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SOCIAL POLICY IN MODERN SOCIAL CHALLENGES: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF REALIZATION

The article is devoted to defining the tasks and principles of efficient social policy in present social transformations. The problem of the tradeoff between social and economic priorities is grounded, while the need in searching for a compromise between various goals of social development is discussed. Basic contradictions, faced by decision-makers when formulating social policies, are outlined, as well as approaches to determination of vulnerable population groups. The author's understanding of social progress is proposed to unify different visions of social policy models. Base principles, which should be used for implementation of and responsible social policies, are developed. The need in evaluation of social policy results is grounded with a particular emphasis on application expansion of subjective estimations based on «indirect» indicators and sociological surveys. The need in consideration of public opinion is discussed with regard not only to the results of social programs, but also to goal-setting in the field of social policy.

Key words: social policy, social progress, social indicators, social justice, economic efficiency.

Introduction. Understanding of transformation processes in a society and new arising social threats and challenges result in a need to revise priorities of social development, to ground new goals and tasks faced by global community and national governments in choosing the optimum models of economic development and providing appropriate quality of life of a population. As a result, particular attention to development and realization of social policy is very actual, while the limited amount of budgetary resources, which remain the basic source of funding of social programs and actions, determines the need in implementation of monitoring and evaluation of efficiency of their use, tracing a correspondence between the final results and specified priorities and tasks. In accordance with Severin Bruyn's scientific vision of a compromise between social and economic priorities, «economics is the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses» [1, p. 186].

Study of recent publications. Issues of social policy development are among the most essential branches of social science, as efficiency of social programs directly determines population well-being, as well as implementation of the principle of social justice and achievement of social development goals. Among the national economists different aspects of development and realization of social policy were investigated in the works of O. Halchynkyi, V. Geyets, O. Grishnova, N. Deyeva, G. Dmytrenko, M. Dolishnyi, T. Zayats, M. Karlin, I. Kurylo, V. Kutsenko, E. Libanova, L. Lisohor, E. Makarova, V. Novikov, O. Novikova, V. Onikienko, S. Pyrozhev, U. Sadova, L. Semiv, V. Steshenko, L. Chernyuk, L. Shevchuk and others. At the same time, dynamic social changes cause a need in regular revisions of priorities and setting new target orienteers of social development. Thus, this work is devoted to fulfillment of the following **tasks**: to define approaches to essence and goals of social policy at times of present social transformations and to ground the adequate principles of efficient social policy, responding to the new challenges.

Basic results of the research. In a broad sense the term social policy could be defined as a system of institutional and legislative measures targeted at achieving social goals and tasks of the state. Respectively, the principal aims of social policy should cover the following fields:

- development of policy measures and management practices on granting basic social services to a population, including administration of the public health system, social protection, education, mental and physical development, regulation of employment and housing policies;
- combating social problems, including unemployment, low level of social safety and prevalence of asocial phenomena, poverty and inequality, socially determined diseases, crime, etc.;
- improving position of vulnerable groups in a society, care of incapable and elderly populations; combating problems of xenophobia and discrimination (race or ethnic, gender, age, etc.);
- studying and managing collective «social actions» to combat the mentioned challenges, i.e. support of activities of local communities, facilitating social responsibility of business, consolidation of activities of non-governmental and international organizations and other representatives of civil society.

Complications with task-setting in the field of social policy are caused by the need to balance between contradictions of economic and social priorities of a state, to search for a compromise between the aims of economic growth and creation of egalitarian society. As a whole, the idea of implementation of the principle of social justice in distribution of economic growth results has been calling for attention of the leading economists of the end of XXth century [2; 3; 4; 5], while the conflict character of these tasks' interaction is considered a dogma in neoliberal economic school. Thus, as A. Okun argues, states have to choose between economic efficiency and egalitarian society, as «efficiency of the economy is achieved at expense of inequality in incomes and «richness» [6]. Indeed, the present post-crisis experience of the European countries reveals that most of them prefer to support financial sustainability of national economies and make significant steps towards short-cutting of social programs by freezing or even reducing social standards. At the same time, welfare models of budgetary policy receive the largest public support, while social initiatives of governments stand as efficient means of impact on population electoral behavior, even in conditions of their obviously populist character.

