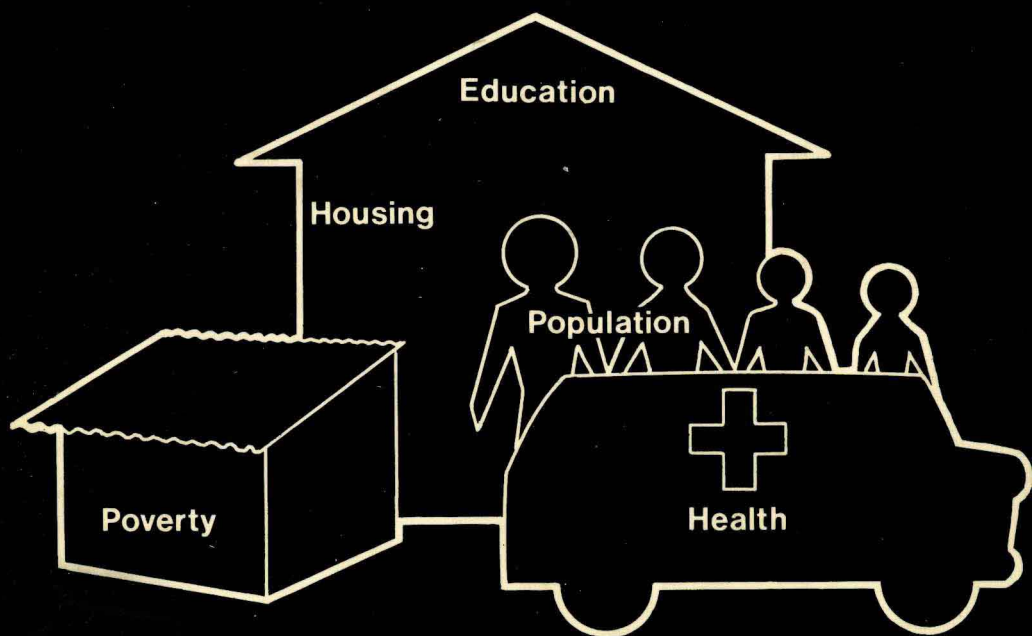


The Social Dimensions of Development

Social Policy and Planning
in the Third World

MARGARET HARDIMAN
JAMES MIDGLEY



THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Margaret Hardiman and James Midgley

London School of Economics & Political Science



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MARGARET HARDIMAN AND JAMES MIDGLEY
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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
1. Social policy and social planning in the Third World	9
Social and economic characteristics of underdevelopment	10
Economic planning, growth and social development	13
Issues in social policy and planning in the Third World	19
The need for a strategy: from incremental to appropriate social planning	29
2. Poverty, inequality and development	32
The definition and measurement of poverty	33
Dimensions of poverty and inequality in the Third World	37
Poverty and development: theories and policies	51
3. Population growth and population policy	62
Population trends	62
The dynamics of population growth	69
The consequences of rapid population growth	77
Approaches to population policy	82
Population policy and social development	87
4. Rural development problems and policies	89
The nature and extent of the problem	89
Issues in rural development	102
Planning strategies for rural development	112
5. Urban policies and plans	124
Definitions of cities	125
Urban growth and urbanization trends	127
The social problems of urbanization	136
Urban policy approaches	144
Social policies and urban plans	151

6. Policies for health and medical care	153
Health conditions in the Third World	154
Poverty and the social causes of ill-health	164
Health policies and curative medicine in the Third World	168
Policies for appropriate medical care	173
Health priorities and comprehensive social policies	179
7. Education policies	182
World trends in educational development	182
Appropriateness and equity in educational development	192
The historical development of educational planning	196
Approaches to the planning of educational systems today	201
Planning in practice	206
8. Housing needs and housing policies	210
The housing situation in the Third World	211
Problems of conventional housing policies	221
Housing policies and housing constraints	225
Public policies and self-help housing	228
Limitations of self-help policies	235
9. Social work and welfare services: problems and policies	237
The nature of social work and welfare services	238
Problems of social work and welfare services	247
Social work, welfare services and development	252
Formulating appropriate social work and welfare policies	254
10. International aspects of social development	258
Interdependence in the world economy	258
The idea of aid	264
Aid for social development	274
Some constraints on the effectiveness of aid for social development	278
Alternative strategies for aid	284
Appendix: a brief guide to further reading	289
Bibliography	295
Index	311

