

Family Policy

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Introduction

Social policy plays an integral role in the transformation of public welfare. It encompasses collective interventions that directly influence social welfare, social relations, and social institutions. Generally, policies are formed through the already existing laws legislated by either the federal or the state governments. Such laws provide the framework under which different agencies that operate under each prescribed policies operate. Most of the social policies influence the operations of families both directly and indirectly. Some of the policies that directly affect the families include the laws that concern marriage, childbearing, and property inheritance. On the other hand, the policies the impact on the family indirectly comprises laws that are concerned with crime, wage, health housing, crime, and education. The primary objective of this paper is to explore the Minimum Wage Policy, its impact on the family, assessment of the policy's strengths and weaknesses, and the recommendations for the improvement of policy.

Minimum Wage Policy

In the United States, many social policies affect the structure and dynamics of American families. One of the most predominant policies that are involved indirectly in shaping the current families is the Minimum Wage policy. This policy is set and implemented by the American labor law under the range of both the local and state laws. The law that sustains the Minimum Wage policy demands that every employer pays the highest minimum wage as prescribed by the local, state, and federal laws. The federal government mandated in 2009 that an hourly minimum wage of \$ 7.25 should be implemented nationwide (Clemens and Wither, 2019). Despite this minimum wage threshold, it is interesting that 29 states had surpassed the federal minimum as by January 2018. This means that the initial set minimum wage had become obsolete to the living standards

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of the least paid employee in most of the American states. Despite the increased standards of living, another factor that significantly led to the increase of the increment of the pay was legislative amendments.

The Minimum Wage was encrypted into the laws as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in 1938 under the regime of Franklin Roosevelt. The FLSA was subsequently passed into law in the same year (1938) and encompassed the employment standards for the youth, overtime pay, and remunerations. During this era, the rate per hour was set at 25 cents an hour—a current equivalent of \$ 4 per hour. Nevertheless, before this first federal minimum wage being implemented, some states have set their minimum wage laws. For instance, Massachusetts had the minimum wage laws implemented in 1912. However, these laws only covered children and women. Notably, there has been a progressive increment in the minimum wage through legislation over the decades.

The primary purpose of the minimum wage was to stabilize the economic status of Americans following the post-depression economic times. By fairly compensating work, a foundation that is solid is formed for the maintenance and creation of healthy and strong family relationships. In the past decades, a significant number of working-class males have experienced a decline in their wages and earnings. Women have done better relatively; however, they are still behind men and earn far less than men. This is despite an increase in their overall educational attainments. These wage trends are captured by marriage trends. Women have experienced low wage growths and men their counterparts, have experienced declines in wages significantly. This policy was also intended to protect the exploitation of the employees in the labor force. This intent was aimed at safeguarding the standards of living, including health status, well-being, and protecting families from adverse financial constraints. It has also been argued that the minimum

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wage aimed at securing a minimum subsistence wage for the lowest-paid American populations who lacked adequate bargaining power. It was a gateway to equality and making the American families in every state happy and productive.

Families and the Minimum Wage Policy

Families are subsets of the whole society. Family income is indispensable for the survival and existence of each family within a given society. Each member of the family depends on the family income for basic needs, cultural and educational opportunities, and quality health. For instance, is a direct correlation between higher incomes with happiness in the families (Hill and Romich, 2018). This translates to less domestic violence and other undesirable family concerns. On the other hand, however, low incomes translate to increased family skirmishes, divorce cases, and child neglect, among other social problems. Higher wages have been established to affect the parents in two ways—others would spend more time at work while others would be motivated to work more for higher payroll incomes. According to the Family Stress Model (FSM), posits that different social and economic situations result in differing developmental outcomes in children (Masarik and Conger, 2017). It is therefore apparent that the tougher the social and economic times, the negative the outcomes of child development. That is, the prevailing economic hardships result in an increase in parents' stress and thus decrease in parenting quality. Nonetheless, if the parents earn considerably sufficient pay, the children find a positive environment that stimulates growth in regards to cognitive development.

Minimum Wage policy is one of the most important aspects of American families today. Applying the FSM, it means that any shift in the income of an American directly influences family life and structure. An increase in the minimum wage would lead to a prosperous and industrious nation at large. The family ties will be strengthened due to lessening economic

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stresses that would otherwise scatter the members. In American society, it has been noted that increase the overall pay rise has led to a significant reduction of suicide cases related to financial constraints within the family structure. The implementation of the Minimum Wage policy has progressively resulted in the number of poor children attaining educational aspirations. This scenario has improved the overall educational attainment for every member of the families regardless of the socio-economic status. This has thus resulted in the equal distribution of resources through the realization of intellectual equality.

Indirectly, there are assortments of impacts of the Minimum Wage policy on the families. For example, an increase in income translates more taxes through pay-as-you-earn (PAYE). These taxes can be channeled to improved medical care and education system, among other infrastructural designs. This improvement will always trickle down to the improved family standards of living and the general well-being of the citizens. As this occurred, favorable conditions for parenting are realized. Crime rates, prostitution, narcotic abuse will, therefore, reduce due to the reduced number of street families. It is important for every citizen to be acquainted with this policy as it is integral for the development and vibrant growth of American families.

Strengths of the Minimum Wage Policy

According to the study by Neumark and Wascher (2008), an increase in the minimum wage would improve the livelihoods of the poor families through improved standards of living—acquisition of quality healthcare, education, among other necessities. When the policy implemented effectively, no family gets income below the basic living standard. This hence ensures equality. The immigration cases of families from the country to the other parts of the world are reduced, and the families instead become more stable within the American borders.

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This situation ensues due to satisfactory pay realized. As the cost of living increases, transportation hike, educational fees, and the price of food increasing, constant income within the family set up results in economic stress—as a situation that leads to illegal activities (crimes). However, with the minimum wage policy, these crimes are significantly reduced. The Minimum Wage Policy is a gateway to happy American families and crime-free nation.

Weaknesses of the Minimum Wage Policy

Apparently, as the minimum wage is set and demands that the employers pay their employees as demanded by the law, the motivation of the money by the parents results in negligence. In the quest for more pay through long working hours, parental responsibilities are left with nannies. The results of this negligence and the lack of quality parental care result degraded the morals of society. Parental guidance becomes obscured by the daily hustles to meet the basic needs. The flaw of this policy is that it overlooks the importance of family ties. It does not provide the terms maximum hours that an individual should work per day. This situation encourages workaholics to neglect the fundamental level of society—the family.

Recommendation and Conclusions

The Minimum Wage Policy affects the family both positively and negatively. However, the policy is streamlined towards the overall benefits of poor families. The minimum wage should be raised to \$12 dollars every hour. This would increase the wages of over 35million employees. The minimum wage policy of 12 dollars would increase the resources for a significant number of young and unmarried employees who might be thinking of family commitments. It will also increase financial resources for Over 10 million parents who work and raise families with low wages. The recommendation to improve the policy to curtail more sensitive issues such as parenting provides avenues of quality child upbringing. Both the state

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and federal governments are required to amend the laws that prescribe the minimum wage to succinctly provide an adequate framework for safeguarding the family ties. By doing this, maximum working hours are adequately outlined. The policy in itself is one of the best social policies intended to upgrade the lives of the low-income earners. It should, therefore, be a safeguard for the betterment of American families.

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