Review of Literature

INDIAN SOCIAL POLICY: NATURE, EMERGENCE, AND APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to describe the terms: 'policy' and 'social' and then explains what social policy is by definition, purpose, nature and approaches. It traces the emergence of social policy over the centuries. Finally, it deals with the comparative dimensions of social policy and Gough's comparative model of social policy. The term social policy appears unfamiliar to many, though it affects all, and probably most people become aware of it through the print media, Television, Radio or Internet. Although human beings have historically relied on their own efforts and on the support of their families, clans, neighbours and religious organizations to meet their social needs and improve their welfare, governments have also played a major role in promoting the welfare of citizens. Today, government is built on a social contract between citizens and the state in which rights and duties are agreed to by all to further the common interest. In this modern world, government, business and voluntary organizations all have policies which affect families and individuals. It is very obvious that we live in times of rapid- and large-scale change, with global economic restructuring and high rates of technological innovation. Economic, technological, environmental and social changes have complex interrelations and consequences for each other, interacting and shaping each other's development. These processes of change demand new, vigorous and coordinated policy responses.

KEYWORDS :Social Policy, Indian Social Policy, Nature of Social Policy, Emergence of Social Policy, Approaches of Social Policy and Comparative Model of Social Policy.

INTRODUCTION

Social policy may be regarded as an academic subject for research and study while strategies

have an impact on the 'real' world (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007: 1). The term social policy appears unfamiliar to many, though it affects all, and probably most people become aware of it through the print media, Television, Radio or Internet (Hothersall, 2010b: 8). Social policy emerged as an academic subject relatively recently (Bulmer et al., 1989; cited in Dean, 2006: 13). Torjman (2005: 1) also states that many people claim to have little or no understanding of policy but people literally eat, drink and breathe public policy. Many universities around the world today have specialized academic departments that study government social policies (Midgley, 2006: 1). It is related to and studied by other social science disciplines such as economics, politics, sociology, social work, housing and nursing. Each discipline brings its own distinctive approach to the understanding and analysis of the world (Bochel, 2005: 4).

Although human beings have historically relied on their own efforts and on the support of their families, clans, neighbours and religious organizations to meet their social needs and improve their welfare, governments have also played a major role in promoting the welfare of citizens (Midgley, 2006: 1). Today, government is built on a social contract between citizens and the state in which rights and duties are agreed to by all to further the common interest (Ortiz, 2007: 6). In this modern world, government, business and voluntary organizations all have policies which affect families and individuals (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007: 1). This article attempts to describe the terms: 'policy' and 'social' and then explains what social policy is by definition, purpose and nature. It traces the emergence of social policy over the centuries. Finally, it deals with the comparative dimensions of social policy and Gough's comparative model of social policy.

TERMINOLOGY: 'POLICY' AND 'SOCIAL'

The Oxford English Dictionary defines policy as "a course of action, adopted and pursued by a government, party, ruler, statesman, etc.", but this definition serves merely to highlight the areas of uncertainty to be resolved and is too narrow. There seems to be a general agreement in the social and public policy literature to be careful not to adopt 'too narrow' a view of what constitutes a policy. Heclo (1972: 84 cited in Jones, 1985: 12) argues that "as commonly used, the term policy is usually considered to apply to something 'bigger' than individual decisions, but 'smaller' than general social movements." Helco's position certainly leaves plenty of scope. Again, Richard Rose (1969: x–xiv cited in Jones, 1985: 12) refers to policy as "a long series of more-or-less related activities and their consequences, rather than a discrete decision."

Birkland (2005:139) states that a policy is a statement by government of what it intends to do or not to do such as a law, regulation, ruling, decision, or order, or a combination of these and the lack of such statements may also be an implicit statement of a policy. According to Titmuss (2008: 139) the word 'policy' can be taken to refer to the principles that govern action directed towards given ends. This signifies that action is about means as well as ends and it therefore implies change: changing situations, systems, practices, behaviour. Policies are living things, not just static lists of goals, rules or laws and they are blueprints that have to be implemented, often with unexpected and sometimes with disastrous results. It is clear that social policies are what happen 'on the ground' when they are implemented, as well as what happen at the preliminary decision-making or legislative stage (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007: 1). It is not easy, therefore, to give a single definition and it is a bit more complex than the simplest definition presented above.

