

A Study of the Enactment of National Basic Livelihood Security Act in Korea: with Special References to the Role of NGOs

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This paper purports to examine the role and function of NGOs in social legislation processes of Korea since the economic crisis of 1997, focusing on NBLSA(National Basic Livelihood Security Act) movement. For this purpose, chapter two briefly examines the socio-economic crisis including mass unemployment and widespread pauperisation after the Korean economy received IMF bailout packages in 1997. Chapter three reviews recent social welfare reforms in Korea. Chapter four documents the role and function of NGOs in enacting the NBLSA, focusing on the activities of the Solidarity (the Solidarity for Enacting the NBLSA). Chapter five concludes that the movement for the NBLSA shows both possibilities and limitations.

KEY WORDS

Enactment Process of the NBLSA, IMF Economic Crisis, NGO, Productive Welfare

I. Introduction

It is widely accepted that the triangular structure of modern society, state, market, and civil society, has changed in accordance with the remarkable development of NGO¹⁾ (Non Government Organisation) since the end of the 20th century. NGO revolution has taken place throughout the world, and accordingly, its sphere of action has extended to the global level, beyond national boundaries.

This extension is quite remarkable in that NGO of civil society historically has played only marginal or, at best supplementary roles in modern society. Compared with the state, which exercises exclusive control over its subjects with ‘authority system’ and the market in which goods and services are produced and exchanged with ‘price system’, the civil society’s working principle does not seem so clear. Rather, the states of the Western world, more or less, have built welfare regimes in the latter 20th century in accordance with the value system of civil society; solidarity. In other words, the state, notably with the ideology of social democracy, willingly accepted the value system of civil society and settled progressive social policies including social security programmes that comprehensively guarantee the social rights of their citizen. It is very interesting to note that the 3rd sector has been crowded out from both public discussion and scholarly inquiry even as this sector continued to grow in consequence of the development of welfare state in Western world (Salamon, 1994: 110).

However, the end of the 20th century widely witnessed the crisis of confidence in state capacity to deal with social problems. Rapid societal and technological development of the latter 20th century inevitably brought unprecedented social problems, which cannot be dealt with or solved by bureaucratic state institutions or market organisations.²⁾ It vividly reflects recent changes of post-modern society, overlapped by four crises of modern welfare state, development, global environment, and socialism, respectively³⁾ (Salamon, 1994: 115-18), and thus there has been growing need for alternative institutions, which are

1) The concept of NGO has firstly appeared in the United Nations’ Charter of 1945, which comprised overall non-governmental associations including profit-making corporations. However, the concept, though somewhat loosely defined, has changed to specify civil society organization that implies both non-governmental and non-profit nature. Now it is generally termed to the 3rd sector, in contrast with the first sector (government) and the second sector (market).

2) Evers (1993: 5-6) argues that the third sector has its chance when market and state fail to coincide.

3) Salamon (1994: 117-18) points out two further developments: the dramatic revolution in communication and considerable global economic growth (during the sixties and early seventies) in explaining the recent surge of third-sector organising, as well as four crises mentioned in the text.

supposed to respond to unmet social and economic needs more susceptibly and effectively.

Interestingly enough, however, through the long history of 'state versus market' debate, there has been a silent continuity and a shared conviction between both camps in that they propose a shared concept which seeks to locate the bulk of all regulatory power in one sphere of society. However, as human needs, which can be resolved by neither state nor market, have erupted at the micro level, there has been increasing significance of spheres and values beyond market and state (Evers, 1993: 3). Now, increasingly more people are gathering together to form their own associations and societies in order to deal with their local, national or sometimes global problems by themselves. Moreover, as social agenda has changed from traditional 'capital versus labour' conflicts to such 'social exclusion' issues as human rights, global environment, gender, minorities, and so forth, the role and function of NGOs have growingly become increasing's significant since the end of the 20th century. And Korea is not an exception.

Although civil movements, initiated by major civil rights NGOs such as 'People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD, hereafter)' and 'Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ, hereafter)' have rapidly developed in Korea since the early nineties, they certainly are originated in the long tradition of social movements, which more or less sought for fundamental changes in class relations. It should be noted, however, that the newly developing civil movements differ from the latter in several ways. First, they pursue reforming the social system, rather than overthrowing the class system. Secondly, they set movements by lawful means, recognizing the legitimacy of state power. Thirdly and probably most importantly, the main group of their movements consists of professionals, which seem to be free from class interests.

It truly deserves our attention not because this new current of social movement is simply different from the existing movements, but because it achieves substantial progresses such as enacting new laws for protecting fundamental human rights like NBLSA(National Basic Livelihood Security Act) which is designed to guarantee minimum income to those eligible irrespective of their age, sex, and working ability.

