

# **Structural Reforms to Social Safety Nets in Post-Pandemic Sri Lanka; Challenges and Way Forwards**

G.J.D.S.D. Meuna Kahagolla<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

Catastrophic socioeconomic and political shocks in recent years exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities in post-pandemic Sri Lanka. As this situation was not a position that the Government of Sri Lanka could face alone, the implications of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility arrangements were called for to stabilize the existing economy. A grant direction that is given attention here is the strengthening of social safety nets. To that end, the implementation of institutional reforms and the establishment of a Welfare Benefit Board are two key recommendations to protect and support vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka. However, the new beneficiary eligibility criteria and the structural benchmark have created a problematic situation among vulnerable communities. This paper investigates the challenges and drawbacks, which impacted on implementing the new reforms to strengthen the Social Safety Net in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, it intends to identify the positive measures that can be applied to mitigate the challenges to the Social Safety Net framework. This study is based on qualitative secondary data resources, namely government reports IMF and World Bank reports websites and archived research. Collected data has been analysed using the descriptive approach. Under social safety nets, a transition period is required to implement the new structural benchmarks and eligibility criteria introduced to protect vulnerable communities. And, because dealing with vulnerable communities is a sensitive matter, they can be protected and strengthened vulnerable communities by providing the necessary environment for their livelihoods and livelihoods. These measures will be a long-term approach to economically stabilize vulnerable communities and strengthen Sri Lanka's economy.

**Keywords:** *IMF, Post-pandemic Economy, Sri Lanka, Social Safety Nets, Vulnerable Communities*

---

<sup>1</sup> BA Honours in International Studies, University of Kelaniya  
mkahagoll@gmail.com