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ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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The article formulates the concept of social policy, presents its main functions, as well as indicators of its evaluation. The effectiveness of social policy in the regions of the Republic of Belarus was assessed using the Social Policy Effectiveness Index (SPEI). There are identified the main problems of the social policy in the regions and there are suggested the ways of their solution.

In modern conditions, social policy is one of the most important directions of the internal policy of any economically developed state, regardless of the presence or absence of the term "social state" in its constitution. In an effort to provide its citizens with decent living conditions, state power redistributes the national product in favour of the least well-off citizens, smoothes out excessively harsh manifestations of social inequality, pursues a policy of employment and equalization of life chances.

Social policy analysis should be conducted on the basis of a multilevel approach, i.e. to consider macro and micro levels in interrelation with each other.

Indicators for the development of human potential, social unhappiness, etc. can be used to analyze and evaluate social policy [1]. In our study, we used indicators of socio-economic development to assess the social policy of the Republic of Belarus at the regional level. Such an analysis was conducted to identify regional leaders in the field of social development, as well as problem regions, whose social policy requires adjustment.

The analysis was carried out for 2013-2015 with the following criteria [1]:

1. Demography and health: life expectancy, infant death rates, total mortality rate, number of doctors in every 10,000 of the population.

2. Education: coverage of the population with basic education, the number of people with the higher education per 10,000 population, the number of students per 10,000 population, and the number of higher education institutions.

3. Standard of living: real gross regional product (GRP) per capita, average wage, average wage ratio to the subsistence minimum income.

4. Employment: unemployment rate, employment rate of economically active people.

5. Life necessities: availability of drinking water, sanitation.

6. Development of the institution of the family: the level of extramarital births, the number of divorces.

7. Food security: the share of food imports in total consumption.

8. Crime: the level of crime among the population.

9. Economic security: the amount of external debt in relation to gross national product (GNP).

10. Expenditures on basic social needs: the share of budgetary expenditure on health in the GRP, the share of budgetary expenditure on education in GRP.

11. Access to information and communications: the number of mobile phone users, the number of Internet users, the proportion of organizations using information and communications technologies (ICT).

To bring the indicators to a common unit of measurement, a normalization procedure was carried out based on the rating approach. This methodology was proposed by the World Bank to calculate the resulting indicators of knowledge measurement, both the knowledge index and the knowledge economy index [2, p. 54]. To assess the effectiveness of social policies in the regions, we introduced the Social Policy Efficiency Index (SPEI). It is the arithmetic mean of the given above indicators that have passed the normalization procedure.

The assessment found out the following results, presented in Table 1.

Proceeding from the SPEI analysis, the leader among all the regions is Minsk City due to the high value of such indicators as "demography and health", "education", "standard of living", "employment", "food security" and "economic security". The last is the Minsk region due to the low indicators such as "education", "food security", "crime", "spending on basic social needs" and "access to information and communications".

Next, we consider the dynamics of the indicators for assessing the productivity of social policies in the regions of the Republic of Belarus using a scale that establishes a correspondence between the value of growth in indicators and productivity.

Table 1 – Assessment of the efficiency of social policy in the regions of the Republic of Belarus in 2015

Indicator	Brest region	Vitebsk region	Gomel region	Grodno region	Minsk city	Minsk region	Mogilev region
Demography and health	6,78	2,50	5,36	5,36	10	5	5,72
Education	4,29	7,50	7,86	3,93	7,86	2,50	6,43
Standard of living	1,91	4,29	6,66	6,19	10,00	8,57	2,38
Employment	5,00	3,58	2,86	7,14	10,00	8,57	5,72
Life necessities	5,00	7,15	4,29	4,29	6,43	7,14	6,43
Development of the institution of the family	7,14	5,72	2,86	10,00	4,29	5,00	5,00
Food security	7,14	5,71	8,57	4,29	10,00	1,43	2,86
Crime	5,71	7,14	4,29	10,00	1,43	2,86	8,57
Economic security	5,71	4,29	7,14	2,86	10,00	8,57	1,43
Expenditures on basic social needs	7,14	8,57	5,72	5,00	1,43	2,86	10,00
Access to information and communication	6,19	7,62	4,76	6,67	7,14	2,38	5,24
SPEI	5,64	5,82	5,49	5,98	7,14	4,99	5,43
Rank	4	3	5	2	1	7	6

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of reference [3].

