

FICCI-KAS VIRTUAL DIALOGUES THE NEW NORMAL

DIALOGUE VIII: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

MODERATOR

JULY 22, 2020 | 1100-1245 HRS @ ZOOM



Mr. Varghese K George
The Deputy Resident Editor
The Hindu



Dr. Qaiser M Khan
Lead Economist, Social Protection & Jobs
Human Development South Asia Region
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Shri Yogendra Yadav
National President
Swaraj India



Mr. Rohit Prasad
Chief Executive Officer
HelpAge India



Mr. Peter Rimmel
Resident Representative to India
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



Prof. Rama V. Baru
Professor, CSMCH
Jawaharlal Nehru University



Dr. Partha Chatterjee
Dean - International Partnerships &
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FICCI-KAS Virtual Dialogues

The New Normal Series

**The Final Dialogue VIII: Social Protection and the impact of the Global
Pandemic**

July 22, 2020
1100-1245 hrs
On Zoom

The Context

The global pandemic outbreak has given rise to the 'New Normal' in all aspects of societal living and productivity. The current crisis has brought to the surface the vulnerabilities of the society. Social protection comprises of policies and programmes intended to lessen poverty and vulnerability through child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment benefits, employment injury benefits, sickness benefits, health protection, old-age pensions, disability pensions and survivors' pensions, in short, the guarantee of basic minimum necessities for survival to each individual by the state. It mainly encompasses four aspects- Protective measures such as income benefits or pensions; Preventative measures such as social insurance, savings clubs, Promotive measures such as enhancing incomes through inputs and public works; and Transformative measures such as social equity and inclusion, empowerment, and rights (e.g. labour laws).¹

Social Market Economy model shows comparisons across countries to be developed as a major discussion factor. As per the Article 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights- "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

According to the World Bank, social protection programs are at the heart of boosting human capital for the world's most vulnerable. These programmes and policies empower citizens to be healthy, pursue their education, and seek opportunity to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. No part of the world is untouched by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) directly or indirectly and social protection systems are crucial to safeguarding the poor and vulnerable when crises hit. Already, 126 countries have introduced or adapted social protection and labour market policies in response to COVID-19, with 505 measures currently in place as per the World Bank. Governments all over the world are continuing to provide vulnerable individuals and families with COVID-19 social protection even as lockdown restrictions are being relaxed.

FICCI in partnership with the India Office of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), has been organising the FICCI-KAS Virtual Dialogue Series on topics of strategic, geo-economic and contemporary relevance. The FICCI-KAS Virtual Dialogue series is an endeavour to stay connected, to exchange notes and to ideate on vital issues and concerns faced by society. The Dialogue brings together thought leaders, opinion shapers and domain experts to discuss topics of contemporary interest. The New Normal Series seeks to examine the paradigm shift, new norms and novel ways of adapting and coping.

¹IDS Working Paper 232 on 'Transformative Social Protection'; Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler; October 2004; Institute of Development Studies, England

Programme Overview

Keeping in mind the current health crisis, it is important to ensure that there are social safety nets such as cash transfers, food security, healthcare benefits in not only conflict areas and least developed countries or resource deficit countries. There is a need for endorsing efficient labour markets, lessening people's exposure to risks, and augmenting their capacity to cope with economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age. It is also crucial to enhance social cohesion and strengthen social welfare schemes such as providing direct benefit transfers to the needy and affordable and accessible healthcare to all. A country can only progress when all sections of society progress together and development is invigorated in a non- exploitative manner by promoting universal good.

To understand the various facets of social protection as well as to enhance social market economy, FICCI in partnership with the India Office of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, organised the 8th and the final edition of the FICCI-KAS Virtual Dialogue on 'Social Protection and the impact of the Global Pandemic' on July 22, 2020 between 1100-1245 hrs on Zoom.

The 8th edition brought together representatives from multilateral institutions, industry, academia.

The panel comprised of the following speakers:

- **Shri Yogendra Yadav**, National President, Swaraj India
- **Dr. Qaiser M Khan**, Lead Economist, Social Protection & Jobs, Human Development South Asia Region, World Bank
- **Prof. Rama V. Baru**, Professor, Centre for Social Medicine & Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- **Mr. Rohit Prasad**, Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India
- **Dr. Partha Chatterjee**, Dean - International Partnerships and Head of Economics, Shiv Nadar University
- **Mr. Varghese K George**, The Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu (Moderator)

Aims and Objectives

The objective of the 8th FICCI-KAS Dialogue was to discuss the social protection measures adopted by our societies and contemplate on how to improve the existing frameworks to manage these programmes and policies especially in the context of the global pandemic.

The discussion addressed the following aspects:

- How can social protection be extended to the 4 billion people worldwide who still lack it?
- How can we protect individuals and their families against future pandemics and what safeguarding measures can the countries take to the lives and livelihoods of the poorest and the most vulnerable?
- What kind of universal social welfare schemes to help in dealing with pandemics? Can these be aligned with the Millennium Development Goals?
- On the economic front, people working in the informal sector as well as those in unconventional sectors, have been badly hit by the economic downtrend. Is there a way to not only create quality jobs for the youth but also to effectively deal with income shocks?
- The World Bank has the Social Risk Management framework for social protection. Can such frameworks be used to create safety nets to tactfully contain the harmful effects of a pandemic?
- How can low-income countries devise effective social protection measures in an affordable manner despite budget constraints?

