's lives and livelihoods may be made more resilient in the face of hardship and poverty is, therefore, a critical policy issue. Therefore, we state that the purpose of Social Security is to avoid, by social means, extremely low standards of living, whether they originate from persistent deprivation or transitory adversity. Social Security, in this context, might be seen as an indicator of how well this goal is being met.

Social security in India includes not just traditional insurance but also microinsurance (often known as "insurance for the poor"), social safety nets, and various forms of social promotion and protection. There is no one, agreed-upon definition of social security in the Indian context since the term has been defined in so many different ways by so many different institutions. Social security encompasses a wide range of policies and programs designed to help those in need, including safety nets, social funds, protection, microinsurance, and social assistance. Rolf Sülzer (2008) in his book „Social Security in India- a system in the making“ has summed up the definition of social security quite aptly “the sum of all government regulations and provisions that aim at enhancing the people’s living conditions, including legislations / acts / laws, regulation, and planning in the fields of old age, wage, unemployment, and social exclusion, sickness and health care, and also income security measures such as food security, employment, education and health, housing social insurance and social assistance.”

According to the Planning Commission, "the fundamental distinguishing element of social assistance is that the complete cost of the programme is borne by the state or the local governments out of their general or special income. Help is provided automatically once the established criteria for destitution are satisfied. This program is designed to help those who are unable to work due to age, illness, or other circumstances and therefore have a low or nonexistent income. There is often a means test for receiving social services.

### **EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY:**

There were police states throughout antiquity and the medieval ages, with less government involvement in economic growth. They'd put their faith in Laissez-Faire economics. As a result, during the police state, the notion of social security was severely constrained. The contemporary era, however, has seen a transformation of the states into welfare states. With the introduction of welfare states, the state was called upon to take an active role in promoting economic growth and social welfare. While the only responsibility of police states was to safeguard the state, welfare states also had a responsibility to ensure the well-being of their citizens. As a result, the idea of social security emerged alongside welfare governments to help the economically disadvantaged. Then, during the industrial revolution in Europe, the idea of social security as a safety net for employees who relied on their paychecks for survival was first established. In ancient and medieval India, the idea of social security was viewed as the personal responsibility of each family's members. However, when urbanization and industrialization occurred at a rapid pace, individuals from rural regions moved into cities. The notion of contemporary social security has emerged in India as a result of the country's fast demographic changes and the accompanying increase in rural-to-urban migration. In response, the government of India has instituted a number of social protection policies in accordance with the constitution's mandates.

### **OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL SECURITY:**

The major objectives of social security are:

- to support in the event of unemployment or non-employment for young orphans, destitute women, incurably sick, old persons when there is none to take care of them
- to provide work to those who can work which includes job security and income guarantee
- to ensure regularity of income for maintenance of life at an optimum level.
- to prevent against fall of income due to any contingency and to avoid loss of productive capacity due to sickness, joblessness.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES:**

In general, there are two types of "social security" programs: voluntary programs and government-mandated programs. Specifically, non-statutory plans can be broken down into employer-provided schemes, publicly funded schemes, and voluntary organization-provided

schemes. Two further categories exist inside statutory programs: social assistance and social insurance.

### **NON-STATUTORY SCHEMES:**

In earlier period of time 'social security was in non-statutory form, without any aid from the state by the voluntary organizations. These organizations were established by persons belonging to common caste or community or profession. These charitable organizations used to provide food, shelter, medical assistance etc. to needy persons.

The members were expected to make contribution. And these voluntary organizations provide insurance against illness and other contingencies of the member participants on loss of income due to illness of similar contingencies. However, these organizations were in a position to provide limited benefits due to their limited resources. Thus only a few persons were covered for benefits and some of the organizations were forced to dissolve. After the introduction of social security legislations, the importance of non-statutory organizations started diminishing.

### **STATUTORY SCHEMES:**

A Welfare state government is bound to provide protection of workers against various risks. As a result, majority of countries having Federal system of government framed statutory schemes to provide social security benefits to its people. The amount of benefit, extent of risk coverage, qualifying period under the scheme varied from nation to nation. Statutory schemes may be either in the form of 'social assistance' or in the form of 'social insurance'.

### **SOCIAL ASSISTANCE:**

This system of social security was introduced in Denmark at the end of nineteenth century. It was found that the workers were putting their efforts for the prosperity of the country but did not get preference in getting assistance in the form of poor relief from the state. In order to solve this issue a new scheme was introduced not on charitable ground but as a matter of their legal right. The costs of social assistance were met out of general revenue of the state. Benefits were in the form of old age, invalidity and surveyor's assistance etc. This scheme is still prevalent in some part of the world. Countries where social insurance is not fully developed or wants to avoid the complication relating to administration of it, prefers social assistance to the residents.