Another important aspect, which has to be taken into account at task-setting of social policy, is seen in consideration of interests of representatives of various parties, as benefits

and costs of the public policies could concern small population segments, not the whole society. The modern theory of «public choice» argues that a state is functioning relatively efficiently when cost-benefit distribution affects equal population groups, whose interests are balanced in the end [7]. However, the optimum solutions of this task are quite rarely seen in practice.

The most prominent example of a constant search for such a compromise is represented by the operation of social safety nets, which are affected by direct influence of two interested groups – working population as tax-payers and recipients of social assistance as consumers of budget expenditures (pensioners, disabled and low-income persons, other disadvantaged people). In highly-aged developed societies, demographic dependency rates are increasing; this demographic pressure is facilitated by negative impacts of crisis phenomena in economies leading to increase in a number of unemployed and low-income persons. As a result, the numerous groups of last categories are obtaining increasing political impact in a society, but intensification of their demands is often associated with paternalist expectations; it should be also considered by policy-makers. That is why the «art» of social policy planning suggests a compromise between interests of all parties – both social expenditure consumers and social benefit «producers» (working population which provides sufficient levels of budget revenues, which are redistributed later).

A fair distribution of social resources among various groups of final consumers is another problematic issue, as well as determination of the target groups of support and categories of increased vulnerability. Responsible policy makers should also understand the specificity of cause-effect relations in creation of «vulnerability» and assess its determinants adequately: does this vulnerability result from objective, external causes (disability, severe disease, social disadaptation) or from more subjective causes (unwillingness to work, prevailing of dependency moods or even misuses of the state social support)?

In most societies, the target population categories for social programs are formed by elderly and disabled persons, children (in particular, orphan children and children deprived of parental care) and families with many children, lonely mothers, persons with socially determined diseases (for instance, HIV-positive persons) or diseases requiring expensive treatment, refugees and victims of human trafficking. Importantly, the retired status, which is often associated with low incomes in Ukraine, is not necessary considered vulnerable in the developed regions. Pensions on age are directly related to the results of previous employment there. Prevalence of accumulative pension schemes and private pension programs, opportunity for personal savings during the working life make pensioners the «privileged» members of postindustrial societies. That is why it is a very specific task to determine the target vulnerable groups, which should consider specificity of the national context in each country.

The principal feature, combining different visions of social policy models, is their subordination to the idea of social progress, which is defined as a *directed advancing movement, accompanied not only by positive dynamics of quantity indicators, but also by quality shifts in various aspects of public life and respective transformations in population perceptions (values, life-style, personal priorities in life, attitude to consumption and environment, etc.)*.

The recent research studies are grounded on two basic methodological approaches to evaluation of social policy results: the concept of life satisfaction based on subjective estimations of people and the concept of well-being based on objective indicators, describing the living standards in a society. However, both concepts deal with assessment of social progress in terms of present generation only; an attempt to take into account the interests and well-being of future generations is realized only within the concept of sustainable development. Thus,

the latter concept deals with idea of inter-generational solidarity in social policy. Respectively, social progress should be characterized by improvements in society's «sustainable and fair well-being» to provide «communities' adequate understanding of progress in the XXIst century» [8]. The increasing role of local communities in facilitating social development is also emphasized by M. Salvaris, who describes expansion of social projects developed at the level of community and characterized with the following features [9]:

- integration of economic-social-environmental issues in understanding of a population well-being;
- declaration of the target orienteers of development and setting indicators to evaluate progress for each target;
- participation of communities and various representatives of civil society in discussion and setting of orienteers and indicators;
- specification of the long-term period for fulfillment of policy tasks;
- implementation of legitimate decision-making.

In author's opinion, efficient and responsible public social policy should be developed in correspondence to certain *principles* at the modern stage of development:

1) fair distribution of results of social program's realization (implementation of the principle of social justice in terms of inter-generational solidarity, gender equality, urban-rural and regional gaps, equal access to basic social services for all population groups, irrespective of their education or incomes);

2) sustainability, i.e. subordination to the long-term stable results, not to momentary effects, and consideration of interests of future generations;

3) proactive character of social policies, which should motivate people to become more active and to search for opportunities to overcome crisis situation by themselves and to improve their well-being through personal efforts;

4) irreversibility, i.e. ensuring quality transformations in social processes, non-acceptance of opportunity to return to the previous standards in public opinion;

5) search for a compromise in development priorities, which enter into a contradiction sometimes (such as «production growth – environment deterioration»; «consumption growth – exhaustion of resources»);

6) «controllability», i.e. subordination to the specified development goals, setting of rational «limits of growth» and the corresponding system of target orienteers and indicators of progress evaluation;

7) complexity of impacts, shown in achieving cumulative social effect through inter-relations among different aspects of quality of life.

