

## **Universal Basic Income: A Policy Tool for Social Security in Emerging Economies**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Universal Basic Income (UBI) has gained increasing attention as a potential policy tool to strengthen social security systems, particularly in emerging economies where poverty, unemployment, and income inequality remain persistent challenges. This paper examines the relevance and feasibility of UBI as an alternative or complementary approach to traditional welfare schemes. Unlike targeted and conditional programs, UBI offers an unconditional cash transfer to all individuals, aiming to provide a basic level of financial security.*

*The study is based on a qualitative analysis of existing literature, policy discussions, and evidence from pilot programs conducted in countries such as India, Brazil, and Kenya. It evaluates the potential impact of UBI on poverty reduction, income distribution, and economic stability. The findings indicate that UBI can help reduce economic vulnerability, improve financial inclusion, and simplify welfare administration. However, issues related to fiscal sustainability, potential inflationary effects, and its influence on labor market participation continue to be important concerns.*

*The paper concludes that while UBI is not a universal solution, it holds significant promise as a policy innovation for enhancing social protection in emerging economies. Its successful implementation depends on careful policy design, strong institutional capacity, and alignment with existing economic conditions.*

**Keywords:** Universal Basic Income (UBI), Social Security, Emerging Economies, Poverty Reduction, Income Inequality, Welfare Policy

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades, the question of how to ensure effective social security has become increasingly important, particularly in emerging economies where large segments of the population continue to face economic vulnerability. Rapid urbanization, informal employment, and unequal access to resources have exposed the limitations of traditional welfare systems.

Many existing social protection programs are often fragmented, conditional, and administratively complex, which reduces their overall effectiveness and leaves significant gaps in coverage.

Against this backdrop, Universal Basic Income (UBI) has emerged as a compelling policy alternative. UBI refers to a system in which all individuals receive a regular, unconditional cash transfer from the government, regardless of their income level or employment status. The idea is rooted in the principle of providing a basic level of financial security to every citizen, thereby enabling individuals to meet essential needs and participate more fully in economic and social life (Standing, 2017). Unlike targeted welfare schemes, UBI eliminates the need for extensive eligibility verification, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and the risk of exclusion errors.

The relevance of UBI has grown significantly in the context of emerging economies due to persistent challenges such as poverty, income inequality, and job insecurity. In countries where a large proportion of the workforce operates in the informal sector, traditional employment-linked benefits often fail to reach those who need them most. Additionally, technological advancements and automation have intensified concerns about future job displacement, further strengthening the case for exploring alternative forms of income support (Banerjee, Niehaus, & Suri, 2019).

Empirical evidence from pilot programs and policy experiments provides valuable insights into the potential impact of UBI. For instance, studies conducted in India and sub-Saharan Africa have shown improvements in household consumption, health outcomes, and financial stability among recipients (Davalala et al., 2015). These findings suggest that unconditional cash transfers can play a meaningful role in reducing poverty and enhancing human well-being. However, the scalability of such programs remains a subject of debate, particularly in terms of fiscal sustainability and long-term economic implications.

Despite its potential benefits, UBI also raises important concerns that require careful consideration. Critics argue that providing unconditional income may discourage labor market participation or place an excessive burden on public finances. Others highlight the risk of inflationary pressures if increased demand is not matched by adequate supply. These debates underline the need for a nuanced and context-specific analysis of UBI, especially in emerging economies where institutional capacities and economic structures vary widely.

This paper aims to critically examine the role of Universal Basic Income as a policy tool for strengthening social security in emerging economies. It seeks to assess both the opportunities

and challenges associated with its implementation, drawing on theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence. By doing so, the study contributes to the broader discourse on designing inclusive and sustainable welfare systems in the face of evolving economic realities.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been widely discussed across economic, social, and policy-oriented literature, with scholars offering diverse perspectives on its feasibility, effectiveness, and implications. The existing body of research reflects both strong support for UBI as a transformative social policy and critical concerns regarding its economic and institutional viability, particularly in emerging economies.

One of the foundational contributions to the UBI debate comes from Standing (2017), who argues that UBI represents a shift toward a more inclusive and rights-based approach to social security. According to this perspective, unconditional cash transfers can reduce poverty, enhance individual freedom, and provide a safety net in increasingly uncertain labor markets. Standing emphasizes that UBI simplifies welfare administration by removing complex eligibility criteria, thereby reducing exclusion errors that are common in targeted schemes.

