

A POSTERIORI ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC WELFARE SCHEMES (PWS) IN THE BRICS COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The concept of welfare state has always drawn attention of policy makers, academia and researchers. The state is looked upon as a care taker of the poor and the downtrodden. As a welfare state, the government has to act as a policy maker that defines the principles of welfare state keeping focus on the poor and the deprived. It has to find problems to the solution of poverty, inequality and unemployment. With the growing population, the problem of unemployment is escalated. To curb these socio economic problems, every government formulates Public Welfare Schemes (PWS) according to its unique socio economic milieu. This paper identifies the PWS implemented in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and their effectiveness, outcomes and pitfalls. The research concludes that the basic objective of PWS i.e. employment was fulfilled, target groups were employed to a large extent, but launching of these schemes has given rise to corruption and increase in the fiscal deficit of governments.

Keyword- Public Welfare Schemes, BRICS, Employability, Bolsa Familia Programme, MGNREGA, Social welfare.

Introduction

Equitable distribution of wealth, minimum subsistence level to the poor and meaningful employment is generated through a strong social safety system frame with the idea of PWS. According to Devereux and Solomon (2006) Employment creation programmes are an important policy instrument, especially in low- and middle income countries where rates of unemployment and underemployment are high, the employment intensity of growth is low or even declining, and macroeconomic shocks or natural disasters can undermine livelihoods and require income-stabilising interventions. Public welfare Schemes are known to support all citizens with reference to public aid. Generally, welfare is undertaken by the government in developing countries. According to McCord (2008), PWS includes all the activities which execute the wages payment in return of labor whether through the state or by any state agent. To meet the subsistence need, PWS is supposed to offer basic income to all workers.

Review of Literature

Two major elements which surround PWS are social security and assistance that include social medical treatment of, literacy home facility and security of the poor. There is an intensive debate on social welfare as now a days state has a significant role in provision of social welfare. Through normal market mechanism there is shortage lack of self-motivated contributions (Olson 1971) and involvement of private sector is the basic reason argued why the government should become the part of provision of welfare.

McCord (2008) states that employability promotion technique is basically a mix of supply-side

constraints to employment. This type of PWS promotes work place experience and skills formation among the unemployed and advances the employability of workers. These schemes are principally adopted by organization of OECD (Economic Cooperation and Development) countries from time to time when unemployment is high.

Arts and Gelissen,(2002)conclude that real welfare states are hardly ever pure types and are usually hybrid cases; and that the issue of ideal-typical welfare states cannot be satisfactorily answered given the lack of formal theorizing and the still inconclusive outcomes of comparative research.

Antonopoulos (2007) observes that in most countries private sector has not been able to absorb surplus labour especially the poor unskilled labour. Public works programs and employment guarantee schemes in South Africa, India, and other countries provide jobs while creating public assets. In addition to physical infrastructure, an area that has immense potential to create much-needed jobs is that of social service delivery and social infrastructure.

Castles (1994)observes that undue reliance on state expenditure necessarily leads to a distorted understanding of outcomes because spending is generally only one of several routes to a given policy objective and different countries use different mixes of policy instruments to achieve similar policy objectives.

Clayton and Pontusson (1998) argue that a sharp deceleration of social spending has occurred in most OECD countries since 1980, that welfare states have failed to offset the rise of market-generated inequality and insecurity, and that welfare programs have become less universalistic. They stress the distributive and political consequences of market-oriented reforms of the public sector.

Baker (1991) defines public welfare as schemes that assist the people to meet their health, social, educational, economic needs.

Jodha (1986) views that Common property resources (CPRs), though neglected by policy makers and planners, play a significant role in the life of the rural poor. There is significant contribution of CPRs towards the employment and income generation for the rural poor, i. e. labour and small farm households.

Parvez (1977) observes that he Rural Social Services (RSS) community-based project is considered to be a major breakthrough in extending Department of Social Welfare (DSW) services to the under privileged in Bangladesh.