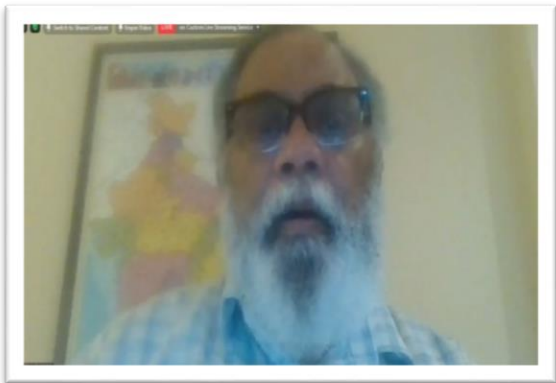
Key Takeaways

- The eighth FICCI KAS Dialogue scrutinised the concept of social protection and its relevance in the current context, especially in the context of the Social Market Economy model.
- The current corona outbreak crisis has brought to the surface the vulnerabilities of the society.
- Social protection systems comprising of policies and programmes intended to lessen poverty and vulnerability through child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment benefits, employment injury benefits, sickness benefits, health protection, old-age pensions, disability pensions and survivors' pensions need to be strengthened.
- Discussion revolved around the provision of basic minimum necessities for survival for life to each individual by the state and especially in the backdrop of the corona outbreak.
- Social Market Economy model with comparisons across countries to be developed was a major discussion factor.
- Social protection programs are at the heart of boosting human capital for the world's most vulnerable.
- Social protection programmes and policies that empower citizens to be healthy, pursue their education, and seek opportunity to lift themselves and their families out of poverty, need to be improved globally.
- Governments all over the world are continuing to provide vulnerable individuals and families with COVID-19 social protection even as lockdown restrictions are being relaxed. These measures need to be enhanced to promote further relief to the citizens.
- Keeping in mind the current health crisis, it is important to ensure that there are social safety nets such as cash transfers, food security and healthcare benefits.
- There is a need for endorsing efficient labour markets, lessening people's exposure to risks, and augmenting their capacity to cope with economic and social risks such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age.
- It is also crucial to enhance social cohesion and strengthen social welfare schemes such as providing direct benefit transfers to the needy and affordable and accessible healthcare to all.
- Societal wellbeing is a precondition to economic progress. All nations can progress when all sections of society progress together and development is invigorated in a non-exploitative manner by promoting sustainable social protection programmes and systems.
- On the economic front, people working in the informal sector as well as those in unconventional sectors, have been badly hit by the economic downtrend. There is an acute need to not only create quality jobs for the youth but also to effectively deal

with income shocks. Societal support is required for those in the informal sector where means of collective bargaining do not exist.

- The social protection framework provided by multilateral agencies such as the social risk management framework of the World Bank, may be used for creating social safety nets with greater participation of state and non-state actors.
- There is a need to devise effective social protection measures in an affordable manner despite fiscal constraints.
- Social protective systems are effective mechanisms which can change the lives of the poor and most vulnerable communities and mitigate economic and fiscal shocks.
- These systems can also help ensure equal prospects by giving the socially vulnerable an option to rise out of poverty and become productive members of our societies.
- Well-designed social protection programs are cost-effective, costing countries on an average of about 1.5 per cent of GDP including that of India. Germany has contributed, at times, more than 20 per cent of its GDP to social protection measures.
- Universal social protection coverage should ideally include the following: providing social assistance through cash transfers to those who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pension coverage for the elderly.
- Support through these social protection measures must be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security especially during health crises such as COVID-19.
- Indian schemes on social protection were discussed and suggestions to improve these schemes were proposed.

Glimpses



Key Statements

Shri Yogendra Yadav, National President, Swaraj India

“Free treatment should be made available for COVID-19 patients and health workers should be taken care of. There is a need to sustain the public distribution system, ensure one-time cash transfer of 10,000 to every family, support for unemployment through wage subsidy, should be given.”

Dr. Qaiser M Khan, Lead Economist, Social Protection & Jobs, Human Development South Asia Region, World Bank

“The Indian states need to be given autonomy and flexibility to design schemes and to decide on how to apply them based on their local conditions.”

Prof. Rama V. Baru, Professor, Centre for Social Medicine & Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University

“Social protection systems across the world have been impacted due to the global pandemic and there is a need for mapping the social gradient of vulnerability in Indian society and providing healthcare assistance.”

Mr. Rohit Prasad, Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India

“There is a need for ensuring social protection for the elderly like enhancing the universal old-age pension scheme and ensuring safety nets for the poor, the vulnerable and those in the informal sector.”

Dr. Partha Chatterjee, Dean - International Partnerships and Head of Economics, Shiv Nadar University

“The State plays an important role in providing social welfare including providing subsidised education.”

Mr. Varghese K George, The Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu

“The different models of social protection systems in various countries can be applied in the case of sickness, old age, economic disruption but not something as big and disruptive as the pandemic.”