The main advantage of 'social assistance' is that every resident of the country is entitled to receive benefit under the scheme even if the person is employed or not. The social assistance programme also taking preventive measures to avoid the occurrence of contingency. Such preventive measures minimize the occurrence of the contingency and ultimately result in reduction of expenditure from the fund. This scheme is financed from state fund. Because of these features social assistance has got maximum coverage when compared to other schemes. Hence 'social assistance' fights with the contingencies namely need, distress, infirmity, helplessness, apathy, mal adjustment etc.

**SOCIAL INSURANCE:**

This system of social security was started in 1883 in Germany with the passing of compulsory Accident Insurance Act. According to Chambers'

Encyclopedia "Social insurance is a system in which compulsory contributions entitles the insured person to benefits of a predictable size when certain conditions are fulfilled."

Social insurance is social because it involves the collective effort of the beneficiaries, State and the employers, if any. It is insurance because the beneficiary has to contribute before he becomes entitled to benefits. Hence the benefits are not paid gratis; they are systematically financed. Since the scheme is subsidised, a device is evolved to exclude those individual groups which do not deserve any subsidy from the State. However, for those who come within the defined limits, social insurance is compulsory. Thus, social insurance is a system in which members are entitled for a specified amount against compulsory contributions made on compliance of certain specified conditions. The basic objective of social insurance is to protect the income of workers who do not have sufficient financial resources to support their family in case any contingency. The social insurance scheme provides benefits for persons of small earnings granted as of right in amounts which combine the contributive effort of the insured, subsidies from the employer and the State.

Contributions by insured, employer and the State largely depends on the wages of the employee and financial position of the state. In some countries the cost of social insurance is borne by the employers and employees only while in certain countries it is whole responsibility of the employer.

In most of the countries the whole population is not covered under social insurance though it has been put forth by International Labour Organization. The contributions payable is on graduated rates. Accordingly, benefits are paid in variable proportions. Among the different branches of social insurance workmen's compensation insurance, industrial accident insurance is the oldest and health and sickness insurance is fairly widespread and unemployment insurance is the latest.

**SOCIAL PROTECTION:**

Social protection is the contributory returns of an individual being provided by the government for providing education, health, nutrition, food, employment, housing, livelihood security, family pension, retired pension and insurance returns are called social protection. So social protection is called as the non-contingent assistance.

The social security in developing countries is confronted with multiple challenges:

- Reduction of absolute poverty by making provision of basic needs like food, shelter, basic health care, primary education and safe drinking water,
- Meeting up of needs in contingencies like old age, disability, widowhood, sickness, death of primary worker etc.
- Assistance to victims for relief and rehabilitation after hazards like earthquake, flood and drought. The social security system in India is also very complex in terms of its wide variations, expansion, coverage and administration.

**SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA:**

India is a very large country with population more than 1.3 billion people. Such a huge population needs utmost attention in order to eliminate the inequalities that has been prevailing since years due to various reasons. As the era of colonialism ends in mid-1950, many countries were successful in freeing themselves from the shackles of exploitative aggressors.<sup>8</sup> In this fight against colonialism, they missed the industrial revolution which would have been a golden chance to prosper and raise the national income and become self-sufficient. Therefore, they inherited a country which was more or poor and illiterate living substandard life. It was the duty of state to look after those exploited people in free and independent India. Many groups were vulnerable to various aspects surrounding them. Health, education related penetration in far flung villages was totally absent making them ignorant about their rights.<sup>3</sup> The constitution of India has an explicit mention of the social security and written it as India is a welfare state which means all the vulnerable section must be taken care of by the government for their basic amenities. Part IV of the constitution titled as Directive Principles for state polices mention such declaration. It is the duty of the state to take care the marginalized section and uplift their situation. Various ministries work in coordination to ensure the social security cover which is time to time reviewed and updated by the parliament of the India. According to the budget estimates from 2020 of Government of India, 1600000 lakh crore (220 billion USD) has been allocated to provide various social security's such as financial inclusion, meal for children, rural job guarantee, various pension funds and so on. The social security cover includes health care benefits, availability of food as minimal cost, pension and provident funds to ensure dignified life post-retirement from the government jobs, Family and child care along with maternity benefits, Job guarantee for certain number of days as specified in the rules for people from rural background, subsidies for fertilizers, minimum support price for the produce from farms and government procurement for some of them are some of the broad areas that government is working to uplift these sections.

