

Problems in retaining the legacy of the traditional idea of family-based welfare support in South Korea's social welfare provisions under the National Basic Livelihood Security (NBLs) System

Abstract

Following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, public attitude towards poverty in South Korea has placed a greater emphasis on the state's responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens than on the previous notion of family-based support. This paper will examine the public assistance system, called National Basic Livelihood Security (NBLs) which guarantees, for the first time in South Korea, the right to social security of its citizens and sets out the responsibilities of the state. It will consider various problems and limitations of this system, specifically focusing on problems arising from the 'family support prior to state assistance' clause. Two case studies, drawn from a sociological fieldwork carried in Seoul 2006, will be used as a vehicle to highlight the issues addressed.

Keywords: Confucianism, social rights, welfare reform, South Korea