Welcome Remarks

Mr. Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI



Mr. Manish Singhal welcomed the distinguished guests at the 8th FICCI-KAS Virtual Dialogue and remarked that the pandemic has led to world-wide disruption and in times like these, it is important to adhere to a pragmatic approach. He mentioned that the New Normal Series is an endeavour to stay connected and keep the dialogue alive during these unprecedented times. Given the global pandemic outbreak, the world is faced with the 'New Normal' in all aspects of life and work.

He remarked that in order to adapt to these circumstances, one has to recalibrate their ways of living and working. He then introduced the esteemed panellists and expressed his keenness to hear their views on the topic.

Remarks

Mr. Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative to India, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



Mr. Peter Rimmele remarked that protecting the vulnerable section of the societies, in the modern world, is regarded as one of the key tasks of the Government. He mentioned that issues of social security and welfare make up the core elements of political discourse in societies across the globe. He gave instances of the National Health Service in United Kingdom, the minimum wage and pension schemes in Germany as well as the issue of lowering the pension age in Russia.

He explained that public health has assumed a different form in the New Normal and the focus on social protection has become intense. With a worldwide economy that is at best sputtering and adapting to the new situation and at worst faltering, the social security of wide swathes of the world population has taken on an urgency that forces politicians and decisionmakers around the globe to act immediately.

He noted that countries are grappling with the depleted public coffers due to the crisis as well as their obligation towards public in providing for social security to ensure survival of governments and social harmony. He also gave an example of Germany and highlighted the path adopted by the CDU to ensure a strong welfare state as well as economy which can safeguard its employees. He mentioned that one part of the salary goes into mandatory health insurance while other goes into mandatory pension fund and small fund as an insurance for debilitating sickness. Everything is paid for in equal parts by employer and employee but when it comes to pensions, the prevalent political viewpoint tilted towards a greater private incentive.

According to him, state pensions alone cannot cover a retirement reflective of individual careers. He informed of the current Government's (in Germany) provision of a basic pension to alleviate the conditions for pensioners in the lower income brackets.

He also talked about the stress put on the economies and health systems of countries due to COVID-19 pandemic wherein governments have a moral duty to step in during such situations to avert the worst damage. He concluded his remarks by mentioning that everyone's needs need to be acknowledged to preserve calm and social harmony.

Introductory Statement

Mr. Varghese K George, The Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu



Mr. Varghese K George welcomed the panellists and remarked that the unprecedented pandemic has made the world rethink about the debates which were considered as settled but need relooking with respect to the organisation of society in the current context. He mentioned that questions are being raised on the role of citizens, private sector, consumers, proper organisation of the society as well as the role of a nation. He explained that the methods used by the superpowers and the institutions in trying to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, is being debated.

He further talked about the issue of temporary unemployment in the West wherein he pointed out the efficacy of the models for social protection applied for sickness, old age, economic disruption but not something as big and disruptive as the pandemic. He remarked that India has been dealing with the issue of temporary unemployment but unemployment due to the pandemic has become a major social security concern in the past few months. He noted that the discussion on unemployment in India cannot be limited to formal workforce but also to informal sectors as well as vulnerable sections of the society. He alluded that the future of work model might create a situation where a major part of the workforce might not be able or required to work.

He opined that social protection financed by employers and employees is one thing while what is supported by tax payers is a different aspect. With the concept of gig economy, the distinction between employers and employees is becoming difficult and it raises questions on economic aspects like where will the money come from? Are the social security measures generating wealth and growth? Are they stimulating the economy and do we finance the deficit therein? Can a democratic society function without taking care of its vulnerable members? What stakes does the private sector have in the social security system and what is its role?

Key Speeches

Shri Yogendra Yadav, National President, Swaraj India



Shri Yogendra Yadav remarked that people have an impression that countries in the world are free market economies. He noted that there is a very careful balance between free market and social requirements. He mentioned that during a pandemic, there are no free marketeers. He informed that the rough estimates of the number of people who have lost their jobs or who might lose it during the crisis is between 120 million to 114 million in India, which can lead to one of the biggest employment crises since the Great Depression in the US and Europe. He talked about the plight of the migrant workers and remarked that the images of them walking thousands of miles and suffering, is quite disturbing. He noted that images such as these does not surface from countries like Africa which are underdeveloped and poor. He mentioned that this extreme display of ultimate vulnerability in a country, which is not the poorest of the poor.

He commented on the aspect of social security in the new normal and who needs it the most as well as the condition of agriculture workers in rural India and how their everyday activity has been affected only in the limited way because they are used to having a low standard of life. He talked about the expression of 'precariat' used in the British context to understand the class division and remarked that in India, the precarious is not the poorest and those who need social security are different. He then focussed on the various social security measures that are needed with the first being- health. He remarked that India, as a country, has realised the importance of public health, however, in the case of public health insurance scheme, the government doesn't even give figures about how many people have been covered. The public sector hospitals, public health, primary health centres need to be focussed upon under public health.

