



From Idea to Reality: Global Transformations and the Local Definition of Social Development

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study aims to present a contextualized interpretation of social development aligned with Iran's cultural, social, and economic context to provide a precise and coherent depiction of the country's social development status

Methodology: A document analysis approach was employed to review the historical evolution of the concept of social development, classification of definitions, and related theoretical developments over time. Changes in global social development measurement indices were examined, followed by an analysis of the measurement methods and the current status of social development in Iran. Key international institutions engaged in social development measurement were introduced, and the limitations of their indices in accurately portraying Iran's situation were discussed. Subsequently, a composite social development index tailored to Iran's context was designed, and using available data, Iran's social development status in 2023–2024 was compared with the Legatum Prosperity Index 2023.

Results: The findings indicate that Iran holds a moderate level of social development, with the most significant inequalities observed in infrastructure capital indicators. Some national welfare indicators require policy revision and increased investment in social and welfare infrastructures to address existing gaps effectively

Conclusions: The localized social development index proposed in this study can serve as an effective tool for accurately mapping the status of social development at provincial and county levels, facilitating the monitoring of social development trends across various planning and policy levels. Additionally, this index can assist policymakers in identifying weaknesses and improving social justice within the country

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Authors' contributions:

All authors contributed to the study conception, design, and data analysis. Material preparation and the literature review were performed by [Author 1] and [Author 2]. The first draft of the manuscript was written by [Author 1], and [Author 2] commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of interest:

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this study.