

Section 5. Psychology

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PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES OF POVERTY: SOCIAL, ETHICAL, AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

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Abstract

This article examines poverty as one of the most acute and pressing issues in contemporary society. It discusses measures to mitigate the factor that poses a dangerous impact on economic and technological progress. The research analyzes the phenomenon of poverty through the philosophical lens, focusing on its social, ethical, and political dimensions. The article considers poverty as a multifaceted philosophical issue, exploring its social, ethical, and political aspects. It reviews the perspectives of philosophers, economists, sociologists, and other scholars, investigating the historical and contemporary theoretical viewpoints on poverty. Additionally, it delves into the complex nature of poverty, identifying both social and natural conditions and highlighting the interconnections between these factors in its formation and persistence.

Poverty is deeply rooted in social structures and inequalities influenced by economic conditions, educational opportunities, healthcare, and social justice. These social factors are crucial for understanding the persistence of poverty across different historical periods and societies. The ethical analysis of poverty includes examining moral responsibilities towards the poor and society's obligations. This involves discussions on human rights, social justice, and the moral imperatives for eradicating poverty through fair distribution of resources and opportunities. The political aspect of poverty considers the role of governance, policy-making, and state intervention in alleviating poverty. The study critiques various political systems and policies, assessing their effectiveness in eliminating poverty and ensuring social equality.

The article identifies a significant gap in existing literature regarding the natural conditions of poverty, such as environmental factors and geographical conditions. It emphasizes the need to integrate these aspects with social factors to form a comprehensive understanding of poverty. The article proposes a new definition of poverty as a complex social phenomenon characterized by a lack of material and spiritual resources necessary to meet human needs. This definition includes social and natural conditions as well as the mechanisms of poverty formation and proliferation. By integrating social, ethical, and political analyses, the article provides a holistic view of poverty, offering insights into its root causes and proposing multifaceted strategies for

alleviation. It calls for a more inclusive approach that encompasses both social and natural aspects of poverty to create effective and sustainable solutions.

Keywords: *poverty, “new poor,” “philosophy of poverty,” inequality, philosophical concept of poverty, cyclical poverty, philosophical lens*

Introduction

When the phenomenon of poverty is studied from a socio-philosophical perspective, it necessitates a deeper analysis of its essence, content, and various forms as a result of the interaction of many processes inherent in human existence. Regardless of the stage of development, every society encompasses poverty as one of its fundamental aspects. In today’s post-industrial information society, the nature of poverty has evolved to include new qualitative indicators. Poverty now manifests not only in material deprivation but also in the spiritual dimensions of human existence.

A specific issue is the emergence of the “new poor,” i.e., skilled professionals who are either unemployed or earning low wages. A comprehensive analysis of the problem of the “new poor” indicates that its solution must be sought within the complex deterministic relationships between economic, social, political phenomena, and the processes of human and societal development, including values and value systems.

The concept of “poverty” still lacks a precise scientific interpretation. Political framing of the essence of poverty and accepting it solely as an economic phenomenon does not contribute to the development of a national strategy to combat this issue.

Typically, government approaches to addressing poverty problems are based on economic methods. However, the use of such methods, as social-historical practice shows, not only fails to solve the problem but also does not always lead to a reduction in poverty. Understanding the socio-philosophical issues of the poverty phenomenon as a catastrophic state affecting all levels of sociality, deprived of one or more components – economic, spiritual, moral – of the individual, society, and human civilization’s social values, contributes to their effective resolution.

This research begins with several considerations and reflections on the social philosophy of poverty. It examines the social aspects of poverty, such as inequality, social exclusion,

and the structural causes of poverty. The study analyzes how certain social mechanisms support and exacerbate poverty in society and how poverty influences social relations and the overall dynamics of society. Additionally, it addresses the ethical dimensions of poverty and the related moral issues. Various ethical principles applicable to the problem of poverty, including justice, social responsibility, and human rights, are discussed. The ethical obligations of society and individuals towards the poor, and the moral aspects of actions to combat poverty, are analyzed.

In the political philosophy of poverty, the role of the state and policy towards poverty, anti-poverty policies, and social programs, as well as their effectiveness and moral foundations, are examined. The political principles and values guiding the development of social policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty are also discussed.

Research Methodology

The philosophical problem of poverty and its social, ethical, and political aspects are scientifically and theoretically analyzed based on various perspectives and approaches. Additionally, the essence of the related reflections and analyses is explored more broadly through philosophical analysis.

The methodology includes the following key components:

- General information on literature sources;
- Literature review: an extensive examination of existing literature on poverty from philosophical, social, ethical, and political perspectives.