If 'policy' is a difficult concept to pin down, then the term 'social' must be more so and this is used differently in many disciplines and professions such as, social geography, social planning, social psychology, social psychiatry, social administration, social work, social law, social linguistics, social

history, social medicine, social pathology, and so on (Titmuss, 2008: 139). Jones (1985: 13) states that there are two broad differences of meaning attached to the word 'social' as quoted in The Oxford English Dictionary:

First, there is the notion of 'social' as implying some form of 'caring/sharing' quality – "Marked or characterized by mutual intercourse, friendliness or geniality" and second is the notion of 'social' as connoting something pertaining to society as a whole: "Concerned with, interested in, the constitution of society and the problems presented by this." Now, while these two notions are clearly not incompatible with one another, they do not necessarily have to go together.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL POLICY

Titmuss (1974: 28) who is well known in the subject area of social policy wrote somewhat wearily of "this tiresome business of defining social policy" and it is difficult not to sympathise with him. It is also difficult to give the best definition that clearly describes social policy and yet offers a clear understanding by looking at what different people say about the subject.

Macbeath in his 1957 Hobhouse Lecture stated that "social policies are concerned with the right ordering of the network of relationships between men and women who live together in societies, or with the principles which should govern the activities of individuals and groups so far as they affect the lives and interests of other people" (Macbeath, 1965: 209). Alcock (2008: 2) states that social policy can be regarded as referring to the "actions taken within society to develop and deliver services for people in order to meet their needs for welfare and wellbeing". Ginsberg (1953: 24) argued that some forms of social policy are based on the notion of moral progress; he then used criteria of moral progress which are to be found "in the growing power of altruism over egoism" brought about by a fusion of intelligence and concern for social justice and equality.

There are others who suggest that the study of social policy "is concerned with those aspects of public policies, market operations, personal consumption and interpersonal relationships which contribute to, or detract from, the well-being or welfare of individuals or groups" (Erskine cited in Alcock, Erskine and May 2003: 15 cited in Hothersall, 2010b: 9). At the other extreme, Hagenbuch (1958: 205) defines social policy in general terms stating that "the mainspring of social policy may be said to be the desire to ensure for every member of the community certain minimum standards and certain opportunities." These and similar definitions, whether one views them as limited or broad, all contain the following three objectives:

1.They aim to be beneficent policies directed to provide welfare for citizens.
2.They include economic as well as non-economic objectives such as minimum wages, and minimum standards of income maintenance.
3.They involve some measure of progressive redistribution in command over resources from rich to poor (Titmuss, 2008: 144).

Social policy mainly refers to guidelines and interventions, which aim to improve human welfare and to meet human needs for education, health, housing and social security. In an academic context, social policy refers to the study of the social services and the welfare state, which includes social security, housing, health, social work and education – the 'Big Five' – along with others that are like social services, including employment, prison, legal services or drains (Spicker, 1995, cited in Alcock et al, 2004: 1). Ortiz (2007: 6) also stresses what social policy denotes:

Social policy is an instrument applied by governments to regulate and supplement market

institutions and social structures. Social policy is often defined as social services such as education, health, employment, and social security. However, social policy is also about redistribution, protection and social justice. Social policy is about bringing people into the centre of policy-making, not by providing residual welfare, but by mainstreaming their needs and voice across sectors, generating stability and social cohesion.

Titmuss (2008: 141) agrees that social policy can be seen as a positive instrument of change as an unpredictable, incalculable part of the whole political process. However, it could also be used for other motives depending on the ideology and the values of different countries. For example:

There are social policies in South Africa today which many people would not regard as being beneficent or welfare oriented. There are social insurance programmes in some Latin American countries, Brazil in particular, which function as concealed multipliers of inequality: they transfer resources from the poor to the rich. Hitler developed social policies in Nazi Germany – they were in fact called social policies – concerning the mentally ill and the retarded, the Jews and other ethnic groups. World public opinion condemned these instruments of social policy which had as their ultimate ends the use of human beings for medical research, sterilisation and the gas chamber (Titmuss, 2008: 141-142).

PUBLIC POLICY VS SOCIAL POLICY

The specific focus upon the trajectory and implementation of policies which influences the social circumstances or well-being of individuals, as well as the focus on the content or substance of policy makes social policy distinct from sociology and, in approach, similar to public policy (Clasen, 2004: 93). Although, the term 'public policy' is problematic at first sight its meaning seems obvious. It is usually used to refer to state intervention which takes place in the pursuit of clearly defined objectives using specially chosen modes of implementation. Public policy is made up of the whole array of government interventions. Social policy is part of public policy as a whole (Burden, 1998: 1). The boundaries and approaches of social and public policy can be defined in very similar terms. Spicker (2008: 9) states the difference between public policy and social policy as follows:

"...Public policy may be concerned with content in so far as it offers an insight into process; social policy is concerned with process in so far as it offers an insight into content. Public policy is of interest to people from different disciplines because they need to know about the policy process; social policy uses material from different disciplines because this is how the problems of social policy have to be addressed..."