He further noted that the division of political economic labour wherein the Government did not comply with the pre-existing Colonial Law under which the state governments have power to deal with any epidemic but instead chose the Disaster Management Act. He pointed out that little less than 1 per cent of the GDP has been spent on social welfare. He also talked about the agenda that his party has made based on ground level research conducted in villages and amongst the vulnerable community. He enumerated them under national priorities- free treatment for every COVID-19 patient, not categorised under public healthcare

but separate as well as support to the healthcare workers; public distribution system and availability of food and essentials like cooking oil, sugar along with other items; need for urgent direct cash transfer benefits of at least ₹ 10,000 per family, not even per individual; unemployment support to the retrenched in the form of subsidy to the industry, to the companies which are paying their workers; upgrading the existing employment guarantee scheme, which is the national rural employment guarantee scheme with a guarantee of at least 200 days with minimal wage; and credit relaxation with a moratorium on a payment of loans but also an interest waiver for the most vulnerable groups of society like for farmers who have taken crop loans and small shopkeepers.

He opined that the entrepreneurs of small businesses who are self-employed and don't work with much capital and whose business have come to a standstill, need capital infusion as well as a moratorium on interest. This is also required for the lower middle-class families, which have taken the first housing loan and cannot afford to pay the things. He mentioned that the last agenda is to help the Government work on the six agenda points through additional taxation and wealth tax, inheritance tax.

He explained that it is important to also raise revenue and revive the economy, which is a necessity for a capitalist economy and the debate of old capitalism versus socialism is pointless as markets are here to stay and there is a need to balance both.

Dr. Qaiser M Khan, Lead Economist, Social Protection & Jobs, Human Development South Asia Region, World Bank



Dr. Qaiser M Khan mentioned that India has 440 national social protection schemes but they have been devised on a model of people as belonging to one place or doing a particular job. He reiterated that the so-called gig economy and the existing schemes have all failed to apply to the crisis brought about by the pandemic. He highlighted the key issues that need to be addressed like affordability, adequacy of benefits, and sustainable fiscal manner. The key challenge is to forge a new relationship between the federal and state governments. He remarked that the pandemic is being managed by the Federal government but it is important to acknowledge that the Indian States vary a lot in terms of the local needs. So, there is a need to give more flexibility to the States to allow them to handle situations in their own area. He emphasised on the aspect of decentralisation and giving the States the ability to design and pay at the local level.

He further commented on the aspect of less or no social protection for the working class. He opined that the informal sector in India has grown rapidly and many formal jobs have become informal because of change in technology. He noted that remote working cannot be applied to the vulnerable people. He suggested that this can be dealt with by bringing the gig economy into the formal protection net in India and leave the design and execution to the States since Indian States vary in economic diversity and federal financing mechanisms and flexibility, which can be done by modifying the NBFCs at the state level.

Talking about the condition of the urban poor, Dr. Khan pointed out the adversities that they had to face during the pandemic with large number of workers who lost their jobs and were forced to leave the cities. He mentioned that the positive aspects during the crisis have been the benefits accrued through the scaling up of the PMJKY scheme as well as an increase and portability of PDS.

He further discussed about the portability of Aadhar Cards and other identifications in the system, which he said need to be worked upon. According to him, India is going to move forward into an economy which will be characterised by informal sector jobs, where there will be an increase in employment and the informal sector will grow. He remarked that out of the 440 National Benefit Programmes in India, PDS and MNREGA are extremely important. He talked about the measures that India needs to take such as the One Nation, One Ration Card, benefits like PDS which can be provided in places where the workers work rather than

their place of domicile only. Dr. Khan alluded that people in gig economy need to be covered and social protection must include safety nets, PDS and social insurance.

He also remarked that in an informal sector job, the savings schemes are not accessible to most people and the actual returns on savings programs are high. He reiterated on the need for state level autonomy in India to be able to design and execute schemes suitable to local situations like if food distribution is important in one place, the same PDS money could be given in cash to another place to make other resources accessible and there should also be some flexibility in how they pay off.

He concluded his remarks by talking about the 20 social protection schemes in India across 20 ministries and the need for robust coordinating structure which can shift the focus on individuals and their needs.

Prof. Rama V. Baru, Professor, Centre for Social Medicine & Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University



Prof. Rama V. Baru noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about uncertainties in economy, science, social relations. She remarked that it has brought about the question of vulnerability and if one is to look at the social security programmes and mechanisms in the country, one would notice that these are driven by the idea of (below or above) the poverty line. She mentioned that the concept of social protection is not only limited to the poorest and there is a social gradient of vulnerabilities. In the context of the pandemic, other than the poorest, there is also the middle class as well as the industrialists, who have been affected. She also pointed out that the schemes should cover those who are self-employed, migrants, poorest of the poor and the need for social solidarity, universal equity and inclusive comprehensive services, should be addressed. She reiterated that the schemes in India are spread over ministries but have weak intersectoral coordination.

She noted that public health and social security are intrinsically interrelated as the former is not limited to public health services and hospitals but it goes beyond that. She remarked that the issues of unemployment, food security and pensions also fall under the umbrella of public health. She talked about the inability of the public sector and the public health sector to respond to the crises such as the pandemic. She mentioned that the deaths that occurred are largely due to the absence of a primary health system even in countries which have a hospital-based insurance model. The pandemic has thus brought to the surface the need for integrated public health services wherein the public sector should be taking the lead in managing the crisis.

