

ՀՀ-ում աղքատության հաղթահարման միջազգային փորձի տեղայնացման հնարավորությունների վերլուծություն

Բաղդասարյան Գևորգ Բ.

սասյիրանտ, 2-րդ կուրս, Կառավարման ամբիոն ՀՊՏՀ (Երևան, ՀՀ)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6950-9465>

baghdasaryangevorgphd@gmail.com

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Հանգուցաբառեր և բառակապակցություններ` Աղքատության հաղթահարման մոդել, աղքատության հաղթահարման միջազգային փորձ, պետական երաշխիքներ, սոցիալական պաշտպանություն

Анализ возможностей локализации международного опыта преодоления бедности в РА

Багдасарян Геворг Б.

Аспирант кафедры менеджмента,

Армянский государственный экономический университет (Ереван, РА)

Аннотация. Бедность не является только индивидуальным злом и, как правило, создает социальные проблемы для общества. Искоренение нищеты — это не только осознанный выбор общества, но и обязанность. Армения, как и другие страны, привержена Целям устойчивого развития ООН, первой из которых является ликвидация крайней нищеты во всем мире к 2030 году. В статье рассматривается международный опыт преодоления бедности и возможности ее локализации.

Ключевые слова и словосочетания: модель борьбы с бедностью, международный опыт борьбы с бедностью, государственные гарантии, социальная защита

Analysis of the possibilities of localizing international experience in overcoming poverty in RA

Baghdasaryan Gevorg B.

PhD Student of the Chair of Management,

Armenian State University of Economics (Yerevan, RA)

Abstract. Poverty is not only an individual evil and, as a rule, creates social problems for society. Poverty eradication is not only a conscious choice of society, but also an obligation. Armenia, like other countries, is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the first of which is to eliminate extreme poverty worldwide by 2030. The article examines international experience in overcoming poverty and the possibilities of its localization.

Keywords & phrases: Model of poverty alleviation, international experience in poverty alleviation, state guarantees, social protection

Introduction: The problems of overcoming poverty are largely interconnected with the social policy implemented by countries. At the same time, researchers suggest four directions for overcoming poverty through social policy: continental, Anglo-Saxon (liberal), Scandinavian and Southern European [2, p. 634-639]. The classification of the main models of the welfare state, developed by G. Esping-Andersen, is currently widely recognized throughout the world. This classification is based on the differences in the approaches of states to social protection.

Analysis: The continental (Bismarckian) social direction is aimed at ensuring the continuity of employment and work activity as a way to overcome poverty (Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, Switzerland, France, the Czech Republic). Moreover, in this case the state is obliged to prevent the process of "equality" of the workforce from

employers in the labor market by legislatively establishing minimum wage thresholds that the employer has no right to violate [3, p. 24-33]. Thus, the minimum wage in France is about 60% of the average wage in the country.

The state has a stronger position here and acts as a guarantor of the fulfillment of obligations of social protection agencies in the event of financial difficulties for the latter. Payments from the state budget are comparable to insurance contributions of employers and employees, and the main channels of their redistribution belong to the state or are controlled by it. In Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium, the basis of the poverty prevention system is the mandatory establishment by employers of a minimum wage, which must be sufficient to meet the basic needs of employees [4, p. 24-28].

The implementation of the continental model of social policy in the Republic of Armenia may face financial difficulties, since the minimum wage established by law (see Table 1) is significantly lower than the average wage (270,000 drams),

therefore the state cannot overcome this financial gap at the expense of its budgetary resources, even in the case when the country has been recording a continuous increase in the nominal average wage in recent years (see Table 2).