**SOCIAL SECURITY FOR WOMEN:**

Social security for women is the most debated topic as many decades saw a patriarchal mindset which more or less makes the women a second-class human being. But on the contrary, women which constitutes almost half of the total population of the world and also of country like India, making any progress without the involvement of them is not possible. Many changes have been brought through various legislative and executive actions to ensure they are providing the level playing field. In fact, India is among the very first countries where voting to elect the democratic government involved universal adult franchise which means women also got equal vote as other which was absent in many western countries till 1970's. But so far, they have remained marginalized due to various reasons. Most of the women are still living in village in spite of shifting of their spouses to cities to provide care for their families. They are ought to do household chores and cannot look beyond that. Thankfully this mindset is now changing and many women are taking up various jobs which suits their educational background or their skills. Violence of any form was the main hindrance in the way of women's progress which has drastically reduced although it is

not completely defenestrated. Considering the situation of the women at the time of independence, constituent assembly inserted the Article 15 (3) which enables the union and state governments to make special efforts to uplift the women from their situation. Keeping in view the said article, government various schemes which includes, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, One stop centre scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM mudra Yojana etc. are the schemes which provides health, educational, economic benefits to the women. Let's see how these schemes are benefiting women. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, institutional delivery is promoted through cash incentives. If there is lack of institutional facility then delivery through certified midwives also can help to deliver the baby. The scheme is comprehensively design especially keeping in view the women for rural background who have to work until the time of pregnancy and child birth and right after the child birth. This has detrimental impact on the mother's health and also child misses the breastfeeding nutrition from the mother which is extremely critical for the new born child for the initial period of six month which also protects child from various infection. It was found that expected mothers and mothers of just born child are told and pressurize to go search for work even if their health condition does not permit to do so. The cash incentive is the substitute for the wages that they would have got during days of pregnancy. The schemes also cover ante natal checkups, institutional delivery, and post birth vaccination for mother and child. The three installments are credited to respective beneficiaries' bank account after every stage is completed.<sup>5</sup> Jan Dhan Yojana is said to be the largest financial inclusion schemes run by any country. A massive campaign was launched by the government to marginalized section especially women who are kept aside in financial matters. Although various studies have found that if the key to financial decision is given to women member of the family, then the money is spent on essential items like good quality education, sanitation, cleanliness which further has multiplier effect. The concept behind the scheme was that everybody including women must be financially free and can take important decisions which she was not able to take when she had no financial backing. The scheme mandated opening of account at any bank at zero balance. Previously there was requirement of minimum threshold balance in form of rupees which was done away with to ensure maximum financial inclusion. Various benefits of various schemes are now directly transferred to the account beneficiary through Adhaar based authentication. This has empowered women and provided the social security. It is found that women tend to save more in Jan Dhan accounts and utilize the money judiciously.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY FOR ELDERS:**

People becomes old as they age. With old age comes various biological restriction which can hinder between ways to live dignified life. Many illnesses get hold of the body as we age and they must be clinical examination at regular interval of time. We have to remember that these elderly people are not liability but the asset as they hold years of experience in different fields. Therefore, we can utilize their expertise if they are well and healthy. Otherwise, this can culminate into clinical disaster as lots of elderly people will need care if they are not fit. Article 41 of the Indian constitution clearly mentions that state should not be barred to make any efforts to uplift the

condition of elderly. To uplift this section of society and make their life smoother, government came up with following legislative bills. These include various pension schemes, health insurance schemes, medical care at subsidized rate, and various concessions in public transport systems, Indira Gandhi National Old Age pension scheme, Atal Pension Yojana, Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) etc. These schemes are aimed at providing financial and healthcare assistance to the beneficiary. In Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Schemes a part of National Social Assistance Program under ministry of rural development. In this scheme there is provision of monthly fixed pension of 200 INR for age group 60-79 and above 80 years of age the amount is increased to 500 INR. It is a non-contributory scheme and anyone who has no other source of income can get the benefit of the schemes. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM JAY) which is also called as Ayushman Bharat schemes which is a Flagship scheme of Government of India run by Ministry of health and family welfare in coordination with state health ministries. Around 11 crore (110 million) families which consists of around 50 crore (500 million) people are insured up to 500000 INR for any disease. Various public and private hospitals are empaneled to provide the service to the beneficiaries. It is termed as world's largest health insurance scheme which is fully financed by the government. Elderly are most benefitted group in these schemes.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY FOR CHILDREN:**

