

Yojana (July)

Issue: Social Security

Introduction

- The objective of social security is to provide sustenance to those who cannot work and earn their living due to temporary or chronic reasons.
- Even the developed countries are facing the problem of the sustainability of their long history of fertile decline leading to increase in the percentage of beneficiaries i.e. elderly and decline in the percentage of contributors i.e. working age group.

Nature of the Problem

- India is home to one-fifth of the world's population, which includes a third of the world's poor and one-eighth of the world's elderly.
- The traditional sources of old age security like family and adult children have come under great strain due to increased longevity of the elderly, disintegration of joint family system, non-availability of care givers due to increased work participation of women, migration of youth and more individualistic attitude of children.
- The problem is more acute among the poor elderly who with their deteriorating health conditions are unable to work for earning and have hardly any savings to fall back upon.
- There is a need to adopt suitably targeted measures that provide social security to the elderly.

BKPAI Survey

Recently as a part of the project on '*Building a Knowledge Base on Population Ageing in India*' (BKPAI), which was jointly undertaken by the UNFPA, Institute for Economic Growth (IEG), Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), a survey on 'The Status of the Elderly' was carried.

According to the survey, nearly 45% of the elderly are from households with either BPL or Antyodaya cards. One third of the elderly are from households having monthly per capita expenditure below Rs.1000. About a quarter of the elderly are in dire need of economic support as they have no other sources of security.

Government Initiatives

Central and state governments in India have been providing security to the elderly in cash (pension schemes such as):

- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)
- Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)

Reasons for Low Utilisation

- Difficulties faced by illiterate poor elderly in providing documentary proof like identity proof, age proof, recommendation of panchayat members. This has led to emergence of middlemen, bribery, corruption and caste favourism.

- Problems regarding accuracy of the BPL list leading to frauds and fake cases.
- Long waiting period for getting pension.
- Inadequate pension amount.
- Underutilisation of funds allotted to states due to failure in identifying eligible beneficiaries.

Demand for Universal Pension Scheme

- To overcome these problems Pension Parishad has made a demand for a universal, non-contributory old age pension system for all men aged 55+ and women 50+ with a monthly pension of Rs.2000 or 50% of minimum wage whichever is higher.
- Actual burden will be less as the expenditure on existing pension schemes will be saved.

Conclusion

- Identification of the needy by suitable exclusion criteria, simplification of the application procedure, efficient delivery system are the major challenges.

HEALTH FOR ALL

India's health system mirrors the iniquitous nature of development that has taken place in the country.

- High income and wealth inequality has resulted in a skewed pattern of health care oriented towards secondary, tertiary level curative services, leading to neglect of the more basic preventive and primary care services needed for the poor to survive.
- Income and wealth disparities are also reflected in the sharply differing health outcomes across rural and urban areas, states and social groups.
- Universal health coverage remains an unfinished agenda with basic indicators of health in India continuing to be below those of low income countries such as Bangladesh.

Health for All

- In 2015, health inequality resulted in a loss of 24% of India's health index value as per the Inequality adjusted Human Development Index computed by the UNDP.
- Unlike education, Health for All has never been an important electoral issue, though the potential for electoral gains are evident as in the case of Andhra Pradesh.
- The general political apathy towards the health sector is also reflected in low budgetary allocations, with public spending accounting for not more than 1.5% of GDP over the last decade despite impressive economic growth.
- This has meant that 75% of health care costs are financed by out of pocket expenses which push a large number below the poverty line.

Health Insurance in India

- Countries such as Brazil, Bolivia, Indonesia and Thailand, all characterised earlier by situations of high inequality and uneven access to health care systems, have revamped policies since 1980s towards universal health care.
- They also indicate that strengthening of the primary health care system is a prerequisite for achieving universal health coverage.
- However, in India none of the central or state level insurance schemes cover primary care in the insurance package, with the exception of Meghalaya that provides partial coverage. All the schemes focus on secondary and/or tertiary care.