Need for the Study

The need for the present study arose from the question as to how effective these PWS programs have been in implementation and have helped in eradication of poverty in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS).The research has a threefold objective to:

- Identify popular public welfare schemes in the BRICS countries.
- Critical evaluation of major country specific welfare schemes.
- Observe skills development in the PWS of BRICS countries.

Methodology

The researchers feel that a descriptive analysis will be suitable for studying the different PWS of the

BRICS countries. The BRICS countries have different government and social set up along with different cultures and environment setup. Voluminous literature has been written on Public Welfare Schemes. The researchers view that their work will more suitable with a descriptive approach. As the different schemes in BRICs nations have been the under study, the work will add knowledge base of the researchers who wish to go ahead with PWS in BRICS or other emerging economies. This study will be ready reference for the researchers as implementation, failures and outcomes of PWS in the BRICS have been discussed in this paper.

Public Welfare Schemes (PWS) of BRICS Countries

Public Welfare Schemes of Brazil

In terms of population as well geographical area Brazil is the largest country in the South American continent. Government of Brazil has initiated different types of PWS from year to year to help and promote human nature. Different types of PWS from different divisions with their main outline are described in Table 1.

Table 1 : Brazil Public Welfare Schemes

S.No.	Public Welfare Schemes	Division	Foundation year	Main Outline
1.	Scheme of Bolsa Escola Programme	Division of education	1995	CCT (Conditional Cash Transfer) for poor children belonging to poor families
2.	Scheme of (GMFIP) Guaranteed Minimum Family Income Programme	Division of education	1995	To give family allowance to poor children
3	Scheme of Progresa	Division of education	1997	CCT(Conditional Cash Transfer) for poor families children
4.	Scheme of (PGRM) Programme for a Guaranteed Minimum Income	Division of Employment	1998	To give family allowance as per the attendance of children in the school
5.	Scheme of Bolsa Alimentacao (BA)	Health division	2001	Initialization of pregnant women health program
6.	Oportunidades scheme	Child labour and education division	2002	As per attendance of children in school to get family allowance
7.	Scheme of Auxilio Gas (AG)	Social protection division	2002	Cooking gas subsidies transfer by unconditional cash
8.	Fome Zero (FZ) scheme	Social protection division	2003	Target of no hunger
9.	Program do Cartao Alimentacao (PCA) scheme	Social protection division	Starting from 2003	Preserve food for poor people
10.	Familiaprogramme	Protection of security division	2003	Mixing of PCA and BE programme

Public Welfare Schemes of Russia

Russia is also a developing country. Since the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian Government had been implementing public welfare programs. Russia was the only country that was immune from the Great Economic Depression of the world that lasted for four years from 1929-1932. Different types of PWS from different divisions with their main outline are described in Table 2.

Table 2 : Russian Public Welfare Schemes

S.No.	Public Welfare Schemes	Division	Foundation year	Main Outline
1	Pensions for aged people	Social division	1994	Pension to senior citizens
2	Homeless for poor people	Social division	1995	Shelter to homeless people
3	Worker Protection and Benefits for people	Development division	2002	Gives maternity leave to mothers
4	Social support of people	Social protection division	2013-2020	To reduce poverty of people living below poverty line
5	Promotion of job (ALMPs) scheme	Job division	2013-2020	To give employment to low income group

Public Welfare Schemes of India

India is also a developing country like South Africa, China, Brazil and Malaysia. It is also one of the largest populated countries among all BRICS countries. Government of India is running different types of PWS to remove poverty from the country. Different types of PWS from different divisions with their main outline are described in Table 3.

Table 3: Indian Public Welfare Schemes

S.No.	Public Welfare Schemes	Division	Foundation year	Main Outline
1.	Swarna jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) scheme	Employment division	1999	Generation of self-employment
2.	National Rural Livelihood Mission(NRLM) scheme	Job division	2011	To reduce poverty in poor families
3.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme	Job division	2005	Manual work for rural people
4.	Rashtriya SwasthyaBima Yojana (RSBY) scheme	Health division	2008	Gives health insurance for families living below poverty line
5.	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme	Education division	2000	Providing school education for village children

Public Welfare Schemes of China

In a recent survey china is the second largest economy of the world and largest population around 1.5 billion out of all BRICS Countries. Different types of PWS from different divisions with their main outline are described in the Table 4.