It is in this regard that this research purports to examine the role and function of NGOs in social legislation processes of Korea since the economic crisis of 1997, focusing on NBLSA(National Basic Livelihood Security Act) movement. For this purpose, section two briefly examines the socio-economic crisis including mass unemployment and widespread

pauperisation after the Korean economy received IMF bailout packages in 1997. Section three reviews recent social welfare reforms in Korea, Section four documents the role and function of NGOs in enacting the NBLSA, focusing on the activities of the Solidarity (the Solidarity for Enacting the NBLSA). Section five concludes that the movement for the NBLSA shows both possibilities and limitations.

II. Socio-economic Crisis of Korea since 1997

It is generally agreed that the industrialisation process of Korea is not only remarkable but also very unique. From a least-developed traditional agricultural economy with unstable political situations, it recorded the highest economic growth rates during the last four decades, with relatively narrow income inequalities. To illustrate, Korea performed over 8% of economic growth rate during 1964~1997, more than three times the world average, and the average Gini coefficient which explains domestic income inequalities was 0.292 during 1975~1995.⁴⁾ In accordance. With the high economic growth and relatively narrow income inequalities, the poverty rate has drastically fallen from 20.04% in 1975 to 7.36% in 1995 (Park & Kim, 1998: 40). Moreover the average unemployment rate was 3.16% during 1980~1997 (Korea National Statistical Office), markedly lower than those of OECD countries.⁵⁾ Accordingly, the economic development of Korea merited the particular attention of those interested in the Third World development. Truly, it is not too much to say that Korea was a star economic performer before the 1997 crisis (OECD, 2000: 9).

However, the Korean economy, once the envy of most developing economies, has been in deep recession, and consequently has brought serious negative social effects since the latter 1997. The outbreak of 1997 economic crisis seriously damaged the economic achievements of the past nearly four decades, and was followed by a deep decrease in economic growth rate, and a skyrocketed increase in unemployment rate and poverty rate, as is illustrated in the following table.

4) Calculated on the basis of urban household expenditures. For more details refer to Park and Kim (1998).

5) The average unemployment rate of OECD countries during 1980-1991 was 7.24%. For more details refer to OECD (1993).

Table 1. Changes of Major Socio-economic Indicators

(Unit: %)

Year		GDP Growth Rate	Unemployment Rate	Poverty Rate
1996		6.8	2.0	6.3
1997		5.0	2.6	5.5
1998	1/4	-4.6	5.7	9.9
	2/4	-8.0	6.9	10.7
	3/4	-8.1	7.4	11.9
	4/4	-5.9	7.4	11.5
1999	1/4	5.8	8.4	11.5
	2/4	11.2	6.6	10.7
	3/4	13.0	5.6	9.1
	4/4	12.6	4.6	8.1
2000	1/4	12.6	5.1	8.6
	2/4	9.7	3.8	7.2
	3/4	9.2	3.6	6.5
	4/4	4.6	3.7	6.2

Source: Korea National Statistical Office, Major Economic Indicators of Korea, each year (in Korean); Ministry of Finance and Economy, Major Economic Indicators, 2001 (in Korean).

Although these indicators have recovered quickly since the first or second quarter of 1999, the income inequality has not improved to the level of 1997, as is shown in the following table.

Table 2. Changes of Income Share since 1995

	Lowest fifth (I)	Second fifth(II)	Third fifth (III)	Fourth fifth (IV)	Highest fifth(V)	V/I*	Gini coefficient
1995	8.5	13.5	17.5	23.0	37.5	4.41	0.284
1996	8.2	13.3	17.5	23.1	37.9	4.62	0.291
1997	8.3	13.6	17.7	23.2	37.2	4.49	0.283
1998	7.4	12.8	17.1	22.9	39.8	5.38	0.316
1999	7.3	12.6	16.9	22.9	40.2	5.50	0.320
2000	7.5	12.7	17.0	22.7	40.1	5.35	0.317

Note : * V/I = Income share of the highest fifth / Income share of the lowest fifth.

Source: Korea National Statistical Office, Annual Report on the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, each year (in Korean).

Income gap between classes has been rapidly enlarged since the 1997 crisis and the

Gini coefficient has increased and accordingly the income share of the highest fifth has become larger and larger. It increased by 5.35 times as much as that of the lowest fifth in 2000 from the 4.49 times in 1997. It vividly reflects the fact that it was and is still the rich who has benefited most from the industrialisation periods, while the poor, who has been virtually left behind in the profits of the industrialisation, suffers most severely from the economic crisis.

