

TATHASTU ICS

CURRENT AFFAIRS

24 AUGUST

KK/AJ

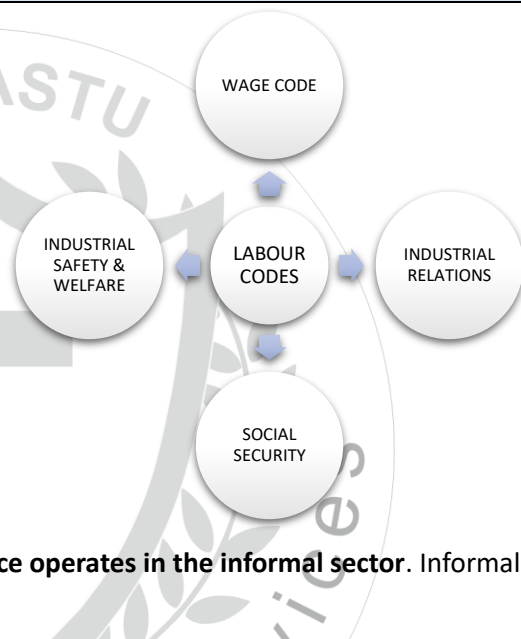
S.No.	TOPIC
1.	NEEDED, A WELL-CRAFTED SOCIAL SECURITY NET FOR ALL
2.	IT'S TIME FOR AFRICA
3.	AS CHANDRAYAAN-3 LANDS ON THE MOON, THE STORY OF ISRO'S REMARKABLE SPACE VOYAGE

NEEDED, A WELL-CRAFTED SOCIAL SECURITY NET FOR ALL

SOURCE: [TH](#)

WHY IN NEWS & CURRENT STATE OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA:

- **Around 53% of the salaried workforce lacks social security benefits** in India. This means they lack access to provident funds, pension, health care, and disability insurance.
- **Only 1.9% of the poorest 20% of India's workforce has access to any social security benefits.**
- Gig workers, about 1.3% of India's active labour force, rarely have access to social security benefits.
- **India's social security system is ranked poorly, at 40 out of 43 countries, by Mercer CFS in 2021.**
- **Around 91% (475 million) of India's workforce operates in the informal sector.** Informal sector workers lack access to social security.



CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA:

Challenge	Description and Examples
Coverage Gap	Despite efforts, a significant portion of the population remains excluded from social security programs. According to the Economic Survey 2020-21 , only about 13% of the workforce is covered by formal social security schemes. Informal and unorganized sector workers often lack access to benefits.
Fragmented Systems	Various social security programs are often fragmented, leading to inefficiencies and duplication. For example, different ministries and departments implement schemes for similar target groups, resulting in overlaps and confusion.
Inadequate Awareness	Many eligible beneficiaries are unaware of the social security schemes available to them. This lack of awareness prevents them from accessing the benefits they are entitled to.
Administrative Challenges	The implementation of social security schemes faces administrative hurdles, leading to delays in disbursing benefits. Instances of incorrect identification, delays in processing, and leakage of funds have been reported.
Funding Constraints	Adequate funding is crucial for the sustainability of social security programs. Limited resources can lead to underfunding, affecting the quality and coverage of benefits.

Gender Disparities	Women often face barriers in accessing social security due to various factors, including limited mobility and decision-making power. For instance, the female labour force participation rate in India remains relatively low, affecting their access to benefits.
Informal Workforce	A significant portion of India's workforce is engaged in the informal sector, making it challenging to extend social security benefits to them. This includes street vendors, domestic workers, and agricultural laborers.
Data Gaps	Accurate and comprehensive data is essential for effective implementation and monitoring of social security programs. Data collection, management, and sharing across agencies remain areas of concern.
Lack of Portability	Portability of social security benefits across different regions and sectors is often lacking. This can be particularly problematic for migrant workers who move across states for employment.