Table 4 : Chinese Public Welfare Schemes

S.No.	Public Welfare Schemes	Division	Foundation year	Main Outline
1.	State Provision Scheme	Social security division	1978	Gives retirement benefits, free medical treatment and free education and housing facility for people
2.	New Cooperative medical Scheme (NCMS, rural) scheme	Social protection division	2003	Provides farming facility, information to reduce population and provision for medical treatment reimbursements
3.	Enterprise provision scheme	Social protection division	2006	It provides labour insurance and welfare schemes for villagers
4.	Social pension insurance scheme	Social protection division	2002 urban 2009 rural	Gives subsidiary to old people
5.	Rural collective provision scheme	Social protection division	2008	Gives medical treatment, pain relief and pension schemes for farmers
6.	Yigong-daizhen programme scheme	Employment division	1985	Gives employment for poor people
7.	Di Boa Urban scheme	Employment division	1999	Gives minimum wages guarantee to urban poor
8.	Di Boa Rural scheme	Employment division	2006	Gives minimum wages guarantee to rural poor

Public Welfare Schemes of South Africa

South Africa has fantastic growth in infrastructure industry and is the most advanced country of the African continent. Different types of PWS of South Africa from different divisions with their main outline are described in the Table 5 below.

Table 5 : South African Public Welfare Schemes

S.No.	Public Welfare Schemes	Division	Foundation year	Main Outline
1.	Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) s	Construction division	1994	Addresses socio-economic issues by providing social services to alleviate poverty through infrastructure projects
2.	Child Support Grant (CSG)	Social Division	1998	To distribute social security cash
3.	(ASGISA) scheme	security division	2006	To transfer community security money
4.	Phase II(EPWP) scheme	Employment division	2009	Giving job in six years
5.	(GERS) scheme	Job division	1996	Guaranteed employment to villagers
6..	Expanded Public Works Programme(EPWP) Phase I scheme	Employment division	2001	Guaranteed employment to villagers

Findings

On the basis of several research reports published by government, semi government and private agencies, the implementation effectiveness and efficiency of the PWS were analyzed and examined. The researchers observe that the famous Brazilian Bolsa Familia Programme (BFP) has attracted criticism from within the country on account of direct cash transfer to the poor families. The critics opine that the poor will not use the money wisely as they are less educated. So there could be misuse of the funds so transferred for e.g. in drug abuse, alcoholism and buying non necessary things. Moreover, the BFP program is not widely accepted by the Brazilian society. It is apprehended that it could impede the search for employment and encourage lethargy.

However many Brazilians feel that the program has potentials to wipe out abject poverty and to reduce inter-generational transmission of poverty. On the basis of surveys conducted by the Government of Brazil it has been observed that the money is spent on item of necessity in the order of food, school supplies, clothing and shoes. An advanced study conducted by The Federal University of Pernambuco concluded that families living in rural areas spend 87% of money in buying food.

It is apparent that the program has been effective in curbing absolute poverty from Brazil. An econometric evaluation report of Bolsa Escola reveals that there has been a positive impact on school attendance and significant reduction in child labour. Yoon et al. (2001) observe that the World Bank also opines that there is a significant reduction in child labour exploitation among children benefitted under the BFP.

About the PWS of Russia, the researchers are of the view that the New Russian Pension Scheme is one of the most widespread and effective schemes as it has increased social security and has increased level of comfort living of the old citizens. The pension scheme also includes people working in the private organizations. The main drawback however is that, it does not include women and people living below poverty line. Moreover it has increased the fiscal burden of the government.