Prof. Baru also talked about the measures taken such as the national lockdown which she noted was to have health preparedness which had been taken care of in States like Kerala, which had better primary healthcare system to deal with the pandemic. She explained that although Kerala lacked the availability of hospital beds and ventilators at the tertiary level yet they were able to avert death due to good primary level healthcare, surveillance systems, etc.

She also highlighted the role of the Ayushman Bharat scheme as well as the health insurance scheme, which was set up with great response. She remarked that however, during the pandemic, the hospitalisation rates have declined and there were no measures taken for the requisition of the services of the private sector, pool the human resources, increase the beds and apply the Ayushman Bharat scheme in an effective manner. She remarked that the

pandemic has highlighted that there are limits to markets and money cannot buy everything as even when one is willing to pay for healthcare services, there is no guarantee of them being able to avail those services.

She talked about the aspects of fairness and justice wherein the poor and the vulnerable had to bear the burden due to the draconian lockdown and failure of public policy in terms of anticipation, preparation and response. She further mentioned about the shift from the lockdown to the state-level intervention and the magnitude of effect across classes and communities. She concluded her remarks by pointing out that while the pandemic had disrupted the world and exposed the loopholes of social security schemes, it has also created human resilience, cooperation and compassion.

Mr. Rohit Prasad, Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India



Mr. Rohit Prasad remarked that social protection has a lifecycle approach starting from child care and employment aspects to the protection of old demographic. He mentioned that although India is a young country but it is also ageing rapidly as the number will triple in 2050 from 100 million older persons to 300 million older persons. He noted that this aspect of demographic transition will have to be factored into the SDGs 2030 agenda and the Inclusive India goal. He explained that in the pre-pandemic world, when poverty vs vulnerability was a major debate, the elderly situation in India stood at an intersection between the two, having both the elements of poverty and vulnerability.

He elucidated that a large section of the society is trapped in poverty, poor health, increasing marginalisation and 90 per cent of the elderly are in the unorganised informal sector and they have to work to survive while 50 per cent are below the poverty line wherein half of the women are widows. He opined that they are the last and lost section of the society who are often ignored in the public policy domain. He talked about the severe and disproportionate effect of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of the elderly and he mentioned that during the research conducted by HelpAge India, it was found that the rural poor were highly affected and were struggling to survive. It was also seen that existing vulnerabilities and inequities like poverty, lack of pension and inaccessibility to care have all intensified their condition during the crisis.

Mr. Prasad remarked that the major impact of the pandemic was in terms of loss of income and livelihoods where people feared survival more than the disease. He informed that in a nationwide survey, about 65 per cent of the elders were reported to have lost income and livelihoods and 70 per cent had difficulty in accessing essential goods and services. He also talked about the challenges faced by the elderly during the pandemic due to the inaccessibility of the benefits of the PDS and the pension from bank accounts.

He further gave instances of the adversities faced by the elderly during the pandemic across the world and noted that it is important to look at building better social protection systems, which have to be rights-based and not charity-driven as well as which would uphold the value of Article 21 of the Constitution of 'Life with Dignity'. He suggested measures towards ensuring social protection for the elderly like enhancing the universal old-age pension scheme and ensuring safety nets for the poor, the vulnerable and those in the informal sector. He talked about the National Social Assistance Programme of the Government of India, which he

said, covers 30 million elderly and 25 per cent of those eligible from the BPO segment and the average amount of pension that they get is ₹ 500 across States wherein the Central Government share is ₹ 200 per month. He remarked that COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the gaps of limited coverage and benefit with a large number of the elderly population as unsupported and vulnerable. He emphasised that pension alone is not enough but there is also the need for an enabling environment, livelihood support system for those who want to work. He informed about the elderly self-help groups wherein the rural communities are collectivised and socially empowered through financial inclusion which also builds resilience. This, he mentioned, can be done by the support from the public sector under the CSR and can be driven by the Ministry as well.

He further remarked about the importance of strong family system. He opined that in countries like Canada, where the institution-based care systems are challenged, it is necessary to understand that any society which fails to build a strong family system, will face challenges and problems. He concluded by remarking that the New Normal might be characterised by the shifts in mindsets and actions and he posed some questions like whether the political will recognises the voices, needs and aspiration of the elderly? Whether the economic and fiscal capacity would be adequate in addressing the issue of universal pension. Will investment in older person be a trade-off between the young and old demographic? Will society reframe its perceptions with respect to ageing and vulnerability?

Dr. Partha Chatterjee, Dean - International Partnerships and Head of Economics, Shiv Nadar University



Dr. Partha Chatterjee remarked that in the case of lives and livelihoods or growth and equity, one cannot equate or pit one against the other as both aspects are equally necessary. He noted that market economy and social infrastructure are compatible with each other.

He opined that freedom is fundamental to one's belief system where people want freedom to live anywhere or do as they please. He talked about the importance of having a Government as opposed to an anarchic structure as the Government ensures social protection to its citizens. He quoted Adam Smith on the role of Government in providing national defense, administration of justice and public goods, and mentioned that it is the duty of the Government and public institutions to provide protection.

He explained that it is crucial to note the growth experiences of countries where one country has progressed from low income to high income, and understand the role of social protection. He mentioned that countries in Asia, which lacked in healthcare infrastructure or did not give much importance of public health, are now focussing on social protection particularly in terms of healthcare, since the onset of the pandemic. He remarked that there are ways to focus both on strengthening social protection systems as well as developing markets.

