



SOCIAL POLICY AND ITS ROLE IN OVERCOMING POVERTY

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10060069>

Abstract: Poverty is a complex, historically conditioned, multifaceted and multifactorial concept. The poor usually include people who do not have the means to meet the minimum needs provided for in the national consumption standard. It is different in each country and depends on the level of economic development, the wealth of the nation, traditions and customs, the mentality of people and authorities, etc.

Key words: Poverty, international community, social community, social relations, social institutions, personal status, structure of society.

Today, more than ever, the attention of the international community is focused on the issues of combating poverty. But the meaning of this activity is blurred due to the ambiguity of the definition of the term “poverty” and the multiplicity of criteria proposed for its definition.

Poverty has always been an urgent problem. Currently, a significant part of the population is below the poverty line or close to the border of the “social bottom”. This is especially noticeable against the background of strong stratification, when the difference in income between the poor and the rich is tens, hundreds and thousands of times. And this process is dynamic, the poor are getting poorer, and the rich are getting richer.

The definition of absolute poverty is based on the ideas of the English economist S. Rowntree and is based on a comparison of the incomes required to meet a certain set of minimum human needs with the incomes that he possesses. In other words, absolute poverty is expressed in the inability of the family to meet the basic needs for food, clothing and housing on current cash incomes. Thus, the person whose income is below a certain set minimum is considered poor. This minimum is the poverty line. To determine the threshold of absolute poverty, a “basket of goods” is compiled and its value is set.

The application of the absolute poverty criterion in practice can lead to the fact that the number of poor and the level of poverty will depend on the poverty line set by the state based on its financial capabilities, which can distort the actual value of the consumer “basket”, and, consequently, the level of poverty in the country.

According to the relative concept of poverty, well-being indicators are correlated not with minimum needs, but with the level of material security prevailing in a particular country. Within the framework of this definition of poverty, two areas are clearly distinguished. In accordance with the first of them, emphasis is placed on the means of subsistence, on the ability of families to buy goods necessary to meet basic needs. In practice, within the framework of this concept, when setting the relative poverty line, a certain proportion of the average or median income is used, for example, half of the median.

The second direction in the relative approach to the definition of poverty is based on the measurement of poverty through deprivation in the broad sense of the word. This

approach to measuring and defining poverty has been called the “civil law theory of poverty”. In this approach to the definition of poverty, the question is posed as follows: do the available funds enable people to fully participate in the life of the society to which they belong.

When determining poverty through deprivation, following the establishment of the list of basic deprivations, it is necessary to know in which specific case a family is recognized as poor: when experiencing all the deprivations from the list, or the presence of only one deprivation is sufficient, or on the basis of taking into account several combinations of individual deprivations. Various variants of deprivation make it possible to build a poverty line in relation to the concept of determining relative poverty. If everyone who experiences two or more hardships is considered poor, then the scale of poverty distribution is characterized by one level, if three or more hardships, then the poverty level falls.

Despite some positive impact of poverty on the life of society, it should be emphasized that the state of poverty does not allow society to successfully realize its potential, and therefore ensure the achievement of social progress. That is why the promotion of poverty must be associated with regression in social development.

The existence of the phenomenon of poverty can be traced from the appearance of historical written sources that have survived to the present day. At all times and in all countries there have been poor and destitute. At the same time, there were people or groups of people in any society who were concerned about this topic and wanted to solve the problem of poverty.

It is not easy to define poverty, since the concept itself is relative. There is no absolute understanding of poverty. Speaking of the “poor”, they are always compared to the rich. Therefore, in the broad sense of the word, poverty is a condition in which there is a discrepancy between the achieved average level of satisfaction of needs and the ability to meet them in some groups of the population. That is, there is a certain average consumer level, there are those whose consumer basket is much higher than the average, and there are those who do not reach the average level. They are called poor.

Moreover, in each individual country, this level may be different. If, for example, we take the average consumer level of Norway or Sweden, then comparing it with Ukraine or Moldova, we will get completely different results. If we transfer the data to Tajikistan or India, the results will vary even more. The life of the poor in each country is different from the life of the poor in other countries and from the life of the rich in their own countries. If the lives of the rich are similar in many countries, the lives of the poor are very different. The poor form their own life values, their own norms of behavior, often their own slang. In other words, they have many signs of a subculture.

At the same time, it is indisputable that the concept of “poverty” is defined not only in financial terms. Even in the sermons of Jesus it was said about “the poor in spirit”. Today, you can often hear the phrase “spiritually rich man.” Therefore, when talking about poverty, it is always necessary to keep in mind such components as worldview, social ties, level of education, access to basic life benefits.

In various typologies adopted as the basis of social stratification, it is customary to speak of the so-called “lower class”. The well-known American sociologist Watson speaks of the “upper-lower class” and the “lower-lower” class, where he refers to the first hired workers who have a certain stability, but they are limited in obtaining a quality education and they are constantly dependent on the upper classes in obtaining their income. Whereas in the second

category he refers to the poor, homeless, unemployed, etc. Some sociologists extend this list to those whose income does not exceed half of the income of the average full-time industrial worker.