INTRODUCTION

While it is true that those countries which are loosely referred to as the Third World have made much progress over the last 30 years and that many of their people today have higher living standards than they did less than a generation ago when most were under colonial domination, absolute poverty and deprivation together with widespread ill-health, ignorance, malnutrition, homelessness and landlessness still exist on a scale in the developing countries which is unacceptable in the twentieth century. It has been estimated that between a third and 40 per cent of the world's population have incomes which are insufficient to meet their most basic needs; of these, the great majority live in the Third World. And, because of their poverty, they suffer other deprivations; insufficient food, illiteracy, inadequate shelter, disease, lack of remunerative employment, exploitation and insecurity comprise a way of life for hundreds of millions of people in the Third World today.

Although there is more concern about these social problems today, in the past social scientists who studied development issues paid little attention to them. Sociologists were so occupied with theoretical issues of social change that the harsh realities of Third World poverty seem to have escaped their attention and few sociological publications which dealt specifically with the social problems of underdevelopment were published. Similarly, while a large number of economic textbooks and articles about trade, development planning, industrial investment and related matters were written, relatively few referred directly to the problems of unmet need in the Third World although they frequently claimed that welfare is the ultimate goal of economic management. This is partly because many social scientists assumed that improvements in welfare would automatically accompany economic and social change. Many economic publications implied that the social needs of people would be met as economic growth accelerated and brought about higher per capita incomes in developing countries. Sociological writings frequently claimed that the modernization of the traditional social structures of developing countries would aid economic growth and thus foster the prosperity of individuals. Current sociological theories have departed significantly from this approach but still imply that social change, and particularly sociopolitical change, will of itself bring about significant improvements in levels of living for the deprived masses of the Third World. While all of these may aid the process of improving people's welfare, none are of themselves sufficient to deal with the

social problems experienced by developing countries: the formulation and implementation of policy measures designed specifically to tackle them is an essential requirement.

This view is gaining support as more social scientists have recognized the need for more systematic research into these problems and for greater government involvement through appropriate social planning. Of course, the social problems of underdevelopment were not ignored entirely in the past; indeed, several economists argued that their discipline should pay attention to social welfare issues and to ways in which economic policies could be directed towards the realization of social goals. But while some social scientists in other disciplines echoed their views, they were in a minority and it is only in recent years that the inadequacies of conventional thinking about development have been more widely recognized. Today, development studies textbooks refer more frequently to the social problems of developing countries and it is now more often admitted that, in spite of an impressive record of economic growth during the past three decades, very large numbers of people in the Third World still subsist in appalling conditions of poverty below the most basic standards of human welfare. Some have gone further, claiming that the process of development has not only failed to ameliorate the problem of mass poverty but that it has exacerbated it as economic growth and technological change continually add to the pool of unemployed, landless and marginal people in the developing world.

Although social scientists have taken a greater interest in the social dimensions of development in recent years, this is not to suggest that previously popular ideas about the benefits of economic growth and social modernization are obsolete and that all accept the need for purposeful state intervention. Indeed, there are many social scientists as well as policy makers who believe that governmental intervention in social affairs should be strictly curtailed; the belief in monetarism and the growing popularity of 'supply side' economics among many academic and professional economists in both the industrial and developing countries indicates that this view not only persists but is widely held. Also, it would be wrong to conclude that planning agencies in developing countries are now widely engaged in effective social planning. Although many governments have established social service planning procedures within their national planning organizations, social planning is still poorly developed. Similarly, there has been insufficient research into the social problems of developing countries and into government policies which directly or indirectly affect the welfare of people.

The study of social policy

The idea that the knowledge of the social sciences should be applied to problems of human welfare is an old one; it has been a recurrent theme in Western Utopian thought for centuries. But the application of scientific knowledge to the formulation of policies designed to promote human welfare

is a relatively recent development. Systematic academic enquiry into government social policies only began in earnest in the industrial countries, particularly Britain, after the Second World War, when the creation of the so-called welfare state provided new opportunities for teaching and research. Demand for trained personnel to staff the rapidly expanding social services led to the creation of training courses in what became known variously as social administration, social welfare, social policy and social planning at numerous universities in the industrial countries. Since the first academic chairs in the subject were established at these universities in the nineteen fifties, the social services and social policies of these countries have been investigated in depth and subjected to much normative comment and there can be little doubt that this research has influenced those responsible for the formulation and implementation of social policies in the industrial nations.