Similarly, Banerjee, Niehaus, and Suri (2019) provide a comprehensive analysis of UBI in the context of developing countries. Their work highlights that direct cash transfers have shown positive outcomes in terms of consumption smoothing, improved health, and increased investment in education and small enterprises. They argue that fears of reduced labor supply are often overstated, as empirical evidence from multiple pilot programs suggests minimal or no significant decline in work participation. These findings are particularly relevant for emerging economies, where informal employment dominates and traditional welfare mechanisms often fail to reach vulnerable populations.

Empirical studies conducted in India further strengthen the case for UBI. Davala et al. (2015) document the outcomes of basic income pilot projects in Madhya Pradesh, demonstrating improvements in nutrition, school attendance, and financial inclusion. The study also reports that recipients were more likely to engage in productive economic activities, challenging the assumption that unconditional income discourages work. These findings suggest that UBI can function not only as a consumption support mechanism but also as a catalyst for local economic development.

However, the literature also presents several critical viewpoints. Gentilini et al. (2020) caution that while UBI has promising features, its implementation in emerging economies raises

serious fiscal challenges. Financing a universal program requires substantial public expenditure, which may not be sustainable for countries with limited tax bases and competing development priorities. The authors suggest that partial or targeted approaches may be more practical in such contexts.

Further concerns are raised by Hanna and Olken (2018), who argue that the effectiveness of welfare policies depends heavily on institutional capacity and governance quality. In settings where administrative systems are weak, even unconditional programs like UBI may face challenges related to delivery, transparency, and accountability. Additionally, there are concerns about potential inflationary effects if increased cash flow leads to higher demand without corresponding increases in supply.

Another important strand of literature focuses on the comparative analysis of UBI and existing social protection programs. Studies indicate that while UBI offers advantages in terms of simplicity and universality, targeted welfare schemes may be more cost-effective in addressing extreme poverty (Hoynes & Rothstein, 2019). This has led to ongoing debates about whether UBI should replace or complement existing social security systems.

Overall, the literature suggests that UBI holds significant potential as a policy tool, but its outcomes are highly context-dependent. While empirical evidence from pilot programs is encouraging, large-scale implementation requires careful consideration of economic, institutional, and social factors.

**Table 1: Comparative Overview of Selected Universal Basic Income Studies**

Study (Author & Year)	Country/Region	Methodology	Key Findings	Implications
Standing (2017)	Global (Conceptual)	Theoretical Analysis	UBI enhances economic security and reduces inequality	Supports UBI as a rights-based welfare model
Banerjee et al. (2019)	Developing Countries	Literature Review & Empirical Analysis	Improved consumption, health, and investment; minimal effect on labor supply	UBI can be effective in poverty reduction
Davala et al. (2015)	India	Pilot Study	Better nutrition, education, and financial inclusion	UBI promotes human development outcomes

Gentilini et al. (2020)	Global	Policy Analysis	High fiscal cost and implementation challenges	Careful design required for sustainability
Hanna & Olken (2018)	Developing Countries	Comparative Study	Targeted transfers may be more cost-efficient	UBI should complement, not replace welfare
Hoynes & Rothstein (2019)	Advanced & Developing Economies	Economic Review	Mixed results depending on context	UBI effectiveness varies by economic structure

**Source:** *Compiled by the author based on Standing (2017); Banerjee et al. (2019); Davala et al. (2015); Gentilini et al. (2020); Hanna and Olken (2018); Hoynes and Rothstein (2019).*

Table 1 presents a comparative overview of key studies on Universal Basic Income (UBI), highlighting differences in their geographical focus, research methodology, major findings, and policy implications. The table helps in synthesizing a wide range of literature into a structured format, making it easier to understand the overall direction of existing research.

As shown in Table 1, the study by Standing (2017) primarily adopts a theoretical approach and emphasizes UBI as a rights-based mechanism that can enhance economic security and reduce inequality. This perspective provides a conceptual foundation for understanding UBI beyond traditional welfare systems. In contrast, Banerjee et al. (2019) rely on empirical evidence from developing countries, demonstrating that cash transfer programs can improve consumption, health outcomes, and small-scale investments, while having little negative impact on labor participation.

