



Social Protection and Social Security in India

India has a broad ambit of social protection programs, but the overall public expenditure on social protection (excluding public healthcare) is only approx. 1.5% of the GDP², lower than many middle-income countries across the world.

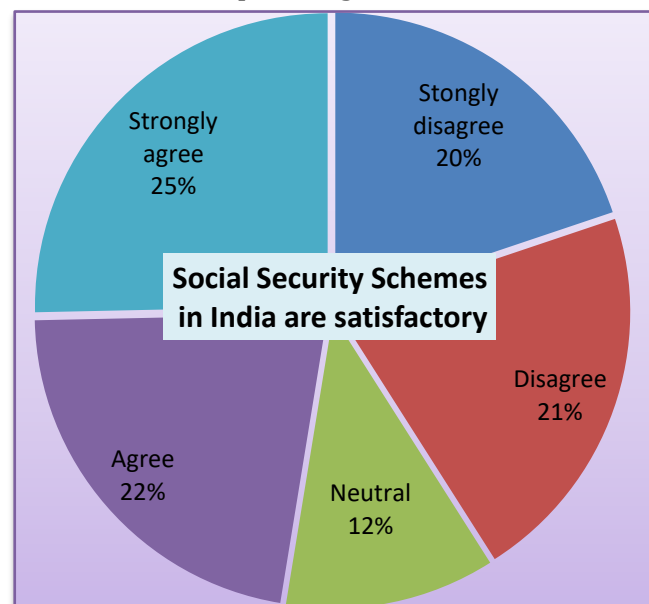
In India, most social protection programs are aimed at addressing capability deprivation (inadequate nutrition, lack of employment, low education), rather than providing safety nets to deal with contingency risks (health hazards, death, disability). Contingent social security covers mostly organized sector workers, who comprise only 8% of India's workforce.

Generally, social protection floors are pre-defined sets of basic social security guarantees, which secure protection, aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Social protection floors consist of two main elements - Basic Services like ensuring the availability, continuity, and access to public services (such as sanitation, health, education, training and family-focused social work support etc.) and Social Benefits like essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, paid to the poor and vulnerable to enhance food security and nutrition, provide a minimum income security and access to essential services, including education and health care.

Government policies and social norms are not at par so far as social security in old age is concerned. In India, social security schemes are rather depressing. Government should focus on social security schemes keeping in view of fast increasing population of older persons. At the same time, there should be some in-built social structures / systems within the social fabric of society so that older persons can lead an untroubled life in old age.

Perceptions on Social Security Schemes in India

- As per the survey conducted by Agewell Foundation in March 2019, according to 41% respondents were found to be dissatisfied with the status of social security schemes in



² International Labour Organization. *World Social Protection Report 2014-15*



India (19.8% strongly dissatisfied & 21.1% dissatisfied with provisions and availability of social security schemes).

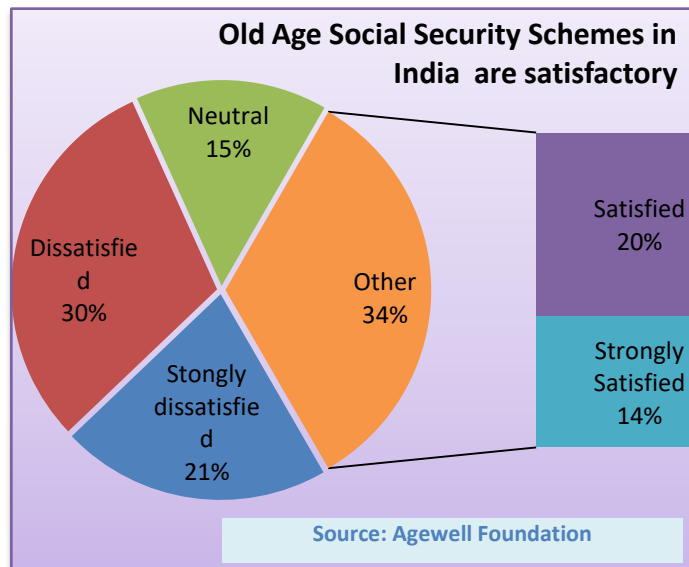
- Only 47.4% respondents reportedly claimed that social security schemes being run by central/state government are quite adequate.

Social Security Schemes for Elderly in India

- During the survey every second elderly respondents i.e. 51.9% respondents reportedly agreed that overall status of social security schemes for older persons in India is not satisfactory.

- In this category, only 21.2% older persons were found to be strongly disagreeable with the fact that old age social security schemes in India are not satisfactory.

- 1/3rd respondents claimed that social security provisions being made by the government and social security schemes being run by the government are quite enough and their overall status can be termed as satisfactory. When respondents were asked about the **status of**



pension funds/ gratuity / provident fund schemes in India, 27.3% respondents said that they are not satisfied with the existing pension funds/ gratuity / provident fund schemes in India. More than 60% older persons found satisfied with the current status of pension funds/ gratuity / provident fund schemes in India.

- 58.7% respondents did not agree with the fact that old age pension schemes are working well in India, while almost every fourth elderly (26% elderly) was found to be strongly disagreeable with this fact.
- When respondents were asked about the **status of health insurance schemes** for older persons in India, 58% said that it is not satisfactory. Among them 18.5% older persons were of the view that the status of health insurance for older persons is critical.
- More than 1/4th elderly respondents (25.8% elderly) feel that health insurance schemes for old age are satisfactory.



Ensuring social security in old age for its population is the major challenge before Government of India that cannot be addressed only by making budgetary provisions from time to time. For overcoming such ever-growing challenges, government must also focus on some out-of-the-box measures and devise continuing strategies.

To ensure social security for people in old age, concerned stakeholders need to focus on:

- Maximum coverage under existing and/or new social security schemes
- Medical as well as life insurance till end of life to provide medical and financial security in old age
- Positive environment for financial planning from younger age, so that they can earn ensured income in old age
- Spreading awareness about medicines and healthcare equipment, beneficial to them in old age, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas
- Old age pension amount should be benchmarked to the increasing cost of living
- Provisions for tax incentives for employees who are looking after dependent senior citizens
- Financial incentive for setting up network of Caregivers for Older Persons at block-level to look after older persons living alone
- Specially designed Self-Employment Scheme for the aged
- Setting up of a National Institute for Promotion of Entrepreneurship amongst the Retired and Aged