Table 1. *Minimum monthly wage in Armenia (drams) [1, p. 137]*

Years	January	April	July	October
2019	55 000	55 000	55 000	55 000
2020	68 000	68 000	68 000	68 000
2021	68 000	68 000	68 000	68 000
2022	68 000	68 000	68 000	68 000
2023	75 000	75 000	75 000	75 000

Table 2. *Main socio-economic indicators of living standards in the Republic of Armenia [1, p. 135]*

Yearss	Nominal average salary, AMD	Compared to the previous year (%)	Real wage index (%)
2019	182 763	105,8	104,3
2020	189 716	103,9	102,6
2021	204 048	107,6	100,3
2022	235 576	115,5	106,3
2023	269 994	114,6	112,4

The Anglo-Saxon model of social policy (Great Britain, the USA, Ireland, Japan) is based on the provision of universal and uniform social services. That is, all those in need of financial support receive it in equal amounts and without any discrimination. For example, in the United Kingdom in 1999 a strategic decision was made to eradicate child poverty by providing universal social support to families crossing the poverty line, which created opportunities to improve the social situation of children from poor families [4, p. 24-28].

The liberal model operates under conditions of minimal state intervention in market relations and limited application of state regulation measures that correspond to the framework of macroeconomic policy. In these countries, the insurance system is developed, providing social support to the population, and state intervention in these processes is reduced to a minimum and is limited only to the regulation of guarantees.

Table 3. *Guarantees provided by the state to the population of the Republic of Armenia (in Armenian drams per month) [1, p. 149]*

Indicators	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
The amount of basic pension for labor pension	16 000	18 000	18 000	21 000	24 000
Size of the statutory minimum wage	55 000	68 000	68 000	68 000	75 000
Average size of pensions	40 424	43 983	43 677	46 629	49 605
For long service	78 628	81 226	80 253	82 317	83 326
Special privileged (occupational)	41 723	45 928	45 929	49 093	52 225
Disability pensioners due to general illness	37 538	41 210	41 110	44 608	48 117
Minimum size of scholarship of the students of institutes of higher education	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000
Minimum size of scholarship of the students of specialized secondary education	4 750	4 750	4 750	4 750	4 750
Minimum size of scholarship of the post-graduate students	20 000	60 000	60 000	60 000	60 000

To some extent, this model corresponds to the current guarantees provided by the state to the population of Armenia (see Table 3), which are aimed not at eradicating poverty, but at preventing the risks of deepening poverty. Moreover, the state social assistance programs operating in Armenia are

primarily aimed at vulnerable groups of the population, who are more likely to end up below the poverty line.

Thus, at present the Government of the Republic of Armenia is implementing a temporary shelter services program, which provides homeless

persons with accommodation in temporary general shelters, in-kind support, medical, social and psychological assistance [8].

Under another social program, if employers hire an unemployed person over 35 years old who has been unemployed continuously for the last three months, the state provides employers with financial support in the amount of 250,000 drams, and in the case of hiring an unemployed person who is a beneficiary, in the amount of 350,000 drams [8].

The Southern European model of social protection (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal) is aimed at overcoming the asymmetry of family social spending. Thus, in Italy, social assistance was provided to poor families who spent disproportionately large amounts of money on education and basic necessities. As a result, only a small portion of funds was allocated to combat poverty, which was compensated by the state [6, p. 2-9].

The social democratic (Scandinavian) model (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway) prioritizes state support aimed at preventing the formation of poverty, and social services are guaranteed to all residents of the country. This model works most effectively in Sweden, where the poverty level is minimal at the EU level.

In these countries, social protection of the population is under the complete control of the state. Thus, the share of state expenditure in the total GDP in Sweden is 66%, in Denmark - 61%, in Finland - 56%, and most of the expenditure is directed to the needs of the social sphere. A significant part of the needs of the social sphere are transfers, due to which the redistribution of the national product in favor of the least well-off strata of the population occurs. The high level of social protection has made it possible to reduce the poverty level in these countries to the lowest values in the world. Social

policy is based on the fact that poverty is a disease of society, and citizens become poor as a result of the market process, not having time to adapt to the changed conditions of the labor market. However, experts see risks in the case of widespread use of social programs for the prevention of poverty, consisting in an exaggerated tendency of the population to rely on state financial support, which in turn weakens the interest and motivation of the individual to improve their social status [7, p. 132-149].