The Purpose and Nature of Social Policy

Social policies are necessary for nation-building because the benefits of economic growth do not automatically reach all. Inadequate social policies ultimately limit growth in the medium and long term. Social policies are justified not only from a humanitarian viewpoint; they are an economic and political need for future growth and political stability, minimally designed to maintain citizen support for their governments (Ortiz, 2007: 9). The social policy of a government may be built on certain values and principles ranging from liberalism, through neo-conservatism, conservatism, socialism, communism, communitarianism to fascism. The objectives of social policy are to enhance the well-being of all citizens, build human capital, support employment and enhance social cohesion (Ibid). Drake (2001: 29) suggests that there are five opposed pairs of generalised objectives:

o To keep things as they are or to effect change;

o To privilege a specific group or to treat all people equitably;
o To promote equality or to extend inequality;
o To promote a set of specific values or to accommodate diverse values;
o To change individuals (or group) or to change environments.

Modern government is based on a social contract between citizens and the state in which rights and duties are agreed to by all to further the common interest. Citizens lend their support to a government through taxes and efforts for a country's good; in return, governments acquire legitimacy by protecting people's rights and through public policies that benefit all (Ortiz, 2007). Alcock argues that social policy is not simply the study of society and its problems, but is also concerned to achieve enhanced solutions to problems by means of an analysis of the success or failure of policies designed to improve welfare and well-being. Implicitly too, the study of social policy is concerned with the creation and appropriateness of structures and institutions designed to implement social policies (Alcock et al. 2004: 3). Dean (2006) argues that

Social Policy is about the study of the social relations necessary for human well-being and the systems by which wellbeing may be promoted. Dean (2006: 1) prefers "the term 'wellbeing', rather than 'welfare', because wellbeing is about how well people are, not how well they do (which, strictly speaking, is what welfare means)". The term 'wellbeing' refers to "the totality of an individual's social relations" (Hoggett 2000: 145).

One of the foremost philosophers of our present era, Amartya Sen (1985; 1999), has developed the concept of capabilities and suggests employing it in social policy. Sen uses the term 'capabilities' to refer not simply to what people are able to do, but to their freedom to choose and to lead the kind of lives they value and have reason to value. The social policies of any government should be for the 'wellbeing' of its citizens. These policies need to take into consideration different needs of the people: education, health, employment, and social security (Dean, 2006: 10). Hothersall (2010b: 9) states that "the core of social policy is the issue of public (state) involvement in private life and that means the policy is made by the government(s), (arguably) on behalf of the people through (democratic) political process". The ultimate aim of social policy is government intervention towards the 'well-being' of its subjects.

The Emergence of Social Policy

The study of historical development of the policy will provide a way to understand policy changes and development in the past as well as the present (Alcock et al., 2008: 184). Berridge (2003) also says that any discussion concerning social policy has to have some reference to history because where things are today in relation to social life are very clearly products of the past. While studying the history of social policy one cannot avoid discussing the 'industrial revolution' around late eighteenth-early nineteenth century which lead many people to migrate to the towns and cities from the countryside in response to the growing need for labour in the factories and mills which had begun to emerge in the wake of technological and economic expansion (Fraser, 2003). The needs and issues of people in industrialised areas have generated a number of challenges for the governments of the day who had to respond to new demands and expectations based on the effects of these migrations (Hothersall, 2010a: 31).

In Britain although there were policies during the Elizabethan and earlier times, for many commentators, the New Poor law of 1834 is seen as the starting point for the modern history of social policy (Hothersall, 2010a: 32). State intervention in education and social security came much later. As

we read in Gough:

The Prussian state introduced compulsory education earlier, and in 1883, Otto von Bismarck introduced the world's first health insurance program, followed by old-age pension in 1889. Before the onset of World War I, the United Kingdom saw the introduction of old-age pensions, school meals, and the first social insurance scheme. By that time, a dense network of local and municipal services in health, housing, and social care had reached much of Europe also. The terms Sozialstaat and Sozialpolitik first appeared in Germany in the mid-19th century, almost before the term welfare state emerged in Britain in the early 1940s. Post-World War II political settlements in several Western countries heralded extensive and comprehensive social policies (Gough, 2008: 39-40).