Way Forward

- India's new National Health Policy 2017 signifies a paradigm shift in government policy towards comprehensive primary health care and is significant for two reasons:
 - (1) It defines health in terms of wellness rather than as absence of disease.
 - (2) It brings focus back on primary care and accords a key role to the public sector.
- Public-private partnerships are being relied upon as a way out of the financial crunch. Unless carefully designed it leads to enriching the private sector at the expense of liberal public subsidies.
- International experience shows that health insurance can function when the basic health infrastructure is in place and this is a function that the government alone can perform.
- Strengthening the healthcare delivery system would require 1 to 1.5 percent of GDP as capital investment to ensure adequate health infrastructure, with another 1% of GDP to provide free universal access to comprehensive primary care, secondary and select set of tertiary conditions for 60% of the population.
- Additionally, at least 2% of GDP would be required for supporting infrastructure like public sanitation, waste disposal, nutrition and housing.
- Achieving universal health coverage is listed as goal 3.8 in the SDGs agenda for 2030. India's performance holds the key to achieving this global aspiration.
- The Government of India's implementation of the National Health Policy 2017 in letter and spirit is crucial for ensuring health security for all by 2030.

EMPOWERING THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED

Traditionally the family has been the informal social security system in India. In joint family system, members of the family were taking responsibility for those who were in need.

Social security is the action programmes initiated by the government to promote the welfare of its population. Thus, the purpose of social security is to provide various support

and resources to the vulnerable people such as children, old age, and people with disabilities in order to improve the quality of life.

Article 43 of Indian constitution speaks of state's responsibility to provide social security to the citizens of the country. Article 14 guarantees that no person shall be denied equality before the law. Article 41 states that states shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement.

- The impact of industrial revolution, modernization and urbanisation and job opportunities in cities, lead to the breakdown of joint family systems and disturbed the social security. Therefore the state has to take steps to protect its citizens.

Social Security Schemes

Promotional social security schemes are providing assistance to the people with disabilities by undertaking various programmes by state and central government to promote health, education, rehabilitation services, and reservation so as to enable them to participate in social and economic activities.

In order to recognise their effort, separate awards are being presented to the outstanding employees with disabilities, best employers, role models, outstanding creative disabled individuals and outstanding technological innovation and adaptation of innovation to provide cost effective technology.

- Persons with disabilities are eligible for professional and income tax deduction under section 80 U and the legal guardians of dependent persons with disabilities are eligible for income tax deduction under section 80 DD
- National scholarship for students who are pursuing post matric/ professional/ technical courses of duration more than one year. Students with disabilities are provided with 3 percent reservation in seats in government and government aided institutions.
- The comprehensive education scheme to provide transport facilities, remove architectural barriers, and supply free books, uniform and other materials, grant scholarship, restructure curriculum and modify the examination system for the benefit of children with special needs.
- The Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) aims to provide educational opportunities for the moderately disabled children in the general school system. The scope of the Scheme includes pre-school training, counselling for parents and community involvement.

- The government reserved 5 percent reservation in posts in Group A, B, C and D positions in government services, public sector banks and PSUs. They are given up to 10 years of age relaxation for recruitment of government jobs.
- Assistance to Disabled persons for purchasing / fitting of aids / appliances (ADIP) scheme is to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and

Challenges and Way Forward

- Most developmental programmes in India are not accessible to differently abled people mostly because of social or physical barriers that surround them.
- Lack of information dissemination and absence of single window approach often make the differently abled people unaware of what benefits and schemes are available to them.
- There is neither a uniform benefit formula nor is there any single agency that administers or guides the programme.
- Multiplicity of departments or agencies looking after disability benefits need to be integrated together to have comprehensive programme design and implementation policy under one umbrella with a chief executive officer.
- There is a need to plan and design inclusive strategies by understanding dynamics of disability. The first step would be collect detailed data on them.
- Comprehensive administrative arrangements, pooling the funds from various sources and delivering the benefit under professional supervision and control are important steps to be taken immediately.
- In addition, more resources from local, state, national and international agencies, government and non-government organisations need to be mobilised in order to reach the benefits to differently abled people.

