SOCIAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ

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Abstract

The crises, conflicts, and wars that the world has experienced have played an effective and significant role in the emergence of social policies to confront the deprivation, poverty, and deprivation that have become a threat to human life in all parts of the world. The emergence of social policies initially consisted of drawing up plans and programs to provide aid to the needy. Over time, they evolved into broader and more far-reaching goals, as they began to demand social justice, achieving equality, and eliminating marginalization among individuals at all levels. They also sought to help individuals improve their living and economic standards, rather than simply seeking help, while developing and empowering their capabilities. Thus, social policies became a governmental program pursued by the state through the formulation of plans and programs aimed at improving the social and economic reality of individuals. Thus, social policy transformed from mere welfare services into a system of constitutionally and legally legitimate rights. This research sheds light on social policy in Iraq, its trajectory and outcome, its early roots, and the stages it has passed through, highlighting the most important factors influencing the creation and development of social policy and focusing on the most important challenges and obstacles facing sustainable development in Iraq. What is Iraq's 2030 vision for achieving sustainable development?

Introduction

Research Problem:

The research problem lies in identifying the most significant obstacles and challenges to achieving sustainable development in Iraq. It is now widely accepted in the field of development that the majority of countries in the world are struggling with more than one crisis and problem simultaneously, including poverty, fragility, conflict, violence, and others.

Based on the convictions we have formed through in-depth dialogues and studies of the development landscape, it has become necessary to understand the transformations and trajectories of various types and dimensions, while attempting to link social policy to development and draw a picture of the interventions that the state and non-governmental actors can undertake to improve the quality of life and its sustainability by providing better services, reducing corruption, enhancing human security, and developing and empowering individual capabilities through effective social policies.

Significance of the Research:

Given the significant role social policy plays in achieving and sustaining development and its objectives in developing and driving the national economy in Iraq, Iraq has yet to reach the

level of ambition. This prompted us to study the impact of social policy on achieving sustainable development.

Research Objectives:

This study aims to identify the most important challenges facing sustainable development in Iraq, identify the obstacles to development derived from current reality, and address them in light of the findings of researchers in development theories. It also highlights the impact of social policy in achieving this goal, and offers insights and perspectives that serve decision-makers and policymakers to advance the country's developmental reality. Terminology and Concepts:

First: Social Policy

Marshall defined social policy as government policy that includes a set of programs and systems aimed at achieving public assistance, social insurance, social security services, housing, and others. Townsend defined it as a set of intervention methods that must be adopted by industrial, professional, and voluntary organizations and political groups to achieve social goals and objectives that lead to equality, equal opportunity, and social justice, and consideration of wealth distribution and income security, thus meeting needs and achieving equality in society.

Schlön defined social policy as "a set of paths that define the efforts, systems, and activities that exist among people and determine the relationship between citizens and government, including legislation, laws, and decisions related to population relations.

Maher Abu Al-Maati defined social policy as the general rules and trends that result from the interaction of social forces within society to achieve long-term strategic goals, including areas, plans, and programs for social care, and the method of working to achieve these goals in light of The ideology of society is based on the available reality to reach a desired level of well-being for the members of society.

Second: Sustainable Development

In fact, it is difficult to find a specific and comprehensive definition of sustainable development, given its extensive overlap and overlap in definitions and meanings. In general, development refers to a comprehensive transformation of all components of the economy. Sustainable development is defined as improving the quality of life for individuals, expanding their options and capabilities, building social capital, and ensuring greater justice in order to meet the needs of current generations while preserving the needs of future generations.

The scholar David Pearce defined sustainable development as development that ensures that the per capita share of human well-being does not decline in the future. The World Commission on Environment and Development, in its 1987 report "Our Common Future," stated that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development for developed countries entails reducing energy and resource consumption, while for underdeveloped countries, it means utilizing resources to raise the standard of living and reduce poverty. **Social Policy in Iraq: Path and Outcome**