We calculated the rates of growth of all the indicators studied, given that their change can have different impact on the effectiveness of social policy. At the preliminary stage of the analysis, a scale was adopted for assessing the effectiveness of social policy, presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Scale for assessing the productivity of social policy

Rate of indicator	Productivity	Interpretation
More than 15 %	-2	Significant productivity reduction
From 5 to 15 %	-1	Decreased productivity
Until 5 %	0	No significant changes
From 5 to 15 %	1	Increased productivity
More than 15 %	2	Significant increase in productivity

Source: [4, p. 54].

The results of the assessment are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 –Assessment of the productivity of social policy in the regions of the Republic of Belarus for 2013-2015

Indicator	Brest region	Vitebsk region	Gomel region	Grodno region	Minsk city	Minsk region	Mogilev region
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Demography and health	0	-2	0	1	2	1	3
Education	-3	-1	-1	-2	-4	3	-3
Standard of living	4	4	4	3	5	5	3
Employment	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-4
Life necessities	0	2	-1	2	1	2	0

Continued

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Development of the institution of the family	3	3	3	2	2	3	4
Food security	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0
Crime	-1	1	0	-1	1	-1	-1
Economic security	-3	-2	-2	-3	-2	-1	-3
Expenditures on basic social needs	3	3	4	4	2	2	5
Access to information and communication	0	0	0	-1	1	0	0
SPPI	2,00	6,00	5,00	3,00	6,00	11,00	4,00
Rank	7	2	4	6	2	1	5

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of reference [3].

As a general indicator of social policy performance, we used the Social Policy Productivity Index (SPPI), which is the sum of social policy performance assessments for indicators, consisting of selected indicators of social and economic development of the regions.

Based on the data in the table, the following conclusions can be drawn. The most productive social policy is in the Minsk region, whose SPPI is 11.00 due to a significant increase in the "standard of living" indicator and the growth of indicators such as "education", "life necessities", "development of the family" and "crime".

The second place is occupied by the Vitebsk region. This is due to the high growth rates of the following indicators: "standard of living", "life necessities", "development of the family" and "expenditures for basic and social needs". However, the decrease in the performance of social policy was caused by a decrease in the "demography and health" indicator. Also running second is Minsk. The "standard of living" indicator gave a significant increase in the productivity of the social policy of the region, but the "education" indicator had a negative effect on the productivity.

Among the regions the Brest region occupies the last place. The decrease in the productivity of the social policy of this region was provided by "education" and "economic security" indicators.

We should take note of the Mogilev region, which, although it is in the fifth place, but has growth rates, proving that the productivity of social policy for the period under investigation has increased. Such indicators are "demography and" health", "development of the family" and "expenditures on basic social needs".

Based on this assessment and the results we obtained earlier, there were identified and presented the main problems of the social policy in the regions of the Republic of Belarus and the ways of their solution in Table 4.

Table 4 – Problems of implementing social policy in the regions of the Republic of Belarus and ways to overcome them

The sphere of social policy	Problems	Solutions
1	2	3
Salary	• outstripping growth of salary over labour productivity growth; • low level of the tariff rate of the first category; • lagging behind the salary of public sector employees in comparison with the real sector of the economy; • a lack of direct correlation between salary and production efficiency; • insufficient attention to the work of a person in the team	• establishing the correspondence between labour payment and business efficiency; • development of joint-stock property of employees with the purpose of involving them in the management of the organization and increasing their motivation for high-performance work; • approximation of the tariff rate of the first category to the value of the budget of the subsistence minimum and further to the minimum consumer budget

Continued

1	2	3
Pension system	• decrease in the level of pensions; • a high degree of redistribution of funds for those who had high earnings before retirement; • the possible scarcity of the current pension system as a result of current demographic processes	• optimization and rationalization of the pension system, which should lead to a change in the basic principles and schemes for obtaining a pension; • formation of a multi-level system that provides different forms and options for pension provision
Social infrastructure	• selectivity and targeting of social policy; • insufficient development of social institutions; • increase in income inequality of the population; • backwardness of social infrastructure facilities, ineffectiveness of social assistance transfer mechanisms based on full centralization	• promoting employment growth and developing a flexible labour market that promotes the most effective use of labour; • refraining from dispersing funds in numerous areas and concentrating on major programs in the social field; • ensuring full access to the necessary information resources; • improvement of the system of selection of young people for study in higher educational institutions; • strengthening of the economic security of the country

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of reference [5, p. 16; 6].

In conclusion it should be noted that at the present time it is necessary to choose such social policy priorities that contribute to the improvement of the social and economic situation and to the creation of conditions for economic growth. In the sphere of income policy, an effective system of labour remuneration is created that will improve the standard of living of the population and stimulate high-productivity work. In the field of social protection of the population – protection of the population against social risks, social protection of children, families, youth, and other categories of citizens.

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