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**THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY IN VARIOUS  
COUNTRIES AND THE ISSUES OF ITS CURRENT STATE IN UZBEKISTAN**

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**Annotation:** The article discusses the concept of poverty, its origin and ways to reduce it. It also researches the geography of poverty in Uzbekistan and the world, factors affecting it, and measures aimed at reducing it.

**Key words:** poverty, absolute poverty, health, bioengineering, poverty line, World Bank, income, migration, geography of poverty, overpopulation, declaration, humanity.

**ТРАКТОВКА ПОНЯТИЯ БЕДНОСТИ В РАЗЛИЧНЫХ СТРАНАХ И ВОПРОСЫ  
СОВРЕМЕННОГО ЕЁ СОСТОЯНИЯ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ**

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**Аннотация:** В статье рассматривается понятие бедности, ее происхождение и пути ее снижения. Также исследуется география бедности в Узбекистане и мире, факторы, влияющие на нее, и меры, направленные на ее снижение.

**Ключевые слова:** бедность, абсолютная бедность, здоровья, биоинженерия, черта бедности, Всемирный банк, доход, миграция, география бедности, перенаселение, декларация, человечества



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The 21st century is characterized by a high state of human society, expressed in the development of electronics, digital technologies, bioengineering, environmentally friendly industries, as well as the presence of various global problems facing society. These problems or indirectly relate to the various political status and geographical location of the state. However, even the highest development of mankind as a whole does not solve some problems, because poverty, overpopulation, migration.

At the present time the attention of the international community, more than ever, is focused on the fight against poverty. But the meaning of this activity is blurred due to the ambiguity of the definition of the term "poverty" and the multiplicity of criteria proposed for its definition. Issues related to assessing the current scale of poverty and material inequality are widely discussed in Uzbekistan.

In different countries of the globe, poverty is understood in different ways and has its own characteristics. If in the countries of Western Europe the concept of poverty means a certain state of a person in society and his economic opportunities, then in the countries of Asia and Africa, people without housing, permanent work, etc. are considered poor.

The concept of poverty is also interpreted differently everywhere. Wikipedia gives the following interpretation: Poverty is a characteristic of the economic situation of an individual or social group, in which they cannot satisfy a certain range of minimum needs necessary for life, working capacity and procreation.

In the application of the Gini coefficient (Theil index), poverty is a relative and ambiguous concept, depending on the general standard of living in a given society.

In the research of the causes and place of poverty in society, the period from the 18th to the first half of the 20th century is singled out. This is considered in the works of A. Smith, D. Ricardo, T. Malthus, G. Spencer, J. Proudhon, E. Reclyu. Currently, many sociologists and economists consider poverty as a social group in their studies (F. A. Hayek, P. Townsend, and others).

The early works of A. Smith revealed the relative nature of poverty through the relationship between poverty and social status, that is, the gap between social standards and the material ability to adhere to them. In the 19th century in Europe, it was proposed to determine the poverty line on the basis of family budgets and thereby introduce the criterion of absolute poverty, link the criteria for determining poverty with the level of income and satisfaction of the basic needs of an individual related to maintaining a certain level of his working capacity and health.

A significant contribution to the study of poverty problems was made by both economists and sociologists, most of whom recognized the pattern of existence of poverty in society, although the interpretation of poverty was not the same. The difference in points of view consisted, first of all, in the recognition or denial of the need for state intervention in solving the problem of poverty and in the scale of such intervention.

In world practice, there are three main concepts for defining poverty: Absolute poverty. The concept of absolute poverty is closely related to the concept of the poverty line. The poverty line is the level of disposable income, gross income, or consumption below which a person is considered poor. Absolute poverty is often measured as the number of people or households whose consumption or income is below the poverty line.

If we take the poverty line for the necessary funds to support life, then we can define all funds above this line as discretionary income. Sometimes several poverty lines are used: for poverty proper and for extreme poverty (poverty; English extreme poverty).



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The World Bank sets the threshold for absolute poverty at less than 1.25 US dollars a day (the exchange rate is calculated at PPP). In 2015, the World Bank raised the poverty line to \$1.9 a day.

The poverty line as an indicator has one significant drawback: it does not take into account the number of all households that are directly at this level or with a small margin from it. It also allows for situations where poverty and inequality are rising and the number of people below the poverty line is falling.

Relative poverty. Relative poverty is opposed to absolute poverty. Measures of relative poverty expose the relative poverty line and try it on the income of the population. In the case when the real incomes of the entire population grow, and their distribution does not change, relative poverty remains the same. Thus, the concept of relative poverty is part of the concept of inequality. However, this does not mean that less equality always means less relative poverty, or vice versa.

