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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL WELFARE AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The concept and scope of social welfare is very different in different countries. Social welfare systems provide assistance to individuals and families through programs such as health care, food stamps, unemployment compensation, housing assistance, and child care assistance (Card, 1999: 287). This difference is affected by various factors, some of which are the level of development of countries, development goals and stages, development programs, the growth and development of management and administrative organizations, how the distribution of responsibilities between government and voluntary organizations, and Socio-cultural frameworks, on the other hand, the continuation of the material and spiritual life of a society, requires the adoption of a social and responsible attitude to the need to establish a comprehensive system of social welfare; A system that may be considered the most important mechanism for establishing social justice. The fact is that the improvement of social welfare and the provision of life and social health are at the forefront of the problems of Iranian society, which should be given serious consideration by considering the characteristics of this society. In any field of study, using the experiences and scientific and research resources of that field, a picture of the current situation can be provided. Policy-making and social welfare management in the country, due to its wide scope, requires continuous studies and comprehensive and integrated studies of past and present conditions with a view to the future.

Keywords: Economic Growth, Poverty, Social Welfare, Development, Social Work, Developing.

INTRODUCTION

So far no research has been done on the impact of economic growth on social welfare in Afghanistan. There has been some literature that has identified the need for inclusion of teaching in relationship to particular skills or approaches, not necessarily in

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the context of international course development, but which are relevant. For example, Schneider and Lester (2001) identified "advocacy" as a core area in which social work professionals should be proficient and this would fit well in a view of how social work education and practice could be developed both for regional and international contexts. Ramanathan and Link (1999) identified a range of areas in which social work education and practice could be reoriented to equip all social work professionals for work in a globalized world, including relationships to social work ethics. Jones and Kumssa (1999) suggested that international perspectives can be offered through curriculum development, the awarding of dual or joint degree programs, doctoral education, extra-mural activities and fieldwork study abroad.

Johnson (2004) described efforts in the United States to shift a social work school from responsiveness to commitment in international issues by building on experiences gained from faculty involvement to training programs in various countries, and noted the importance of establishing committees that include social work students and representatives from social service agencies to plan strategic developments and opportunities for learning about international social work. Such activities included open lectures, international awareness days, informal social events as well as more emphasis on the recruitment and integration of international students, and established fieldwork placement abroad which included international and cross-cultural focuses in their work. Social work curriculum development accordingly should include women's issues, HIV/AIDS, social and community development approaches, and theories relative to international poverty (Lyons, Manion, & Carlsen, 2006).

Healy (2001) believed that inclusion of environmental studies, peace studies, human rights studies, multicultural education, and developmental studies should be in place in social work curriculum. Additionally, Healy identified core curriculum themes as comparative and hence nice fits for international exposure, such as social policy, social development, and professional development. Healy also identified the desired outcomes for programs that have a specifically international focus in terms of attitude and values, knowledge, and skills. These included skills in cross-cultural work, knowledge of major global issues along with efforts to address them, opportunities for future learning, research, and crosscultural literature for continued professional development in global social work.

Both Healy (2001) and Lyons (1999) identified international resources for the social work profession as including policy statements and documents periodically

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produced by the International Association of School of Social Work (IASSW), and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) as well as international conventions and reports provided by the various United Nations bodies as well as the many INGOs. The potential values of attention to migration theories and policies, including references to disasters and conflict resolution work in the curriculum of professional social work education should be emphasized.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has supported the development of specific coursework aimed at providing international and regional as well as cross-cultural learning for social work professionals and students as a main outcome, and leading to appropriately named awards at the first degree or often at the post-graduate levels. These developments have identified essential elements of such programs. Among these are that the student groups are comprised of people from different nationalities and cultures and that this constitutes both a resource and a support system for student learning and growth. All social work students have the opportunity for learning whether through the university curriculum or through social work fieldwork, outside their home country, and that there is a scope of practice for social work students to develop particular areas of interest through a period of independent studies, project work, research, class presentations, and assignments (Lyons & Lawrence, 2006).

Katz (2001) advanced the concept of trans-local counter-topographies, suggesting that various marginalized populations, such as indigenous populations, in different regions of the world present the same issues, requiring similar needs for analysis and strategies for effective change. This concept fits very well with the growing movement of an international social work view that many social issues have international dimensions and consequences, cross over and transcend national borders, and increase the opportunities for social workers on a shared agenda and quest of knowledge and action (Healy, 2001). It is increasingly important to recognize universally relevant concepts and values as well as develop new globally relevant conceptual frameworks for social work education and practice (Healy, 2001).