If we talk about Eastern Europe, especially those parts of it that were part of the Soviet Union before 1991, then the phenomenon of poverty is even more diverse there. Here are some examples. A significant part of the adult population, who had worked for many years at state-owned enterprises, received apartments for free. During the years of Soviet power, they could neither sell nor buy them, but after the fall of the socialist system, the privatization process began actively, and almost all apartments became private property. To date, the cost of one small apartment (in two rooms, with an area of 30 square meters) in cities such as Chisinau can be up to fifty thousand euros. If we talk about the center of Moscow, the price can reach up to half a million euros. A significant part of those who received these apartments today are pensioners. And it is hardly possible to call a poor person who owns real estate worth 50-100 thousand euros. At the same time, the monthly income of one family of pensioners in Chisinau can be less than 150 euros for two, given that the payment of utility bills can exceed 200 euros in winter. At the same time, these people do not have the opportunity to sell their apartments and move to cheaper ones. In fact, these people are faced with a choice - to die of hunger, or not to pay their bills, at the risk of being cut off from access to electricity, water and gas.

Another example is from rural areas, where it is very difficult to find a paid job. Twenty years ago, most of these people worked for the state. Most people are not given the following reasons to start a private business:

- 1) lack of entrepreneurial spirit, which was knocked out during the years of Soviet power and was not instilled during the years of independence;
- 2) unfavorable tax legislation, which is built in favor of large companies and enterprises and practically strangles small businesses.

People are forced to look for work outside their locality, and most often outside their country. On average, almost every family has one parent working abroad. At the same time, there are thousands of families where both husband and wife work outside the country. In many cases, they work in different countries. Thus, their children are left alone without parental care. Parents before leaving, as a rule, do not issue guardianship to any of the relatives, trying to avoid additional bureaucratic delays. Children are left to themselves. Every month, parents send them financial support of several hundred euros. The result is the following picture: two teenagers live in a separate house, they have finances to pay for services, food, and even for entertainment remains. But they are completely deprived of parental control, guardianship, love and communication. Naturally, this affects the impoverishment of their emotional and social world.

Speaking about the classification of poverty, there are whole classes and groups of people who are unable to meet basic physiological needs. They are followed by those who have enough material resources to cover basic needs, but are experiencing an acute shortage in the social sphere (restrictions on access to education, medicine, recreation). There are those who consider themselves poor, despite the fact that they do not need either material or social benefits. Their reasoning is based on a comparative analysis of the quality of the benefits received. For example, they have food, but it is of low quality, they have housing, but it does not allow them to have a so-called "personal" space. In addition, it is worth noting such

a phenomenon as “intellectual poverty”. There is a category of people who have escaped from the circle of poverty (for example, on the basis of an unequal social marriage). But even after gaining access to the benefits, they cannot get used to it and behave like poor people.

Speaking only from a financial perspective, there are at least two levels of poverty - absolute poverty, which according to official data for 2010 is about 22% (their income is less than 70 euros per month) and extreme poverty, about 2% of them in Moldova (their income is less than 30 euros per month). Data for 2011 show that about a third of the population lives below the poverty line.

Speaking of absolute poverty, it is impossible not to mention such a thing as relative poverty. The relative definition of poverty is based on comparing the living standards of the poor of one country (or one region) with the poor in another country (or region). This is what liberation theology tried to draw attention to in the 70s and 80s of the last century. Focusing on the fact that modern rich countries have become such to a greater extent due to the centuries-old colonization of the "third world" countries, there were calls for the redistribution of material goods between countries and continents.

A comparative analysis of the various points of view of domestic and foreign scientists expressed about the definition and assessment of the phenomenon of poverty allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

1. It is impossible to define and evaluate such a complex, multifaceted socio-economic phenomenon as poverty by using a single criterion common to all times and peoples. To assess poverty, it is necessary to apply a system of criteria that take into account the specifics of a particular form of poverty.

2. The lowest form of poverty is poverty, which expresses a condition in which households (families) lack the monetary and material resources necessary even to meet the natural (physiological) human needs for food and clothing.

3. Absolute poverty characterizes a state when the resources of households (families), societies are sufficient only to meet the minimum diverse needs recognized and accepted by society. The state develops and legislatively establishes minimum social standards of consumption, the implementation of which ensures the normal existence of people in society.

4. Relative poverty in a broad sense should be understood as a condition in which the ability to meet the needs of individual social groups, strata of the population is lower than the average level of satisfaction of needs in society.

Poverty as a socio-economic phenomenon always and in any country manifests itself in two forms: absolute and relative. Absolute poverty, according to our interpretation, means a state in which certain groups of the population do not have the vital resources necessary to meet even their minimal needs, and therefore for a normal existence. A type of absolute poverty is poverty, in which some part of the population does not have the resources necessary to meet natural (physiological) needs. Therefore, poor citizens, as a rule, are on the verge of survival.

Relative poverty is determined by the ratio of the resources of certain groups of the population and the average standard of living of the population achieved in a particular country. In other words, with relative poverty, the situation of the poor correlates not with statistical indicators characterizing the degree of satisfaction of abstract needs, but with the average standard of living of the country's population.

The degree of satisfaction and development of both the minimum and maximum needs of people is ultimately determined by the level of sustainable economic growth and the security of society. The richer the country, the more diverse the range of minimum and maximum needs of the population, the higher the degree of their satisfaction, and vice versa. In this regard, it should be emphasized that the level and range of needs recognized by the state as minimum permissible, and the possibilities of meeting them in highly developed countries are quantitatively and qualitatively different than in underdeveloped ones.

The boundaries of poverty cannot be permanent, they are very mobile, and it is sometimes difficult to determine who is poor and who is not. In everyday life, poverty is associated with the consequences of extreme socio-economic difficulties, when there are no opportunities to meet even the primary needs for food and clothing.

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