



Handbook on Society and Social Policy

Chapter 17: India: welfare disfare from Nehrus imagination to Modis dirigiste reforms

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Handbook Chapter

In his work on welfare regimes, Esping-Andersen classified advanced economies into three ideal-types of liberal, conservative-corporatist and social-democratic welfare states using a 'decommodification index' as the principal means of distinguishing among regime types. Since the publication of *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, classical typology discussions have gone beyond the rich countries to include countries such as India. Kühner and colleagues classified India as an informal-insecurity regime due to the informal nature of the economy that provided little in the way of social security for workers. With a specific focus on Modi Sarkar's dirigiste style reforms in his two regimes – 'Modi 1', 2014, and 'Modi 2', 2019, this chapter asks whether Modi's big-bang reforms such as demonetization and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) along with an array of other schemes have recalibrated India's moribund welfare system – one that has always been embedded in patron-client relationships – towards a universal citizenship model grounded in a modern industrialized economy. The chapter also asks whether the Modi government has brought about a radical departure from the United Progressive Alliance governments' (UPA 1 and 2) lacklustre approach to welfare, that looks to a strategy that uses welfare reform as a political weapon on a national scale.

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