Discussing social policy in Iraq is a complex and thorny topic, and it generates considerable controversy among researchers and specialists in this field. This leads to intertwined and interconnected issues. Until recently, the concept of social policy was not clear and specific. What was written about it was scarce, or the writings were not clear or specific, nor did they

reflect the magnitude of the social and economic problems facing individuals in society. The reason for this shortcoming is the lack of sufficient importance given to the issue of social policy by decision-makers and policymakers in the government. This is in addition to the lack of expertise and specialization in this field, especially among the ruling elite who manage the political process in the country. For example, we see that the concept of social policy is sometimes linked to social welfare services for individuals, at other times to the state's general policy and ideology, and at other times to the concept of social welfare. This confusion regarding the concept and its terms has continued until recently. In light of these visions and perceptions, the concept of social policy is a complex and intricate one, encompassing legislation, plans, and measures aimed at achieving social and human development, particularly when linked simultaneously with other development goals. Conversely, it is a relative concept, evolving and changing with the development and change of countries and governments, and with the differences in their needs, interventions, and resources to protect vulnerable and marginalized social groups in society, who are more vulnerable than others. It should be noted that all social policies have a clear and specific primary goal: preventing poverty or attempting to alleviate it by adopting all means and methods to control and overcome the causes that lead to it. In Iraq, the first social policy initiative was the enactment of the Labor Law in 1936 to protect workers and secure their future. After the abolition of the monarchy and the transition to a republic in 1958, the Iraqi government began adopting social policies, the most important of which was the government's direct responsibility for caring for and protecting orphans, widows, the poor, and vulnerable and marginalized segments of society. Until the 1950s, the Iraqi government did not have any clear and well-defined institutional procedures for social problems such as poverty, orphanhood, widowhood, disability, people with special needs, etc. In the early 1950s, the first directorate of social services was established. After 1958, the state began establishing institutions and shelters for orphans, the homeless, and the disabled, and special laws were issued to protect them and their interests and affairs. Not only that, but a large number of students with interests in sociology and social work graduated. This state intervention in caring for and providing protection to its citizens was truly considered one of the most important indicators of social policy at that time. When we consider the period between 1975 and 1980, we find that social policy was a set of temporary plans and programs that did not offer radical solutions or treatments for social problems, but rather merely sought to calm them or control their spread. One of the most difficult and complex phases in Iraq's history was the occupation and its aftermath, affecting not only social policy but also all other public policies in the country. This crisis was followed by the collapse of most of the country's infrastructure, the devastation and destruction of state institutions and agencies, and a general failure in the social services provided to individuals. All of these factors combined led to the spread of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and an increase in the number of orphans and widows. This is what the Poverty Reduction Strategy indicated. This strategy emphasized that the Iraqi economy faces significant challenges related to poverty, the most important of which are security, deteriorating infrastructure, and deteriorating services. The government must take a series of measures, plans, and policies to achieve the strategy's goal of alleviating poverty. This can be achieved by adopting the following measures and procedures:
- Ensuring good governance
- Providing community security

• Ensuring a fair distribution of resources
• Mitigating the negative impact of economic reform on the poor

The sources of funding for social policy in Iraq are still largely determined by the central government alone, with few contributions or participation from other entities. This increases the difficulty of achieving a social policy that accommodates unemployment, poverty, disability, widowhood, and other challenges.

After decades of crises, catastrophes, economic blockade, and years of occupation, Iraqi society is experiencing rapid and profound structural changes. This is the result of the interaction of external factors linked to the concomitant effects of globalization and its repercussions, and internal factors linked to the adoption of economic policies that revolve almost exclusively around so-called structural adjustment policies. This has resulted in consequences and impacts that have affected a number of social groups and categories.

Among the most important of these consequences and impacts are the increasing rates of poverty and unemployment, and the entry of new categories of young people with degrees due to the use of modern technology in production and the adoption of employment systems that rely on temporary work. Furthermore, the education system is unable to meet the demands of labor markets, which are themselves suffering from rapid change, division, and duplication. This is in addition to the decline in demand for job opportunities due to the decline in opportunities for productive growth and the increasing reliance on foreign imports. Rising poverty and unemployment rates, coupled with inflation and the state's diminishing role in employment, have contributed to increased opportunities for impoverishment and social exclusion. These factors have led to diminished opportunities for social groups and segments to meet their basic needs for food, housing, and health, particularly those who lack access to comprehensive and integrated social care and protection.