This involves collecting books, academic journals, articles, and various viewpoints to create a theoretical foundation. Qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and field studies have been used to gather in-depth information from individuals experiencing poverty, social workers, policy-makers, and philosophers. This helps in understanding the experiences and subjective aspects of poverty. To provide a holistic view

of poverty, relevant concepts from disciplines such as sociology, economics, and political science are included. This interdisciplinary approach enriches philosophical analysis with empirical data and practical insights.

The research methodology for studying poverty as a philosophical problem includes a multifaceted approach that integrates literature analysis, philosophical and qualitative analysis, comparative and thematic analysis, and interdisciplinary concepts. This comprehensive methodology aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social, ethical, and political dimensions of poverty and to finding more effective solutions.

Literature Review

Although poverty was recognized as a global problem in the 20th century, its impact remains one of the main factors contributing to socio-economic and political instability. Experts acknowledge that the scale of the problem has expanded, leading to increasingly catastrophic consequences. Poverty is linked to primitive desires and limited spiritual needs, often stemming from a lack of familial educational potential, insufficient communication, underdeveloped social intelligence, and inadequate comprehensive education. This can result in an inability to adapt to the pace and dynamics of societal development.

The issue of poverty as a social phenomenon has been studied and researched by numerous thinkers and specialists. Notably, philosophers such as Karl Marx (Karl Marx, 1867), Aristotle (Aristotle 2001), Mahatma Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi, 2020), and Amartya Sen (Amartya Sen, 1999) have expressed their views on the dangers of poverty to societal life.

Poverty is a multifaceted social phenomenon characterized by limited access to resources, social discontent, restricted personal and educational development, lack of initiative, resignation, and a tendency towards victimhood. Poverty is naturally defined as a state, either permanent or temporary, that is opposite to wealth. It has a dual basis: material (access to resources) and spiritual (moral, educational, and socio-psychological qualities).

Poverty is characterized by the restriction or absence of access to material, social,

and spiritual benefits, which are available in greater quantities to others in the same society. People living in poverty often experience dissatisfaction with their lives and lack social engagement, leading to feelings of social discomfort, injustice, and tension.

Individuals living in poverty often show a lack of social initiative and responsibility necessary for their development and self-awareness. Among them, there is a tendency to devalue their lives, lose the meaning of life, develop a dependent psychology, and exhibit a high degree of resignation (seeing themselves as victims of circumstances).

The topic of the “philosophy of poverty” is very broad and can be examined from various perspectives, including philosophical, sociological, economic, and even religious aspects. Some possible approaches to studying this topic include:

1. **Philosophical Concept of Poverty:** Analyzing and interpreting various philosophical views on the nature of poverty. This includes classical philosophy (e.g., Aristotle’s concept of justice), modern philosophy (e.g., social contract theory or critiques of capitalism), and ideas from various cultural and religious traditions.

2. **Sociological Analysis of Poverty:** Studying the social and structural aspects of poverty in society, such as racial, ethnic, gender, and other inequalities that may be fundamental to understanding the causes and consequences of poverty.

3. **Economic Analysis of the Philosophy of Poverty:** Examining economic theories and models related to poverty, such as theories of income distribution, human capital theory, and cyclical poverty, as well as their philosophical and social implications.

4. **Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Poverty:** Discussing ethical issues related to poverty, including justice, social responsibility, human rights, and society’s responsibility towards the poor.

5. **Historical Perspective:** Analyzing the historical conditions and evolution of the concept of poverty in different cultures and societies, as well as the history of efforts to eliminate poverty and develop social policies and programs.

6. **Religious and Cultural Aspects of Poverty:** Studying traditional and contemporary

religious and cultural views on poverty and the role of religion and culture in combating it.

Analysis and Results

Poverty, as a social phenomenon, represents a state of social existence that deprives individuals of the wholeness and completeness of human existence, standing in stark contrast to wealth. It manifests destructively across all spheres of society and personal life. Poverty at a higher social level quickly impacts interpersonal and individual levels. In turn, due to its interconnected nature, it influences the higher social levels, transitioning from one domain of human and societal life to another. This principle is clearly evident in the world of human life, encompassing both everyday reality and the institutional and normative systems.

Poverty, entrenched in daily consciousness as a prevailing idea, can be addressed not only through material solutions but also by improving social existence and developing individuals' moral and spiritual dimensions through theoretical reflection.

Despite its widespread impact, poverty remains an integral part of social life for both society and its individual members. Under conditions of private ownership of the main means of production, the disparity in the quality of life persists across all levels of sociality. While it may be impossible to completely eradicate relative poverty, society at every level must create conditions to mitigate its consequences.