WAY FORWARD:

- Expansion of EPFO System for Formal Workers:** Expand employer and employee contributions under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for formal workers.
- Partial Contributions for Informal Workers:** Elicit partial contributions from informal workers with meaningful income. Encourage informal enterprises to formalize and contribute.
- Government Support for Unemployed and Low-Income:** Government intervention for unemployed, low-income, and vulnerable workers.
- Estimated Cost and Reforms:** Estimated cost for providing social protection to the poorest 20% is ₹1.37 trillion. Reforms needed for expanded coverage, benefit portability, and simplification.
- Recent Progress and Challenges:** The Code on Social Security (2020) aimed at urban and rural poor, gig workers, etc. **e-Shram platform** enabled enrolment but placed burden on informal workers. Employer involvement could have formalized relationships and registration.
- Support for Financing Social Security:** Push for **pan-India labour force card** and expand existing schemes. Loosen restrictions on benefit portability and registration.
- Focus on Domestic and Migrant Workers:** Special attention to domestic workers and their unpredictable job status. Expand coverage for migrant workers and address discrimination.
- Strengthening Existing Schemes:** Strengthen existing schemes like EPF, ESI, and NSAP with budgetary support. Address administrative complexities and overlapping areas of authority.
- Raising Awareness:** Promote awareness about social security benefits among workers. Leverage organizations like Self-Employed Women's Association for campaigns.

SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES IN INDIA:

Social Security Initiative	Description and Purpose
National Social Assistance Program (NSAP)	Provides financial assistance to elderly, widows, and disabled individuals living below the poverty line. Includes Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), and Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS).
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	Guarantees 100 days of wage employment per household in rural areas, contributing to livelihood security and reducing rural unemployment.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)	Introduced during crises to provide food security and financial assistance to vulnerable sections, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)	Aims to provide access to financial services like banking and insurance to all citizens, especially the unbanked and underbanked sections.
Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)	Offers affordable accidental insurance coverage to provide financial support in case of accidental death or disability.
Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)	Provides low-cost life insurance, offering financial assistance to families in case of the policyholder's demise.
Atal Pension Yojana (APY)	Focuses on providing pension benefits to individuals in the unorganized sector, encouraging them to save for retirement.
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)	Provides financial aid to pregnant women for maternity care and nutrition, promoting maternal and child health.
Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)	Offers health insurance coverage to below-poverty-line families, reducing out-of-pocket expenses for medical treatment.
National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	Provides financial assistance to families in the event of the primary breadwinner's death or incapacitation.
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	Provides pensions to individuals with disabilities, ensuring financial support and inclusion.



IT'S TIME FOR AFRICA

SOURCE: [IE](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

During its leadership of the G20, India achieved a significant milestone as **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** passionately **advocated for the inclusion of the African Union within the group's membership**. In harmony with India's commitment to greater involvement and engagement with the Global South, an Action Council titled '**African Economic Integration: An Agenda for Global Business**' was established under the Business20 (B20) framework.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICA:

- Africa holds around **30 percent of the global mineral reserves**, 12 percent of the world's oil, and **8 percent of its natural gas resources**.
- In the year **2050, Africa is projected to account for over half of the world's expected population growth of 1.7 billion individuals**. This will consist of a youthful workforce, an expanding consumer market, and increasing disposable incomes.
- For a significant duration, Africa has been referred to as the "**final frontier**" for business. As experts assess prevailing global trade practices, the viewpoint of Africa as an invaluable investment market needs to broaden even further.
- We should perceive the region not only as a market for expanding businesses but as a contributor to a more comprehensive and stable global economic order.
- Encouraging investments in Africa transcends the expansion of businesses alone; it pertains to **diversifying supply and value chains to establish a resilient and relatively shock-resistant global economy**.
- A fundamental element of this strategy involves the integration of the African continent's economies on a regional scale.

AFRICA'S UNCAPPED POTENTIAL:

- Converting Africa's considerable potential into benefits requires a collaborative endeavour involving the international community, encompassing governments, businesses, and civil society.
- Currently, **Africa's contribution to the overall global manufacturing and trade stands below 3 percent**.
- Within the continent, **33 out of the world's 46 least developed countries are situated**, with many of them being landlocked.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES TO CATALYSE AFRICA'S ECONOMIC INTEGRATION?