Despite the rapid and dramatic transformations that Iraqi society has witnessed in recent years, the state has attempted, through national development plans and strategies, to build a bridge between a dire social reality and a development option aimed at establishing an enabling environment for the integration of vulnerable and vulnerable groups into society, while ensuring their access to the education system and medical services by expanding the base of civil society participation.

Social policy constitutes the primary axis for healing wounds and mitigating the impact of these crises to achieve sustainable development. The options available to decision-makers, policy makers, and development partners place them at a crossroads through interventions aimed at strengthening and evaluating sustainable development paths. Iraq, especially after 2003, has faced a series of challenges and obstacles. Despite all the circumstances it has gone through and is going through, it has succeeded in issuing the first human development report after 2003, which included a review of the conditions of poverty, health, education, housing and other social services. The Ministry, along with its supporting bodies, has also succeeded in issuing national development plans for the years (2010-2014), (2013-2017) and (2018-2022). Work is now underway on the (2024-2028) plan, which is scheduled to be issued in mid-2024. These plans are an important achievement, and all of these plans emphasized the issues of poverty, eliminating extreme poverty, health, education, housing, the environment, social protection and others. The Ministry of Planning also issued (Iraq's Vision for Sustainable Development Goals

2030), which is a set of voluntary reports on the development conditions in Iraq. Among the surveys implemented by the Ministry of Planning is the economic and social survey. For the family in Iraq, the first survey was conducted in 2007 and the second survey was implemented in 2012. They were the basis for preparing the first and second poverty reduction strategies. These surveys provide information and data related to the family's situation and its economic and social circumstances. They also help provide a better understanding of the current situation of families and individuals, including levels of poverty and deprivation, and the extent of the need for support and assistance. The Third Poverty Reduction Strategy outlines a national roadmap for halving poverty by mobilizing efforts, resources, and activities to achieve this goal. The strategy includes seven outcomes:

- Higher and sustainable incomes for the poor and economic empowerment of poor women
- Improved health
- Emergency response activities
- Improved education for the poor
- Confronting the impacts of climate change and food security
- Adequate housing and a resilient environment
- Effective social protection for the poor

The 2013 World Human Development Report indicated that countries that achieved remarkable growth and modernization relied on three main drivers:

- An effective development state
- The ability to compete in global markets
- Innovation in social policies
- Measuring development in any country depends on:
- Increasing life expectancy
- Acquiring new skills and eradicating illiteracy
- Increasing national income and improving the standard of living by addressing weak capital growth

Since politics is the art of the possible in dealing with reality, social action represents a continuous effort to change this reality with all its pressures And its problems. So, social policy is an art that relies on scientific data to influence reality according to an ideological vision, achieving lofty goals with realistic values.

Social policy plays a significant role in innovation, expansion, and enhancing the technological capabilities needed to transform the idea of industrialization into reality. Social policy also seeks to secure livelihoods for individuals by providing systematic mechanisms for income redistribution and protecting the weak, vulnerable, and marginalized groups from market fluctuations. Social policy can also play an important role in shaping the nature of economic transformation in a country. Early development economists emphasized that social policy plays a significant role in the process of economic transformation, not as an end result, but as a primary pillar of the transformation process. Thus, social policy can be transformative when it plays a role in shaping the type of economic activity and determining the speed and content of innovation and consumption patterns, which appear as indicators of growth occurring at a given stage of societal development. It is important to note that economic policy is not defined by

social policy, but it can have a significant impact on social outcomes. This means that social and economic policies, by their very nature, build upon each other, that social policy has far-reaching economic impacts, and that economic policies inevitably play a significant and direct role in determining social outcomes. Therefore, successful social and economic policies are required to guide the path of development in Iraq.

Factors Influencing the Making and Building of Social Policy:

There are a number of factors and components that must be considered when building and designing the state's general policy in general and social policy in particular. The most prominent influencing factors are:

• Geographical and Natural Factors:

i.e., the distinctive features and characteristics of a country's territory, such as its geographical location, land area, available natural resources, population size, and its geographical distribution. Certainly, geographical and natural factors have a direct and indirect impact, both positive and negative, on the systems of government adopted by the state in its management of the country's affairs. • Social Factors:

There is no doubt that social factors have a significant impact on the design of social policy, as the latter reflects the conditions of society, including customs, traditions, norms, relationships, and social ties, in addition to the level of education, culture, intellectual awareness, and the civilizational and technological advancement enjoyed by members of society.