The findings from Davala et al. (2015), based on pilot studies in India, further reinforce the positive developmental impact of UBI. Their research shows that recipients tend to invest in better nutrition, education, and income-generating activities, suggesting that unconditional cash transfers can support both immediate needs and long-term economic improvement.

However, not all studies present an entirely positive outlook. Gentilini et al. (2020) highlight the significant fiscal challenges associated with implementing UBI on a large scale, especially in countries with limited financial resources. Similarly, Hanna and Olken (2018) argue that targeted welfare programs may be more efficient in addressing extreme poverty, raising important questions about cost-effectiveness. Hoynes and Rothstein (2019) add to this debate by suggesting that the success of UBI largely depends on the economic and institutional context of a country.

Overall, Table 1 illustrates that while UBI has demonstrated promising outcomes in various settings, its effectiveness is not uniform across all contexts. The literature collectively suggests that UBI should be viewed as a flexible policy tool that may complement existing welfare systems rather than completely replace them.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical research design to examine the role of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a policy tool for social security in emerging economies. Given the conceptual and policy-oriented nature of the topic, the research primarily relies on secondary data collected from academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, and documented evidence from UBI pilot programs. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of both theoretical perspectives and real-world applications.

The research follows a systematic review method, where relevant literature was identified, selected, and analyzed based on its relevance to UBI and social protection in emerging economies. Key sources include empirical studies, comparative policy analyses, and pilot project reports from countries such as India, Brazil, and Kenya. The selection criteria focused on credibility, academic rigor, and relevance to the research objectives. Only sources from recognized publications, including books and peer-reviewed journals, were considered to ensure the reliability of the analysis (Banerjee, Niehaus, & Suri, 2019; Gentilini et al., 2020).

To provide a structured analysis, the study employs a thematic approach. The collected data is categorized into key themes such as poverty reduction, income inequality, labor market effects, administrative efficiency, and fiscal sustainability. Each theme is examined critically by comparing findings across different studies. This allows for identifying patterns, similarities, and contradictions within the existing literature.

In addition, a comparative framework is used to evaluate UBI against traditional welfare policies. This involves analyzing how unconditional cash transfers differ from targeted and conditional programs in terms of effectiveness, inclusiveness, and implementation challenges. The study also incorporates evidence from pilot experiments to assess practical outcomes and policy implications.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Relationship between Universal Basic Income and Key Socio-Economic Outcomes**



**Source:** *Developed by the author based on Standing (2017); Banerjee et al. (2019); Gentilini et al. (2020).*

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework that illustrates how Universal Basic Income (UBI) influences key socio-economic outcomes in emerging economies. At the core of the framework is UBI, represented as a direct and unconditional cash transfer that acts as the primary policy intervention.

The framework shows that UBI first contributes to income security, ensuring that individuals have a minimum level of financial stability. This, in turn, promotes financial inclusion, as recipients are more likely to access banking services and participate in formal economic systems. Simultaneously, UBI plays a direct role in reducing poverty by providing a consistent income floor.

These immediate effects lead to broader socio-economic improvements. Increased income security and financial inclusion contribute to improved living standards, including better access to food, healthcare, and education. At the same time, the reduction in poverty helps in addressing income inequality, which is a major challenge in emerging economies.

The combined effect of these factors enhances economic stability, as individuals are better equipped to manage financial shocks and participate productively in the economy. Ultimately, this leads to improved social well-being and overall development, reflecting the long-term impact of UBI as a social security policy.

Overall, the figure demonstrates that UBI operates through multiple interconnected pathways, influencing both immediate economic conditions and broader developmental outcomes.

While the methodology provides a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The study is based entirely on secondary data and does not involve primary data collection or field experiments. As a result, the findings depend on the quality and scope of existing research. Additionally, variations in economic conditions, governance structures, and social contexts across countries may limit the generalizability of the conclusions.

Despite these limitations, the chosen methodology is appropriate for exploring a policy concept like UBI, where extensive empirical literature and pilot evidence are already available. It allows for a critical and holistic understanding of the subject, contributing to informed policy discussions.