The transition from feudalism to capitalism had great influence on the development of the earliest forms of social policy. According to Dean (2006: 16-17) the transition from feudalism to capitalism involved the following different processes: "the emergence of a new 'middle' class that was determined to secure for itself some of the privileges enjoyed by the aristocracy; the expansion of international trade and of market systems based on concepts of property and individual ownership; advances in science and technology. These made possible firstly an agrarian and then an industrial revolution, the effects of which were to force the 'common' people from the land and into wage labour". At this point, many laws were introduced to control working-class people and to support both the industrialised capitalist society and the subsequent dynamics of local and global capitalism. These continue to shape the way that social policies develop. The principle of 'Poor Law' continued to apply until the nineteenth century and modified, according to the signs of the time and new perspectives, models and ideologies of social policy that emerged in different countries (Ibid: 18-20).

Development of different Perspectives, Approaches or Models of Social Policy: Ideologies

Throughout the nineteenth century, issues of poverty, child labour, education, and health enabled the growth of social policy (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007: 5). In the first four decades of the twentieth century, a different set of principles and a different model of social policy gradually replaced the classic, laissez-faire ideas of the nineteenth century (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007: 49). In today's social context, every developed and developing country has formed its own social policy based on different ideologies and beliefs. Midgley (2006: 2) states that scholars have identified and developed different perspectives used in various countries, called 'normative' perspectives, which are classified into two categories: the residual social policy model and the institutional social policy model. Midgley (2006 2-3) identified another approach called 'developmental model'.

In the 1980s, some social policy scholars began to argue that residual and institutional social policy models did not fit the experience of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Central and South America. Stewart MacPherson and James Midgley (1987) pointed out that the residual and institutional perspectives did not accurately describe the social policies of the governments of many developing countries which were seeking to promote economic development and seeking to integrate social policies with economic policies.

Up until the mid-1960s studies of social policy were usually based on a reformist or Fabian approach and the state intervention was considered as a solution to the problems of the capitalist society. For a long time this view was largely unchallenged.

1. In the 1960s radical viewpoints, including Marxism, challenged the reformist orthodoxy. The radical approach exposed how social policy worked to reinforce the capitalist system and the capitalist class....
2. Reformist thought includes Fabianism in social policy, Keynesian ideas in economics, and pluralism in

political science. The reformist approach tends to assume that the welfare state is a beneficent institution which works for the benefit of everyone…. 3. In the 1970s there was a resurgence of liberalism which challenged both reformism and radicalism. This new-right approach saw the welfare state as damaging the operation of the market system. (Burden, 1998:4).

The utopian socialists in Europe and scholars such as Henri Saint Simon (dates) and Auguste Comte (dates) in France were among the few who challenged the dominance of laissez-faire and Social Darwinist theories in the 19th century and they proposed that social science knowledge should be applied to government planning (Midgley, 2006: 3). The development of different ideological perspectives not only influenced Britain and Western countries but also influenced and translated into governments in various ways in other countries. The three main Western ideologies are: liberalism, conservatism and socialism and later from liberalism emerged neo-liberalism, then libertarianism and communism (Lister, 2010: 29-30).

Beveridge (dates), a social liberal, integrated Scandinavian social liberal ideas with those of his colleague, the economist John Maynard Keynes (dates), and initiated a new theoretical construct for the welfare state in the UK: universal state services and social security systems, including a national health service (Fraser, 1978; Lavalette and Penketh, 2003: cited in Aspalter, 2008: 781). The ideas of Beveridge and Keynes were implemented by successive governments after 1945 and have been described as evolutionary (Fraser, 1973 cited in Cochrane et al., 2000: 2). In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher (dates) challenged the ideology of Beveridge and Keynes with the new idea of neo-liberalism, and at the same time similar changes were taking place in many countries of the developed capitalist world, especially in western Europe and North America (Cochrane, et al., 2000: 2). The discrediting and demise of Keynesian macro-economic management and its replacement by a neo-liberal agenda emphasizing deregulation, privatization and free trade are all elements of a new era of global capitalism (Kennett, 2001: 1-2).

The Third Way was introduced in the late 20th century by Bill Clinton (dates) in the US and Tony Blair (dates) in Britain and was used to signify the shift in the nature of social democratic politics. This new Labour's Third Way was considered as an alternative to the Thatcherism which was prevalent for the previous two decades (Lister, 2010: 46). There are critics who argue that "the third way is simply a continuation of the neo-liberal and social authoritarian philosophy of the new right: the wolf of neo-Thatcherism in social democratic sheep's clothing" (Hall, 2003; Gray, 2007; Marquand, 2007 cited in Lister, 2010: 47) but this was denied by the Labour party.