Key Considerations for Alleviating Poverty.

Material Solutions: Meeting the material needs of individuals and communities by ensuring access to essential resources such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education.

Theoretical Considerations: Understanding and addressing the structural and systemic causes of poverty through critical thinking and reflection. This includes developing policies and foundations that ensure social justice and equality.

Moral and Spiritual Development: Supporting the moral and spiritual growth of individuals to foster compassion, solidarity, and a sense of community. This can be achieved through education, cultural programs, and initiatives that promote ethical values.

Interconnectedness of Social Levels: Recognizing the interconnectedness of individual and social levels of sociality and implementing strategies that address poverty holistically. This involves collaborative efforts among various sectors of society, including government, the private sector, and civil society.

Subsystem Interventions: Developing targeted measures for different subsystems of human interaction, such as environmental sustainability initiatives, social integration programs, and mental health support services.

By adopting a multifaceted approach that considers both the material and non-material aspects of poverty, society can work towards reducing the prevalence and impact of poverty, thereby striving for a more just and inclusive world. In a market economy, the influence of economic factors on human life, as well as the surrounding social and natural environments, is increasing. Generally, people are involved in economic activities that include the constant buying, consuming, producing, selling, and exchanging of production activities' products.

In a civilized society, economic relations are always formalized through legal documents. Among these, the natural rights that individuals receive at birth hold prominent positions. These include the right to life, the right to work and occupational freedom, the right to personal freedom, the right to marry, and the right to freedom of conscience. Additionally, individuals have the right to own property granted by society, the right to enter into contractual relationships, the right to economic freedom, the right to fair income distribution, and the right to the inviolability of housing.

A philosophical and economic analysis of citizens' rights shows that they are based on concepts common to both economics and social philosophy and sociology. These concepts include freedom and coercion, wealth and poverty, rationality and choice, labor and alienation, desire and need, economic ethics, economic culture, and socio-economic inequality.

The philosophical conception of poverty encompasses various aspects of understanding this phenomenon through the lens of philosophy. Some key elements of this conception include:

1. Freedom and Coercion: Examining how poverty can limit individual freedoms and the ways in which societal structures can coerce individuals into poverty.

2. Wealth and Poverty: Analyzing the dichotomy between wealth and poverty and their respective impacts on social structures.

3. Rationality and Choice: Understanding how rationality and decision-making processes are influenced by economic status.

4. Labor and Alienation: Investigating the relationship between labor conditions, alienation, and poverty.

5. Desire and Need: Differentiating between human desires and needs in the context of poverty.

6. Economic Ethics: Exploring the ethical considerations in economic behaviors and policies related to poverty.

7. Economic Culture: Studying the cultural aspects of economic activities and their role in perpetuating or alleviating poverty.

8. Socio-Economic Inequality: Addressing the broader issues of inequality and their connection to poverty.

Ethical Analysis of Poverty: Philosophers have engaged with the ethical issues related to poverty, discussing the fairness and unfairness of wealth distribution in society, as well as the responsibilities of society and individuals towards the poor. This raises the question of which ethical principles and values should guide society in addressing the problems of poverty.

Social Philosophy of Poverty: Philosophers analyze the social and structural aspects of poverty, such as inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion. They explore the factors and mechanisms that contribute to the creation and maintenance of poverty within society.

Political Philosophy of Poverty: Philosophers consider the role of the state and politics in relation to poverty. This includes discussing the government's responsibilities towards poor citizens, the effectiveness of social programs, and the ethical and political aspects of resource distribution and anti-poverty policies.

Cultural Philosophy of Poverty: Some philosophers study the cultural aspects of poverty, such as stereotypes and misconceptions about the poor, as well as the cultural

identities of poor individuals and their connection to social and economic conditions. Martha Nussbaum, a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago, refers to anthropological research that highlights the tendency of human nature to build harmful hierarchies and discriminations.

Historical Perspective: Philosophers examine the historical contexts and evolution of the concepts of poverty in various cultures and societies. They analyze the dominant ideas and notions in different historical periods and how these have shaped contemporary understandings of poverty.

The philosophical conception of poverty helps us better understand the roots and causes of this phenomenon, as well as develop ethical and socially grounded approaches to address it.

Current Global Social Threat: Poverty is a significant global social threat. Unemployment, economic and social instability, unfulfilled hopes, and broken plans are driving the process of societal marginalization. Poverty hinders society's ability to realize its potential, linking it to regression in social development. Today, there is a significant disparity between the rich and the poor, leading to anger and discontent among the impoverished.

