Socio-Economic Child'S Wellbeing Impasse in South Africa: Towards a Theory-Based Solution Model

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Abstract : Research Issue: Under economic constraints, socio-economic conditions of households worsen discounting child's wellbeing to the bottom of many governments and households' priority lists. In such situation, many governments fail to rebalance priorities in providing services such as education, housing and social security which are the prerequisites for the wellbeing of children. Consequently, many households struggle to respond to basic needs especially those of children. Although economic conditions play a crucial role in creating prosperity or poverty in households and therefore the wellbeing or misery for children; they are not the sole cause. Research Insights: The review of the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation and the South African Child Gauge establish the extent to which economic conditions impact on the wellbeing or misery of children. The analysis of social, cultural, environmental and structural theories demonstrates that non-economic factors contribute equally to the wellbeing or misery of children, yet, they are disregarded. In addition, the assessment of a child abuse database proves a weak correlation between economic factors (prosperity or poverty) and child's wellbeing or misery. Theoretical Implications: Through critical social research theory and modelling, the paper proposes a Theory-Based Model that combines different factors to facilitate the understanding of child's wellbeing or misery. Policy Implications: The proposed model assists in broad policy and decision making and reviews processes in promoting child's wellbeing and in preventing, intervening and managing child's misery with regard to education, housing, and social security.
Keywords : children, child's misery, child's wellbeing, household's despair, household's prosperity
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