The Emergence of Indian Social Policy

According to Paranjpe (1990: 2) the development of social welfare in India began with the social reforms and provision of specific services to the handicapped and disadvantaged individuals and groups provided voluntarily by the joint family, caste and religious institutions and the government had only limited responsibilities. Muzumdar (1964: 5) states that during the pre-colonial period, the field of welfare had rested on three pillars of solidarity: 'extended families, village and religious or caste communities'. It was only during British rule, with such changes in Indian society as urbanisation and industrialisation that organised social welfare came into existence in urban areas but only for limited groups of people (Paranjpe, 1990: 2-3). Ehmke (2011: 6) opines that the arrival of colonialism,

On the one hand, opened up the rigid determination of occupations by caste when the colonial industries and the military offered jobs and upward social mobility to some of the most oppressed groups. On the other hand, the pre-colonial economic order of the jajmani system was disturbed by the arrival of industrially manufactured goods, with which craftsmen could not compete. Those who lost

their place in the old economic system became subject to a new mode of economic exploitation: as part of the forming working class.

The British colonial administration changed the heredity economy regime in India by introducing the permanent settlement of 1793 but at the same time failed to implement the early Poor Laws in India which were introduced in England under Queen Elizabeth I (Ehmke, 2011: 6). As Corbridge et al., state (2005: 52 cited in Ehmke, 2011: 6): The English, who had been among the first nations to install a poor relief at home, reacted to urban poverty in India with containment and zoning, and the problem of the rural poor was perceived as a result of their backwardness, untouchability and finally of 'Indianness' itself". The British introduced 'social security' for a small group of people who were working for them by the Workmen Compensation Act of 1923 which was the beginning the institutionalisation of state welfare mechanisms in India (Ehmke, 2011: 6).

Soon after independence, social welfare policy received a greater impetus and direction due to the active intervention of the government. The goals of development have been enshrined in the constitution and various planning documents. The Indian Constitution which came into force on 26th January 1950 laid down the aim to build a socialist, secular and democratic polity (Chopra, 2010: 297). Ehmke (2011: 8) states that 'a key moment for the institutionalisation of the Indian welfare regime came with the formulation of the country's constitution'. India has not only a system of liberal democracy but also a federal polity, in which certain aspects of social policy such as land reforms, education, health, and rural infrastructure are either specifically 'state government subjects' or are concurrently under both state and central governments (Ghosh, 2002: 4). Article 58 of the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution directs the State 'to secure and promote a social order which stands for welfare of the people' (Paranjpe, 1990: 3). This provision and the involvement of different political groupings in each state leads to much variation in terms of major demographic, economic and social factors across the states (Ghosh, 2002: 4).

Important policy and provision for youth is contained in seven articles under the directive Principles of State Policy, which however are not enforceable in a court of law. These principles are:
o Right to an adequate means of livelihood;
o Securing health and strength and not abusing the tender age of children;
o Protecting against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment;
o Right to work, education, public assistance in case of unemployment;
o Just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief;
o Provision of free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age;
o Promotion with special care of educational and economic interests of the weaker sections (Saraswathi, 1992: 165).

The welfare of citizens can only be achieved with proper planning. Hence, the National Planning Commission (15th March 1950) was formed under the Chairmanship of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru which opted for Five Year Plans, akin to the 'soviet' model of economic growth. The Planning Commission tried to address the basic issues of national development with four long-term prime objectives with socialist orientation. They are:

o To increase production to the maximum possible extent so as to achieve higher level of national and per capita income;
o To achieve full employment;
o To reduce inequalities of income and wealth;

o To set up a socialist society based on equality and justice and to ensure absence of exploitation (Grover and Grover, 2002: 720).

The above four prime objectives were addressed in every Five Year Plan thereafter. The policy measures of the government meant that the state took the lead in business and restricted the power of private enterprise. Licensing of industries and import restrictions further circumscribed industry (Tripathi, 2003: 223).

The Government of India started the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in August 1953 based on the recommendation of the Planning Commission in its First Five Year Plan. The creation of CSWB was an important milestone in the field of social welfare which aimed at promoting, developing and assisting voluntary effort to involve the voluntary sector in the development of welfare services. It also preceded the setting up of the Department of Social Security and enabled the national movement to think about the need for the social progress and removal of long-standing 'backwardness' (Paranjpe, 1990: 13). Up to the seventh Five Year Plan, there was no material change in the economic policies of the country.