• Economic Factors:

Economic factors are no less important than geographical and social factors in determining social policy-making. In fact, they may be more important and more influential, as they influence the composition of the economic structure, the degree of complexity or simplicity of this structure, and the system of economic exchange followed in society. In addition to the level of progress and economic growth of a society, the more advanced a society is, the more the state's role is limited to coordination and oversight. However, in economically backward societies, the state is required to play a developmental role first. Furthermore, the distribution of wealth and income has a direct impact on the process of formulating and developing social policy. In societies suffering from poverty, underdevelopment, and unequal distribution of wealth, we find many problems that require direct state intervention and the development of specific social policies, given that such economic problems place significant pressure on the state and undermine its political and social stability.

Other factors influencing the formulation and definition of social policy include:

• The availability of the data necessary to formulate and define successful social policy.

• The philosophy and approach to social reform.

• The method and methodology for selecting areas of work.

• Selecting problems that are of importance and priority.

• The availability of opportunities for popular participation by members of society.

• The availability of technical and administrative cadres with a clear intellectual understanding of how to define policy objectives.

• The prevailing cultural framework in society.

• The importance that individuals in society attach to the policy will influence its implementation, as will the cost of its implementation and the extent to which the cost is commensurate with the expected return from its implementation.

Challenges of Sustainable Development in Iraq

Delayed development efforts and a lack of attention to individuals not only affect them, but also affect society as a whole and hinder its opportunities for progress. The success and development of any society depends on the development and empowerment of the individual in all aspects (health, education, livelihood), as attention to these aspects constitutes a critical part of achieving any country's sustainable development goals.

There is no doubt that the impact of wars, crises, and terrorism has been direct and devastating to the country's resources and all aspects of development in Iraq. This has had a direct impact on the state's capacity and the quality of life, or the loss thereof, as a result of severe deprivation, conflict, forced displacement of individuals, and the destruction of infrastructure. Economically, this has harmed the development process due to a decline in development spending, coupled with modest spending on health, education, and the environment. Financial, administrative, and political corruption are also on the rise. All of these changes have left a legacy and a dangerous environment that has posed a threat to human security.

We live today in the midst of societal transformations in which unsustainable and unequal development has become a source of numerous threats and risks, with existing ones worsening. Sustainable development includes two fundamental pillars: employing development to serve the individuals of society by improving their standard of living above the minimum, on the one hand, and sustaining development to include the current and future generations by creating reserve resources for sustainable development.

The sustainability or resilience of development cannot be considered unless the multiple crises, threats, and risks to human security and their associated risks, particularly those related to the social protection of individuals, are taken into account. Any measures to reduce these risks and avoid their repercussions must be integrated into the planning and implementation policies of the government and society to achieve the basic goals of sustainable development.

The exacerbation of these challenges makes calls urgent to develop national social programs and policies that present the state and society with fateful choices. Their spread has created a continuous generation of problems and a lack of social will and empowerment tools. These have left serious impacts on the Iraqi body, threatening opportunities for empowerment, development, and the possibility of improving welfare indicators.

Iraq's Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development...

Sustainable development means preserving the environment with all its resources and potential for the future. This does not preclude the exploitation of natural resources, but rather in a rational and non-excessive manner. Sustainable development has three dimensions:

• The qualitative dimension, which determines the type and magnitude of change required across various economic, social, urban, and other sectors.

• The temporal dimension, which determines the timing of the desired change.

• The spatial dimension, which determines the location or site of the desired change.

These three dimensions have not received any attention from the state, which is why development indicators have remained unchanged.

Human beings are the focus of development and the secret to its sustainability. Any improvement in the level of education, healthcare, and social welfare will all lead to human development and thus ensure a significant portion of sustainable development. Human beings play a major role in achieving sustainable development, as they are the foundation of planning,

consumption, and implementation, and they have a significant relationship with the elements of the natural environment and the resources they exploit. Furthermore, the global population increase itself plays a significant role in determining sustainable development.

