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# Social Security, A Cornerstone Of Sustainable Development: A Discourse In Indian Context

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**Abstract :** *Social Security mechanisms in the Indian context serves as a fundamental pillar for sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Social security systems play a crucial role in achieving this by providing a safety net that ensures basic economic security and social protection for individuals and families, both in the present and in the future. These systems provide economic security and social protection for individuals and families, crucial for addressing socio-economic challenges, promoting inclusivity, and empowering communities. By ensuring access to necessary resources and support, social security plays a vital role in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges, fostering sustainable development, and enabling individuals to thrive now and in the future.*

*This paper evaluates the Indian government's initiatives to integrate social security into sustainable development. Key strategies include poverty and inequality alleviation through financial aid and employment generation, and human capital development via education and healthcare to improve health outcomes and promote universal well-being. The initiatives also aim to bolster social cohesion among disadvantaged groups, enabling them to secure livelihoods and participate in economic growth. Efforts focus on mitigating risks associated with illness, disability, and unemployment by providing marginalized communities with essential resources and support systems, thereby reducing inequalities. Prioritized interventions include subsidized food distribution, pensions, and healthcare for the elderly, empowering vulnerable groups like women, children, and the elderly to lead dignified lives with access to essential resources and opportunities for socio-economic advancement.*

**Key words:** *Social Security, Economic shocks, Social shocks, Protective function, Promotional function, Preventive function, Transformative function, Anti-discrimination laws, Marginalized groups.*

## Introduction

Social Security is a fundamental element supporting the framework of a welfare state and forms the backbone of social policy in many countries. Through social security initiatives, the state endeavours to ensure that every citizen is maintained at a specified minimum standard of living, preventing anyone from falling below this threshold. Social Security, both as a concept and a practical system, embodies society's responsibility to protect individuals from unexpected

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hardships such as retirement, job loss, disability, or death. It reflects the diverse needs of people, with the state stepping in to mitigate inequalities by providing support to the vulnerable. In today's context, Social Security encompasses collective measures aimed at shielding individuals from economic and social shocks caused by various life events, including illness, childbirth, workplace accidents, unemployment, disability, old age, or death, which can disrupt income. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines Social Security as a fundamental right guaranteed by law to individuals who, due to circumstances beyond their control, are unable to work and rely on their labour. The ILO, in alignment with the United Nations, emphasizes the importance of protecting workers from work-related health issues, offering pensions for the elderly, and safeguarding the rights of migrant workers, formally acknowledging the right to Social Security. Social Security, recognized as a tool for societal progress, must be maintained, strengthened, and adapted to changing needs. Despite arguments that it might impede economic growth, a well-designed Social Security system can actually enhance productivity by reducing individuals' worries and enabling them to contribute more effectively to society. Debates on Social Security often raise concerns about its potential negative impacts, such as discouraging work and savings, reducing international competitiveness, and leading to early retirement. However, it also brings positive economic outcomes by increasing individuals' earning potential, sustaining domestic demand, and creating conditions conducive to economic development and innovation. Formal Social Security systems require state intervention for income redistribution, aiming to ensure a basic standard of living for those disadvantaged due to disability, unemployment, or old age, while also addressing income disparities. Providing Social Security to workers involves developing schemes and services to help them maintain a decent standard of living and financial stability in the face of unexpected job loss. It requires ensuring fair wages and benefits to support both workers and their families, thus promoting social progress and effective governance. Disparities in Social Security expenditures as a percentage of GDP vary across countries, with some nations like Argentina and Brazil allocating significant resources, while India's spending in this area remains comparatively lower. However, establishing a direct correlation between Social Security expenditure and economic development is complex, requiring state intervention to establish a coherent relationship for accelerated economic growth.

