



# Meta-Synthesis of Development Components for Empowering Individuals with Disabilities through a Social Innovation Approach

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## Abstract

The social development approach is significant because its ultimate goal is to improve living conditions and enhance the welfare of individuals in society. It also addresses social dimensions of development, ultimately leading to social empowerment. Social development can mean creating opportunities and conditions for individuals with disabilities to participate in social, economic, and cultural activities. However, due to the dominance of economic and cultural approaches, its social aspect has received less attention. The aim of this paper is to analyze the content of studies on social innovation and social development and to formulate a new understanding of the fundamental concepts and scientific indicators related to this field.

The present research employs a descriptive-analytical method, with an applied objective, using qualitative content analysis and meta-synthesis over a time frame of social development studies from 2003 to 2023 and social innovation studies from 2014 to 2023. Data collection was conducted through documentary and library studies, focusing on articles, theses, books, and research projects related to the research topic. From the available articles, after screening and refining the data, a total of 18 articles in the field of social innovation and 33 articles in the field of social development were selected and entered the analysis phase.

The findings indicate that, considering the significant macro aspect identified around "social development" and the fundamental concepts embedded within it, such as "social entrepreneurship, self-efficacy, empowerment, physical capability, psychological capability, economic capability, social capability, political capability, cultural capability, legal capability, women's empowerment, skill training, and female-headed households," the empowerment of individuals with disabilities in various fields, in line with the social innovation approach and a focus on entrepreneurship and skill training for this vulnerable group, is achievable through educational and specialized organizations like the Technical and Vocational Training Organization in Iranian society.

**Keywords:** Development, Social Innovation, Meta-analysis, Empowerment, Individuals With Disabilities.

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### Problem Statement

Among the different approaches to social development, there are four general perspectives;

**Structuralist perspective:** This perspective believes that social development requires changes in social and economic structures. This perspective emphasizes that in order to achieve development, social and economic systems must be changed.

**Cultural perspective:** This perspective believes that social development requires changes in cultural values, beliefs, and ideas. This perspective emphasizes that local culture and identity must be used for development .

**Sustainable development theory:** This theory was proposed in the ۱۹۸۰s and believes that development should be in a way that meets the needs of future generations. The sustainable development theory also analyzes and justifies social development with an emphasis on preserving natural materials and the environment. The main concept of this theory is the close relationship between economic, social, and environmental development, and in order to achieve sustainable development, attention must be paid to the balance between these three factors.

**Social development approach:** Because its ultimate goal is to improve living conditions and raise the level of well-being of the people in society, and because in this path, in addition to considering the economic dimensions mentioned above, it also considers the social dimensions of development, such as the importance of social structure, social changes, distributive justice, i.e. fair distribution of resources, human-environment interaction, social participation, and ultimately social empowerment, and also considers the cultural dimensions of development, such as emphasizing the importance of raising awareness and emphasizing the importance of human values, or issues related to the development of technology and media, etc. And finally, because it also focuses on the empowerment of the disabled, social development can mean creating opportunities and conditions for the participation of the disabled in social, economic, and cultural activities. This requires flexible social structures and a review of laws and regulations so that the disabled can fully participate in society.

Disability is one of the important and sensitive issues in society that requires special attention and support. Empowering the disabled means creating opportunities and suitable conditions for independent living, active participation in society, and achieving one's potential. It seems that by using the two approaches of social innovation and social development, it is possible to analyze the development components for empowering the disabled, and accordingly, the research background corresponding to these two approaches has been examined. Therefore, the results of this study are presented in separate tables with the titles; Background of research conducted in Iran and abroad with the social innovation approach and background of research conducted with the social development approach, and finally, we will point out the importance of continuing research and studies in this field.

Accordingly, it can be said that no research has been conducted so far (at least to the extent of the researcher's search ability) on the role of social innovation in changing the conditions of the disabled in Iran. The few studies on the two components of social innovation and vulnerable or marginalized groups have also focused more on the reporting mode of organizational performance (performance reporting), which is mentioned in the analysis. More foreign articles can be found and used in this regard. The place of such studies in addressing marginalized groups in our country has been neglected, and it is hoped that the present study can be useful in this area and be the beginning of future studies.