Unlike the study of economic policy, which is vigorously pursued at university departments of economics and institutes of development studies in both the industrial and developing countries, the study of the social policies of governments in the Third World is still a much neglected field of enquiry. Although a few departments of social administration and schools of social work have undertaken comparative research of this kind, it has been very limited. This is true also of institutes of development studies, a few of which have taken an interest in the economic aspects of the social services in developing countries, especially education and health and their effects on economic development. In fact, more social policy research has been undertaken by international development agencies such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation, UNESCO, World Bank and the International Labour Organisation. Much of this enquiry has been directed at the provision of social services in developing countries. In recent years, these organizations have paid much more attention to the broader welfare implications of economic development. During the nineteen seventies, several development agencies, notably the United Nations, World Bank and International Labour Organisation, urged their member states to adopt economic measures which are geared to meeting social needs and to ensure that the benefits of economic growth, which have eluded the poorest groups, be distributed more evenly.

These organizations, and particularly the United Nations, which has championed the idea of development planning for many years, have been instrumental in popularizing the idea of social planning. Under pressure from the United Nations, many Third World governments have created departments in their central planning agencies which are concerned specifically with planning the social services; similarly, policy and planning units have been established in ministries responsible for health, education, housing and other social services. The United Nations has promoted the idea that economic development plans should be designed to improve levels of living among the population as a whole and that efforts should be made to measure and monitor social progress.

These developments have created a new demand for trained planners to assist in the formulation of appropriate policies to deal with social problems

and, although courses in social planning have been established in several countries, this demand is being met only gradually. Many of those who are now employed as social planners in central planning organizations and the planning units of social sectoral ministries in developing countries do not have qualifications in this field. Most are economists or graduates in other social science disciplines which are not wholly appropriate to the tasks these planners are called upon to undertake. This is not to deny that a disciplinary training in economics, sociology, public administration or other relevant subjects provides a useful academic background for those who find employment as social planners. But a knowledge of social problems and social needs and of the effectiveness of different policies which have been adopted to deal with them is seldom provided in these subjects.

Although academic courses in social planning have been introduced at some universities in the Third World and in the industrial countries where students from the Third World still go to study in significant numbers, particularly to obtain postgraduate qualifications, the nature of social planning as a subject is still confused and there is a serious lack of relevant literature. This problem is compounded because social planning is often taught as a part of a degree course in disciplines such as development studies, sociology, social administration and social work and not frequently as an interdisciplinary specialism. To meet the need for teaching materials, many social planning courses rely on textbooks written for students of social policy in the industrial countries but these are wholly unsuitable. While it may be interesting to learn about social security in Britain, public housing in Germany, preschool education in the United States and health insurance in France, this knowledge is of little relevance to the problems facing social planners in the Third World; indeed, it will be a hindrance if they seek to replicate these measures instead of formulating policies appropriate to local needs and conditions.

The scope of this book

This book is an attempt to meet, in part, the growing need for suitable literature on the subject of social planning for developing countries. It discusses a number of problems which are common to Third World nations and generally regarded as being 'social' in nature. Mass poverty and deprivation both in urban and rural areas; marked inequalities in levels of living, employment opportunities and welfare; low standards of health, education and housing; and the problems of rapid urbanization, population growth and rural underdevelopment comprise its subject matter. In discussing these problems, attention is directed specifically at the policies which have been formulated to deal with them in the past; different policy approaches are compared and their effectiveness is assessed. The book deals exclusively with problems of policy rather than the techniques of planning which are used in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy measures. These planning technologies as they are sometimes also known, which include a variety of operations research

procedures, programming budgeting techniques and micro-economic planning tools such as cost benefit analysis, are also employed by social planners. Although some have defined social planning as the application of these technologies to the solution of social problems, we believe that a far broader appreciation of policy and policy issues is required; planning technologies are valuable aids but they do not constitute the whole planning process.