1. **First, human capital outcomes across health and education need to be strengthened:** -
 - a. **Youth Demographic Dividend:** Much like India, Africa's population represents a valuable demographic dividend. This underscores the pivotal role that African youth will play in the economy's future.
 - b. **Focus on Healthcare and Education:** Effectively harnessing these potentials necessitates a dedicated emphasis on improving healthcare and education results.
 - c. **Financial Requirement for Healthcare:** The African Development Bank has highlighted the need for substantial funds, amounting to \$26 billion annually, to sustain healthcare expenditure on the continent.

- d. **Impact of Education on Earnings:** According to the World Bank, each additional year of schooling is projected to lead to an 11 percent increase in earnings for boys and 14 percent for girls.
 - e. **Benefits of Integrated Economic Structure:** An integrated economic framework would enable the consolidation of resources, sharing of knowledge, and cost-effective transfer of innovative education and healthcare methodologies.
2. **Enhancing Agriculture and Food Systems:**
 - a. Approximately **70 percent of the African population being employed in the agricultural sector.**
 - b. **Characteristics of Farming:** Farming in the region is characterized by small-scale and subsistence landholdings.
 - c. **Challenges in Agricultural Productivity:** The existing gap in the availability of finance and essential inputs like fertilizers and seeds results in low productivity. Additionally, value addition remains limited, and a majority of agricultural products are exported without undergoing processing.
 - d. **Need for Training and Mechanization:** Addressing these issues necessitates the training and education of farmers. Incorporating mechanization is essential, along with introducing sustainable value-added enterprises within the sector.
 - e. **Positive Outcomes through Interventions:** Coupled with improved access to inputs and credit lines, these interventions have the potential to yield impressive outcomes in Africa.
 3. **Fostering manufacturing-based industrialization and empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises:** Achieving this aim can be realized gradually by facilitating smoother intra-continental trade, aligning policies, and tapping into natural resources for renewable energy.
 4. **Accelerating trade facilitation under AfCFTA for increased competitiveness and investments:** AfCFTA, when fully implemented, will increase the competitiveness of economies across the continent, boost integration with global value chains, and attract investments. Trade facilitation must be accelerated through technology and implementation support from G20 nations.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Strengthen diplomatic ties with African nations and engage in dialogues with key stakeholders to garner support for African Union's inclusion in the G20.
- **Promote Awareness:** Create awareness campaigns to emphasize the benefits of African representation in the G20, both within India and among other G20 member countries.
- **Diplomatic Advocacy:** Utilize international forums, such as G20 meetings, to advocate for African Union membership and highlight the significance of Global South inclusion.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Foster collaborative projects that align with the 'African Economic Integration' agenda, focusing on trade, investment, and economic development.
- **Capacity Building:** Offer technical assistance and training programs to African nations to enhance their capacity for active participation in global economic discussions.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** Encourage partnerships between Indian and African businesses to promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation.

MAJOR GROUPINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN AFRICA:		
Grouping/Organization	Member Countries	Description and Purpose
African Union (AU)	All 55 African countries	Continental organization for political and economic integration.
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo	Regional economic integration and cooperation in West Africa.
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Regional cooperation and integration in Southern Africa.
East African Community (EAC)	Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda	Regional intergovernmental organization for economic and social integration.
Arab League	Various Arab countries	Organization of Arab countries to promote economic, cultural, and political cooperation.
African Development Bank (AfDB)	Regional and non-regional member countries	Multilateral development finance institution focusing on Africa's development.
African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)	Member countries of the African Union	Pan-African multilateral trade finance institution.
COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa)	Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Regional economic community for promoting trade and development.
Maghreb Union	Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	Economic and political integration among North African countries.
G5 Sahel	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger	Joint military and political efforts to address security challenges in the Sahel region.

AS CHANDRAYAAN-3 LANDS ON THE MOON, THE STORY OF ISRO'S REMARKABLE SPACE VOYAGE

SOURCE: [IE](#) , (For analysis and further reference for [CHANDRAYAAN-3](#))

WHY IN NEWS?