The policies aimed at equitable redistribution of the national resources, a heavier taxation burden on the rich, provision of subsidised goods and services to the poor sections of the society, welfare of the poor and the 'downtrodden', restrictions on inflow of foreign capital investments, complete regulation of the economy, a prominent role of the public sector in industrial development and fixed prices for many goods and services (Tripathi, 2003: 226). The social and economic conditions and the international imperatives led the government to intervene with a New Economic Policy (NEP) package in 1991 which opened the door for liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. This was reflected in the policy reforms of the Eighth Plan (1992-97) and then with the Ninth Five Year plan (1997-2002) as a result of which the direction of economic planning changed in India. This altered the monopoly of the public sector (ibid: 227). After the general elections of 2004 and the formation of the government under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), there was a shift towards a rights-oriented policy. The best examples are the Right to Information Act of 2005, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) from the same year and the Right to Education Act of August 2009. Also currently discussions on 'an act that shall guarantee the right to food' are underway (Ehmke, 2011: 10).

COMPARATIVE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL POLICY

Joan Higgins (1981: 7) states that "acts of comparing are part of our daily lives". For example, parents compare their babies "to see whether they are unusually fat or thin, or small or large" and a photographer who places a figure in the foreground of a mountain (Amenta, 2008: 93) sees it not as a theory or a specific method or technique, but as an approach that has been undertaken by scholars with varied academic, theoretical, and methodological affiliations and preferences. Kennett (2004: 1) asserts that the field of comparative social enquiry has grown dramatically since the 1960s, in relation to the number of studies being undertaken, the range of approaches used and the countries analysed. Comparative social policy might be regarded as a subset of comparative public policy which developed in the 1970s as a field of study within political science and comparative politics (Leicher, 1977, Landman, 2000 cited in Clasen, 2004: 93).

The focus and reflection on the policy and welfare contexts of individual countries is changing. As one commentator remarks: "International forces are increasingly shaping the policy agendas of national governments, so that welfare provision is less. The product of national policy debates or political considerations" (Alcock, 2001: 4). Clasen (1999: 4) also argues that "growing interdependence

between and similar challenges across countries have put into question social policy research which remains locked into analysing developments within one country."

In the present context, the world in which we live is a fluid and dynamic environment. The social, cultural and economic manifestations are imported and exported across borders while people flow between countries (Kennett, 2000: 1). The pressures on policy making need to be viewed within the context of globalization and its accompanying burgeoning capitalist economy, whereby international agencies are seeking to control social policy in individual countries (Alcock, 2001, Kennett, 2001, May, 1998). Thus, for example, the increase of international agencies such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank, the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the number of transnational companies which have no specific national base is immensely influential on the social policy of different countries (Kennett, 2000: 1). What is called for, therefore, is a comparative study of social policies of different countries.

Today countries are becoming more interdependent, and the socio-economic trends and challenges they face are similar and their response to social problems are also similar in some issues but different in others, for example: unemployment or poverty, demographic ageing and low birth rates (Clasen, 2007: 601). In this context, there emerges "the need for a better understanding of the common features and crucial differences between not only individual welfare states but particular policy programs in order to unravel why and how welfare needs, or demands are being transformed into social policy" (Clasen, 1999: 4). There are also countries proactively engaged in examining the policies of other nations with the possible intention of transferring policies into their own contexts. Harris (2007: 28) states that these comparisons are also opportunities to learn from the mistakes of others. Jones (1985: 4) also states the necessity of comparative study on three grounds:

Firstly, comparative study promotes a better understanding of the home social policy environment; secondly, it helps broaden ideas as to what may be done in response to particular issues or problems and may even suggest 'lessons from abroad'; finally, it opens the door to a greater breadth and variety of case material, such as may further the development of theoretical constructs about social policy formation and development to an extent that could not be possible on the basis of home country experience and materials alone.