**Literature Review**

India's economic development is closely tied to the effectiveness of its social security programs, which aim to promote inclusive growth, reduce poverty, and enhance overall well-being by addressing various socio-economic challenges. According to Saxena (1974), social security is a dynamic concept deemed indispensable in advanced countries for combating poverty, unemployment, and disease, and is particularly crucial for industrial workers. Aggarwal (1982) argued that a comprehensive social security and labour welfare policy is vital for maintaining industrial morale and efficiency, and detailed the differences between India's social security schemes and those abroad. Sarma (1981) examined the social security schemes and legislation in India, noting that the Employee's State Insurance Scheme did not cover all risks or the entire working population. Punekar et al. (1984) highlighted the importance of the Employee's State Insurance Act and the Employee's Provident Fund Scheme in providing extensive social security coverage. Subrahmanya et al. (1994) suggested that social security in developing countries should be broader in scope, prioritizing those unable to work, such as the handicapped and destitute, followed by programs for the unemployed and income maintenance for the employed facing income risks. Social Security Division of the Ministry of Labour (2005) made a general overview of the social security schemes in India and concluded that social security system was an investment for the future and it acted as a facilitator since it helped people to plan their future through insurance and assistance. Madhava Rao (2007) critiqued the ILO definition of social security, noting that existing employment-related programs in India neglect the disabled, a highly vulnerable group. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), launched in 2005, significantly enhances rural incomes, agricultural productivity, and local infrastructure (Dreze & Khera, 2017; Himanshu, 2010; Sundar, 2011). Social pension schemes like the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) are crucial for alleviating poverty among vulnerable groups by improving the economic well-being of the elderly (Drèze et al., 2017; Desai & Vanneman, 2018). Insurance programs such as the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) enhance financial stability and resilience against economic shocks (Ghosh & John, 2019; Choudhury & Sethi, 2019). Health and nutrition programs like the National Health Mission (NHM) and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) contribute to human capital development and long-term economic growth by addressing the health and nutritional needs of mothers and children (Chakrabarti & Mohanty, 2015; Rao & Choudhury, 2018). Despite their positive impacts, these programs face challenges in implementation, targeting accuracy, and beneficiary awareness (Bhagat & Verick, 2015). Continuous evaluation and adaptation are necessary to ensure these programs remain effective in changing economic and social contexts (Khera, 2011; Mohanty & Sethi, 2017). An integrated approach leveraging technology and data analytics is recommended to streamline program delivery and enhance impact, with improved monitoring, capacity building, and community participation essential for optimizing community-based programs like ICDS and NHM (Rao & Choudhury, 2018; Chakrabarti & Mohanty, 2015).

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To discuss the functions and components of social security.
2. To comprehensively document and categorize Social Security and its significant contribution to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals.
3. To analyse the shift from traditional familial or community support to institutionalized, state-regulated social security measures in India.
4. To identify and classify various social security schemes or programs across India.

## Methodology

In this paper a comprehensive methodology to analyse Social Security systems is employed. It starts by classifying Social Security components into broad and narrow approaches, detailing specific policies and risks. Contextual analysis follows, comparing Social Security expenditures and implementations across countries, with a focus on India's historical, constitutional, and legislative frameworks. The paper reviews various Indian government programs and schemes, categorizing them into Contributory Schemes, Welfare Schemes, Social Assistance, and Promotional Social Security, and analysing specific examples for structure, benefits, and target demographics.

The economic and social impact assessment involves analysing government spending on social sectors relative to GDP and examining its distribution across health, education, and housing. The paper evaluates how Social Security contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting areas of alignment and support. Comparative and statistical analysis is used to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of Social Security frameworks and expenditures in different countries, supported by data from reports like the Economic Survey 2022-23.

Qualitative analysis explores the impact of Social Security systems on individual well-being, economic stability, development, inequality reduction, and social cohesion. The paper concludes with policy recommendations advocating for increased spending and comprehensive coverage to achieve sustainable development and economic growth. This methodology provides a detailed overview of Social Security systems, particularly in the Indian context, using a blend of analytical approaches for a holistic understanding.

