**Social protection promotion**

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Social protection signifies the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of the citizens, and establish building blocks allowing citizens and communities to enhance the quality of their lives on a sustainable basis and accordingly create the conditions for all individuals to attain their full potential. Social protection can help build the resilience of the poor and vulnerable segments of the society by supporting them against negative income shocks and protecting their essential household expenditures such as on food, health and education.

The social and economic effects of COVID-19 were being felt with a high intensity across least-developed, developing and emerging market economies around the globe irrespective of their income levels. Most of these will quite obviously be experiencing comparatively low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth during the period coupled with a decline in employment levels leading to a worsening situation in respect of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.

[Dubai-bound flyers offloaded twice from plane over technical fault](https://nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2021/dubai-bound-flyers-offloaded-twice-from-plane-over-technical-fault)

Social protection as such has a central role to play in mitigating the social, economic and health dimensions of the prevailing crisis. It fulfils three interrelated roles; protecting critically threatened livelihoods, preserving and strengthening capacity for recovery and building future resilience.

Pakistan’s poverty reduction efforts have been widely documented and acknowledged. Remittances by Overseas Pakistanis, safety net transfers and informal system of philanthropic networks have contributed to poverty alleviation. Under social safety nets, Pakistan’s Ehsaas Emergency Cash programme has helped to a great extent in countering the socio-economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve “No Poverty” by 2030 is part of a comprehensive Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda-1 that calls to end poverty (extreme) in all its manifestations by ensuring social protection, increasing access to basic services and supporting the people from economic, social and environmental shocks.

[26 dengue cases reported in Islamabad in a day](https://nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2021/26-dengue-cases-reported-in-islamabad-in-a-day)

The Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives in collaboration with the Planning and Development Departments of the provinces and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have carried out an extensive series of divisional level workshops on sensitisation to SDGs at the grass root levels, localisation of SDGs, prioritisation of SDGs and data gap analysis for proper monitoring and reporting.

According to UNDP Human Development Report 2020, Pakistan’s HDI value for 2019 had remained at 0.557 which put the country in the ‘Medium’ category. Pakistan ranked 154 out of 189 countries in the index based on Health (life expectancy at birth), Education (Expected years of schooling) and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.

According to the data available, 1990 to 2019, Pakistan’s HDI value had increased from 0.402 to 0.557 showing an increase of 38.6 percent which was considerably less than the increase achieved by Bangladesh (59 percent) and India (52 percent). Pakistan’s life expectancy at birth had increased by 7.2 years, mean years of schooling increased by 2.9 years and expected years of schooling increased by 3.7 years respectively. Pakistan’s GNI per capita likewise had increased by 64.1 percent. From South Asia, Pakistan is compared with Bangladesh, Afghanistan and India which had HDIs ranks of 133, 169 and 131 percent respectively. Pakistan had shown some progress in human development indicators over the years, raising it to the Medium Human Development category yet, this progress was somewhat slower than all other South Asian countries except Afghanistan.

[Hand grenade recovered from garbage dump in Karachi](https://nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2021/hand-grenade-recovered-from-garbage-dump-in-karachi)

What was the incumbent federal government doing to promote social protection? In March 2019, Ehsaas programme was inaugurated by the Prime Minister as Pakistan’s largest ever social protection and poverty eradication initiative. The Ehsaas programme was especially designed for the poor, orphans, widows, the homeless, the disabled, those who were at risk of health shocks, the unemployed, poor farmers, labourers, the sick and undernourished, students from low-income backgrounds, poor women and elderly citizens. This has helped greatly.