Here comes the question: How can a sustainable development system be social? It can be said that when justice is achieved in the distribution of national income, and the state is able to deliver social services, especially health, education, and housing, to the needy, and achieve equality and social justice between the sexes, with the active participation of all in making decisions that impact the lives of members of society, then the goal of sustainable development will be achieved.

It is no exaggeration to say that the (17) Sustainable Development Goals are broader and more vague than the development goals. They were drawn and established based on the history of the Millennium Development Goals. Global efforts have gone beyond a single development goal, as they focused previously, and have adopted a set of development goals entitled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." This development agenda is based on two fundamental pillars:

The first: on the commitment to human well-being, security, and dignity, which constitute the prominent feature of the contemporary system of development cooperation.

The second: on the commitment to sustainable development, integrating economic, social, and environmental aspects, and recognizing the close interconnectedness between them.

The new development agenda included an unprecedented call for concerted and integrated global efforts to preserve the planet and improve people's living conditions. The ultimate vision of the Sustainable Development Goals crystallized in a world free of poverty, hunger, and deprivation; a protected global environment; and a population benefiting from economic progress and opportunities for peace, justice, and social cohesion.

The first goal of the Sustainable Development Goals was to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. This goal was based on the daily income of an individual. The goal extends to social protection systems to cover the poor and vulnerable groups, providing access to economic resources and basic services, and increasing the resilience of the poor who are exposed to economic, social, and environmental shocks.

One of the most important drivers of eradicating extreme poverty is the presence of strong safety nets and social protection that leave no one behind. It must be remembered that any development project must stem from the uniqueness of a society and its culture, balance tradition and modernity, and achieve integrated growth. The stages of growth and development represent a significant milestone in the journey of peoples and the advancement of societies, including their value systems, cultural heritage, and collective memory.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, with their priorities, options, and comprehensiveness, can form the general framework guiding development strategies at the national level. The Sustainable Development Goals for the least developed countries are characterized by high poverty rates and low health and education indicators. In less developed countries, the Sustainable Development Goals constitute a tool for setting priorities within the framework of the development strategy, particularly addressing pockets of extreme poverty, eliminating severe disparities in health and education indicators, and addressing environmental and economic problems from the perspective of serving the goals of eradicating extreme poverty and eliminating disparities among individuals.

The most important challenges and obstacles facing sustainable development in Iraq

There are some challenges and obstacles facing Iraq in adopting sustainable development plans and programs. Sustainable development in Iraq faces a number of challenges simultaneously, including: poverty, hunger, education, health, gender equality, energy, water and sanitation, productive labor, economic growth, industrialization, innovation, infrastructure, inequality, human settlement, consumption and production patterns, climate change, preserving human resources, peaceful and fragile societies, corruption, access to justice, crime and violence, capacity-building and accountability institutions, and global partnerships. Of course, the priorities for all of these challenges vary from one country to another, but they are all taken into consideration in any development path.

Despite all the goals mentioned above, the core essence of the Sustainable Development Goals focuses on:

alleviating poverty, achieving peace, justice, and a cohesive, prosperous, and vibrant society, while ensuring economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Among the tangible and significant challenges facing the achievement of development are the current political situation, the wars against terrorist organizations, and regional problems that have delayed any tangible progress towards the goals. According to reports and indicators, Iraq has faced tangible challenges regarding the first goal of the Sustainable Development Goals, due to high unemployment rates and other social problems. Among the most prominent challenges that continue to pose an obstacle to achieving the goals are the rentier nature of the Iraqi economy and the high unemployment rates resulting from the weak ability to generate job opportunities, and the high poverty rates resulting from the deteriorating economic and security situation. In addition, there is the growing deficit in the federal budget, along with the weak participation of women in economic activities, the burden of debt, and weak institutional performance. Let us not forget the political and security situation that has generated conflicts, unrest, financial and administrative corruption, and the impact of sub-loyalties on standards of efficiency and achievement. Iraq has not achieved economic growth due to the disintegration of its public policy-making system and the isolation of social policies and governance structures that could achieve equality of opportunity and economic prosperity. The Iraqi economy has relied excessively on oil, neglecting other productive sectors (industrial, agricultural, etc.), in addition to the labor market's challenges in achieving sustainable growth in Iraq.