## Functions of Social Security

The major functions of social security systems are as follows:

1. Protective function: This is the fundamental aspect of social security systems. By providing cash assistance, in-kind resources, or subsidies, governments aim to prevent individuals and families from falling below the poverty line. This can include programs such as welfare benefits, food assistance, housing subsidies, and healthcare coverage.
2. Promotional function: Social security systems also play a role in minimizing risks, which in turn promotes development. By providing a safety net, individuals are more willing to take risks such as investing in education, starting a business, or pursuing innovation. This function helps foster economic growth by encouraging entrepreneurship and investment.
3. Preventive function: Beyond simply lifting people out of poverty, social security systems aim to prevent individuals and families from slipping back into poverty. This can involve measures such as unemployment benefits, job training programs, and access to affordable healthcare. By addressing the root causes of poverty and instability, governments can help people maintain their standard of living and avoid downward mobility.

4. Transformative function: Social security systems can also serve a transformative role by addressing systemic inequalities and vulnerabilities. This might involve strengthening workers' rights, implementing anti-discrimination laws, or providing support specifically targeted at marginalized groups. By changing the legal and social framework, governments can work towards a more equitable society where all individuals have the opportunity to thrive.

Overall, social security systems are multifaceted tools that serve not only to alleviate poverty but also to promote economic development, prevent instability, and drive social transformation.

**Components of Social Security**

The components of social security can be classified into a broad as well as narrow approach:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Broad Approach</th><th colspan="2">Narrow Approach</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">A. Policies for / of</td><td>Risk prevention: workplace assurance, work conditions – physical, social, abuses, minimal wage guarantee.</td><td rowspan="7">1. Protection against</td><td>Unemployment</td></tr>
<tr><td>Quality of life deterioration/prevention: maintaining the standard of living.</td><td>Illness</td></tr>
<tr><td>Individual and community protection against corruption, criminality, interethnic-interracial-interreligious conflicts.</td><td>Disability</td></tr>
<tr><td>Health and educational social services.</td><td>Agedness</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diminishing inequalities among individuals or groups.</td><td>Death</td></tr>
<tr><td>Individual perception improvement in socio-economic and moral comfort.</td><td>Family obligations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Environment protection as a necessary condition for social safety of individuals and / or communities.</td><td>Work accidents</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">B. Social safety from existence / inexistence of natural or man-made hazards or risks.</td><td colspan="2">2. Maternity</td></tr>
</table>

**Social Security and Sustainable Development**

Social Security significantly contributes to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), partially contributes to others, and has no direct contribution to some.

| Social Security contributes to the achievement of SDG | Social Security partially contributes to the achievement of SDG | Social Security does not contribute to the achievement of SDG |
|---|---|---|
| SDG 1: No poverty<br>SDG 2: Zero Hunger<br>SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being<br>SDG 4: Quality education<br>SDG 5: Gender Equality<br>SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation<br>SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy<br>SDG 8: Clean water and sanitation<br>SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.<br>SDG 10: Reduced Inequality | SDG 13: Climate action<br>SDG 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institutions<br><br>SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals | SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities<br>SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production.<br>SDG 14: Life below Water<br>SDG 15: Life on Land |

**Indian context of Social Security**

India, operating as a welfare State, undertakes the responsibility of delivering various Social Security and Social Assistance benefits to its populace. The groundwork for social security legislation in India finds its roots in the Directive Principles of State Policy outlined in the Constitution. Despite the absence of formal recognition of social security as a fundamental right within the Constitution, it directs the State to pursue the advancement of citizen welfare, fostering a societal framework guided by principles of justice across social, economic, and political domains. Particularly, Article 41 stresses the State's duty to strive, within its economic capacity, for ensuring the rights to employment, education, and public aid in scenarios such as unemployment, old age, illness, and disability. Article 42 emphasizes the State's responsibility to guarantee equitable and compassionate working environments and offer maternity relief. Article 47 underscores the State's obligation to bolster nutrition standards, improve living conditions, and enhance public health as primary duties. These provisions collectively embody the essence of Social Security, delineating the State's commitments to its citizens.