Such understanding of aims of social policy related to quality transformations in the way of life, priorities and outlooks in a society should be used as the criterion and measure of social development, as indicator of efficient goal-setting and public resource allocation. This approach predetermines the need in transition from evaluation of «resource» indicators of social development (such as per capita provision norms by medical or educational institutions, qualified personnel, public social expenditures, etc.) towards quality indicators, reflecting the actual results of social programs or the so-called «social effects» (state of population health, quality of education, rate of social integration and safety in a society, etc.).

In this context, the role of extended use of subjective estimations of social policy results is also increasing. In particular, it concerns deprivation approach based on sociological questioning intended to reveal the rate of exclusion from such basic social benefits as appropriate housing conditions, access to educational, medical, social services, infrastructure,

etc. Special population surveys to reveal the rate of satisfaction with quality and accessibility of these services are also very important.

In general, such population surveys are regularly conducted in most developed countries; for instance, surveys targeted at revealing health self-estimation are wide-spread, as official rates of applications to medical institutions or registered rate of disease incidence cannot be regarded as reliable indicators of public health. Also, indicators of life expectancy do not reflect quality of life. Moreover, any effects of public health policy are obviously revealed only in the long- or mid-term perspective.

However, correspondence between real needs and demands in society is an important problem of any subjective estimations; it is well illustrated by the experience of creation of «societies of consumption» in the developed regions, where increase in well-being and constant public demand on its further growth is not accompanied with intensification of life satisfaction and confidence in the future. In contrast, R. Lane argues about a decline in feeling of happiness among residents of the present market economies, explaining this fact by institutional neglect of social needs [10]. So, foreign researchers currently pay a lot of attention to developments of methodological approaches to constructing the «indices of happiness», as they are considered the most adequate subjective indicators of satisfaction in a society, in particular in combination with life expectancy parameters [11].

Importantly, subjective indicators are also important tools for evaluating both progress related to specific social programs, as well as efficiency of goal-setting in the field of social policy. Thus, assessment of success of a social policy requires information on achievement of the selected tasks (such as poverty alleviating strategies or improving of housing conditions of households, granting of social support to vulnerable population groups) based on analysis of public opinion on the corresponding policies and their results. In this regard, some kind of political marketing in the field of social policy is actual, which cannot be realized without consideration of public opinion, expectations, level of satisfaction of some groups. Particular attention should be paid to well-planned information campaigns to promote obviously unpopular social reforms, such as raising of the pension age or short-cutting of social privileges, etc. Ultimately, public support for social policies is an important condition of their final efficiency: a program cannot be regarded as successful without public acknowledgement of priorities of realized actions and positive attitude to its results, even if the selected tasks have been formally achieved.

Conclusions. Measures of social policy cover the system of interventional tools implemented by the state to support population well-being and to provide social protection for special groups, to prevent social risks and to solve social problems. Although the range of these measures, their generosity and efficiency differ in various societies, their common and general aim is to provide equal access to base social needs for a population. At the same time, the newest challenges of social development result in arising of new tasks of social policy, lead to creation of new groups of increased vulnerability which require support. On the other hand, numerous contradictions common for goal-setting in the field of social programs cause the need to implement some principles when developing social policies. These principles should be subordinated not only to ideas of social justice, but also to bases of sustainable development, take into account economic preconditions and priorities, etc. However, the general grounds of efficient social policy in any society should suggest target and proactive character of basic support programs, targeted at preventing citizens' vulnerability and motivating their conscious position in providing own well-being.