Iraq is not far from achieving sustainable development. However, the political and security conditions that have accompanied Iraq during the past three decades of wars, conflict, displacement, and economic blockade have created many obstacles and problems that have, and continue to represent, a major challenge to achieving sustainable development in Iraq. The most important of these obstacles are:

1. Armed conflicts and wars:

Human life and well-being represent the highest and most sublime aspirations of nations and peoples at all times and places. The most important and greatest gain for human and social peace is avoiding the costs of war. There is a relationship and mutual influence between development, peace, and societal security, and each is a cause and effect of the other. Wars and armed conflicts lead to:

• They lead to losses in human capital, particularly in individuals and scientific minds, upon whom the state has spent vast sums over many years to prepare and qualify scientifically,

administratively, and technically, in addition to supporting those injured during armed conflicts and rendered unable to engage in business. This is in addition to the costs of war and the resulting devastation and destruction of infrastructure.

• In the event of war, the state prioritizes financial resources for defense purposes, which in turn comes at the expense of development in all its human, economic, social, and technological dimensions, leading to a decline in economic capacity.

• The lack of political, societal, and security security weakens confidence in economic recovery and hinders or weakens trade and investment, particularly foreign investment. A decline in foreign investment may lead to a decline in sustainable development gains, as investment not only brings physical capital but also generates other side benefits in the field of modern technology and the transfer of administrative, technical, and scientific expertise. • Wars and conflicts have a clear and significant impact on the tourism sector, leading to significant financial losses and serious repercussions on public spending, employment, traditional crafts and professions, and the state's ability to allocate the necessary and sufficient resources to implement sustainable development plans.

• Wars and conflicts have a direct impact on all members of society, but to varying degrees. This impact is particularly felt by women due to their weaker social structure and secondary status in society.

2- Absence or lack of democracy:

Since popular participation is the foundation of sustainable development, democracy is a prerequisite for participation in decision-making.

Most governments resort to obstructing the existence of any form of democracy in order to maintain and sustain their rule. This is done through the use of physical and moral means of oppression, or through the use of the method of enticement, which complements the method of intimidation, by harnessing the media controlled by the state's ruling regime, which monitors and shapes public opinion, invades the minds of individuals, and disseminates and implants appropriate concepts, transforming them into self-evident convictions, in addition to distorting and combating ideas and forms that contradict the state's orientations and policies.

3. Reducing or marginalizing the role of women:

One of the most prominent obstacles to sustainable development in Iraq is discrimination against women and their denial of effective and genuine participation. The value system and cultural heritage of any society determine women's role and status within it, through socialization and educational attainment. This creates a sense of discrimination and disparity between men and women, as traditions, customs, and norms still place many restrictions on women's contributions and work outside the home, limiting their role and human presence. Iraqi women live in a patriarchal society that relies on men for all matters. Therefore, women's roles have been limited and restricted to domestic matters. Indeed, women have been viewed as physically and even mentally weak beings who must be subject to men's control.

4- Poverty:

Poverty, in its simplest form, means a low standard of living and the inability to meet the basic needs necessary for sustaining life. Therefore, poverty is a state of material deprivation, manifested in low levels of food consumption, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The concept of poverty, from a sustainable human development perspective, goes beyond material deprivation to include deprivation of options and opportunities for an acceptable life. In other

words, poverty here means more than just the lack of material deprivation, but also the deprivation of opportunities and choices that are important for the components of human development, such as living a long, healthy life with good health, a good education, the ability to be creative, and enjoying a decent standard of living. Therefore, the concept of poverty is closely linked to housing standards, public works, reproductive health, high fertility rates, low use of contraceptives, large families, early marriage, high mortality rates, high rates of physical illness, and low rates of education in general and girls' education in particular. Therefore, the most important obstacles to achieving sustainable development are the problems of poverty, increasing illiteracy, population growth, increased unemployment, and the irrational exploitation of natural resources.

5- Increased and rising population growth rates:

Today, the phenomenon of population growth and explosion in all countries of the world in general, and in Iraq in particular, has become a major obstacle, alongside other obstacles that stand in the way of various economic and social development plans and projects.