SECURING FARMER'S WELFARE: REALITY TO VISION

Introduction

- Renaming Ministry of Agriculture as the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in 2015 was recognition that agriculture is not just about producing more food but also about a vision that producers will live a life comparable with other sections of the society.
- In India's agricultural growth story, large sections of primary producing farmers remained deprived and disenchanted. Not only do farm incomes tend low, some of the worst victims of economic uncertainty are farmers.
- A survey of 2003-04 conveyed that 40% of agricultural households would take up a different occupation if given a choice (NSSO, 2005).

- Later the same survey showed that even to meet their meagre consumption needs, agricultural households needed to supplement their income from cultivation with other sources (NSSO, 2014).

Farmers Income and Vulnerability

- Farmer's income gained interest in the wake of reports of farmer's distress and the prime minister's speech about doubling food producer's income by 2022.
- Farm income depends on number of factors. Productivity, especially of land, is regarded as the key to higher earnings.
- Improvements in technology and practices enhance production and efficiency.
- Agro-climatic diversity of India is well known but in a federal setup, policy, infrastructure and institutions differ among states.
- Crop cultivation is therefore more remunerative in some parts of the country than others owing to natural, demographic and administrative differences.
- Monsoon failures can impair not only current production but their effects can spillover to subsequent seasons via water levels in reservoirs, rivers, canals, wells and soils.
- Excess or untimely rainfall is a threat too. Floods can be devastating.
- Price movements too cause vulnerability.
- Raising MSP encourages farmers to grow enough food and keep prices remunerative and stable, but only if government can procure adequately.
- The bumper harvest of 2016-17 brought prices of pulses down in spite of raised MSP.
- Demand fluctuations and global competition may further intensify price uncertainties with the opening up of markets.

Farmers' Welfare: Emerging Ways

- For many years the key instruments of India's agricultural development like supply of improved seeds, fertilizer subsidies, cheap energy and concessional credit and public procurement of grains at MSP addressed farm production.
- Crop insurance can be a critical protection against climate change. The nation's satellite and meteorological capabilities are strengthened to generate early and reliable alerts.
- Storage and distribution systems, now facing supervisory and budgetary challenges, determine the effectiveness of government intervention to control price.

NURTURING A HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

- Social security refers to well-being and the system that ensures this for all. It typically enjoins governments to provide a basic set of benefits or services that would enable its citizens to live a life of dignity.

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone as a member of society has the right to social security, through national effort and international cooperation for free development of his/her personality”.
- Social security provisions include pensions or unemployment insurance and basic services like health and education.

The Mid-day Meal Programme

- Given India’s record on hunger and malnutrition, especially among children, the idea of introducing mid-day meals in schools addresses the twin objectives of improving nutrition, as well as enabling children to come to school and remain there through the day.
- Research across the world has established that school meals reduce hunger, increase enrolment and attendance and improve learning outcomes.
- Even today in many parts of the country, the mid day meal is the first meal of the day for a number of children.
- There are gaps in delivery mechanism, such as:
 - o Irregularity in supply
 - o Poor hygiene and infrastructure
 - o Inadequate nutritional content of meals
- Too much time is spent by teachers in organizing MDM taking away from their core duties of teaching and that children come to school only for food, leaving soon after it is served, thus not meeting their educational requirements.
- There are reports of discrimination on the basis of caste – such as dalit children being asked to eat separately or not being provided sufficient quantity of food.
- What is unclear is how using a mandatory UID for children will address any of these problems.

ENSURING A RISING TIDE

Introduction

Social security measures broadly refer to public that is government provisioning for economic security and social welfare of individuals and families.

