DECENTRALIZATION AND DE-INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR   THIRD AGE –CASE OF SHKODER

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Abstract

*T*he extension of life expectancy and the increasing number of third age population has led to an increased interest around topics of aging. An important moment for impersonal human life, but also for society as a whole, it is inevitable for everyone. Biologically, it is the moment that separates life from death, but it seems that there are many social problems and concerns controversial old age, the family and society. National policies on care have their philosophy of building a system of services to meet the needs and to minimize the impact of the negative consequences of social problems on categories that want to benefit from its services. Social care system, through policies and strategic objectives, seeks to support people in need within the family and in their communities. It should be noted that the transformation of social services has not been easy and without problems. **Decentralization and de-institutionalization of social services are priorities of the European Social Charter and of many other international documents. The process of decentralization has been used for recent years, while the world is a consolidated practice in our country is a new perspective service. The paper is an exploratory empirical study about the theme of transformation services in Albania (Shkodra city) for this target group. The study gets boost from concrete analysis of the implementation of the directives of national and international strategic documents**. *In particular, the paper analyzes the practice of residential and non-residential services at Shkodra city*

Keywords: Social policy, care, decentralization, institutionalization, Independence, participation, self-fulfillment and dignity.

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The growth of the elderly population has increased, interest topics for aging, not only by doctors but also by psychologists, sociologists, social assistants, administrators and public policy as an aging population has led to the emergence of social and sanitary problems which the community is forced to run to find not only proposals for solutions, but above all estimates at the end to promote and improve the quality of life of older persons. The lengthening of life expectancy highlights the need to understand in depth the factors related to maintaining a good quality of life in older people, and the factors that may exert a protective function and promoting well-being and independence understood in a meaning systemic bio-psycho-social (Engel, 1977)[1]. In terms of economic and social, neglect of the elderly is becoming a phenomenon in our country today has taken on a large scale. Children have mostly abandoned their parents in search of a good life. Problems experienced by the elder people: financial difficulties, health problems, loneliness, unable to cope with food, medicines and medical services, family conflicts in the allocation of property, tendency toward alcoholism, discrimination, social neglect. In this regard is very important and needs assessment of existing capacity and opportunity to intervene and considering alternatives typology new community services for the elderly. The elderly are traditionally respected and appreciated for their authority, for wisdom, dignity and experience accumulated over a lifetime. These values are often neglected, and the elderly often presented as a burden to the economy which should provide social and health services. Elderly people usually grow older in good health, but there are many of them who seek health care services.

Social policies for the elderly have been subject to numerous changes that have brought a new configuration based on pluralism and the principle actors on all aid from a management model based on governance and allocation of responsibilities.

Social policies are defined as all those actions and norms promoted or recognized by political institutions with the sole purpose of protection and fulfillment of human rights (Mesa 2008)[2].

Although earlier aging of the population is treated as a matter of minor importance, today we understand that it is a demographic change, the effects of which appear deep in all aspects of

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[1] Giori-Essere vecchi .Vecchiaia e processi di emarginazione nella societa capitalistica .Marssilio Editori.-1978

[2] What can the European Union do to protect dignity in old age and protect elder abuse ?-European Commission. Brussel .2008

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individual and collective life of the individual countries and the international community as a whole. While in the past the aging population was a problem for developed countries, today he takes great importance to developing countries

Declaration and International Plan on Ageing was an act that marked a turning point on how important the whole world must face the biggest challenge, which is to build a society for all ages. This plan proposed a new orientation and brave aging issues, focusing on the implementation of three priority directions: older persons and development, promotion of health and welfare for the elderly, and creating a supportive and enabling environment to individual making the protagonist of its needs assessment and plan making its assistance.

Engaging now taken by the Albanian Government for the modernization of services requires a radical transformation. Like many other countries, in Albania, services are institutionalized, and there is no significant experience of alternative services. But the widespread culture of service has already passed the stage of institutionalization in all advanced countries. The government in recent years has made many advances in programming planning, delivery and monitoring of social services

Decentralization means to enable every local community in the construction and running of society. Means strongly considered as indispensable sources of local communities, in line with the central institutions, although with different tasks and different levels of responsibility[3]. Social services system, through this strategy, aims to ensure non-discrimination and inclusion, ensures that people always be supported within their families and communities.

Methodology

The paper is an exploratory empirical study about the theme of transformation of services for this target group. The study gets boost from concrete analysis of the implementation of the directives of international and national strategic documents. In particular, the paper examines the practice of residential and non-residential centers impact of this service to meet the needs, in order to improve   life   and   their   integration.
The object of study of this paper is to present the process deinstitutionalization and decentralization of social services for adulthood through new policies for this target group. This paper is exploratory empirical study. Theoretical treatment was conducted aimed at explaining

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[3] Mbeshtetje per decentralzim ,deinstitucionalzim dhe transformimin e Sherbimeve rezidenciale –propozime per transformime te Instutcioneve publike ne Shqiperi per te moshuaurit. Pulse , Mars 2007

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the process of decentralization and deinstitutionalization services for this target group, analysis of the legal framework, reform of services based on national and international documents. Semi-structured interviews with representatives of institutions, local authorities and organizations that provide services in the field of institutions for third age older also frequent these   services.
They discuss the services they provide, the needs of this age group for services, have changed these   services   cover   the   needs   of   the   elderly.
The second phase is oriented to survey in Institutions that provide social services.

Analyze

In the framework of the implementation of social policies that have essentially change services, National Social Strategy and legal framework of the Albanian Government has provided support towards the third age, model, and contemporary standards.