In India, traditional Social Security mechanisms were largely based on familial or community support. However, as industrialization, urbanization, and changes in family structures occur, there is increasing recognition of the need for institutionalized, state-regulated Social Security measures to address evolving socio-economic challenges effectively. With global trends leaning towards market-driven economies and longer life expectancies, the importance of comprehensive and regulated Social Security measures becomes even more evident.

The Economic Survey 2022-23, as outlined by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, reflects a significant shift in India's economic and social policy paradigm. Emphasizing the transition into what is termed as the "Amrit Kaal" or the era of abundance and prosperity, it underlines a holistic approach towards economic growth intertwined with social welfare measures. This narrative resonates with the global context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts, urging India to prioritize inclusive development and ensure that the dividends of progress are equitably distributed across its diverse population.

Central to this new approach is India's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. These goals encompass a wide range of objectives, including poverty eradication, hunger alleviation, promoting gender equality, ensuring environmental sustainability, and fostering inclusive economic growth. By aligning with the SDGs, India acknowledges the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental challenges and underscores its dedication to address them comprehensively.

The Economic Survey underscores the imperative of addressing social welfare concerns alongside economic growth, recognizing that sustainable development cannot be achieved without ensuring the well-being of all segments of society. It emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive and just societies where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances. The Economic Survey signals a transformative vision for India's future, one where economic prosperity is intertwined with social progress and environmental stewardship. It sets a course for building a more equitable and sustainable society, guided by the principles of the UN SDGs and the commitment to leaving no one behind.

Social Security is increasingly recognized as vital to the process of development. It not only fosters a more positive outlook towards structural and technological advancements but also addresses the challenges posed by globalization and its potential advantages in terms of enhanced efficiency and productivity. Over the past five decades, significant strides have been made in expanding social security coverage at both the State and Central levels. However, achieving a universal social security program for the entire nation remains a distant objective. With improved healthcare leading to longer lifespans, there is an urgent need to intensify efforts to design and implement suitable institutional frameworks and initiatives aimed at encompassing a broader segment of the population.

Social sector expenditure in India is crucial due to the country's developing economy. Both governmental and private entities must undertake initiatives in key areas such as education, nutrition, housing, sanitation, and urban development. These efforts generate positive externalities and foster individual and societal upliftment. According to the economic survey, the government expenditure to GDP ratio increased to 8.6% in 2021-2022, up from 6.2% in 2014-2015, although India still lags behind many nations in social security expenditure, excluding healthcare.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which encompass 17 developmental objectives, focusing on social sector development and effective implementation is essential. In India, social security programs are designed to provide financial support and welfare benefits to various segments of society. These programs can be broadly categorized into four types: Contributory Schemes, Welfare Schemes, Social Assistance, and Promotional Social Security. A detailed discussion of each type along with various schemes to address social security needs, as introduced by Indian government are as follows:

**1. Contributory Schemes**

Contributory schemes are social security programs where both the employer and the employee contribute towards a fund. These schemes are generally statutory and administered by the government. They are designed to provide financial support in various situations such as old age, illness, unemployment, and maternity. Key features include:

- **Accident Insurance:** Provides financial compensation and medical benefits to workers who suffer from workplace injuries or occupational diseases.
- **Medical Facilities:** Offers healthcare services and support for medical expenses.
- **Old Age Pension:** Ensures regular income for individuals after retirement.
- **Gratuity:** A lump-sum payment given to employees as a token of gratitude for their service, governed by the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.
- **Provident Fund:** A retirement benefit scheme where employees contribute a part of their salary, matched by the employer, which accumulates over time and is paid out upon retirement.
- **Maternity Benefits:** Offers financial and job security to women during maternity leave, regulated by the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961.
- **Income Security:** Provides financial stability in case of disability or illness.
- **Unemployment Allowance:** Financial support provided to individuals who are temporarily unemployed.

Examples include:

- **Employee's Provident Fund (EPF) Act 1952**: The act mandates a savings scheme for employees, where both the employee and employer contribute a portion of the salary to a provident fund, which can be accessed upon retirement or certain other conditions.
- **Employee's State Insurance (ESI) Act 1948**: This act provides social security and health insurance for Indian workers. It includes benefits such as medical, disability, maternity, and unemployment insurance.