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СОЦІАЛЬНА ПОЛІТИКА В УМОВАХ СУЧАСНИХ СУСПІЛЬНИХ ВИКЛИКІВ:
ОБГРУНТУВАННЯ ЗАВДАНЬ ТА ПРИНЦИПІВ РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ

Стаття присвячена визначенню завдань соціальної політики в умовах сучасних трансформацій, дослідженню проблеми вибору пріоритетів та пошуку компромісу між різними цілями суспільного розвитку. В якості основних напрямів соціальної політики на сучасному етапі розглядаються такі складові, як розробка політичних заходів та управлінських практик щодо надання базових соціальних послуг населення; вирішення найбільш гострих соціальних проблем; питання, пов'язані зі становищем вразливих груп у суспільстві, підтримка непрацездатного та літнього населення; вирішення проблем дискримінації (за віком, гендерної, етнічної тощо) та ксенофобії; підтримка та спрямування колективних соціальних «дій», покликаних протистояти цим викликам, тобто, розвиток громадянського суспільства.

Окреслено основні протиріччя, з якими стикаються розробники соціальної політики, – між принципами економічної ефективності та соціальною справедливості, інтересами різних категорій населення (як платників податків та «споживачів» соціальних видатків, так і різних груп отримувачів соціальної допомоги), коротко- та довгостроковими пріоритетами розвитку. Запропоновано авторське розуміння поняття соціального прогресу як спрямованого поступального руху, що супроводжується не лише позитивною динамікою кількісних показників, а й якісними змінами в різних сферах суспільного життя та відповідними зрушеннями у свідомості населення. Сформульовано загальні принципи, яким має підпорядковуватися ефективна та відповідальна соціальна політика, зокрема – справедливий розподіл результатів, сталий характер перетворень, проактивність основних заходів, збалансованість різних пріоритетів реалізації реформ, комплексний характер впливу тощо.

У статті підкреслюється необхідність широкого застосування суб'єктивних оцінок результатів соціальної політики за допомогою показників «непрямого» характеру та соціологічних опитувань населення. Обгрунтовано необхідність урахування суспільної думки не лише щодо оцінки результатів соціальних програм, а й особливостей цілепокладання у сфері соціальної політики.

Ключові слова: соціальна політика, соціальний прогрес, соціальні індикатори, соціальна справедливість, економічна ефективність.

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СОЦИАЛЬНАЯ ПОЛИТИКА В УСЛОВИЯХ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ВЫЗОВОВ: ОБОСНОВАНИЕ ЗАДАНИЙ И ПРИНЦИПОВ РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ

Статья посвящена определению заданий социальной политики в условиях современных трансформаций, исследованию проблемы выбора приоритетов и поиска компромисса между различными целями общественного развития. В качестве основных направлений социальной политики на современном этапе рассматриваются такие составляющие, как разработка политических мер и управленческих практик относительно предоставления базовых социальных услуг населению, решение наиболее острых социальных проблем, вопросы, связанные с положением уязвимых групп в обществе, поддержка нетрудоспособного и пожилого населения; решение проблем дискриминации (возрастной, гендерной, этнической и т.д.) и ксенофобии; поддержка и направление коллективных социальных «действий», противостоящих этим вызовам, т.е. развитие гражданского общества.

Обозначены основные противоречия, с которыми сталкиваются разработчики социальной политики, – между принципами экономической эффективности и социальной справедливости, интересами различных категорий населения (как налогоплательщиков и «потребителей» социальных расходов, так и различных групп получателей социальной помощи), кратко- и долгосрочными приоритетами развития. Предложено авторское понимание понятия социального прогресса как направленного поступательного движения, сопровождаемого не только положительной динамикой количественных показателей, а и качественными изменениями в различных сферах общественной жизни и соответствующими сдвигами в сознании населения. Сформулированы общие принципы, которым должна подчиняться эффективная и ответственная социальная политика, в частности – справедливое распределение результатов, устойчивый характер преобразований, проактивность основных мероприятий, сбалансированность различных приоритетов реализации реформ, комплексный характер влияния и т.д.

В статье подчеркивается необходимость широкого использования субъективных оценок результатов социальной политики с помощью показателей «непрямого» характера и социологических опросов населения. Обоснована необходимость учета общественного мнения не только по отношению к результатам социальных программ, но и относительно целеположения в сфере социальной политики.

Ключевые слова: *социальная политика, социальный прогресс, социальные индикаторы, социальная справедливость, экономическая эффективность.*