The time has come to redefine the mission and forms of social work education and practice on an international level to make these more relevant to the new globalized conditions which we now face as a global society. New developments would recognize the growing importance of international civil societies and would accord with Lorenz's

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(1994) vision of social work educators and practice professionals as citizens committed to humane internationalism, integrating rights and obligations through collective actions. Current views of globalization are often presented in an economic worldview and do not include the concept of global citizenry, social priorities, and human rights.

Ife (2001) has identified social work education and practice as necessary to require work at local and global levels and to bring the idea of an economic worldview and global citizenry together. In this sense, international social work is no longer just a specialization but should actually be an integral part of the social work curriculum and part of day to day professional social work consciousness. This would also include a scope for development of specialized practices and knowledge as well as social work research, education, and both national and international professional associations. Each should bear some of the responsibilities for developing this new and growing area of social work education and practice, as well as identify the implications of globalization for the social work profession.

The growth and development of social work as a discipline, a profession, and a social science in the developed and developing countries of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, and Europe is the positive outcome of cooperation among both government and voluntary organizations (Ginsberg, 2001). For further development of social work in both developed and developing countries in accordance with the growing needs of the world's people, initiatives should be taken in terms of organizing local, regional, national, and international conferences, seminars, workshops, short term academic exchange programs of faculty and students, incorporation of more international perspectives into the social work curricula and scheme of distance learning as options of reaching out and bridge building of mutual cooperation. Secondly, the role of organizations including education accreditation bodies such as the United States Council on Social Work Education, the Bangladesh Council on Social Work Education and the South Korean Council on Social Work Education, as well as the United States National Association of Social Workers, the Bangladesh Clinical Social Workers Professional Organization, and the South Korean Association of Social Workers should be strengthened for technical supports and proportionate distribution of funds for necessary financial supports to ensure that global north and global south have effective and meaningful networks among social work schools all over the world (Ramanathan & Link, 2001). International supports for the profession would be the development of more universal standards for social work education globally, mutual cooperation amongst

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international schools of social work, and the development of minimal standards of ethical social work practice to be accepted by all global colleagues. Finally, since historically in many countries the introduction to social work has been the result of charitable efforts of government and non-government organizations, and the United Nations on an international level, their organizational roles play a key part in the process. As a result, many and varied players have major facilitating roles in the international development of social work education and the profession.

In this current era of globalization, international cooperation for the development of social work is not only crucial, it is essential. It is worth mentioning that through indigenization of knowledge and discourses based on individual social, economic, and cultural characteristics of respective societies, academicians, students, and target populations will not have confutation to accept the globalization of social work as such. Thus, it would be more meaningful and instrumental for the social work schools to meet the growing economic, cultural, and psycho-social challenges to make proper utilization of precious and often times scarce resources for improving the life situations of the developing and developed societies all over the globe.

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Welfare provision serves mainly the physical and material interests of recipients. Interests are linked both with people's needs, which are socially defined, and with what people want. If people can be mistaken about where their interests lie, their welfare will not be served by considering their wants alone.

Social welfare is not simply the sum of individual welfares, and one concept cannot be derived from the other. Some interests may be held in common. Equally, however, there may be conflicts between interests, and some may bear costs for the benefit of others.

In its broadest sense, the idea of 'welfare' refers to 'well-being', or what is 'good' for people. Understood more narrowly, it can be taken to refer to the provision of social services principally health care, housing, social security, education and social work. The connection between the two uses rests in the role of social services as 'the provision of welfare'. Part of the purpose of social services is, ideally, altruistic - 'doing well' to people. There are curative approaches: people who have something wrong with them receive 'treatment' to put it right. Social services can be developmental: a society in which individuals are valued should have the facilities to help them realise their

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potential. And social services may protect people; the 'safety net' which the services provide help to remove the uncertainty associated with need, a protection against for example the problems of old age, disability or poverty.

However, the provision of welfare is not necessarily for the benefit of the recipients alone. Townsend suggests that 'social services are those means developed and institutionalized by society to promote ends which are wholly or primarily social'.

In many ways, measures which benefit the individual person are important for society: societies are, after all, made up of people. But there are also aims which can be seen as more for the benefit of the whole society than for any person within it. The social services can, for example, reinforce economic policy. They can be seen as a way to achieve equality or social justice. They may be an instrument of social change. They can also, conversely, be a means of maintaining social order.