Children are said to be the future of the world. Therefore, these future decision makers must be taken care of in order to make them as demographic dividend, otherwise they will become demographic liabilities to any nation states. Health and education are the two main aspects of social security cover provided to the children. Right from the childhood birth various schemes are enacted by Government of India to ensure that this section always connected to mainstream and no threat of lack of health or education can haunt them. Women and child development Ministry of Government of India in coordination with state departments are responsible to effective implementation of various schemes. Some schemes which act as a social security cover for children are Mid-day meal Scheme, right to education scheme, central sector scholarship and fellowships, young scientist fellowship, Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana, Integrated Child Development Scheme program which is a holistic program encompassing various factors associated with childhood. For example, to address the issue of foeticide and ignorance towards girl child, government had come up with Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana. It is a small deposit scheme which fructify when the girl child turns 18 which is the legal marriage age and all the benefits are transferred to her account. Government also contributes towards the contribution done by the beneficiary. It is therefore act as enabler for continuance of studies and other educational ventures which was otherwise scuttled due to patriarchal mindset.

### **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION:**

There are lots challenges which plague the effective implementation of the social security which is highly debated topic. There are several fundamental questions about the social security about the extent to which the government can provide assistance and role of private participation. In



government enacted schemes, the challenge of implementation huge. Large scale diversion of fund for the needy has been seen in the past which defeats the whole purpose of the schemes. Social security is the need of the hour especially in the trying times of COVID-19. According to World Food Program and United Nations more than 170 million people were sleeping on an empty stomach prior to COVID-19 and the pandemic has only aggravated the situation. The basic dignity of the human being must be protected at any cost. In India considering the situation, Government has made free distribution of adequate quantity of grains to the below poverty line beneficiaries which is a huge relief as there was large scale loss of lives and livelihood. Many people wouldn't have been earning as much as it cost for one time meal. The large-scale loss of livelihood has made all progress in the field of social security more or less ineffective as people are again experiencing large scale poverty. Therefore, effective and targeted implementation of the existing schemes must be prioritized to ensure the relief at this critical juncture. Especially the healthcare coverage is most important. The fund allocation to such schemes must be increased in order to cover the ever-rising number of beneficiaries. All the existing schemes must run as it is as these schemes are the only source that is available to the vulnerable section.

### **THE WAY FORWARD:**

A lot of challenges have been encountered while providing the social security cover to the downtrodden and marginalized group. But slowly by eliminating the middle man which devoured the fund in the middle before reaching the beneficiary. Targeted delivery of these schemes is a key challenge which needs to address as there are lot of beneficiaries waiting in line. Streamlining of scheme and coordination between various ministries. The free ration which are being provided is seriously benefitting not only poor but also to lower middle class which had also faced the wrath of COVID-19 induced unemployment and inflation in food prices. The budget allocation of all schemes must rise as more people are seeking jobs under rural job guarantee schemes. Schemes like National rural employment guarantee schemes are the lifeline of villages as these provides assured work for the rural folks who had lost jobs in current scenario. Apart from COVID-19, these measures hold an extraordinary value where it provides utmost care to women, elderly and children.

The policies and laws must be framed in such a way that they are mostly concentrated for the benefit of unorganized workers, marginal peoples etc. There should be proper mechanism by which the public is made aware about the existing social security schemes. The existing laws should be implemented strictly by the State Govt. Departments with the help of social security officers/inspectors and the defaulting persons should be punished.

Though there are a number of schemes covering various sections and target groups, the focus and efforts get splintered due to numerosity of programmes and inflexible rules and problems in implementation.

The urgent necessity is:

- Assistance to destitute, especially elderly, handicapped and sick by providing a pension linked to some price index

- An employment guarantee for the able bodied to do at least casual labour and earn a living in times of distress;
- Programmes for self-employment of the poor by providing financial support, technical assistance and facilitation for marketing worked out at the Panchayat level,
- Programmes to improve nutritional status of the vulnerable groups like children and women by providing supplementary nutrition and noon-meals;
- An umbrella legislation for providing minimum social security to the workforce in the unorganized sector,

It will be desirable if the implementation of all these schemes is done at the Panchayat level with people's participation and social audit at the Grama Sabha. Evaluation of the schemes can be done by the funding State governments or the Union Government separately.

- An employment guarantee for the able bodied to do at least casual labour and earn a living in times of distress;
- Programmes for self-employment of the poor by providing finance
- Revamping the numerous existing schemes;
- Debureaucratizing them; and
- Introducing flexibility to take care of regional specification

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