The founder of the relative concept of poverty is the British sociologist Peter Townsend, who considered poverty as a condition in which, due to a lack of economic resources, it becomes impossible to lead a lifestyle habitual for most members of a given society. He based his analysis of poverty on the concept of a set of experienced deprivations, multidimensional deprivation, which he understood as “a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage of an individual, family or group against the backdrop of a community, society or nation as a whole”.

The concept of multidimensional deprivation was introduced by Townsend because, along with material deprivation, including such indicators as food, clothing, housing conditions, durable goods, place and condition of the living environment, conditions and nature of work, he also used indicators of social deprivation, including the nature of employment, features of leisure activities, education, etc.

Currently, within the framework of this definition of poverty, two directions have developed. The first focuses on livelihoods, on the ability to buy the goods needed to meet basic needs. In this case, when constructing the relative poverty line, the indicator of personal disposable income (median income) is used. In the United States, the relative poverty line corresponds to 40% of the median income, in most European countries - 50%, in Scandinavia - 60%.

The relative poverty line is commonly used in Europe. In this case, the poverty line is taken as the amount of consumption (income), below which 25% of the total population remains.

Within the framework of the second direction, called the civil law theory of poverty, poverty is measured through deprivation in the broadest sense of the word. In this case, it is considered whether the available means allow full participation in the life of society, on the basis of certain basic sets of considered deprivations.

The scale of relative poverty does not coincide with the scale of absolute poverty. Absolute poverty can be eliminated, but relative poverty always persists, due to the fact that inequality is an indispensable attribute of stratified societies. Relative poverty persists and even increases, even as the living standards of all social strata rise.

Subjective poverty is a concept of poverty based on the belief that only the individual can determine whether he or she is poor. To determine the level of subjective poverty, there are many approaches: you can find out how many people consider themselves poor, or consider their friends poor. It is possible to identify a subjective absolute poverty line based on public opinion, and then compare the income of the population with it.

With the advent of welfare states, today the poor in Western countries live incomparably better than the poor of Victorian times. The social composition of the poor has



changed over time, for example in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s it was pensioners and single parents, while in the 1980s it was mainly families with many children.

The use of one parameter (income) in the definition often leads to paradoxical situations, for example, when pensioners who own fully paid-off real estate (for example: a house for which the family has paid for 20 years, or land) fall into the category of poor. Today, the cost of industrial products is very low, and it has become possible for the poor to purchase goods such as a television, computer, or mobile phone, while at the same time, the cost of services and housing rent is high.

Therefore, social scientists today are considering a number of alternative definitions for poverty, the most common being: the inability to purchase or have access to a basic basket of services. The list of services from the basket is different, for example, for the USA it includes health insurance, a bank account in the UK, where medical care is covered by the state.

According to the United Nations (UNDP) for 2022, approximately 1.2 billion people in the world live in conditions of "multidimensional poverty". This means that these people earn less than \$1.9 a day per person, often have no toilet or running water in the house, and they also have no access to a doctor or education. Such estimates are provided in the United Nations Development Program on the "multidimensional poverty" index. Developed by UNDP and the Oxford Human Development and Poverty Initiative, the index evaluates the situation of each person on 10 indicators related to health, education and wealth.

In 2022, the level and structure of poverty was analyzed in 111 countries with a total of 6.1 billion people. The majority of the world's poor, 83 percent or 579 million, live in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 385 million people with "multidimensional poverty" are in South Asia. There are about a million of them in Europe. Two-thirds of the poor live in middle-income countries, and 83 percent of all poor people live in rural areas.

In parallel with the UNDP report, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) presented its assessments of the situation with poverty in 22 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

UNICEF predicts that the number of poor people in 22 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia will increase by more than 10 million people in 2022. Four million of them are children and adolescents under the age of 18.

The largest increase, three-quarters, of children trapped in poverty and rising living costs across the region is in Russia. At the same time, 2.8 million Russian children already live in families below the poverty line.

In Ukraine, the number of children in poverty will increase by half a million, which is the second largest indicator; it is followed by Romania, where another 110,000 children will find themselves in poverty this year.

The criteria of poverty. There are different criteria for poverty, which have different kinds of levels. Criteria and indicators of poverty were the subject of research in the works of such economists as Malthus T., Rowntree S., Ricardo D., Townsend P., Sen A., Cherenko L.M., Zubarevich N.V., Mandibura V.A., Rzhantsina L.S., Ratgaizer V.M.

There are the following types of poverty levels:

- national;
- international.