The increasing rate of population growth in Iraq, and the resulting diseases and deficiencies in all basic services provided to individuals, has prompted the government to consider and plan to develop its population policy by taking important measures, such as enacting laws, enacting new regulations that are compatible with the population increase, and developing programs aimed at influencing the most important determinants of population change (births, deaths, and migration).

This is a means of promoting social and economic development to improve the quality of life in harmony with the country's available material and natural resources. It is worth noting that there is a close and solid relationship between a woman's level of education and family size. The concept of family formation and size for an educated woman differs completely from that of an illiterate woman. Educated women are often limited to forming and raising a family of no more than four members. Illiterate women, on the other hand, see their sole function in life as being to bear children and increase their number of children. Since they only have the role of wife and mother, the only role in which they excel, they will certainly not risk relinquishing this single role, in which they hold a privileged position.

6 - Level of Education and Culture:

It is no secret that there is a close relationship between education and sustainable development, given that education is a very important indicator of sustainable development. Low education leads to low levels of educational attainment and high illiteracy rates, both of which are important causes of low incomes and manifestations of backwardness and poverty. Education is a fundamental human right and one of the most important components for helping marginalized groups contribute effectively and participate in professional life. Many decision-makers and development policy makers have emphasized the importance and necessity of linking educational development with economic development, and considering education an essential component of development programs. This is due to the successful and productive human capital it provides, as well as the trained and qualified technical personnel it provides at various levels.

7- Migration:

Rural-to-urban migration and the phenomenon of urbanization, which coincided with the emergence of slums, have put pressure on vital balance systems and basic services within cities. It has also led to waste accumulation and increased air pollution.

8- Climate Change:

Climate change is one of the obstacles to sustainable development in Iraq. Climate change has led to significant increases in temperatures and decreased rainfall, leading to an increase in desert areas, desertification, and the spread of drought. The scarcity of water resources is also one of the most significant problems and obstacles affecting human and economic development. This problem is exacerbated by the increasing population growth rate, in addition to Iraq's dependence on water sources originating from abroad.

It should be noted that Iraq suffers from a sanitation problem due to the erosion, destruction, and devastation of its infrastructure resulting from the successive wars that have occurred in the country. Thus, the most important criterion of human poverty is the population's lack of access to potable water sources, which poses a threat to the requirements of a safe environment for humans.

9- Environmental Pollution:

This includes air, soil, and water pollution. Pollution results from the release of foreign substances into the atmosphere from industrial emissions or vehicle exhaust fumes. Oil and gas are among the most important sources of environmental pollution at all stages of production and consumption. Iraq suffers from the fact that most industries lack environmental safety requirements, both in terms of location and waste disposal. Much industrial waste is discharged into rivers before being treated. Iraq's environment also suffers from the remnants of successive wars. Soil pollution results from contamination by chemical and organic fertilizers, in addition to the salinity of most lands in central and southern Iraq. Soil pollution contributes to a decline in land productivity, leading to farmers migrating from their lands, exacerbating unemployment, increasing poverty rates, and food insecurity.

10- Economic Obstacles:

One of the most prominent obstacles contributing to the impact on development in Iraq is the economic obstacle. The dominant feature of the Iraqi economy is its rentier nature, resulting from the oil sector's dominance of the largest share of the gross domestic product compared to other sectors. The Iraqi economy relies solely on the oil sector, neglecting or leaving other sectors, such as the agricultural and industrial sectors, to suffer from backwardness and decline. Another challenge is the almost nonexistent planning policy, in addition to the weakness and lack of interest in the tourism sector, particularly religious tourism, which is a tributary of sustainable development.

11. Health Services:

This sector has witnessed a significant decline over the past three decades, which in turn has led to a decrease in the average lifespan of Iraqis. Individuals still lack adequate and adequate health services, both in quantity and quality. Perhaps the most important reasons behind this are the ongoing wars since the 1980s, the economic blockade and its numerous consequences, the spread of diseases and epidemics, and the migration of specialist doctors abroad due to the poor security conditions that the country experienced after 2003.

12. Financial and Administrative Corruption:

The misuse and waste of financial resources and the weakness of administrative reform have created obstacles and impediments to achieving sustainable development plans in Iraq. Government institutions have not succeeded in curbing this widespread administrative and financial corruption in state institutions.