- **National Pension System (NPS)**: A voluntary retirement savings scheme for government and private sector employees, involving regular contributions from the individual and possibly the employer.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):** Launched in 2014, PMJDY aims to ensure access to financial services such as banking, savings and deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, and pension in an affordable manner.
- **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)**: Introduced in 2015, APY aims to provide social security to the unorganized sector by offering a guaranteed minimum pension for subscribers who contribute regularly over a certain period.
- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)**: Launched in 2015, this accident insurance scheme provides coverage for accidental death and disability at a very affordable premium for individuals aged 18 to 70 years.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jivan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)**: Also launched in 2015, PMJJBY offers life insurance coverage for death due to any reason. It is available to people in the age group of 18 to 50 years.
- **Krishi Shramik Samajik Suraksha Yojana**: This scheme focuses on providing social security to agricultural labourers through various benefits like health and accident insurance.
- **Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana**: Aimed at artisans, this scheme provides health insurance coverage to handicraft artisans for their healthcare needs, ensuring access to quality medical services.
- **Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) 1954**: This scheme provides comprehensive healthcare facilities to Central Government employees, pensioners, and their dependents through a network of wellness centres.

**2. Welfare Schemes**

Welfare schemes are designed to improve the living standards of specific vulnerable groups and are often fully or partially funded by the government. Welfare schemes are non-contributory and are funded entirely by the government. These programs are designed to provide direct support to the underprivileged sections of society to ensure their basic needs are met. They focus on areas such as:

- **Healthcare:** Provision of free or subsidized medical services.
- **Education:** Financial aid and scholarships for students from economically weaker sections.
- **Housing:** Affordable housing schemes for low-income families.
- **Food Security:** Programs like the Public Distribution System (PDS) that provide subsidized food grains to the poor.

- **Employment:** Job guarantee schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in rural areas.

Examples include:

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**: Enacted in 2005, MGNREGA provides at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas and create durable assets.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)**: A financial inclusion program aimed at providing affordable access to financial services like banking, credit, and insurance.
- **Poshan Abhiyan**: Also known as the **National Nutrition Mission**, it was launched in 2018 to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. It aims to reduce malnutrition, stunting, anaemia, and low birth weight.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme**: Provides free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government and government-aided schools.
- **National Health Mission (NHM):** Launched by the Government of India in April 2005, NHM aims to provide accessible, affordable, and quality health care to the rural and urban populations, especially the vulnerable groups. It encompasses two sub-missions: the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM).
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY)**: This initiative aims to achieve 'Housing for All' by 2022. It provides affordable housing to urban poor, including slum dwellers, through financial assistance and subsidies.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission**: Launched in 2019, the mission aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections to all rural households by 2024.
- **Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), 2003:** This scheme offers comprehensive healthcare services to ex-servicemen and their dependents, ensuring they receive medical treatment and support post-retirement.
- **Workmen's Compensation Act 1923**: This act provides compensation to workers for injuries or disabilities sustained in the course of their employment, ensuring financial support in case of work-related accidents.

**3. Social Assistance**

Social assistance programs offer non-contributory benefits to the elderly, disabled, widows, and other vulnerable sections of society. Social assistance programs are targeted at providing financial aid to individuals or groups who are unable to support themselves. These schemes are typically means-tested, meaning they are based on the recipient's income and assets. The goal is to ensure a minimum standard of living for all citizens. These programs are typically funded by the government and the key components include:

- **Pensions for the Elderly:** Non-contributory pensions for senior citizens who do not qualify for contributory pensions.
- **Disability Benefits:** Financial support for individuals with disabilities.
- **Survivor Benefits:** Financial assistance to the dependents of deceased individuals.