Dr. Chatterjee further discussed about the Ayushman Bharat scheme where he remarked that the idea of providing health insurance is based on the premise of having a safety net. He alluded that one has to ensure that the basic tenets or principles of a scheme are looked into where he gave an example of the ineffectiveness of a health insurance due to the inaccessibility of hospitals.

He mentioned that in terms of financing, the Government has to create the markets if they are missing and create a finance infrastructure. He reiterated that taxation could be a way but one has to be careful in devising ways to tax without disrupting the incentives as well as think about deficit financing in the short run. He explained that deficit financing can work when it is ensured that there will be returns in the future.

Interventions

Q. How do you think the Indian mainstream political discourse will pan out in the light of the pandemic?

A. The trouble in India is that the left wing has no economics and the right wing has no politics. The reason is that in India, the overall intellectual consensus and the public opinion consensus has always been in favour of welfare. The consensus of Indian public life is that it is the duty of the state to offer welfare. The pandemic has shown us the American model where the global power is struggling where the poor and the most vulnerable are facing a grim situation, which can be associated with the third world. The models of capitalism in the US and Germany, are different from that of India. India can look at the European social democracy model where there has to be a balance between markets and providing social security. There is a need for informed and sensible conversation on how to bring together markets, enterprise with serious and assured mechanisms of social security. It is important for entrepreneurs to note that the future and stability of markets in the long run, in India, depend upon the widening of the baseline social security as without that even markets don't function. ~ **Shri Yogendra Yadav**

Q. The trade unions as an interest group in the overall political negotiations, are practically now non-existent and the workforces are not part of the politics. So, do you think that the lessons that we learned could lead up to a renewed debate?

A. It ought to come up for a renewed debate as it is a scandal that the trade unions and workers' organisations are as powerless as they are in India, because that's a very significant part of our population, which have no voice. For example, the three or four States abolished the labour laws and called it labour reforms. When the labour reforms were announced, they faced a kind of political resistance as well as the plight of the migrant labours where the workers from the organised sectors or trade unions did not come to their rescue. There was no sense of solidarity. The Indian workers movement has remained confined to the organised sector however, it needs to be taken up in the unorganised and informal sector. ~ **Shri Yogendra Yadav**

Q. For any economy to prosper or any entrepreneurship to prosper, it would have to be based on a stable social security architecture. Do you think there will be sufficient buy in from entrepreneurs and industries on that aspect? As a principal, do you think that the business and the companies and corporations will be open to this idea?

A. They will have to for their own survival. The German model of modern social protection will have to be tweaked to suit the modern economies. In India, there is a bigger challenge of gig economy wherein there is both a formal sector and an informal sector economy. There is a need for portability as going forward in India, one will have to find a way to cover the gig economy, which can also improve the urban workers who make a lot of money relative to the average. They need to if they want to have their workers around and if they want to make

capital cheaper than labour. That is what happened to the steel industry in the United States where it does not employ many workers. So, one will have to be careful in making changes. ~ **Dr. Qaiser M Khan**

Q. Over the years there have been the debates in public policy discourse, where the balance between growth and equity have been questioned. Why is that so?

A. India has a deep-rooted history of socialism and has gradually moved towards market economy. As compared to countries like the United States, which provide basic social security benefits to its population, India lacks basic social protection infrastructure. Hence, it has failed to maintain the balance between growth and equity. ~ **Dr. Partha Chatterjee**

Q. In order to have a robust economic growth and to enhance investments, there has to be a negotiation between investors and other stakeholders. How can that be done keeping in mind the aspect of expanding social safety net?

A. Without adequate social protection, economic growth will come to a halt. The benefit levels can be set at a level which can allow people to function wherein as compared to the past where income levels were at 80 per cent but have now come down to 40 per cent. In India, there is a need for social protection to the informal sector. ~ **Dr. Qaiser M Khan**

A2: The business leaders in the healthcare and pharmaceuticals sector have failed to assume a more responsible role during the pandemic. There is the need for a visionary role of the private sector especially in health sector. ~ **Prof. Rama V. Baru**

A3: The context that if economic growth is sustained then the social systems can be strengthened, is debatable as the drivers for economic growth are completely different. The private sector needs to assume greater role and responsibility in helping the Government build stronger social protection systems. ~ **Mr. Rohit Prasad**

FICCI-KAS Virtual Dialogues: The New Normal Series

Dialogue VIII: Social Protection and the Impact of the Global Pandemic

July 22, 2020; 1100-1245 hrs on Zoom

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1050 – 1100 hrs	Logging into respective devices for webinar
1100-1105 hrs	Welcome Remarks by Mr Manish Singhal , Deputy Secretary General, FICCI
1105 – 1110 hrs	Remarks by Mr. Peter Rimmele , Resident Representative to India, KAS
1110-1215 hrs	<p>Input Statements by Key Speakers followed by panel discussion moderated by Mr. Varghese K George, The Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shri Yogendra Yadav, National President, Swaraj India • Dr. Qaiser M Khan, Lead Economist, Social Protection & Jobs, Human Development South Asia Region, World Bank • Prof. Rama V. Baru, Professor, Centre for Social Medicine & Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University • Mr. Rohit Prasad, Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India • Dr. Partha Chatterjee, Dean - International Partnerships and Head of Economics, Shiv Nadar University.
1215-1235 hrs	Audience interventions and Q & A
1235-1245 hrs	<p>Concluding remarks from key speakers</p> <p>Key Takeaways of Dialogue: Summing up by Moderator</p>