#### 4. RESULTS

The analysis of existing literature and evidence from pilot studies provides important insights into the potential outcomes of Universal Basic Income (UBI) in emerging economies. The findings indicate that UBI has multidimensional effects, influencing economic stability, social welfare, and individual behavior.

One of the most consistent results observed across various studies is the positive impact of UBI on **poverty reduction and income security**. Evidence from pilot programs in India and sub-Saharan Africa shows that unconditional cash transfers help households meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare (Davalala et al., 2015). Recipients experience improved financial stability, which reduces their vulnerability to economic shocks. This confirms that UBI can function effectively as a safety net, especially in economies with high levels of informal employment.

Another significant outcome is the improvement in **living standards and human development indicators**. Studies report increased spending on education, better nutrition, and improved health outcomes among beneficiaries. For instance, Banerjee, Niehaus, and Suri (2019) highlight that cash transfer programs enable households to invest in long-term welfare rather than merely addressing short-term consumption needs. These improvements contribute to overall social development and align with broader policy goals in emerging economies.

The results also suggest that UBI promotes **financial inclusion and economic participation**. With a stable source of income, individuals are more likely to access banking services, engage in small-scale entrepreneurship, and participate in local markets. This leads to increased economic activity and strengthens local economies. In many cases, recipients use the income to start or expand small businesses, indicating that UBI can support productive investment rather than discourage work.

Importantly, the analysis finds **limited evidence supporting the claim that UBI reduces labor market participation**. Contrary to common concerns, most empirical studies indicate that recipients continue to work, with some even shifting toward more productive or self-employed activities (Banerjee et al., 2019). This suggests that UBI may provide individuals with the flexibility to pursue better employment opportunities rather than withdrawing from the labor force.

However, the findings also highlight certain challenges. One of the key concerns is **fiscal sustainability**, as implementing UBI on a large scale requires substantial financial resources. Gentilini et al. (2020) emphasize that for many emerging economies, funding a universal program could strain public budgets unless accompanied by tax reforms or reallocation of existing welfare expenditures. Additionally, there are concerns about **inflationary pressures**, particularly if increased demand is not matched by adequate supply of goods and services.

**Table 2: Summary of Key Outcomes from UBI Pilot Programs**

Study (Author & Year)	Country/Region	Type of Study	Positive Outcomes	Challenges/Limitations
Davala et al. (2015)	India	Pilot Experiment	Improved nutrition, education, financial inclusion	Limited scale and duration
Banerjee et al. (2019)	Multiple Developing Countries	Empirical Analysis	Increased consumption, investment, stable labor participation	Context-specific results
Haushofer & Shapiro (2016)	Kenya	Randomized Controlled Trial	Better mental health, higher income, asset growth	Dependency concerns in long-term
GiveDirectly (2020)	Kenya	Large-scale Pilot	Poverty reduction,	High implementation cost

			improved living standards	
Gentilini et al. (2020)	Global	Policy Review	Simplified welfare delivery, inclusion	Fiscal burden, sustainability issues

**Source:** *Compiled by the author based on Davala et al. (2015); Banerjee et al. (2019); Haushofer and Shapiro (2016); GiveDirectly (2020); Gentilini et al. (2020).*

Table 2 presents a comparative summary of key outcomes observed in Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilot studies across different regions. The table highlights both the positive impacts and the challenges associated with UBI implementation, providing a balanced understanding of its effectiveness.

As shown in Table 2, pilot studies conducted in India (Davala et al., 2015) demonstrate significant improvements in basic living conditions, including better nutrition, increased school attendance, and enhanced financial inclusion. These findings indicate that UBI can directly improve human development indicators at the household level. Similarly, evidence from multiple developing countries analyzed by Banerjee et al. (2019) shows that cash transfer programs lead to higher consumption and investment without significantly reducing labor participation.

The randomized controlled trial conducted by Haushofer and Shapiro (2016) in Kenya further supports these findings, revealing improvements in income levels, asset ownership, and psychological well-being among recipients. Large-scale experiments by GiveDirectly (2020) also report positive effects on poverty reduction and overall living standards, reinforcing the potential of UBI as an effective social protection tool.