Currently, the Republic of Armenia is striving to introduce a social democratic model of social protection, significantly increasing the importance of employers in hiring members of low-income families with a comprehensive approach to state incentives. Thus, in case of hiring unemployed persons aged 16 to 29 from families receiving family or social benefits, employers are provided with compensation from the state for 3 months in the amount of 50% of the income tax calculated and paid from the salary of the employed person, but not more than 15,000 drams per month. And in case of unemployed persons aged 46 to 62, the employer will be provided with support for 9 months in the amount of 50% of the income tax calculated and paid from the salary of the employed person, but not more than 20,000 drams per month. In case of hiring unemployed persons over 63 years of age from families receiving family or social benefits, the employer will be provided with support for 6 months in the amount of 70% of the income tax calculated and paid from the salary of the employed person, but not more than 21,000 drams per month. However, we believe that state social support in such low doses cannot be considered effective in overcoming poverty, as is noticeable in Scandinavian countries.

Table 4. Dynamics of changes in the average monthly nominal wage and consumer price indices in the Republic of Armenia compared to the corresponding month of the previous year (%) [1, p. 137]

	March	June	September	December
2019				
Average monthly salary	107.2	106.2	107.4	105.3
Consumer Price Index	101.9	102.6	100.5	100.7
2020				
Average monthly salary	108.6	101.5	103.8	101.7
Consumer Price Index	99.9	101.7	101.4	103.7
2021				
Average monthly salary	102.9	110.5	108.9	112.0
Consumer Price Index	105.8	106.5	108.9	107.7
2022				
Average monthly salary	117.7	116.9	117.4	120.9
Consumer Price Index	107.4	110.3	109.9	108.3
2023				
Average monthly salary	125.3	113.8	110.4	107.8
Consumer Price Index	105.4	99.5	100.1	99.4

In another case, RA residents who submit an annual income declaration and have income tax may benefit from the possibility of reimbursement for social expenses incurred by them in the reporting year on healthcare and/or education. The maximum amount of social expenses for healthcare is 50,000 AMD per year, and for education, the maximum amount is 100,000 AMD per year [8]. However, when a country records a disproportion between the average monthly nominal wage and the dynamics of

the consumer price index (see Table 4), this circumstance to some extent neutralizes the results of the state's efforts to overcome poverty. It is also noteworthy that in recent years the country has seen a tendency to reduce the share of families receiving social benefits (see Table 5), but the size of the monthly benefit per family remains the same, which may not indicate that the state is applying a social democratic model of social protection.

Table 5. Number of families receiving benefits aimed at improving the family's standard of living and the average amount of the monthly benefit assigned (at the end of the year) [1, p. 147]

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total number of families, unit including:	91 302	92 012	87 267	76 874	71 468
Receiving family and social benefits	86 197	86 927	82 328	72 748	68 023
Receiving quarterly emergency benefits	5 055	5 085	4 939	4 126	3 445
Average size of monthly benefit per family, drams	31 350	31 350	31 350	31 350	31 350

Conclusion: Thus, by studying international experience in overcoming poverty and analyzing management processes aimed at localizing it in the Republic of Armenia, a number of conclusions can be drawn:

First, anti-poverty initiatives are mostly related to social protection policies implemented by the state and are top-down, so decisions taken in this direction are mainly formed in the macro- rather than microeconomic environment. Bottom-up poverty reduction measures are relatively passive on the part of individuals or employers and require little managerial effort, which is also the case in the Republic of Armenia.

Secondly, there is no single model of poverty alleviation management in the international practice, since, based on the level of economic development and financial capabilities of countries, management is built preventively or in the direction of mitigating existing risks. In this regard, the Republic of Armenia, given its current economic situation, does not have the opportunity to localize the large-scale management functions in the field of poverty alleviation adopted in international practice, using instead social intervention programs aimed at vulnerable groups.

Thirdly, international experience shows that governance based on social solidarity is more effective in overcoming poverty. Therefore, in the governance functions aimed at reducing poverty in the Republic of Armenia, in parallel with the approaches to the redistribution of public resources, consensus approaches of various layers of society should be taken into account, contributing to the intensification of efforts to eradicate poverty through social solidarity.

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