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Speaker Profiles

EMINENT KEY SPEAKERS (*In Alphabetical Order*)

Shri Yogendra Yadav, National President, Swaraj India



Shri Yogendra Yadav is the National President, Swaraj India. He is an Indian activist, psephologist and politician whose primary interests are in the political and social sciences. He has been a Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi since 2004. He is a former member of University Grants Commission (UGC) and National Advisory Council on Right to Education Act (NAC-RTE) constituted by Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Govt of India, in 2010. He was a member of the National Executive of the Aam Aadmi Party until 2015. Yadav is a founding member of Swaraj Abhiyan and Jai Kisan Andolan.

Prof. Rama V. Baru, Professor, Centre for Social Medicine & Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University



Prof. Rama Baru is a professor at the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has taught the Masters in Public Health, MPhil and PhD programmes in the Centre for 25 years. She is an honorary fellow with the Institute of Chinese Studies and an honorary professor at India Studies Centre, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China. Her research focus is on social determinants of health, health policy, international health, privatisation of health services and inequalities in health. She is the author of *Private Health Care in India: Social Characteristics and Trends* Sage Publication. She has edited several volumes on *School Health Services in India: The Social and Economic Contexts* (Sage Publication); *Medical Insurance Schemes for the Poor: Who Benefits?* (Academic Publication); a co-edited volume with Anuj Kapilashrami titled 'Global Health Governance and Commercialisation of Public Health in India: Actors, Institutions and the Dialectics of Global and Local' published by Routledge. Her latest is co-authored book (with Madhurima Nundy) 'Commercialisation of Medical Care in China: Changing Landscapes' (Routledge).

She has published extensively in journals and contributed to several edited volumes. She was awarded the Balzan Fellowship by the University College, London and the Indo-Shastri Canadian Fellowship, Yusuf Hamied Fellowship at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York.

She is currently on several research committees in the Indian Council for Medical Research, Department of Health Research and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Dr. Partha Chatterjee, Dean - International Partnerships and Head of Economics at Shiv Nadar University



Dr. Partha Chatterjee is currently a Professor and Head of the Department of Economics at Shiv Nadar University (SNU). His research interests are broadly in macroeconomics, international economics, and issues related to emerging economies. He has taught a variety of Undergraduate, Graduate and MBA courses.

As the first Head of the Economics Department, he has built up the Economics Department which is now established as one of the premier economics departments in the country. As Dean – International Partnerships he is responsible for developing the University’s Global Strategy and implementation of that through international partnerships and strategic engagements across the world.

Earlier, he has worked as Assistant Professor at NUS Business School and Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi. He also has a keen interest in a variety of issues related to higher education, particularly in India. He has a Ph.D. in Economics from University of Minnesota.

Dr. Qaiser M Khan, Lead Economist, Social Protection & Jobs, Human Development South Asia Region, World Bank



Mr. Qaiser Khan is the Lead Economist for the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice in the World Bank. He started as an Economist working on poverty and food security issues in Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Rwanda. He moved to the Middle East and North Africa region in 1995 working on Egypt, West Bank and Gaza, Morocco, Iran and Yemen where he served as HD Coordinator in the field from 1997 to 1999. He moved to South Asia in 2003 where he worked on all countries except Bhutan before returning to Africa end of 2009 to serve as sector leader/ program leader based in Accra and then in Ethiopia. He returned to HQ end of 2016 to work across Africa and also led for a while the Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project before agreeing to move to Delhi from August 2019. During his period in the Bank he has led major pieces of analytic work as well been TTL for DPLs, SILs and PforRs.

Before the World Bank Qaiser worked as a development consultant from 1985-89 in Nepal, Philippines, Barbados, Thailand and Lesotho. Prior to that he was an Assistant Professor of Economics at Bowdoin College in the USA. He has a PHD from the University of Pennsylvania plus two Master's degree from the same institution. Qaiser is a Bangladeshi National and is fluent in English, French, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and has a working knowledge of Arabic.

Qaiser is the lead author of a 2015 book *Improving Basic Services for the bottom forty percent: Lessons from Ethiopia* and has written several recent academic papers on development and equity issues with papers published in *World Development*, *Journal of Health Equity* and *PLOS*. Qaiser is currently finalizing publication of a paper on the impact of decentralization on health and education which came out in August 2019 as an LSE Working Paper pending publication in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, Oxford University Press sometime in 2020.

Mr. Rohit Prasad, Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India



Mr. Rohit Prasad is working with HelpAge India as CEO since July 1, 2020. He was earlier in the role of COO for three years, responsible for program development and implementation in HelpAge’s mission areas of healthcare, agecare, livelihoods, and advocacy for social security and care systems for the elderly. He is strongly focused on mainstreaming ageing into India’s national development agenda.

