

# Patterns and trends in social policy essay sample

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At the introduction of social policy ideologies emphasis was put on civil and political rights especially in countries like South Africa and America where there was wide discriminations on the basis of race and class. In the current contexts Social policy has underwent various transformations in terms of the subject matter, internationalization, approaches of conceptualisation and cooperation with other disciplines in the world with most countries taking it as a way of tackling social problems. The most apparent is the change in subject from mainly focusing on civil and political rights to focusing on mainly on social welfare. Themes of social policy have shifted to tackling social problems that are mainly experienced by minority populations in society. Part of the agenda which social policy tackle are issues of gender equity, access to basic services among women, ethnic minorities, old age, children and other marginalised groups. The change in themes is triggered by economic development and the changing needs of populations, for example women working in the labour force, may influence the character of social policy on occupational health for expectant female workers.

Historically social policy has used a one-dimensional approach of poverty, which is more narrowly focused on financial well-being, consumption and income adequacy. This however did not enable a focus on the factors that contribute to disadvantaged people's economic marginality and general inability to participate in the key activities of society. This has been replaced by the social exclusion approach, which focus on populations considered not to be able to access basic services due to various vulnerabilities that make them excluded formal labour market and benefits of economic growth.

Policies are therefore formulated that are oriented towards bridging the gap

in various sectors and eradicate discriminations that are most cases levelled on people excluded from the main labour market. Approach has also shift from target populations being mere consumers of social policy to also being involved in the full range of activities associated with their welfare. Currently policy formulation is widely based on social science research and through this target populations get opportunities to participate in the design and setting of objectives and priorities of social institutions such as the public health and education system.

Social policy previously concentrated on issues of national societies and topics but this pattern has changed to developing policies that have international coverage and spell out international relations. This came up due to rise of international relations activities and the transfer of populations triggered by international research and education programs. The field of human right has witnesses the greatest transnationalism of social policies, for example the development of universal fundamental right for women, children and prisoners under the guardianship of the United Nations

During the 1960s and 1970s social policy was mainly associated with sociology, political science and partly with economics, however this has changed to take an interdisciplinary approach in the way social policy is studied and applied. This change in cooperation was triggered by the change in the themes of social policy and a close cooperation developed with natural sciences and law specialists with the view that they also had a role to play in human welfare.