The provision of welfare is contentious. There are many different and conflicting views of what is good for the individual or society. This book is an examination of the principles which guide such judgments. Its aim is to explain the values which are being applied, to examine the grounds on which disagreements of principle arise, and to relate principles to practical issues of welfare provision.

We refer to what is 'good' for people as being in their interests - interests being those things which lead to well-being. Feinberg uses the term 'welfare interests' to refer to the interests that he considers fundamental. They include physical health and vigour; physical integrity and functioning; the absence of pain or disfigurement; a minimum degree of intellectual activity; emotional stability; the absence of groundless anxieties and resentments; engagement in a normal social life; a minimum amount of wealth, income and financial security; a tolerable social and physical environment; and some freedom from interference by others. These interests are 'basic', in his view, because without them a person cannot be a person. In other words, welfare interests are needs - items that are essential.

In other words, physiological needs are more important than safety, safety than the need for love, and so on. There are three main problems with this concept. In the first place, Maslow's order of priority is very arguable - is love really subordinate to safety? Secondly, it is not clear that basic needs can be ordered in a 'hierarchy' at all. In some cases, the value of measures to look after a person's physiological needs is clearly reduced if other needs are not met; many people would prefer to be malnourished and free rather than to be well-fed in prison. This implies that people are affected, not so

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much by a hierarchy, as by a whole set of interdependent needs. Thirdly, it is difficult to apply the approach directly to the provision of welfare. Education is almost certainly of less importance than a person's emotional needs, but education is largely organized as a social service, and provision for emotional needs is not. If there is a pressing need for state-run computer dating, the case has not been made out. On the face of it, the concept of 'welfare' seems to take in every aspect of a person's life - physical, emotional, material and spiritual. Robson, writing about the 'welfare state', emphasizes that 'welfare is of unlimited scope'.

The sorts of areas in which 'needs' are commonly taken to occur include, Harvey suggests, food, housing, medical care, education, social and environmental service, consumer goods, recreational opportunities, neighborhood amenities and transport facilities The exclusion of employment opportunities from this list is, Jones et al. note, an illustration of the way in which ideas of need change over time. It is fairly easy to add other needs to the list: they might include physical care (like help in bathing or dressing), clothing, fuel, or simply the money to buy things. But the list is not infinite; to a large extent, it is limited to those areas in which some sort of social provision might be made. The statement that people are in ‘need’ that they must have something, effectively constitutes a claim against other people to make some sort of response.

Within each category of need, there are degrees of classification - 'greater' or 'lesser' needs - depending on how strong the claim is and how 'essential' the need appears to be. An example of this is poverty, the lack of material resources. People are not simply said to be 'poor' or 'not poor'; they may be destitute (almost totally without resources), poor, deprived, or disadvantaged. Within these categories, there are further gradations - like 'very poor', 'poor', 'fairly' poor. These are not precise terms with a universally agreed meaning, and they may overlap with the other categories; there is no clear distinction, for example, between 'fairly poor' and 'deprived'. In the case of other 'needs', there are gradations made between those things which are needed more and those which are needed less. This may mean either that both things are necessary, but one is more important than the other; or that a condition has only been partially satisfied. People in general need food to live, and to be healthy; the food might be enough to preserve life but not health. A person without any food at all is more 'in need' than someone who does not have food which is adequately nutritious, but it makes perfectly good sense to talk about both people as being 'in need' - which means that both people have a claim, even if one claim is stronger than the other.

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The second idea is drawn from the Marxist tradition. Marx argued that although some human needs are basic to everyone, the pattern and interpretation of those needs is socially defined. This may still mean that a level can be fixed in the context of a particular society, based on accepted standards rather than on comparisons between groups. 'Homelessness', for example, is a socially determined issue. In many countries, people without a home of their own build squatter shacks; it is a normal pattern of development in some Third World countries. In Britain, people are not allowed to build a home where or how they can, and the problem of homelessness is an obvious result. (This is not to say that squatter settlements are a better way of dealing with the lack of shelter; they present a different kind of problem.) Poverty, in the same way, is a defined by the conditions prevalent in a particular society. In the USSR, the official standard of poverty is based in a 'subsistence' standard.

CONCLUSION

Relative poverty is based on a comparison of poor people with others in society. A person who would be considered 'poor' in Britain might be 'well off' in the terms of the Third World. Different standards are being applied, based on comparisons within societies rather than between them. This definition, however, confuses two different ideas. The first is that people are poor by comparison with others - for example, because their income is in the lowest ten per cent of the population, or because they fall significantly below the average income. This is justified by the argument that the amount needed for subsistence is determined by the conditions in that country.

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