The Vikram lander, a part of Chandrayaan-3 mission, has achieved a precise and gentle touchdown on the Moon's surface, marking India as the pioneering nation to approach the lunar south pole. This achievement has also positioned India as the fourth country globally to successfully land on the moon's terrain.

ISRO'S SATELLITE PROGRAMMES:

Satellite Programme	Description and Purpose
Aryabhata (1975)	India's first satellite, focused on scientific and technological research.
Rohini Satellite Series (1980s)	A series of satellites for Earth observation, remote sensing, and scientific research.
INSAT Series (1983 onwards)	Communication, broadcasting, and meteorology satellites for India.
IRS Series (1988 onwards)	Earth observation and remote sensing satellites for various applications.
GSAT Series (2001 onwards)	Communication satellites to provide various telecommunication services.
Cartosat Series (2005 onwards)	High-resolution Earth observation satellites for cartographic applications.
NavIC (2018 onwards)	India's regional satellite navigation system, providing accurate positioning and timing.
Astrosat (2015)	India's first dedicated multi-wavelength space observatory for astronomical studies.

ISRO'S LAUNCH VEHICLE PROGRAMMES:

Launch Vehicle Programme	Description
SLV (Satellite Launch Vehicle)	India's first experimental satellite launch vehicle, developed to demonstrate the capability of placing satellites into orbit.
ASLV (Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle)	An improved version of SLV designed to enhance payload capacity and orbital capabilities.
PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle)	A versatile launch vehicle used for launching satellites into polar and sun-synchronous orbits . Known for its reliability and adaptability.
GSLV (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle)	Designed to launch heavier payloads into geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO) for communication satellites .
GSLV Mark III (LVM3)	ISRO's heaviest and most powerful launch vehicle , capable of carrying larger payloads to GTO and beyond. Also known as " Bahubali ".

ISRO'S PLANETARY EXPLORATIONS:

Mission	Description
Chandrayaan-1	ISRO shifted focus to planetary exploration with Chandrayaan-1 in 2008. Moon Impact Probe intentionally crashed on the lunar surface, marking India's lunar presence. ISRO became the fifth country to reach the Moon. Orbiter detected lunar water indications.
Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)	In 2013, ISRO launched Mangalyaan, its maiden interplanetary mission, reaching Mars orbit. ISRO stood as the fourth entity to achieve this feat after Russia, USA, and EU.
Chandrayaan-2	Chandrayaan-2's 2019 mission included an orbiter, lander (Vikram), and rover (Pragyan). Vikram's soft-landing attempt failed due to communication loss and improper velocity reduction, resulting in a lunar surface crash.
Chandrayaan-3	Launched on July 14, 2023, Chandrayaan-3 accomplished a successful soft landing near the lunar south pole, a remarkable achievement that made India the pioneer in reaching this lunar region.

OTHER LUNAR MISSIONS:

Country	Mission Name	Description
United States	Apollo Program	A series of missions, including Apollo 11, which successfully landed astronauts on the Moon . Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the lunar surface in 1969 .
Soviet Union	Luna Program	The Luna series of missions included Luna 2, the first human-made object to reach the Moon in 1959 , and Luna 24, which successfully brought lunar soil samples back to Earth in 1976 .
China	Chang'e Program	Chang'e missions include orbiter, lander, and rover components . Chang'e 4, launched in 2018, achieved the first soft landing on the far side of the Moon .
United States	Surveyor Program	A series of robotic spacecraft that conducted soft landings on the Moon's surface to gather data for future human missions. Surveyor 1 successfully landed in 1966.
European Union	SMART-1	Launched by the European Space Agency (ESA), SMART-1 was the first European spacecraft to orbit the Moon and conducted scientific observations from 2004 to 2006.
China	Chang'e 5	Launched in 2020, Chang'e 5 successfully collected lunar samples and returned them to Earth , marking a significant milestone in China's lunar exploration efforts.
United States	Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter	Launched in 2009, it orbited the Moon to gather detailed maps, images, and data about the lunar surface, assisting in planning future lunar missions.