Another PWS of Russia which is Employment Promotion Scheme focuses on increasing

employment opportunities and skills development. It also imparts education and vocational training to the people for skills development. The main impediment in effective implementation of this program is the geopolitical barriers as many states of the Russian federation have contrasting ethnic and religious traits and beliefs.

The Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana of India is rural based employment generation scheme started in 1999 with the aim of providing self-employment opportunities to the rural poor and bringing the people living below poverty line above the line. Under the scheme, the villagers form Self Help Groups (SHGs) and form activity clusters on the basis of common skills and aptitude and locally available resources. These SHGs are supported and trained by the NGOs and other government agencies. The researchers have observed that the scheme has a positive impact on the target people. Since its inception in 1999, nearly twenty-two lakh SHGs have been formed comprising around thirty-five lakh people. The scheme has benefitted thirty-one lakh self-employed individuals.

The other popular PWS of India is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The scheme started with the objective of enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work and creation of assets such as roads, canals, ponds and wells. We have observed that the scheme has been severely criticized on a number of grounds. First, a lot of money is engulfed by the middlemen and the workers are not paid in full. The workers are paid for the work which they do not do and is shown on papers only as the workers also get a share for this deceit. Second, the program has drawn severe criticism that it has not led to any asset creation and has increased the fiscal deficit of the government. Economists like Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Pangariya view that MGNREGA is an inefficient instrument of shifting income to the poor.

China launched *Yigong-daizhen* Scheme in the 1980s as a part of nation's rural poverty eradication program. The funding in this program is allocated to the local governments with a view to construct local infrastructure with the involvement of the local labour. The program is aimed at development in four key rural infrastructure areas namely rural land construction and irrigation system construction, road construction, drinking water facilities improvements and small-scale water conservation. The local labour is paid on hourly basis.

The program however had a negative impact on the village population of China. Chau et al.(2014) observe that that the introduction of *Yigong-daizhen* projects in the villages stimulates the outflow of migrant workers from affected villages.

The PWS of South Africa Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was launched in 2004 with a view to providing poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed. It is a key government initiative which includes priorities of the Cape government into account such as decent work & sustainable livelihoods, education, health; rural development; food security & land reform and the fight against crime & corruption. The EPWP creates work opportunities in four sectors, namely, Infrastructure, Non-State, Culture and Social Environment. The Programme is an effective tool for labour absorption and transfer of income to the poor families. It is aimed at creating work opportunities for the unemployed by expenditure on goods and services. It employs workers on a temporary or ongoing basis by government, contractors or by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

On the basis of reporting by the government and non governmental agencies we observe that the programme fails to cover all the skills of the local labour. The scheme also had failed to cover all the poor households. Moreover lack of job card system has led to implementation failures in the scheme in many pockets of the South Africa.

Conclusion

Public Welfare Schemes are implemented in all BRICS countries. Table 1 to 5 depict that objectives of PWS were similar in all the BRICS countries. The basic objective of PWS i.e. employment was fulfilled. It is also observed that most of the people join particular PWS due to working of their relatives already in that scheme.

The objective of research was to identify popular public welfare schemes implemented in the BRICS countries. It is evident from literature that many authors view that PWSs are effective in welfare of the poor. Accordingly, it is compulsory to evaluate the ongoing PWS benefits.

The study also reveals that after working in a particular scheme the beneficiaries became self-employed. To make poor people self-employed, it is necessary to provide them skills so that they can become self-dependent. Providing opportunities of skills development and its use is the most powerful and effective way to help the poor.

Further Research

The present study aims at studying Public Welfare Schemes and their effectiveness in the BRICS. The other countries are also have PWS running under different names there is a scope of further research in other non BRICs countries of the world as public welfare schemes are also implemented in these countries. Further, the spatial development of the region where these schemes are implemented can also be brought under the purview of research as the effectiveness of a PWS also indicates whether the target region is brought at the same level of development vis a vis the other developed regions of the country. The human development index value during pre implementation and post implementation period can also be compared to gauge the level of effectiveness of these schemes.

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