- A rising tide is necessary to lift all boats. Traditionally the focus of social security measures has been on targeted programmes that address certain communities or regions. This approach has not yielded the requisite results.
- That is why the focus must be on ensuring a rising tide; reach out to those who need some more help to ensure their boats remain afloat with the rising tide.
- Education, healthcare, skills that open up opportunities for improving livelihoods are interventions that will ensure a rising tide.
- Both the general and targeted efforts to ameliorate economic and social backwardness need to be undertaken simultaneously.
- Social reformers in the past like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Vivekanada all stressed on the need to educate and improve the standing of women as the first step to improve the conditions of a community.

- We have seen how microfinance targeted at women helped for socio-economic change in many rural communities.

Government Programmes

- According to WHO estimates about 5 lakh deaths in India alone due to unclean cooking fuels? Indoor air pollution is also responsible for a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses in young children. So Government launched **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** which empowers women as she has access to better and clean cooking fuel and which have positive impacts on health of women and children
- The government's **Ujjwala scheme** to provide clean cooking fuel has health and cognitive development to learn, the families expenditure on health is down, and immunity has improved. This provides a pathway out of poverty.
- **PMJDY** has been one of the most vital initiatives towards financial inclusion in India till date. The scale of undertaking this project in a Mission Mode was much higher than any other initiatives taken in the past. PMJDY has been instrumental in bringing almost all families of the country into the formal financial system and enabling citizens at grassroots level to perform financial transactions and keep their hard earned money safe.
- The **Nai Manzil** scheme aims to benefit the minority youths in the age group of 17 to 35 years who are school-dropouts or educated in the community education institutions like Madaras, by providing them an integrated input of formal education (up till Class VIII orX) and skill training along with certification, with a view of enabling them to seek better employment in the organized sector and equipping them with better lives.
- **The merit-cum means based Scholarship Scheme** provides financial assistance to the poor and meritorious minority students pursuing professional studies at graduate and post-graduate levels. 30% of the scholarships are earmarked for girl students.

Way Forward

- Social security and welfare schemes that are targeted at specific groups be tailored to the particular conditions of those communities.
- Social security and welfare schemes must economics and social mobility of their members.
- Education is the only silver bullet that can change a person's life for social and economic advancement.
- There has to be greater effort to reach children from marginalised and poor communities.

SYSTEMATIC REFORMS IN MGNREGA

Introduction

- India is at a very crucial phase of developmental process, between growth and prosperity on one hand and social welfare on the other.
- We are primarily an agrarian economy, with over 58 percent of rural households dependent on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood, largely contributing to the nation's wealth.
- However, the country has seen a steady decline in the proportion of national income coming from the primary sector.
- MGNREGA has been a veritable platform providing social protection to rural populace in terms of livelihood. The programme aims at contributing to rural infrastructure development and other land works in the rural areas.

Resolving Agricultural Distress

- Presently, the government has strategically shifted its focus on leveraging MGNREGA's potential in effectively addressing agrarian crises and farmer distress.
- Emphasis on works related to drought proofing, flood control, micro irrigation, water conservation and renovation of traditional water resources.

Convergence for Agricultural Productivity

- Rural development ministry has largely worked upon converging Natural Resource Management (NRM) related works under MGNREGA along with Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP).
- Mihir Shah Committee in 2013 mentioned inclusion of new works under MGNREGA for better agricultural productivity and sustainable asset creation.

Capacity Building

- The government has initiated several schemes to impart skills to workers both in agriculture related activities and other fields.
- Project-LIFE under MGNREGA was mooted by the government to develop skills among the workers and their families.
- There is significant thrust on Agri related skills and the youth have shown preference for agriculture related works in comparison to other fields.

Financial Streamlining

- The DBT platform, combined with the biometric-based UID program Aadhaar, effectively combats financial leakages through middlemen and also eliminates the possibility of duplicity in records.
- This is a positive development towards greater transparency as it would ensure that the payments reach the rightful beneficiaries.