Joseph Stiglitz points out the increasing inequality and the growing segment of the poor population in the United States, urging the study of experiences from Scandinavian countries, Singapore, and Japan to learn how to ensure full employment and restore justice and harmony in society.

Other studies emphasize the role of "inclusive" institutions that serve the political and legal interests of all social layers in achieving sustainable economic prosperity.

The history of poverty can be traced back to the emergence of society itself. However, historical data on the recognition of poverty and the development of measures against it vary.

By addressing poverty through its material and non-material dimensions, society can strive to mitigate its spread and impact, ultimately working towards a more just and inclusive world. In market relations, the influence of economic factors on human life and the social and natural environment is intensifying. People are generally involved in economic activities, continually buying,

consuming, producing, selling, and exchanging products.

In a civilized society, economic relations are always formalized through legal documents, with natural rights received at birth holding a prominent place. These include the right to life, the right to work and occupational freedom, the right to personal freedom, the right to marry, and the right to freedom of conscience. Additionally, individuals have the right to own property granted by society, the right to enter into contractual relationships, the right to economic freedom, the right to fair income distribution, and the right to the inviolability of housing.

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Multifaceted Approaches to Addressing Poverty: Poverty results from a complex and interrelated set of causes, which scholars categorize into several groups:

- **Economic:** Unemployment, low wages, low labor productivity, and industrial competitiveness;
- **Social-medical:** Disabilities, old age, and high morbidity;
- **Demographic:** Single-parent families and high dependency ratios within households;
- **Socio-economic:** Low levels of social security and protection;
- **Educational:** Low levels of education and insufficient professional training.
- **Political:** Military conflicts and forced migration;
- **Regional-geographic:** Uneven development across different areas.

In its usual sense, poverty refers to the inability of a family to meet its basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter with their current income. This definition of poverty emerged in England at the end of the 19th century and dominated both theoretical and social policy perspectives throughout the first half of the 20th century. The evolution of ideas about poverty has led to various assessments of its scale.

One of the most significant reasons for different assessments of poverty levels is the differing approaches to defining the concept of poverty. There are numerous definitions of poverty, among which three main concepts can be distinguished: absolute, relative, and subjective poverty.

Absolute Poverty: This concept is based on comparing the minimum necessary needs with the resources required to meet these needs. People are considered poor if their income is below the cost of these minimum needs and if their basic needs are not adequately met.

When studying absolute poverty, two key issues must be addressed:

1. Developing an indicator that can be used as the poverty line.
2. Creating a system of indicators to compare with the poverty line.

Relative Poverty: This concept is linked to the level of material well-being in a particular country. Unlike absolute poverty, relative poverty levels rise with increases in overall income. This approach is more often used to compare socio-economic development across different periods within a country. Additionally, while absolute poverty may be overcome through appropriate government policies, the concept of relative poverty always assumes a certain portion of the population will be considered relatively poor.

Subjective Poverty: Developed by economists and statisticians at Leiden University in the Netherlands during the 1970s, this approach to defining poverty is based on the hypothesis that people participating in sociological surveys are fully qualified to judge what constitutes poverty. According to the Leiden method, based on a representative household survey, the income level perceived by the population as sufficient to meet their needs is determined.

Research indicates a correlation between people's subjective views and their objective living standards, such as income and needs. Conversely, some individuals with incomes below the poverty line may not consider themselves poor, while others may feel poor despite having incomes above the poverty line, depending on their living standards.

Understanding the Causes of Poverty: To combat and eliminate poverty, it is essential

to understand its causes. Repeated sociological surveys have shown that people attribute poverty to various factors, including government policies, corruption, laziness, national mentality, alcoholism, mafia influence, and monopolies.

The objective economic basis for the expansion of poverty and its transformation into a national issue exists in all countries with transitional economies. Therefore, prospects for reducing poverty are primarily linked to economic development. One significant cause of poverty is the lack of access to quality education. Official statistics show that the higher the educational level of the working-age population, the lower their risk of poverty. Resource allocation through assistance programs is implemented in three main areas.

Addressing poverty through both material and non-material dimensions allows society to strive to mitigate its spread and impact, ultimately working towards a more just and inclusive world. In market relations, the influence of economic factors on human life and the surrounding social and natural environment is intensifying. People are generally involved in economic activities, continuously buying, consuming, producing, selling, and exchanging products.

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First Direction:

A portion of income, as perceived by the population, is attributed to labor, but the vol-

ume of stipulated needs is also taken into account.