In discussing these social problems and their possible solution in this way, the authors of this book make a number of assumptions or value premises; although these will be examined in more depth in the next chapter, they should be stated clearly at the outset. For example, we argue that the social problems which have been mentioned earlier are inimical to development and progress and that steps must be taken to deal with them; we reject the view that these problems will solve themselves in the long term. Also, we believe that concerted and appropriate state intervention is required to deal with them. The belief that individuals alone are responsible for their welfare and that the critical problems of poverty and deprivation in developing countries today are due to the failure of individuals to meet their own needs through their own efforts is rejected. We argue that the causes of most of these problems are to be found not in the inadequacies or maladjustments of individuals but in broader external conditions in society as a whole; because of this, remedial action must be taken at the national level within the context of broader international reforms. This is not to deny that non-governmental organizations and the efforts of local communities can make a major contribution to the amelioration of social problems. But while voluntarism and local self-help are to be encouraged, the social problems facing developing countries are of such magnitude and have their causes in conditions of such complexity that determined state intervention is required to deal with them effectively. It is partly for this reason that this book focuses primarily on the social policies and plans of government.

We argue that for state intervention to be meaningful governments must formulate appropriate social policies and plans based specifically on the needs and circumstances of their societies. A major concern of this book is the problem of inappropriate social policy in the Third World, where the social services of the industrial countries have been copied frequently without modification; for example, some of the negative consequences of replicating European and North American approaches to health, education, housing, urban development and other social services are discussed in subsequent chapters of this book.

The task of devising and implementing appropriate social policies and plans requires the participation of those with political authority, administrative responsibility as well as technical expertise in the field of social planning. However, just as a textbook on economic planning would emphasize the role of the professional economist in development planning, we believe that professional expertise based on a detailed knowledge of social policy and planning is an essential ingredient in this process. For this reason, we argue

that social planners should have a specific professional role based on a specific body of knowledge appropriate to this task. However, as indicated previously, there is still some confusion about the academic content of social planning. Different views on this question will be examined in the next chapter but we shall argue that social planning is based on an interdisciplinary approach and that it draws pragmatically on the knowledge of the social sciences in an attempt to formulate appropriate social policies and to evaluate their effectiveness. While other writings on this issue frequently claim a particular parentage for social planning, we suggest that the problems of welfare and of meeting social needs through government action require analysis and comment which transcend the conventional boundaries of the established disciplines.

Each of these premises is open to criticism. There are, for example, many who believe that state responsibility for welfare is an evil which should be resisted. While some claim that it encourages complacency among the masses, sapping society of its vitality and productive urges, others point to the dangers of creating bureaucracies needed to implement the social policies and plans of government. It may be argued also that the training and employment of social planners to formulate social policies is an elitist, technocratic exercise which is divorced from the realities of poverty and deprivation in the Third World. Isolated in their central planning organizations, planners are soon misled by the routines of administration and the intricacies of office politics and quickly lose their commitment to those whom they are supposed to serve. The possibility of an interdisciplinary and applied social science of this kind may be questioned; in particular, it may be argued that without theory and armed only with an eclectic collection of ideas, social planners are very likely to end up being confused. Some will be sceptical about the ability of personnel who are employed by the state to bring about meaningful social improvements; they argue that welfare and social justice do not flow from technocratic planning but from political change. Since change of this kind is unlikely in most developing countries, they believe that social planning is bound to be a wasteful and pointless exercise.

Of these criticisms, doubts about the possibility of social planning are the most trenchant. But while social planning is unlikely to bring about improvements in societies where the state is itself opposed to state intervention or unwilling to implement measures which ameliorate the problems of poverty and deprivation, this is not the case in most developing countries today. Although the social problems of underdevelopment are immense and the past record has been uneven and often depressing, there have been progressive social changes and there are further prospects for progress. While we do not share the pessimism which is currently fashionable in development studies, we recognize the enormous difficulties and complexities of bringing about change and it is for this reason that some statements in the following chapters may seem to have a pessimistic tone. Unlike those who advocate solutions to the world's problems which require little more than the implementation of this or that recipe or the adoption of this or that ideology, we do not believe that the

training of social planners and their recruitment to government service will result in instant Utopia. As in those societies which enjoy high levels of living and welfare today, these changes will not come easily.