Clasen (2004: 94) states that "all social sciences might be regarded as ultimately comparative in the sense that observed phenomena are compared against a certain point of reference, which is either explicitly stated or implicitly assumed, and which allows differences and similarities to be analysed, interpreted or evaluated". There are various types of comparative research such as comparisons across time, between gender and age categories within countries, across-countries as well as some comparative studies that might find greater diversity within rather than across countries (e.g. within India) (Clasen, 1999: 1 and Clasen, 1999; May, 1998 cited in Harris, 2007: 27). Cross-national comparative research may be undertaken at either the micro or the macro level. At the micro level, individual programmes are compared usually within nations with similar political and social structures. Macro comparisons are attempts to examine whole 'systems' over a range of countries and across time (Harris, 2007: 27). There are four approaches to cross-national research as follows:

First, theoretical studies "attempt to explore, and to explain, the differences between the different welfare systems of different countries and to assess the extent to which they are the result of internal policy making or external dynamics" (Alcock, 2001: 5). The second approach focuses on particular sectors across nations, such as social security, childcare policy, housing, and health; the third, stresses on evaluating policy effectiveness across states which rely on qualitative data gathering techniques and "emphasise cultural sensitivity and specificity, agency and reflexivity in the policy

research process" (Kennett, 2001: 7). Finally, the fourth approach emphasises on comparisons between countries, involving comparisons of welfare provisions in selected countries and this approach focuses on regime theory and makes use of welfare state typologies (Harris, 2007: 27).

Clasen (2007: 606) also suggests that systematic cross-national analyses can be distinguished by three methods: providing descriptive information about other countries, comparative policy evaluations, and theoretical explanations of cross-national variation. The details of each branch of comparative social analysis are given below:

Descriptive accounts which are informative comparisons go back to the 1960s and 1970s, initially concentrating on social administration (Rodgers et al. 1968) and later social policy per se (e.g. Kaim-Caudle 1973; Rodgers et al. 1979). ....Evaluative comparisons is a second branch of cross-national social policy analysis focusing on the evaluation of articular types of social policy intervention (e.g. Bradshaw and Piachaud 1980), or on particular problems such as poverty (Walker, Lawson, and Townsend 1983 cited in Clasen, 2007: 607). A third branch of comparative social policy is more directly aimed at the generation of theory or theory testing, ranging from two-country comparisons (e.g. Mau 2003; Clasen 2005) to comparisons involving a relatively large number of advanced welfare states (Clasen, 2007: 606-608).

The comparative method is used in natural science to advance the development of a theory but in the social sciences comparison is used as a substitute for experimentation in the natural sciences. Thus, for example,

A physicist may write down a model, in the form of equations, to explain a set of observations, and then conduct experiments to test whether the implications of the model are valid. This methodology has an affinity to the way in which nineteenth and early twentieth century sociologists used the comparative method. They tested theories about the development of societies (e.g. Comte, Spencer); formulated universal social laws (as in Durkheim's work on the causes of suicide); created typologies and models of society (e.g. Hobhouse); explained particular configurations (as in Weber's account of the rise of Western capitalism) (see Fletcher, 1972). The descendants of this tradition in comparative social policy include Wilensky (1975), who was explicitly concerned with examining the industrialisation theory of welfare development, and Esping-Andersen (1990) who correlated three models of the political economy of capitalist countries with different welfare configurations (Mabbett and Bolderson, 1999: 35).

The most common way to take a systematic look at cross-national differences in social policy development is to examine the concept of 'welfare regime' as articulated by Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999 cited in Béland, 2010: 45). Esping-Andersen argues that the provision of social policy and the interaction between markets, states, and families follows a certain logic which differs across the three clusters of welfare states (Clasen, 2007: 609). According to Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), there are three welfare regimes in developed societies - liberal, conservative, and social democratic and these regimes consist of clusters of countries that, despite their differences, share major similarities (Béland, 2010: 47). Empirically Esping-Andersen distinguished the three clusters by their respective degrees of 'decommodification' and 'stratification' (Clasen, 2007: 609). The details of these clusters are:

Liberal: these types of regimes are highly commodified and welfare is therefore seen as something that people can purchase for themselves (Hothersall, 2010a: 51). These, by and large, are English-speaking countries – such as the USA, Canada and, increasingly, the UK and Ireland – that have relatively modest levels of public spending on social policies, where welfare benefits tend to be means-tested, and where public services may be selectively provided.(Dean, 2006: 29).

Conservative: these arrangements are usually highly decommodified, but not necessarily universal (Hothersall, 2010a: 51). These, by and large, are Western continental European countries such as Germany and France that have higher levels of public spending on social policies, where welfare benefits tend to be social insurance based, but where particular importance is placed on the role of families as opposed to public services (Dean, 2006: 29).

Social democratic: these arrangements are highly decommodified in that welfare services are provided by the state for all citizens irrespective of income, status or any other particular characteristic and welfare services are universal (Hothersall, 2010a: 51). These, by and large, are Scandinavian countries – such as Sweden and Denmark – that have the highest levels of public spending on social policies (Dean, 2006: 30).