Second Direction:

The paid funds are not specifically related to the work of a particular individual, but the amount of these payments is considered to address the need for assistance. These payments encompass various groups such as many employed workers, single mothers, subsidies for specialized treatments for children, expenses for raising children, and government subsidies for maintaining children in boarding schools and hostels. The amount of these subsidies depends on the number of children and the financial status of parents.

The third direction involves directly providing benefits and services to the population in the form of tangible goods and services. This portion of allocated funds constitutes additional income. They do not exceed the state budget and are not subject to discretionary spending. Such income is distributed without considering individual labor contributions and is allocated based on perceived societal benefits and needs at a certain historical period. The recipients of state assistance are not all workers in general, but rather those at a particular level of need. For example, those who are frequently and severely ill and cannot afford medical services often seek free medical assistance, while children of school age, especially those from low-income families, often seek assistance from school institutions.

Analytical conclusions summarize that the following strategies are identified to combat corruption:

- Creating conditions to ensure the degree of prosperity for all families capable of working;
- Elaborating guarantees for the effective support of vulnerable groups in society without unnecessary financial constraints;
- Fostering cooperation between laborers, especially women, elderly parents of young children, single-parent families, and ensuring the role of the state in securing the rights of young workers by promoting collective agreements in the field of labor rights;
- Reducing corruption in the labor market by increasing the minimum wage

and reducing the number of workers vulnerable to unemployment;

- Increasing community cohesion;
- Improving the system of providing direct social assistance to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled individuals, single parents, migrants, and others.

Finally, by analyzing the research and discussing the basic conclusions, the philosophical significance of combating corruption is emphasized, and some directions for further research in this area are proposed.

In addressing corruption, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive approach that takes into account both social and ethical aspects. This research delves into the philosophy of corruption, examining its societal, ethical, and political dimensions, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the nature of the problem and the formulation of effective strategies to address it.

Analyzing the causes of corruption demonstrates that these reasons can be attributed to several distinct categories, each with its own set of internal factors. These categories encompass external objective factors, internal individual factors, and societal factors, incorporating economic, legal, cultural, educational, healthcare, and administrative aspects.

Researchers identify the causes of corruption extensively, considering historical, civilizational, and socio-economic perspectives. These causes can be allocated to various groups based on their nature and impact. They arise from natural phenomena inherent to society and its environment, such as disasters, conflicts, and natural phenomena.

This research offers the possibility of devising effective strategies for combating corruption by understanding its root causes and addressing them comprehensively.

Factors such as chronic illnesses, mental and physical disabilities, can hinder a person's ability to escape poverty. Unemployment and the failure of social support systems exacerbate corruption.

Insufficient legal protection and lack of access to rights can exacerbate corruption, especially for those with weak legal protection.

In shaping cultural values, national customs, and ethical-economic environments,

play a significant role in influencing the level of corruption.

The level of education significantly influences the prevalence of corruption, with lower levels of education correlating with higher levels of corruption.

Inadequate healthcare services not only undermine people's health and productivity but also contribute to corruption. Corruption persists due to ineffective government systems described as corrupt administration and management, which fail to provide essential government services and assistance.

Conclusion

The causes of corruption are diverse and multifaceted, encompassing external, internal, and social factors. Fighting corruption requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account all these factors. Corruption is a complex social phenomenon influenced by both natural and social factors. While historical social conditions and consequences have been primarily considered in historical perspectives, natural factors have not received sufficient attention. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the interdependence of both scales and suggesting strategies to mitigate corruption. Analyzing historical perspectives on corruption reveals that while social conditions (such as economic conditions, social structures, and policies) have been extensively studied, natural conditions (ecological factors, geographic conditions, and biological aspects) have not been adequately considered. In various historical periods, many researchers have emphasized the role of social factors in the emergence of corruption. They attribute this to economic disparities, social injustices, and inadequate healthcare systems. Economists and sociologists argue how these social conditions contribute to corruption and perpetuate it.

Research on the natural conditions of corruption reveals a significant gap in research. Environmental degradation, natural disasters, and geographical isolation are factors that can affect corruption, but aspects that have not been fully explored. The lack of attention to these natural factors hinders a comprehensive understanding of the full scope and complexity of corruption.

Analysis suggests that understanding corruption as a complex social phenomenon requires describing it as a complex social phenomenon based on the scarcity of material and spiritual resources necessary to meet human needs. It is based on social and natural conditions and continues through social and natural mechanisms, resulting in a range of social and natural consequences.

The research demonstrates that combating corruption requires a comprehensive approach based on natural and social factors. Obtaining and resolving mutual dependencies between these scales can lead to the development of more effective strategies to combat corruption.

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