Impact Assessment Framework

- The impact assessment framework implemented from 2015-16 records expected outcomes and actual outcomes of works undertaken.
- The practice is aimed at improving the quality and productivity of assets created and to also create an accountability structure.

Conclusion

Ensuring the agrarian economy of better irrigation facilities, mitigating damage due to flood and drought, access to modern agriculture skills to the farmers and more need-based agri-related infrastructure through the public works programme, shall certainly replicate into better farm productivity.

Thereby, leading to growth in farm incomes and creating a sustainable social security cover for the farmers. The systematic reforms shall certainly help the marginal farmers.

A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES

Introduction

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encourages organisations to protect the interests of communities by taking responsibility for the impact they are creating on people, planet and profits.
- India has become the maiden country in the world with legislated CSR provisions.
- The Companies that are covered under CSR ambit are contained are under The Companies Act 2013. The following category of companies have to follow the provisions of CSR:
 - (i) Companies having net worth of Rs.500 crore or more; or
 - (ii) Turnover of Rs.1000 crore or more; or
 - (iii) Net profit of Rs.5 crore or more
- According to estimates, around 8000 crore companies have come under the mandate of CSR provisions by this Act.
- The Act specifies that companies have to spend at least 2 percent of their average profit in the last three years on CSR activities.
- With increased GDP and subsequently increased profits, this mandatory spending will increase.

CSR – the Harbinger for Empowerment

- Empowerment of the marginalised is the key responsibility of the government, but corporate sector initiatives are required for scale, speed and creating best practices for others to emulate.
- Businesses concentrate on a particular community where they are located, so it is easier for them to understand the issues, challenges, and opportunities for the marginalized that can be garnered through CSR projects.
- The inclusive growth mantra – Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas can be realized only by creating linkages in the development models of private and public sector.

- The state budget for people's welfare is insufficient to meet the increasing demands. Private sector participation is essential to meet the developmental goals of the marginalised.
- As per the Human development report released by the United Nations Development Programme, India is placed at 131 among 188 countries.
- Government flagship programmes like Make in India, Start-up India, Skill India and Digital India can be promoted by the CSR projects as these interventions make marginalised more educated and skilful and generate massive job opportunities.

CSR Activities for Marginalized Sections

- Skilling and Livelihood opportunities for the Differently-abled:
 - (i) Persons with disability are more vulnerable to exclusions from the socio-economic domains as they have poor access to infrastructure, education and skill development.
 - (ii) Projects like providing literacy, vocational education and employability are the strategic CSR projects for persons with disability.
- Self Help Groups and Micro Enterprises:
 - (i) CSR projects facilitate livelihoods in rural areas by creating job opportunities without migration through SHGs and micro enterprises
 - (ii) E-commerce ventures can provide market linkages to producers and artisans for online selling of their products.
 - (iii) Innovative CSR models in skills intervention for SHGs can increase their efficiency and outcomes.
- Elderly Population:
 - (i) The poor civic infrastructure poses a challenge for their healthcare, well-being and housing needs.
 - (ii) The new CSR amendment suggests setting up old age homes, day care centres and such other facilities for senior citizens.
 - (iii) The inclusion of the CSR activities in the Schedule VII supplements the government's efforts.
- Slum Development
 - (i) Inclusion of slum development in CSR activities is supplementing government's efforts to make cities slum free.

Conclusion

- Corporates should integrate their CSR goals with organizational goals as this is a bright opportunity for them to become a conduit on the nation's development agenda.
- Innovative CSR projects are needed that are economically viable, scalable, and replicable in demographic context.
- What is required is tapping of enormous resource pool and the organisational capacity of the corporate sector to design viable and innovative CSR projects.
- Strategic CSR projects for the marginalised sections can assume much significant role in their social development.