

The Evolution and Development of the Connotation of Poverty

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Abstract: The author sorts out the connotation, evolution and development of the concept of poverty from different definitions of poverty and clarifies the connections and differences between several concepts related to the concept of poverty. Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. There are many ways to define it, including the concept of relative poverty corresponding to the concept of absolute poverty, the development of the concept of subjective poverty corresponding to the concept of objective poverty, and the ability to correspond to the concept of income poverty. The creation of the concept of poverty.

1. Introduction

Poverty is a social phenomenon caused by various factors such as economic, social, and cultural backwardness. It is often characterized by low economic levels, loss of personal ability, and marginalization of group society. The earliest research on poverty in academia originated from the early twentieth century. The British economist Seebohm Rowntree defined poverty as: "The total income level is insufficient to obtain the low amount of daily necessities needed only to maintain the normal function of the body," that is, material poverty. By 1965, Schultz put forward the concept of human capital in "The Economics of Poverty" and began to link poverty with human capabilities. This idea of poverty and ability was studied by Amartya Sen, and he proposed the idea of poverty of ability in his book "Poverty and Famine". The lack of human capital is also a manifestation of poverty. Ability poverty pays more attention to the ability of the poor individuals themselves, but the explanation of the relationship between the environment and other external factors are insufficient. On the basis of ability poverty research, Amartya Sen also proposed the concept of rights poverty. It is used to explain the vulnerability of individuals or groups, lack of voice, and social exclusion. Rights poverty refers to poverty caused by the lack of political, economic, cultural rights and basic human rights that groups or individuals should enjoy. Academia divides the types of poverty into four categories, namely material poverty, ability poverty, culture poverty and right poverty. In addition to the above research, the American sociologist and anthropologist Lewis first proposed the concept of "poverty culture" in 1966 creatively, arguing that the poverty culture in the region affected the values and thinking styles of individuals and groups, which led to intergenerational transmission of poverty. By sorting out the development of the concept of poverty, this research is divided into these four types of poverty from an academic perspective, and the research results are presented below.

2. Description of Poverty Connotation

2.1 Material Poverty

Material poverty, also known as income poverty or subsistence poverty, mainly focuses on the relationship between household income and biomass energy demand. The earliest discussion of material poverty originated in the early 20th century. In "Poverty: A Study of Town Life", the British economist Rowntree first defined poverty as: "The total income level is not enough to obtain the minimum necessities needed to maintain normal body function" (Seebohm Rowntree, 1901). Rowntree estimated a minimum living expenditure, the poverty line, by calculating the expenses of

food, housing, clothing and other necessities.

Survival poverty refers to the situation where income cannot maintain the minimum living needs, which is also called absolute poverty. With the development of the concept of poverty, some scholars introduced the concept of relative deprivation into poverty analysis, laying a theoretical foundation for the proposal of relative poverty. Relative poverty can be understood that although individual's income can meet their basic living needs, it is still not enough to reach the average living standard of society. The extreme poverty standard of US\$1.9 per person per day used by the World Bank since 2011 is the absolute poverty standard under the monetary standard. The American economist Galbraith proposed in 1985 that whether a person is poor depends not only on how much income he has, but also on the income level of other people. If other people's income levels increase while their own income levels remain the same, poverty still exists. Relative poverty is also closely related to income distribution. If a country's distribution is severely uneven, then the country's relative poverty is even more serious (Guo Xibao, 2005). Relative poverty is also measured and calculated by income, consumption and welfare. The World Bank defines social members whose income is less than one-third of the average income as relatively poor.

2.2 Ability Poverty

The concept of ability poverty is a deepening and development of the concept of income poverty. It was first proposed by Amartya Sen in his book *Poverty and Famines*. Sen defines ability poverty as deprivation poverty due to lack of competence, where competence refers to "different combinations of functional activities in a class that a person can obtain. Therefore, competence is a kind of freedom to obtain various functions. The choice combination of functional activity is substantial freedom (Guo Xibao, 2005).

Sen's discussion of ability poverty is mainly reflected in the relationship between function and ability. Functions are doings and beings that a person performs in life, that is, all aspects of human life (Yang Guotao, 2012). The most basic function of human beings is to enjoy adequate nutrition, have a healthy body, participate in community activities, and so on. The function of capabilities represents a combination of various functions that a person can achieve. Therefore, capabilities are a vector set of functions, representing a person's freedom, or that a person chooses one type of life or another Freedom of life (Yang Guotao, 2012).

Therefore, in actual poverty governance, ability poverty has been highly recognized. For example, in 1990, based on the theory of ability poverty, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) created the Human Development Index, which is based on "life expectancy, education level and quality of life" as the basic variable, which measures the level of economic and social development of the member states of the United Nations.