## Research Method

Given the main objective of the research, which is to provide a conceptual model of social innovation and social development studies and in line with the research questions, the statistical population of this qualitative research includes all research and studies found in the past ten years. Therefore, from the perspective of the historical approach, the time interval of the past ten years, and the number of articles evaluated was ۱۸ on social innovation and ۳۳ on social development.

## Research Findings and Results - (Social Innovation Variable)

In the next step, the research findings for the social innovation variable are presented in two descriptive and analytical sections.

### A) Descriptive

Time period: Based on observations made in the field of social innovation, most research (۳۹٪) was conducted in ۲۰۱۸.

Authors' field of study: ۷۸٪ of the research was conducted in the field of management and economics.

Research Document: ۳۹٪ of the research conducted was from articles extracted from doctoral dissertations.

Research Origin: ۱۶٪ of the research was conducted by professors and students of the University of Tehran.

### B) Analytical

Regarding the variables related to the research topic, scientific studies in the field of social innovation were collected through scientific interventions and, after filtering, (۱۸) domestic and foreign articles, books, and analytical reports were entered into the content analysis phase as documents from ۲۰۱۷-۲۰۱۵. Finally, the descriptive results of the research have shown that in ۲۰۱۸, we witness the highest frequency in this field with ۳۹٪.

The field of "Management and Economics" also recorded the highest activity in conducting research related to the field of social innovation in the field of authors' studies with ۷۷٪, "Articles extracted from doctoral dissertations" with ۳۹٪, and "professors and students of the University of Tehran" with 16.7%.

As is clear from the number and dimensions associated with social innovation, the macro dimensions: "economic/managerial" and "social" have the most fundamental concepts associated with this approach.

In the second section, we will review the background of research with a social development approach.

### Findings and results of research on social development

In the next step, the research findings for the social development variable are presented in two descriptive and analytical sections.

### A) Descriptive

#### Time period

Based on observations made in the field of social development, most research (18.2%) was conducted in 2018.

Authors' field of study: 39.02 percent of the research was conducted in the field of sociology.



Research method: 60.6 percent of the research was conducted using a qualitative method.

#### B) Analytical

The concept of social development has various definitions and indicators. Therefore, considering the variables related to the research topic, scientific studies in the field of social development were collected through scientific and library resources and screening was carried out. A number of (33) scientific articles in the country from 2003-2013 were entered into the content analysis phase as documents. Finally, the descriptive results of the research have shown that the highest frequency of research was in 2018 with 18.2% and 39.2% of these studies were conducted in the field of social sciences-sociology and with a qualitative research method.

The above-mentioned studies conducted by experts, professors and students in the field of sociology in this field are worthy of interaction and attention in relation to the social innovation approach, in which the field of management and economics has the largest volume of activity.

In the next step, the macro concept of social development has been thematically analyzed and based on the macro dimensions and basic concepts extracted from (33) analyzed documents, in the form of a combination of findings and according to the indicators listed in Table (11), the macro concepts: government, civil society, various dimensions of development, social/welfare policies, social innovation, social security, social harms, entrepreneurship and rural development have been identified and identified as the most important areas related to social development and a new formulation has emerged from it, each of which has important and influential micro concepts in the social, economic, political and cultural fields in society.

As is clear from the multiplicity and diversity of the extracted concepts and their practical importance: the macro concepts of "government", "civil society", "social and welfare policies", "entrepreneurship" and "rural development" have been considered to have important factors and an influential role in relation to social development.

Regarding the relationship and correlation of research variables with the topic of empowering the disabled, it can also be said: Given the identified major and important dimension of "entrepreneurship" and the basic concepts embedded in it, including: "social entrepreneurship, self-efficacy, empowerment, physical empowerment, mental empowerment, economic empowerment, social empowerment, political empowerment, cultural empowerment, legal empowerment, women's empowerment, technical and vocational education, skill training, female heads of households", empowering the disabled in various fields with regard to the social innovation approach, material and non-material support from government sectors and non-governmental organizations, and the commitment to entrepreneurship and skill training of this vulnerable group through educational and specialized organizations such as the Technical and Vocational Education Organization is possible in Iranian society.