Reforming the system of social protection, decentralization, de-institutionalization and establishment of new services, based on Law No. 8652, dated 31.7.2000 " Për organizimin dhe funksionimin e qeverisjes vendore ", in Law 9355, dated 10.03.2005 " Për ndihmën dhe shërbimet shoqërore " Objektivat e strategjisë sektoriale të mbrojtjes sociale" Strategjia ndërsektoriale e përfshirjes sociale 2007 – 2013 dhe "Strategjia Kombëtare për Zhvillim dhe Integrim [4] .

With local service strategy is intended to create a system of services that meet the needs of beneficiaries and minimize the impact of society on the negative aspects of these services target categories. In decision, dated 28.1.2008 of the Council of Ministers, the change in the strategy of social protection was added chapter, " Dokumenti i politikave ndërsektoriale për moshën e tretë "added Annex " Plani i veprimit për politikat ndërsektoriale të moshës së tretë, për periudhën 2009-2013 "[5] .

Law on Social Assistance and the National Strategy for Social Services promulgated by the Council of Ministers, provided clear instructions to start the implementation of a modern system of social services in Albania[6].

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[4] Ligji mbi Asistencen sociale

[5] Vendimi Nr.763, datë 11.6.2009

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Albanian Government provides guidelines and new standards for Residential Services and community center care; these standards tend to provide a concretization operating in Albanian. Predict an evaluation by qualified professionals, socio-sanitary needs of the elderly, which responds with the signing of a contract with an individual assistance plan.

The right to health assistance provided through a specific and appropriate sanitation.

National standards in particular are wary of the dignity of the elderly in the protection of privacy and the privacy of his, to fully integrate its needs for socialization and affective integration.

It also recognized the right of autonomy and independence, protecting peaceful development activities of daily life and providing appropriate incentives to participate actively in social life.

Assistance to the elderly provided professional operators, qualified through specific training courses.

With the strategy of local services, is planning to create a system of services that meet the needs of beneficiaries and minimize the impact of society on the negative aspects.

The Government aims to elderly homes to function as a family home, relying on modern principles of social service, which requires that the elderly be kept longer in the natural and social environment within this environment to ensure the service strategy. In the third age will aim towards: Creation of an umbrella structure which include all the network of non-governmental organizations operating in the field of the third age for voluntary social service delivery as quality and as close to the people, which will provide services for the elderly, alone, without support and social problems to complete residential treatment, but at the same time daily service for community. Seniors in these centers can provide health, social educational services.

Shkodra, 2013

Residential of the elderly at Shkodra city has started its activity in 1945 and accommodates older ages of 60 for women and 75 for men, practically 29 women and 43 Man. House of the elderly has the capacity to host 80 people, provides no assistance at home. The structure does not develope day services, Seniors housed in this center are almost all introduced directly by the

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family or as a voluntary choice, only in few of cases have intervened Social Services or public entity. As regards, self-sufficiency situation and conditions of autonomy of these people, nor even half of them is not able self-sufficiency seniors have more than one handicap and 21% of the total elderly unable to care for himself. The problem of the presence of psychotic elderly requires the intervention of specialists and staff present has no such powers. The structure has only   a   social   assistant. The staff of employees is divided into two types: qualified, they have a suitable title to the work they perform, and a large number without any special training. The first part of the inadequacy of services reduced to hotel services, Central government contributes to the cost structure management, in particular to cover the assistant and medical activity and other entities cover the costs of other activities not well defined. Among the critical elements emphasize the inadequacy of   the   available   budget.
 There are architectural barriers, stairs but no lift this, in appropriate for people with handicaps. General conditions of the structure are discrete and hygienic conditions are to be improved, such as inadequate.

Should also say the presence of a different structure that deals with assistance for the elderly "Human Dimension" Albanian NGO that organizes particularly creative cultural activities for seniors and three private centers that provide services against payment.

Finding of the study

It is expected that these changes will have already anticipated a significant effect on the services sector to the elderly in the future.

 These data show that although simple problem of the elderly is very broad, and although services are limited compared to the need, they are not fully used.

 The challenges of the services sector to the third age can be summarized in the following key points:

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1. Failure of assumptions against the growing demand of users of services and its differentiation

2. Introduction of new political agendas and development strategies in order to standardize and make the services more professional

3. Long-term care and assistance for special groups in terms of resource consumption, quality schemes and more advanced forms of services.

4. It seems that in Albania hospitalization was the best way to assist the elderly, but in most cases this does not lead to improvements but negative consequences and to serious problems. Degradation to these stages was merely a consequence of the total lack of medical assistance against them, which is already an alarming situation which is observed in the residential institution.

5. Key challenges is therefore to help identify potential solutions for the individuals on the services sector to the third age to deal with such changes. It is not difficult to note that the small number of public services for the elderly requires a more radical policy formulation for the elderly, which of course requires adaptation and transformation of existing services, as a concretization of a different culture to the elderly and relevant supporting policies

Recommendations

Positive ageing policy should not be generic but should explore the changing life circumstances.

Services should not only be developed and implemented, but should also be systematically evaluated to assess their effectiveness with various societal groups. This will help to determine the most successful types of interventions for influencing perceptions of older people and ageing.

Higher education and other educational authorities should assume greater responsibility in providing the general public with accurate information on ageing, so that perceptions of older people can be developed based on fact rather than misconceptions.

This description suggested that in order to fulfill this vision approaches needed to go beyond traditional health and social care services and encompass a broader range of support to enable people to live independently stay healthy and recover quickly from illness have as much control over their own lives as possible .

Older people should be encouraged to become more involved in community activities, increase quality of life, and to reduce social isolation and the possible associated risks of abuse.

Implementation of the variety of social and medical services for the elderly and implementation of service standards for the elderly and increase the quality of services

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