It is clear from the above and other comparative studies that Europe offers a natural and well-studied landscape of differing social policy responses to broadly similar social problems. Because one of its more pervasive lessons is that there are multiple routes to broadly similar goals, a major analytical task is to understand the reasons behind these differences (Gough, 2008: 40).

Gough's Comparative Model of Social Policy

Gough (2004: 239) remarks that the welfare regime paradigm development within Northern social studies can provide a rich, open and rewarding framework for understanding the nature and diversity of social policy in the South. Gough (2008: 39) evolved a simple model of social policy making by comparing welfare states in Europe to provide two types of lessons for developing countries: (a) models of social policy action to follow or avoid and (b) forms of social policy analysis that help address emerging social problems (Gough, 2008: 39).

Figure.1 presents a modified form of a basic textbook model of policy making, based on Easton (1965) and Hill (2003). It first distinguishes three explanatory factors: industrialization, interests, and institutions. Interestingly, these were developed roughly in this historical order in the literature. Two other factors are also considered: (a) ideas and ideologies (which can operate both through interest groups in civil society and through governmental institutions) and (b) international influences (the original model focused entirely on internal explanatory factors) (Gough, 2008: 44).

Figure.1: A Simple Model of Social Policy Making
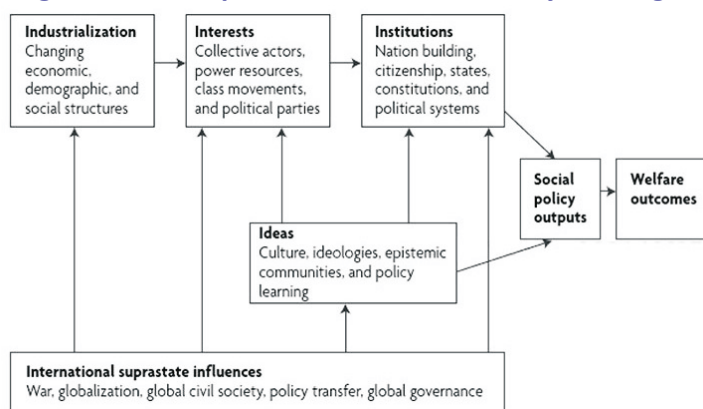
Source: Easton 1965, Hill (2003) and Gough (2008)

The diagram above clearly shows how each factor and actor influences the other and finally the social policy and its outcomes. Through this research, Gough (2008: 63) derives two analytical lessons

from the emergence of European welfare states over the past century:

First, a combination of structural factors, interest based mobilization, political institutions, and policy discourses have determined patterns of social policy development. …Social policy must always be embedded in structural, political, and institutional contexts. A second analytical lesson from European social policy is more contestable. It is the importance of path dependency: how, once established, patterns or constellations of social policies tend to reproduce and are rather impervious to radical change, short of encountering a major crisis or external intervention.

It is clear that social policy was framed initially to control and support the Capitalist system. Much stress was given to the rights and duties, particularly, of the poor and in general of all. In the past and present, when dealing with social policy issues, scholars focussed mainly on their areas of interest: "economists tend to focus on incentives and fiscal constraints, sociologists are more likely to attend to the relationship between social programs and specific forms of inequality and political scientists often emphasize the impact of political parties and interest groups on welfare state development" (Beland, 2010: 10). There are also different factors which influence the development of social policy both in the north and the south such as industrialization, interest groups, institutions, ideas and international agencies (Gough, 2008).

It is also apparent that studying national social policy in isolation seems increasingly questionable due to the growing impact of external influences on national social policy formation and the increasing interdependence between countries (Clasen, 2007: 601) and therefore comparative study is gaining momentum among countries to create a meaningful social policy. Muleya (2006: 445) states that there are many researchers have proved that Western Euro-centric knowledge and intervention methods have been widely applied across different cultural and geographical boundaries. For example, Gough (2008) has developed "five I's" social policy making model to compare developed countries to draw out lessons for developing countries. Mares and Carnes (2009: 110) also observe through their study the social insurance programs of developing countries "greater variation in social policy outcomes both across countries and regions, and across policy areas within individual country cases."

It is very obvious that we live in times of rapid- and large-scale change, with global economic restructuring and high rates of technological innovation. Economic, technological, environmental and social changes have complex interrelations and consequences for each other, interacting and shaping each other's development. These processes of change demand new, vigorous and coordinated policy responses (Room, 2008: 345). The modern world experiences similar issues and the response of each country depends on its government's ideology. Carnes & Mares (2007: 882) stress the need for "research on social policy to become more unequivocally comparative in its orientation".

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