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Topic: SOCIAL SECURITY, SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR

### **SOCIAL SECURITY, SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR**

In common parlance, the terms social protection and social security are used interchangeably. However, in development literature the two terms are defined differently, although with some common characteristics. Social protection is a broader concept and includes both protective and promotional measures. Protective measures are those measures which are directed towards providing safety against risk and vulnerability. Promotional measures are those measures which are aimed at increasing the well-being and livelihood conditions of the people. The policies and procedures included in social protection involve five major kinds of activities:

- i) labor market policies and programmes,
- ii) social insurance programmes,
- iii) social assistance,
- iv) micro and area-based schemes, and
- v) child protection.

In a nutshell, social protection hovers around the promotion of economic strength, protection of the deprived sections, prevention from external shocks and diminution of people's exposure to risks, and enhancement of their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income. On the other hand, Social security is a traditional concept and includes measures aimed at providing safety protection during risk and vulnerability against poverty, old age, disability, sickness, orphanage, etc. The International Labour Organisation

(ILO), a specialized agency of the UN though it pre-dates the UN, has been working for the welfare of labor since 1919 through its Member-States. It holds certain conventions whereby signatory member-states implement agreed-upon agenda. It can also make recommendations which do not bind member-states which, however, consider the merit of a recommendation vis-à-vis its capacity. Two flagship conventions / recommendations set by ILO for the extension of social security are: (i) Social security (minimum standards) convention, 1952 (No. 102), and(ii) Social protection floors recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), establishes minimum standards for all nine branches of social security. These branches are:

- medical care;
- sickness benefit;
- unemployment benefit;
- old-age benefit;
- employment injury benefit;
- family benefit;
- maternity benefit;
- invalidity benefit; and
- survivors' benefit.

The minimum standards of the Convention for all the nine branches relate to the percentage of the population protected by social security schemes, the level of the minimum benefit to be secured to protected persons, as well as to the conditions for entitlement and period of entitlement to benefits. It also lays down that social security schemes be administered on a tripartite basis, which guarantees and strengthens social dialogue between Governments, employers, and workers. ILO Convention 102 does not include the principle of universality and does not prescribe how to reach these objectives but leaves certain flexibility to the member state. As per this convention social security grows and evolves over time. Social security policies should reflect countries' social and cultural values, their history, their institutions and their level of economic development. By the year 2012, the majority of countries had social security schemes established by law covering all or most areas, albeit in many cases including India only

for a minority of their populations. After the economic crisis of 2008, the UN recognised the fact that billions of people who have no social protection were hit harder. It shows that extension of legal coverage does not in itself ensure either the effective coverage of the population or improvements in the quality and level of benefits. Realizing the importance of human right to social security across the board, ILO has made certain floor recommendations in 2012. Called as social protection floors recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) is the first international instrument that explicitly recognises the triple role of social security as a universal human right, an economic necessity and social necessity. It calls upon the States to achieve universal coverage with at least minimum levels of protection through the implementation of Social Protection Floors as a matter of priority; and to progressively ensure higher levels of protection.