Examples include:

- **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)**: Provides financial assistance to senior citizens who are below the poverty line.
- **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)**: Offers pension to widows aged 40-59 years living below the poverty line.
- **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)**: Provides pensions to severely disabled individuals aged 18-59 years who are below the poverty line.
- **The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP):** Launched in 15th August, 1995 represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of the Directive Principles in Article 41 of the Constitution.
- **The National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)** is part of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), which provides financial assistance (one-time lump sum amount of Rs. 20,000) to families living below the poverty line (BPL) in the event of the death of the primary bread earner of families living below the poverty line.
- **The Annapurna Scheme** is aimed at providing food security to senior citizens who are eligible for old age pension but are not receiving it by providing 10 kilograms of free food grains (usually wheat or rice) per month to ensure that senior citizens have access to basic food security.

**4. Promotional Social Security**

Promotional social security programs aim to enhance the skills, capabilities, and economic opportunities of individuals and communities to improve their social and economic security and to participate productively in the economy. These programs are designed to promote self-reliance and long-term development. They include:

- **Skill Development Programs:** Training and skill development initiatives to improve employability.
- **Microfinance and Self-Help Groups:** Financial services and support to small entrepreneurs and self-help groups to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment.

- **Agricultural Support:** Programs providing financial aid, training, and resources to farmers to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Examples include:

- **Skill India Mission**: Aims to train over 400 million people in various skills by 2022 to enhance employability.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**: A flagship program to provide industry-relevant skill training to youth, ensuring increased productivity and employment.
- **Start-Up India**: Aims to foster innovation and entrepreneurship by providing funding support and incentives to start-ups.

India's social security system encompasses a diverse range of programs designed to support different segments of the population. Each type of program plays a critical role in ensuring the well-being and financial security of citizens across various stages of life and economic conditions. These categories collectively ensure a comprehensive social security system in India, targeting diverse segments of the population. The allocation of funds in major sectors for FY 2021-22 includes Rs 86,200.65 crore for health, Rs 1,04,278 crore for education, Rs 60,000 crore for the Jal Jeevan Mission, Rs 1,900 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana etc. There is a direct correlation between social sector expenditure and development, which enhances living standards and well-being. Health and education significantly impact the Human Development Index (HDI), a measure of growth and development. The continuous increase in expenditure reflects a commitment to planned social sector outlays over the years. In FY 2021-22, the total social sector expenditure rose to Rs 71.61 lakh crore, with significant allocations to education, health, and other sectors. Noteworthy state expenditures on the social sector include Delhi, Bihar, and Manipur, showcasing their commitment to social welfare.

## Conclusion

Thus, we can conclude that social security systems are crucial in protecting individuals and families from poverty during challenging times, ensuring their basic needs are met, and enhancing overall well-being. By providing financial assistance, these systems prevent low-income families from taking extreme measures like withdrawing children from school or selling essential assets. This support enables individuals to pursue education and invest in income-generating activities, helping to break the cycle of poverty. Moreover, social security programs contribute to economic development by stabilizing income streams and stimulating local demand. With predictable incomes, families can invest in agriculture, education, or entrepreneurship, boosting productivity and economic growth. These systems also promote food security by ensuring vulnerable households can access sufficient food, thereby reducing hunger and malnutrition.

The evaluation of Indian Social Security Programs and Initiatives reveals a multifaceted landscape characterized by notable achievements and ongoing challenges. The findings highlight the importance of these initiatives in addressing socio-economic disparities and enhancing the overall well-being of the population. Furthermore, the assessment of healthcare initiatives, including the National Health Mission, demonstrates significant progress in improving healthcare accessibility. Ultimately, this study contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on social security, informing the future direction of social welfare programs in India.

In the Indian scenario in addition to economic benefits, social security systems mitigate inequality, foster social cohesion, and support peace and stability by narrowing the wealth gap and promoting fairness. This unity is essential for sustaining peaceful and stable communities. Investing in robust social security is vital for the Indian Government in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, upholding human rights, integrating humanitarian aid, development, cooperation, and peacebuilding efforts. Thus, prioritizing social sector spending is crucial for constructing resilient, inclusive societies and fostering national prosperity. Despite increased government spending, India's social sector expenditure to GDP ratio remains low, and prioritizing this area is essential for sustainable development and growth.

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