However, the table also highlights important limitations. Many pilot studies are conducted on a relatively small scale and for limited durations, which raises questions about their long-term sustainability. Additionally, Gentilini et al. (2020) emphasize that while UBI simplifies welfare systems and enhances inclusivity, it poses significant fiscal challenges, especially for emerging economies with constrained public resources.

Overall, Table 2 demonstrates that while UBI has shown promising results in improving socio-economic outcomes, its effectiveness depends on contextual factors such as scale, funding capacity, and institutional strength. These findings suggest that UBI should be carefully designed and possibly implemented alongside existing welfare policies.

Overall, the results demonstrate that UBI has the potential to significantly enhance social security systems by reducing poverty, improving living conditions, and promoting economic participation. At the same time, its long-term success depends on addressing financial and structural challenges through careful policy design.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the role of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a potential policy tool for strengthening social security in emerging economies. The results indicate that UBI has the capacity to address multiple socio-economic challenges simultaneously, including poverty, income inequality, and financial instability. However, its effectiveness is shaped by several contextual and structural factors that must be carefully considered.

One of the key points emerging from the analysis is that UBI offers a **more inclusive and simplified approach** to social protection compared to traditional welfare systems. Existing programs in many emerging economies are often fragmented, conditional, and prone to administrative inefficiencies. In contrast, UBI eliminates complex eligibility criteria, thereby reducing exclusion and inclusion errors. This aligns with the arguments of Standing (2017), who emphasizes that UBI can strengthen social justice by ensuring a basic level of economic security for all individuals.

The discussion also highlights that UBI has demonstrated **positive developmental outcomes**, particularly in terms of improving living standards, enhancing financial inclusion, and promoting human capital development. As reflected in both the literature and empirical findings, recipients tend to invest in health, education, and small-scale economic activities. These outcomes suggest that UBI can contribute not only to short-term consumption support but also to long-term economic empowerment (Banerjee, Niehaus, & Suri, 2019).

**Table 3: Key Policy Implications, Benefits, and Challenges of Universal Basic Income**

Dimension	Key Benefits	Major Challenges	Policy Implications
Social Protection	Ensures universal coverage and reduces exclusion errors	May provide benefits to non-poor individuals	Combine UBI with targeted welfare programs
Poverty Reduction	Direct income support improves basic living conditions	Impact may vary across regions	Adjust transfer size based on economic conditions

Administrative Efficiency	Simplifies welfare delivery and reduces bureaucracy	Requires strong digital and financial infrastructure	Invest in governance and delivery systems
Labor Market	Provides flexibility and supports self-employment	Concerns about reduced work incentives	Monitor labor participation and design adaptive policies
Fiscal Sustainability	Transparent and predictable expenditure	High cost of universal implementation	Reform taxation and reallocate existing subsidies
Economic Stability	Increases consumption and local economic activity	Risk of inflation if supply is limited	Ensure parallel growth in production and supply

**Source:** *Compiled by the author based on Standing (2017); Banerjee et al. (2019); Gentilini et al. (2020); Hanna and Olken (2018); Hoynes and Rothstein (2019).*

Table 3 presents a structured analysis of the key dimensions associated with the implementation of Universal Basic Income (UBI), highlighting its benefits, challenges, and corresponding policy implications. The table provides a comprehensive overview of how UBI performs as a social policy while also identifying the practical issues that must be addressed for its successful implementation.

As shown in Table 3, UBI offers significant advantages in terms of **social protection**, particularly by ensuring universal coverage and reducing exclusion errors commonly observed in targeted welfare programs. However, this universality also raises concerns about resource allocation, as benefits are distributed to all individuals regardless of income level. This suggests the need for a balanced approach where UBI is complemented by targeted interventions.

In terms of **poverty reduction**, UBI provides direct financial support that improves living conditions and reduces economic vulnerability. Nevertheless, its effectiveness may vary across different regions depending on local economic conditions. Therefore, policymakers must consider flexible designs that adjust transfer amounts based on regional needs.

The table also highlights improvements in **administrative efficiency**, as UBI reduces bureaucratic complexity and simplifies welfare delivery. At the same time, its implementation requires strong institutional capacity, including digital infrastructure and transparent governance systems. Without these, the benefits of simplification may not be fully realized.

Regarding the **labor market**, UBI can support individuals in pursuing self-employment and more stable work opportunities. However, concerns about reduced work incentives remain part

of the policy debate. This indicates the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptive policy design.