According to the international gradation, the criterion of poverty, the national poverty level is the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line. In most countries of the world, including in the CIS countries, in particular in Uzbekistan, the national poverty line is understood as income below the subsistence level, i.e. not allowing to cover the cost of the consumer basket - a set of goods and services most necessary by the standards of a given country



in a given period of time. In many developed countries of Europe, people with an income of 40-50% of the average income in the country are considered poor.

It is known that, based on the requirements of the time, the issue of poverty reduction in the country was raised to the level of state policy, as well as personal initiatives of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This painful issue, which has not been raised in our republic for many years, was first noted in the Address to the Oliy Majlis on January 24, 2020, thanks to the political courage of our President. According to research results, 12-15 percent or 4-5 million of the population of our country is in a state of poverty. This means that their daily income does not exceed 10-13 thousand sums. Therefore, the problem of poverty in Uzbekistan should be considered as a very urgent problem.

In order to implement the optimal state policy to reduce poverty in our country, the Ministry for Combating Poverty and Employment was created, and its main tasks in this direction were determined.

Uzbekistan also participates in solving the problems of poverty reduction in the world. In particular, in 2020, at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev proposed to identify the elimination of poverty and the fight against poverty as one of the main topics of the next session of the Assembly, as well as to hold a global summit dedicated to these issues.

In 2020-2021, the following main strategic measures to reduce poverty were implemented in the republic.

First of all, the institutional framework for poverty reduction has been created, a ministry coordinating these issues has been created, and a research center has been established to carry out research work in this direction.

Over the past period, our country has established close ties with international organizations (UN Development Program, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, UNICEF, etc.), financial institutions (World Bank, Asian Development Bank) and scientific centers of states with advanced experience in this area (Chinese International Center for Poverty Reduction).

Secondly, in order to provide material and non-material support to the needy population during the pandemic, together with representatives of 4 sectors, mahalla structures, the general public and local deputies, the Iron Notebook system was organized - a list of poor families and those in need of material assistance.

To ensure the transparency of this system, to take into account families whose social status and living conditions have deteriorated and which are under special control of sector leaders, the saxovat.argos.uz program was launched.

The Temporary procedure for creating a source of income by providing employment for able-bodied unemployed family members was approved. This year, the principle "Motivation, skills and financial support" was introduced to lift families included in the "Iron notebook" out of poverty.

In order to further improve the ongoing work, a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 28, 2021 № 250 "On additional measures for social support of families, women and youth in need of material assistance and support" was adopted.

Thirdly, based on the proposals and recommendations of such international organizations as the World Bank and the UN Development Program, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated August 27, 2021 № 544 "On the implementation of the procedure for calculating the minimum consumer spending" was adopted.

Fourthly, in order to determine the strategic goals of poverty reduction in the medium and long term, together with experts from the World Bank and the United Nations Development





Program, a draft Poverty Reduction Strategy in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2021-2030 was developed.

The nutrition-based poverty line. Poverty takes certain forms, and one of these forms is hunger. In this case, well-being would be measured as daily calorie intake per capita and compared with the daily minimum energy requirement for this category of people. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations defines a minimum level of 1,800 kilo calories per day on average, with requirements adjusted for age, gender and activity level of the individual. Other forms of nutritional deficiencies can be measured, for example for proteins or certain types of micronutrients called "hidden hunger". The recommended minimum can then be used to establish a universal poverty line.

International Poverty Rate - This poverty line is used by the World Bank for international comparisons. It was set at \$1 per day measured in purchasing power parity dollars for the extreme poverty line and \$2 per day for the poverty line. These poverty lines were recently raised to \$1.25 a day and \$2.5 a day, respectively. The reason for this was that this poverty line is currently used by the 15 poorest countries in the world. At the same time taking into account the specifics and stages of development of different countries, other poverty lines are also used. In particular, for countries with lower middle income, the poverty line is set at \$3.2 per day and for countries with upper middle income - \$5.5 per day.

The problem of poverty is receiving increasing attention from the international community. In 2000, the heads of governments of 180 states of the world signed the so-called Millennium Declaration, defining eight key tasks of world development for the period up to 2015 and calling on international economic organizations to orient their assistance programs towards their achievement. The first of these goals in the declaration is the goal of halving by 2015 the number of people forced to subsist on less than \$1 a day.

Until a certain time, the problem of poverty was not considered in the national geographical literature, in which specific aspects of Uzbekistan and its geography would be considered. In our opinion, this problem requires special study and approaches, where they reflect the regional image and the development of socio-economic relations in society.

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