2.3 Right Poverty

Right poverty is developed on the basis of Sen's ability poverty, which is an expansion of ability poverty. Sen's theories and methods of right poverty are reflected in his works "Poverty and Famines" (Poverty and Famines, 1981) and "Hungry and Public Action" (Hungry and Public Action, 1989). Sen uses the "rights method" to study poverty for the first time. From the perspective of the rights method, Sen regards poverty and hunger as the result of "loss of rights" (Ma Xinwen, 2007), and defines it as rights poverty refers to that a group of specific groups' poverty is caused by the lack of political, economic, cultural rights and basic human rights that people should enjoy.

The concept of right poverty is relevant to vulnerability, voicelessness, social exclusion, and social marginalization. Vulnerability includes being vulnerable to external shocks and internal self-strikes when risks come. Compared with the rich, the poor lacks the means to resist risk shocks and are more likely to suffer losses. From the perspective of social exclusion, poverty of rights is not only limited to material and human deprivation, but also damages people's self-esteem, dignity, and self-identity, blocking their participation in the decision-making process and access to various relevant institutions (Tang Jun, 2002). The vulnerability of the group has increased. Social marginalization is also one of the important reasons leading to the power poverty. According to the "the nature of exclusion", social marginalization can be divided into five types: economic exclusion,

political exclusion, social relationship exclusion, cultural exclusion and welfare system exclusion. According to the “exclusion object”, it can also be divided into: individual exclusion, group exclusion and spatial exclusion (Guo Xibao, 2005).

2.4 Culture Poverty

American anthropologist Lewis was the first to study poverty as a cultural phenomenon. In his book “Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty” published in 1959, Lewis first proposed the concept of “poverty knowledge” and believed that culture poverty is an important factor restricting the development of poor groups.

The definition of culture poverty mainly has the following three viewpoints. First of all, the first viewpoint is that culture poverty is a subcultural phenomenon in modern society, which refers to the fact that when most people in society are living above the average standard of living, there are still some people live in poverty. The resulting set is a specific cultural system that enables poverty itself to sustain and multiply. Secondly, poverty culture also refers to a way of life of the poor, behaviors, customs, ideological values and other non-material forms that are different from those of non-poor people. The last point is that poverty economy and poverty culture are two closely inseparable concepts, and they form and transform into each other. The culture of poverty is rooted in the poor economy and also contributes to economic poverty.

The psychology of poor groups reflects that the knowledge poverty is an important factor hindering their development (Xin Qiushui, 2001). For example, in some Chinese poor rural areas, the lack of modern technology and culture and the superstition of praying for the blessing of Buddha have led to an endless cycle of regional poverty and ignorance. In addition, poverty culture also has group characteristics. It is a mode of survival activities, behavior, thinking habits, and ethics shared by the group. The collective nature of the poverty culture determines that the poverty culture will use its existing cultural characteristics to cultivate and inherit the carrier of poverty production methods, behaviors and thinking modes and values, and make it lasting and stable through intergenerational transmission. American scholar D.P. Moynihan proposed a vicious cycle of poverty model in understanding poverty and believed that there is a strong intergenerational transmission between cultural environment, education level and professional income.

In actual practice, knowledge poverty alleviation is an effective way to break the intergenerational transmission of poor culture. Knowledge poverty alleviation can be carried out by vigorously promoting the cultural characteristics of the poor culture that are conducive to social development and human happiness; focusing on the carrier of the poor culture and the cultural poverty alleviation of the offspring of the poor. At the same time, pay attention to the physical and mental health of children, provide correct guidance and care for children, strengthen the direct connection between parents and children, and break the cycle of knowledge poverty (Fang Qingyun, 2012).

3. Research and Prospects

In the previous article, I have discussed four poverty concepts, including material poverty, ability poverty, power poverty and knowledge poverty. The proposal and research of these four concepts reflect the deepening and perfection of the understanding of poverty in academia.

These four concepts of poverty are not mutually negative or substitute each other, but they have mutually complementary relationships. They understand and interpret poverty from different perspectives. Material poverty embodies the minimum standards of people’s material needs and is the most direct manifestation of poverty; ability poverty represents poverty caused by insufficient personal survival and access to subsistence materials; power poverty emphasizes that individuals or groups are affected by politics, society, and society, and poverty caused by economic exclusion; culture poverty discusses poverty in terms of ideological value and cultural background. Income affects personal ability, personal rights, and personal cultural background. At the same time, personal ability, personal rights, and personal cultural background also affect personal income.

The solution to eliminate material poverty is to provide the poor with personal survival necessities; the elimination of knowledge poverty requires the poor to receive a certain level of education and improve the overall national education level; the elimination of ability poverty requires the improvement of the poor's personal capabilities and the provision of basic services for the poor to improve them To eliminate power poverty. The poor must be truly and entirely integrated into this society, and political, social, cultural and other institutional factors must be integrated into the concept of poverty.

Poverty can be attributed to two forms of deprivation, one is deprivation in the form of victory, including the inability to meet basic material or physiological needs such as nutrition, health, education, shelter, etc.; the second is social deprivation, including vulnerability , No voice, social exclusion, etc. (Guo Xibao, 2005).

In summary, these two forms of deprivation play a role in complementing and influencing each other, rather than replacing each other.

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