Finally, the issue of **fiscal sustainability** emerges as one of the most critical challenges. While UBI provides a transparent and predictable form of expenditure, its large-scale implementation requires substantial financial resources. This necessitates policy measures such as tax reforms and reallocation of existing subsidies. Additionally, the potential for **inflationary pressures** highlights the need to align income support with productive economic growth.

Overall, Table 3 demonstrates that while UBI has strong potential as a social security tool, its success depends on careful policy design, institutional strength, and economic feasibility. It reinforces the idea that UBI should be implemented in a strategic and context-sensitive manner.

At the same time, the discussion must address the **economic and fiscal challenges** associated with UBI implementation. One of the most critical concerns is the affordability of a universal program, particularly in countries with limited fiscal capacity. Gentilini et al. (2020) argue that financing UBI would require either significant tax reforms or the restructuring of existing welfare expenditures. Without such measures, large-scale implementation may place excessive pressure on public finances.

Another important issue relates to the **potential impact on labor markets**. While the results of this study suggest minimal negative effects on work participation, concerns remain regarding long-term behavioral changes. Some critics argue that guaranteed income may reduce the incentive to work, although empirical evidence does not strongly support this claim. Instead, it appears that UBI may enable individuals to pursue more stable or productive forms of employment, particularly in informal economies.

In addition, the discussion highlights the importance of **institutional capacity and governance**. The success of UBI depends not only on economic feasibility but also on the ability of governments to design, implement, and monitor such programs effectively. Weak administrative systems, lack of transparency, and inefficiencies in fund distribution can undermine the intended benefits of UBI (Hanna & Olken, 2018). Therefore, strengthening governance structures is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of any large-scale social policy.

The broader implication of this study is that UBI should not be viewed as a complete replacement for existing welfare systems, but rather as a **complementary policy instrument**. In many cases, a hybrid approach that combines universal transfers with targeted interventions may be more practical and sustainable. This perspective is supported by comparative studies,

which suggest that different policy tools can work together to address diverse socio-economic needs.

Overall, the discussion underscores that while UBI holds significant promise as a tool for enhancing social security, its implementation in emerging economies requires a balanced and context-sensitive approach. Policymakers must carefully evaluate trade-offs between inclusivity, cost, and long-term sustainability to ensure that the policy achieves its intended objectives.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This study examined Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a policy tool for strengthening social security in emerging economies, with a focus on its potential benefits, limitations, and practical implications. The analysis demonstrates that UBI offers a promising approach to addressing persistent challenges such as poverty, income inequality, and economic vulnerability. By providing an unconditional and universal income floor, UBI has the capacity to enhance financial security, improve living standards, and promote greater social inclusion.

The findings from both the literature and pilot studies indicate that UBI can generate positive socio-economic outcomes, including improved health, education, and economic participation. As reflected in the comparative analysis of existing studies and pilot programs (see Table 2), beneficiaries often utilize the income for productive and welfare-enhancing purposes rather than reducing their participation in the labor market. This challenges common assumptions regarding dependency and highlights the potential of UBI to support long-term human development.

At the same time, the study underscores that UBI is not without challenges. Issues related to fiscal sustainability, administrative capacity, and economic feasibility remain central to the policy debate. The discussion of policy dimensions (see Table 3) further illustrates that while UBI simplifies welfare delivery and ensures inclusivity, its implementation requires substantial financial resources and strong institutional frameworks. Without careful planning, large-scale adoption may place pressure on public finances and economic stability.

Another important conclusion is that the effectiveness of UBI is highly context-dependent. Factors such as economic structure, governance quality, and existing social protection systems play a crucial role in determining outcomes. Therefore, a uniform approach to UBI may not be suitable for all emerging economies. Instead, a phased or hybrid model—combining UBI with targeted welfare programs—may offer a more practical and sustainable solution.

Overall, this study concludes that UBI should be viewed as a **complementary policy instrument rather than a complete replacement for existing welfare systems**. Its potential lies in enhancing and modernizing social protection frameworks in response to evolving economic realities, including informal labor markets and technological disruptions. Future research should focus on large-scale empirical evaluations, long-term impact assessments, and innovative financing mechanisms to better understand the viability of UBI in diverse contexts.

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