



THE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY AND ITS SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the content and essence of the concept of poverty, its socio-philosophical interpretation, and various scientific explanations. The causes and consequences of poverty, as well as the economic, cultural, and political factors that give rise to it, are widely examined based on philosophical approaches. The article also discusses modern strategies for combating poverty in contemporary society and evaluates their effectiveness. Although poverty has been studied as a social phenomenon, most research has focused primarily on economic factors.

Introduction

In the New Uzbekistan, one of the social challenges of the 21st century is eradicating poverty. To achieve this, strategies have been set to create new jobs and enhance citizens' economic initiative. For many years, poverty in our country was a "closed topic," and previously, the term "low-income" was used instead to soften the connotation. Today, thanks to the open and democratic policies pursued in the country, the existence of this problem is openly acknowledged, thorough analyses are conducted, and systematic measures are implemented to reduce and ultimately eliminate it in the future.

For the first time in Uzbekistan's history, the issue of poverty was raised in President Sh. M. Mirziyoyev's address to the Oliy Majlis on January 24, 2020, making it a central agenda of socio-political policy. According to him, "For the first time in the new history of Uzbekistan, we openly declared our firm decision to reduce poverty and began comprehensive efforts to achieve this goal." This involves "awakening the entrepreneurial spirit in the population, fully realizing human potential and capabilities, and implementing a comprehensive economic and social policy to create new jobs."

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, the word *kambag'al* means "poor, insufficient, lacking the essentials for living, living in need or destitution." Generally, acknowledging the richness of the Uzbek language, poverty can also be expressed with words such as *qashshoq*, *faqir*, *g'arib*, *nochor*, *muhtoj*, *bechora*, *kam ta'minlangan*, or "in need of social protection."

Literature Review

Studies on poverty focus on factors influencing it, problems of poverty reduction, dynamics of civilizational mobility, and the impact of poverty on the socio-economic life of society. Key studies have been conducted by J. Keynes, A. Marshall, D. Ricardo, A. Sen, M.

Kremer, A. Banerjee, Y. Duflo, G. Y. Anderson, D. Saks, B. S. Rountree, A. S. Ditton, D. Acemoglu and D. Robinson, A. P. Alexandrov, A. V. Karev, Y. Y. Rumyanseva, A. A. Razumov, O. S. Abramova, L. M. Khusnutdinova, Y. G. Odegov, A. V. Vakhabov, B. Kh. Umrzakov, L. N. Ovcharova in their philosophical and political studies.

Results and Discussion

Research indicates that, first, education level is inversely proportional to poverty; second, rural residents are less prone to poverty; third, urbanization reduces poverty, while rural areas may experience an increase. Age, experience, and employment in agriculture do not necessarily cause poverty.

According to research, two factors are crucial in school education: student interest and fixed-term contracts with teachers. Problems in school education not only affect poverty but also contribute to other socio-legal issues.

In the U.S., social protection advocates such as M. Friedman emphasized that “statistical distributions of income do not fully reflect the causes of inequality.” H. Stakle argued that unequal abilities among individuals partly explain income disparities. G. Ford also noted, “The best work is a highly paid hobby,” emphasizing the need to direct human abilities properly and develop literacy in that direction.

J. Minser studied investments in human capital and factors of income inequality. He concluded that income inequality is linked to investments in human capital and that investment choices are voluntary. Higher salaries require more study, explaining differences in income across professions. Factors such as education, age, and occupation are key in income stratification.

Research by X. Rindermann, M. Seyler, and J. Thompson highlights the role of cognitive factors in social development. Their findings indicate that “the population’s intelligence quotient (IQ) significantly affects the growth of GDP.”

Analysis of Poverty Factors (Translated)

Ch. Peng and colleagues, in their research, analyzed factors contributing to poverty. “Among the factors that increase the likelihood of poverty are: old age, being female, being unmarried, growing up in a single-parent household, large family size, unemployment, living in public or rented housing, low literacy and health levels.” Additionally, having a family member with a disability or chronic illness contributes to poverty. It should be emphasized that higher education helps prevent poverty and minimal destitution.

Classical economists such as A. Smith, D. Ricardo, and T. Malthus argued that poverty was an inevitable consequence of the acceleration of the Industrial Revolution. In the mid-19th century, the widely spread ideology of Darwinism regarded poverty as a natural phenomenon, suggesting that certain individuals or groups lacked the ability to survive and protect themselves.

The neoliberal thinker Friedrich von Hayek considered poverty a “natural phenomenon in human development, necessary for the benefit of society.” Other scholars, including S. Fisher, R. Dornbusch, and R. Shmalenzi, stated that “the poor are individuals and households whose incomes are insufficient to meet the society’s current consumption standards. Some families may have the physical ability to survive, but they are constrained morally and culturally, as their incomes are significantly below the established level.”

English sociologist P. Townsend defined poverty as the lack of resources necessary for most members of society to maintain an ordinary standard of living. He developed a method of analyzing poverty based on the concept of multidimensional deprivation. Townsend explained this as “the observed and underlying destitute condition of an individual, family, or group within society or the nation as a whole.” He applied the multidimensional deprivation approach, including indicators of material deprivation (food, clothing, housing conditions, durable goods, living environment, labor conditions) and social deprivation (employment, leisure, education, and related characteristics).

Modern economic theorist Adam Smith defined poverty as “the inability of a person to purchase the goods required by nature or custom.” His definition emphasizes relative elements of poverty by considering needs generated by social customs, though in his era, the focus was limited to the ability to satisfy material needs.

Poverty should not be viewed solely as an economic indicator but also as a significant measure reflecting an individual’s position in society. It limits access to rights and freedoms and generates situations contrary to the principles of social justice. Therefore, when determining poverty levels, its socio-philosophical foundations must be considered.

In Uzbekistan, the formation of a social state is aimed at improving citizens’ living standards and preventing social inequality. A social state should include measures to meet the basic needs of the population, strengthen social protection systems, and implement poverty reduction programs. Thus, building a social state is not only an economic task but also a socio-philosophical mission to ensure justice, equity, and inclusivity in society.

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