In the following chapters, we discuss what we believe to be some of the more important issues in social planning in the Third World. Some of these, which concern the nature of social planning and its potential contribution to development, are discussed in the next chapter. This chapter is also intended to provide a conceptual introduction to a subject which has been criticized for its theoretical underdevelopment. Chapter 2 deals with the central issue not only in social planning but in development studies as a whole; this is the problem of poverty and inequality. The remaining chapters deal with issues in major fields of social planning: these include rural and urban development, population, health, education, housing and social work and welfare services. A final chapter examines some international issues of social development.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of the issues which concern social planners in developing countries. Although they are referred to, lack of space in this book, which is intended primarily to introduce the student to the field, prevents a full discussion of issues such as ethnic and racial conflict, the subjugation of women, unemployment and underemployment, the exploitation of children and various forms of social deviance such as alcoholism, mental ill-health, divorce and drug addiction. Some of these are mentioned in Chapter 9, which deals primarily with the responsibilities of professional social workers employed by Ministries of Social Welfare in developing countries. Related issues such as social security and criminal justice are referred to briefly in this chapter. Although these and other topics merit fuller discussion, selectivity is unavoidable in a field as broad as the social policies of developing countries. Nevertheless, we believe that the topics chosen for discussion are the most important and represent the areas of most concern today. These fields of social planning are covered somewhat artificially through the convention of compartmentalizing them into what are known as 'sectors'. Although this is a convenient way of dealing with a very complex planning field, the inter-relationship of the various social sectors such as health, housing, education, social work services, urban and rural development and indeed the economic sectors must be borne in mind constantly.

In the chapters concerned with the major fields or sectors of social planning, an attempt has been made firstly to outline the problem and then to examine issues of policy. The nature of the various social problems with which the book is concerned is described and, as far as possible, statistical and other empirical information is provided. But recognizing the hazards of treating those nations referred to as the Third World as a homogenous group, regional and other differences are emphasized. Policy issues are then examined; different policy approaches are outlined and, although the authors' preferences are revealed, the reader is encouraged to decide which are most appropriate. Since the book is designed to be an introduction to the field, it covers a broad subject matter and may be accused of superficiality. However,

each chapter attempts to outline the major problems, issues and controversies relevant to each topic and, in this way, seeks systematically to direct the reader to original and other secondary sources; by providing a broad framework for the study of social policy and planning in the Third World, we hope that subsequent attempts at more detailed analysis will be made easier.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL PLANNING IN THE THIRD WORLD

Between 1946 and 1980, the membership of the United Nations increased from 55 to 154 countries and, with the exception of Namibia and a few generally small territories scattered around the globe, most of the world's people now live in sovereign nation states. Previously, the majority were ruled by foreign, mostly European powers. Although these countries have been classified in many different ways, socioeconomic criteria are widely used to differentiate between them today. Previously, in the nineteen fifties and sixties, countries were often grouped in terms of their international allegiances and ideological leanings. But as the complexities of contemporary politics and shifting diplomatic loyalties have been recognized, previously popular geopolitical classifications such as the East *versus* West dichotomy are being used less frequently; instead, the developed-developing division and its various synonyms and euphemisms have acquired prominence.

Although few people can define them precisely, most are familiar with terms such as 'developing' or 'less developed' country or 'Third World' and have a general idea of their connotation. Many social scientists also use these terms imprecisely, partly because attempts to define them usually elicit a clamour of dissent from other social scientists. Also, while they may agree that the world's nation states may be classified in terms of their level of social and economic development, they do not agree about the nature or the number of categories required or about which countries should be included in the different groups. They disagree also about which criteria should be used to distinguish between the categories. This is understandable, since the nations which may be loosely described as 'developing' vary enormously in their social and economic as well as their cultural and political characteristics.

Nevertheless, as we shall see, there are real social and economic differences between the majority of countries generally referred to as developing and developed. Of course, there are cases where the distinction is blurred and where convention and common usage determine the category into which a country is placed. But generally the social and economic problems of underdevelopment are clear enough, particularly in the poorest of these countries. Mass poverty, widespread deprivation and all that accompanies subsistence living characterizes the Third World today and distinguishes between the rich and poor nations of the earth.