

SUMMARY

The scientific conventions: "Poverty, fragmentation, and the possibilities for social integration", "Decrease of the socio-economic exclusion of the citizens of Republic Macedonia", "The participation in the creation of social life" were conducted during the period when Republic Macedonia was facing serious economic, political, and security difficulties. Moreover, the number of people who live in poverty is increasing. The diffusion and depth of poverty remains main challenge for the developmental efforts in the country. Poverty is often accompanied with malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, or limited access to the social services. All of these factors contribute to the increase of the mortality rate, delaying getting married. The reproductive function of the families has been disturbed, as well postponing having children. Finally, they have contributed to the weak economic productivity, unsustainable use of the natural resources, and serious ecological degradation.

The most significant characteristics of the last few years are the notable changes in the structure of the society, social stratification, as well impoverishment of the major part of the population in the state. The rate of poverty has risen from 19.0% in 1997 to 22.3% in 2000. The major part of the impoverished is individuals with lower educational level, old people, families with young children, unemployed, and Roma's families. Romas in Macedonia have very low living standard, and are very poor. The major part of the poor households lives in the rural regions. The gap between the poor and the rich is increasing. More than one third of the population lives in poverty, majority of them experience hunger daily (23% do not have money to buy food). Large part of them have limited access to the wages, education, health protection and food, usually it is the population in the

mountain and the underdeveloped areas. They are facing poverty due to several factors. First, there are lesser possibilities for agriculture. Second, the migration has reduced the number of work-capable population. Finally, the access to the public institutions, such as educational, health, cultural, and the like is difficult.

There is a great recession in the area of personal spending. The means for personal spending in Republic Macedonia are decreasing. This influences on significant changes in the structure of expenditures. In these frames, there is increase of expenditures for food, housing, heat, electricity, health, and hygiene, whereas, there is decrease in expenditures for clothes, furniture, as well as savings. All of it indicates decrease in the living standard of the population in the Republic Macedonia.

Many categories of population are excluded in Republic Macedonia. The most obvious exclusion is on the economic and social level, where due to unemployment or low and irregular wages, citizens cannot cater sufficient quantities of food, cannot use the health services, as well the education is not available to everyone. Finally, the welfare help is not available to those that need it. There are difficult and chronic changes in the area of the regional development. The regional changes in the level of development are very big and there is tendency toward increase. There are multiple causes, however, they can be reduced to two major: First, one fourth of the population in Republic Macedonia is excluded from the possibility to participate in the economy. The poor are not capable to get bank loans, thus, they cannot participate in the economic life. This inability prevents them from improving not only their financial condition, but also to contribute to the economic development of the country. Second, the high degree of unemployment indicates that large amount of people have been denied their right to participate on the labour market. The structure of the unemployed indicates that the participation is denied mostly to the relatively young and insufficiently educated people. The transition caused decrease even in the participation of the employed. That is, large amount of the employed is denied their rights for normal work conditions, rights for higher nightshift wage, rights for trade-union organization, or regular wages.

Among the most significant sources of social exclusion is the unemployment. The unemployed is denied equal opportunities to the production.

This source of social exclusion does not have the same specific weight in every region of Republic Macedonia because the degree of unemployment is significantly differentiated regionally.

The bureaucracy represents a special kind of an obstacle for the complete realization of the participation. There are cases of long and tiresome administrative procedures for realization of certain rights, or obligatory requirements for obtaining some documents necessary for starting individual small businesses or enterprises.

Additional factor that strengthens the poverty is the lack of infrastructure. This affects especially the population in the underdeveloped regions.

We are facing emphasized exploitation of the working force, increase of the social differences, illegal gaining of wealth of the small group of the population, who enjoys privileged position in the society. They have developed luxurious style of expenditures with insufficient care for the existence of the large part of the Macedonian citizens, or for the high and increasing rate of unemployment.

Republic Macedonia is facing social problems. The negative side is the undeveloped and unadjusted economic structure that in the process of privatization created poverty, huge unemployment, getting rich quickly of a small group of citizens, as well as privatization with discount prices of significant business capacities.

During the procedure for privatization of the companies, personal gaining was more important than the interest of the community in some structures. The model of paid privatization caused exclusion of the citizens in Republic Macedonia due to: favoring the managerial purchase, decrease of the price of the capital, and selling the bonds through pressure and blackmail.

Creating institutional frames, that is, normatively organizing the market and enhancing the economic development is not enough to reduce the poverty and the social insecurity. There are instances when the legal network is specifically created it does not warrant neither complete regulation of the market, nor efficient protection of the social rights. Incomplete legal regulation in the area of labour laws enables numerous instances of

exploitation of the employed: low and irregular wages, or avoiding to pay the benefits for health, retirement and disability insurance.

There are cases when economic increase was achieved, however, the results do not reach the poor and this does not reduce the poverty. Although there is increase in the GDP from 1722\$ in 1977 to 1823\$ in 2000, the rate of poverty is increasing.

The economic development and the poverty have to be synchronized because the interaction is not only economic question, but also a political one. In other words, this question depends on the social players, those that participate in the policy for decrease of poverty.

The social development cannot be accomplished only through economic interaction of the economic forces. There is a necessity for public policy in the unsuccessful creation of the market, as well as in the creation of national economic environment that will promote sustainable development. Decrease of the poverty, exclusion, and the creation of normal social life looks for universal access to the economic possibilities that will enable promoting sustainable incomes for life and basic social conditions, as well as special efforts for creating access to the services for those that are endangered.

The importance for the improvement of the female status was emphasized on these conventions. Women in Republic Macedonia are facing health and life hazards due to workload, lack of education, and power. In some parts of the country women acquire less formal education than men. Moreover, her knowledge and abilities remain very often unacknowledged. There are differences in the educational level between men and women, in fact 76.6% of the illiterate population are women in Republic Macedonia.

Although the literacy level of the population is on reasonably high level (95% of the population is literate), education remains problem of specific social groups of the population, due to the fact that three fourths of the poor have less than primary school education.

Inaccessibility of the primary education and the low level of literacy of the adult population continue to impede human developmental process in any area. The education and the social security are interrelated. There is narrow and complex relation between education, poverty, social exclusion, and quality of life.

Социјална положба на населението во Република Македонија

During this period of transition the religious communities overall are caring very little for their followers. That is, the believers claim that they did not get any help from the religious communities during this period. Hence, the humanitarian activities, which are practiced by the religious communities in Macedonia, are only a possibility for partial answer to the tendency toward impoverishment.

Jorde Jakimovski