He has experience of 20+ years across both corporate and social sector, with focus on healthcare and public health. Prior to HelpAge India, he worked as Director- Development & Strategic Initiatives with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), a non-profit public private initiative; McKinsey & Company in practice building and growth roles, and several other organisations.

Rohit has an MBA from Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi and Bachelors in Arts (Economics Honours) from Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), University of Delhi.

Moderator

Mr. Varghese K George, Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu



Mr. Varghese K George is the Deputy Resident Editor, The Hindu and he writes the editorials on select topics, besides signed commentaries. Earlier he was the Political Editor of The Hindu and between 2015 and 2018, the US Correspondent. He had covered the 2016 U.S presidential election; travelled extensively in America, and wrote extensively on U.S domestic politics and foreign policy, primarily for an Indian audience. Through a series of comparative commentaries on Indian and US democracies, he has sought to explain the intense churn that is underway in both countries. He wrote the lead stories for the paper on the victories of Narendra Modi in 2014 and 2019; and of Donald Trump in 2016.

He coined the term Hindutva 2.0 to describe the combination of economic aspiration and religious nationalism represented by Narendra Modi, in 2007. “Newly tested in Modi Gujarat lab: Hindutva 2.0” was the Indian Express lead on Modi’s second victory in Gujarat. Previously, he was the Chief of Bureau - Politics, at Hindustan Times (2008 – 2013) where he headed a team of 16-20 reporters who covered domestic politics and policy, defence and internal security and foreign affairs. He has also worked with the Indian Express, in various capacities and was based in Patna till July 2005. Several of his reports from Bihar led to wide national and international follow-ups by other publications. He had unravelled the Bihar Flood Scam in April 2005. Between 2005 and 2008, as Senior Editor (Politics), he had covered Congress and BJP, the ruling and opposition parties respectively, of India, then.

He has also written books like *Open Embrace: India-US ties in the age of Modi and Trump* (Penguin Viking, October 2018); *Jayaprakash Narayan: The Eternal Rebel* (2002, Rupa, Delhi). He has won accolades during his illustrious career- Journalist of the Year, Ramnath Goenka Award for Excellence in Journalism and Prem Bhatia Award for Excellence in Political Reporting and Analysis in 2005; Special Mention by the jury of the 23rd People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) in 2004 as well as the *Journalism for Human Rights Awards* in 2003.

Mr. George was the Emerging Leader Fellow -2013 at the Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne. He has pursued his M. Phil from School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi with specialisation in neo-liberal economic reforms and its implications for governance in the West Asian countries. He has a M.A. degree in Modern Indian History, University of Delhi.

ORGANISERS

Mr. Dilip Chenoy, Secretary General, FICCI



Mr. Dilip Chenoy is currently Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). He leads the permanent secretariat of the industry chamber, which is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India, and a potent voice for policy change. FICCI represents over 2,50,000 members through Member Bodies covering all the States of India.

Before joining FICCI, Dilip served as Managing Director & CEO of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). NSDC fosters private sector investment and initiatives in training and skill development.

Dilip has also worked in several key industry organizations, including SIAM as its Director General. He was a member of the Harvard Business School project under Professor Michael Porter that worked on the competitiveness of Indian industry. With varied experiences of working in the private sector, he advises start-ups including organisations in the digital, education, skills and livelihood space. Dilip has also served as Chairman of an Engineering Institute.

A fellow of the World Academy of Productivity Science (WAPS), he was awarded the Indian Achievers Award in 2018, The Game Changer Award in 2015 and the Rashtriya Media Ratan Award in 2013.

Mr. Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative to India, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)



Mr. Peter Rimmele is currently the Resident Representative to India of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

He has a First Law Degree from Freiburg University, as well as a Second Law Degree from the Ministry of Justice Baden-Württemberg, Germany and a M.A. in Geography.

After working as, a jurist, judge and lecturer, he took public office as Ministerialrat, Head of Division at the State Ministry of the Interior in Saxony, Germany, from November 1991 on until 2000.

There he first served in the Police and Security and later in the Local Government Department.

On behalf of the German Foreign Ministry he served in East Timor as Registrar General, Head of Civil Registry and Notary Services (UNTAET), and became later the principal Advisor for Governance Reform for GIZ (German International Cooperation) to the Ministry of Administrative Reform and the Anti-Corruption-Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, where he served for 7 years. He then moved to Rwanda, also as Principal Advisor Good Governance/Justice Program. Earlier he was Resident Representative Lebanon, Director of Rule of Law Program Middle East North Africa, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Mr. Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI



Mr. Manish Singhal is currently the Deputy Secretary General, FICCI and Head, International Affairs. He has been with FICCI since 2012 and oversees the global outreach of FICCI, to further the business interests of Indian industry and strategic approach of Govt of India. He also oversees the Resource Conservation & Management (RCM) and FICCI Quality Forum (QF) Divisions which focus on audits, improvement planning and related capacity building initiatives with industry in India and abroad. Prior to FICCI, he has spent over 22 years with some of the best in class Indian transnational companies like Tata Motors, Eicher (Volvo), Tata Autocomp Systems, Moser Baer and BEML. Career involves immense exposure to global multi-cultural business environment, covering over 60 countries, besides India.