

A social analysis of child support policy in the u.s

Government



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

It is the social responsibility of the government to reliably provide for the basic needs of its citizens. This is of particular importance in ensuring sustainable and equitable social and economic development in the community.

Due to this reason, numerous government policies have been formulated and implemented to promote provision of support services to the vulnerable minority members of the community. Of importance here is the Child Support Policy, which mandates financial support responsibility for single parent child by the other parent.

This paper gives a critical social analysis of Child Support policy as well as a brief history of this policy in the US.

History and provisions of Child Support policy in US

The concern for child support policy in the United States can be traced back to the 19th century. This was after courts addressing marital breakdown and divorce cases identified the lack of enforceable legal provision providing for child support action by non-custodian parents (Hansen, 1999).

This concern and increased public outcry led to the passage of the first federal child support enforcement later in 1952. Available information indicates that this legislation provided guidelines to state welfare agencies on determining when aid is necessary for single parent families.

In 1975, the federal government enacted the Social Security Act, which provided more legal authority for enforcing collection of child support (Hansen, 1999).

This was followed by the 1984 amendment on Child Support Enforcement dictating for improvement in state and local support enforcement programs through establishment of state-wide child support guidelines.

Through this amendment, the states gained authority to withhold income for non-custodial parents who were paying for child support (Josephson, 1997). In addition, the law required state governments to report defiance or late payment of support by non-custodial parents to consumer credit agencies.

According to the provisions of the current child support laws, an individual is termed as a non-custodial parent in three conditions namely; if the child was as a result of a relationship, a marriage that was terminated through divorce or separation, and/or even in cases where none of such existed (Meyer, & Cancian, 2005).

Social value of child Support policy in the community Child support policy in the United States has been marked with numerous controversies among members of the political, social, and economic fronts of the community.

Proponents of the policy have cited its instrumental role it plays in promoting sustainable parental care responsibility on children. According to available information, the high rates of divorce in the nation have resulted into increased burden to members of the society.

This is because most victims of single families are economically dependent. Thus, the policy serves the ultimate purpose of ensuring sustainable economic independence in single parent families (Department of Health, and Human Services, 2005).

Another common assertion by supporters of child support policy is that it functions to mitigate unethical practices in the society. True to the letter, divorce rates are increasingly becoming a major social concern in the nation. On the contrary, this is found to negate the underlying purpose of marriage in the society.

This has the implication that failing to enforce mandatory parental care for both parents will only serve to create injustice in the community (Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). This can be supported by the fact that the child in question is in essence the result of the relationship of the couples.

In addition, child support policy finds its importance in reducing government expenditure on individual citizens, an element that promotes public policies for the common good of all in the society (Melli, & Oldham, 2000). As provided for in the constitution, the government should provide for the basic needs of its citizens.

This means that the government will increase its investment on providing for single families at the expense of other public projects. Due to this reason, child support policy in the united states of American functions a crucial role in promoting ethics of care and equitable justice in the society.

However, child support policies have not been without critics. It is a common claim by opponents that this policy is a real source of resource wastage in the community. The law requires a law enforcement of the policy through court agreement between the custodian parent and the non-custodian parent of the child.

According to available statistical information, an estimated over 60 percent of child support cases end up in a long court battle between the disputing parties (Hansen, 1999). This has the ultimate implication that both parties are entailed to losing both in time and financial resources.

Still, the provisions of the child support policy can be seen as a contradiction of individual right to equal opportunity. Existing legislations on child support enforcement give state and local governments to report to consumer credit agencies any delays by non-custodial parents to pay support (Meyer, & Cancian, 2005).

However, this requirement does not take into account the question of employment loss or financial crisis on the side of the non-custodial parent.

This has the implication that the policy limits the sustainable social and economic development of these individuals in the society. Failure by the policy to appreciate the dynamics of the employment market is thus a contradiction of the constitutional provisions of equal opportunity.