In addition to security reasons, including the lack of security and social stability in Iraq, this constitutes one of the most important challenges and fundamental obstacles to sustainable development in Iraq. These conditions are factors that repel local and foreign investment, in addition to their impact on existing infrastructure and the overall slowdown of the economy. There is also a clear weakness or deficiency in the capabilities provided to some scientific and research institutions, which has led to their failure to keep pace with developments in scientific, technical, and technological progress occurring worldwide. This is in addition to the misuse of natural resources, reaching the point of depletion, along with the underutilization of renewable energy. Furthermore, the wasteful use of technical and human skills and the high unemployment rate are all factors that weaken society's ability to keep pace with the requirements of sustainable development.

Elements for the Continuity of the Development Process

In order to ensure the continuity and success of the development process in society, the following elements must be present:

- Providing a successful, trained, and qualified administrative cadre capable of managing development projects efficiently and knowledgeably. These cadres must come from within the community itself.
- Appropriate financial support must be provided to contribute to the continuity of development projects.
- Community members must accept the development process through their participation in the planning, implementation, and management of development projects, and their sense of ownership of these projects.
- Emphasizing the role of civil society organizations, which complements the role of government agencies in the development process and creates a collaborative relationship among them.
- Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires building national and local capacities to improve data collection, monitor achievements, and prepare national, local, and sectoral reports, while building strong multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Increasing knowledge and innovation will lead to increased and improved production quality and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2030.

Conclusion

From the above, it can be said that social policies emerged as a result of urgent needs to address the problems and crises that existed at the time. Others were exacerbated by the transformations that occurred after 2003, as well as by the weakness of future planning to formulate policies that seek to improve the living conditions of Iraqi society. All laws, legislation, and policies enacted since 1921 are no longer appropriate or commensurate with societal changes and the magnitude of the social problems and risks that now threaten Iraqi society, including unemployment, poverty, exclusion, marginalization, violence, displacement, conflict, and

others. Therefore, it was imperative for decision-makers and social policy makers to formulate a set of decisions and policies that could provide an adequate level of security for marginalized and vulnerable groups in society, or those groups that are unable to keep pace with the rapid development process. Furthermore, it is necessary to formulate a package of policies that would ensure equitable access to the fruits of economic growth for all individuals. Social policy is a process that embodies development goals. Based on the visions and perceptions that have shaped the Iraqi development landscape, it has become necessary to understand trends, transformations, and trajectories of various types, dimensions, and scope. This requires linking social policy with social protection, while also drawing a clear picture of the interventions that the government can undertake to improve the quality and sustainability of life by providing quality services, reducing administrative and financial corruption, and enhancing human security. Social policy represents the optimal path for governments to address social problems and emerging conditions in society as a result of the social, political, and economic transformations taking place within it. This is achieved by striking a balance between social, political, and economic action paths, side by side, by developing successful social policies aimed at achieving the desired development.

Conclusions
1. In recent years, the political and economic environment in Iraq has not been conducive to sustainable development. Social policy has not played a prominent or well-understood role, nor has the development process itself been sustainable. Social policy choices have not prioritized raising levels of sustainable development, resulting in lost development opportunities and wasted human and humanitarian efforts.
2. Certainly, proper planning and organization of social policy programs will accelerate the process of sustainable development in Iraq, and vice versa.
3. A system will be sustainable if justice and equality are achieved in distribution across all aspects and levels.
4. Social policy concepts and their associated components have become a rapid response to achieving a set of goals, the most important of which are reducing poverty and raising economic growth rates.
5. Through international and global experience, it has been proven that a democratic system is the only system capable of achieving sustainable development.

Recommendations:
1. Actively contribute to holding workshops and seminars on the importance of social policy and sustainable development.
2. Attempt to support income-generating development projects.
3. To ensure the sustainability of resources, a genuine approach must be taken between the three parties: the government, the private sector, and civil society institutions, and there must be genuine popular participation in decision-making.
4. Achieving political stability, as constant change in governance systems harms development programs and plans and sometimes even leads to their cessation.

5. Building the cognitive capacity of individuals regarding the concepts of social policy and development and their importance by incorporating them into training and educational programs.

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