Therefore, the Korean government was forced to introduce social programmes to tackle these unprecedented social problems: high unemployment and widespread pauperisation. It should be noted, however, that the Korean government traditionally has paid little attention to the social programmes for social problems such as unemployment and poverty. The Korean government officials, who have enrolled in rapidly developing era, still hold spirits of economic development. Accordingly, policy priority has traditionally been given to economic development as a panacea to social ills. However, as the myth of economic development has collapsed, they were not able to grasp the policy point to tackling the unprecedented social problems, and turned out to be incapable of running social programmes effectively. It can be further argued that these social programmes can hardly be successful even if they actively introduce new schemes and allocate vast amount of budget to these programmes.

Whilst this lack of social techniques of the Korean government may be a historical legacy of the economic development era, it is noteworthy that the then president Kim Dae Jung was said to be relatively devoted to social reforms. It does not necessarily mean that he was a leftist politician with a firm faith in social equality. However, no one would doubt that he was a proponent of progressive policies towards solidarity and fair distribution. In his long political career, he has been appraised as one of a few politicians who have paid attention to the welfare of less-privileged class in Korea.

However, we cannot explain the social welfare development under Kim Dae Jung government simply by his personal political position or the 1997 economic crisis alone. Yet, it would be more reasonable to say that it would not have been possible had it not been for the role and function of NGOs, which will be examined in more details in the following chapter.

III. Recent Trends in Social Welfare Movement

As was briefly examined previously, the new trends in social movements of Korea, much in accord with the New Social Movement (Salter, 1991) of the Western world, which differ from traditional labour movement, have settled down successfully throughout nineties. Also it can be said that the movement for the NBLSA may demonstrate the most typical characteristics of this new trends in social movement. It would be more reasonable to say, however, that this movement developed in tandem with recent social welfare reforms.

It is widely accepted among students of social policy that speed and contents of the social welfare reforms under the Kim Dae Jung government were surprisingly epoch-making, compared with those in previous governments. In addition to the enactment of the NBLSA, which stipulates a social right to all nationals, the Kim Dae Jung government launched the integrated health insurance system, putting an end to the two decade long controversy over the choice between a fragmented or integrated health insurance system. It also extended the National Pension coverage to the entire population. Moreover, the Employment Insurance and Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance were extended to all employees. Each of these new policy initiatives promises to fundamentally change the Korean social welfare scheme (Kim, 2001: 170).

Whilst these social welfare reforms may be appraised as an epoch-making, it is quite noteworthy that the process of such reforms is totally different from the existing processes. Generally, it was the government that designed and proposed a new law and then the parliament examined and decided. It was thoroughly a government-centred process, and thus there has been no room for NGOs. In contrast, these social welfare reforms under the Kim Dae Jung government were strongly influenced by NGOs, which played a key role from the agenda setting and proposing policy alternatives, to the final enactment. This action was most clearly manifested in the enactment process of the NBLSA, and it can be said that this way of law making is very unique in the history of Korean welfare system and stimulates a lot of inspiration for the future development.

Seen in this light, it is worthy to examine the enactment process of the NBLSA, and the next chapter discusses the enactment process of the NBLSA in four stages: (1) issue making, (2) agenda setting, (3) policy alternatives, and (4) decision-making.

IV. Role of the Solidarity in the Enactment Process of the NBLSA

1. Issue Making Stage: Campaign for National Minimum

An organisation that has played a central role in the enactment process of the NBLSA is undoubtedly "Solidarity for Enactment of the NBLSA (the solidarity, hereafter)". It consisted of 64 major Korean NGOs such as PSPD, CCEJ, the Korean Council of Trade Unions, the Federation of Korean Trade Union, the Lawyers for Democratic Society, and the Representative Council for the Religious, the Korea Women's Associations United (KWAU), and so on. Since its inauguration in March 1999, the organization has pushed forward a single goal of enactment of the NBLSA, leading other social organisations in gaining a victory and having the law passed in the 206th Special Session of the National Assembly of Korea in August 1999.

It should be noted, however, that the solidarity had as its kernel the Committee of Social Welfare under the PSPD. In fact, the spirit and purpose of the NBLSA had already begun to sprout when the committee initiated the National Minimum Movement since 1994. The strategy for attaining its goal was not mobilisation of the public but development of a professional-centred movement for (1) procedural control in administrative procedures, (2) investigation into legal systems of social welfare programmes, and (3) judicial proceedings for realising a social right declared in the Constitution.

It was generally recognised among those who participated in the committee that this public lawsuit campaign⁶⁾ could not achieve its goal for national minimum, but they hoped that it could pave the way for guaranteeing national minimum. Truly, this public lawsuit campaign sped up the activities of the committee, enabling the committee's work to be extended to other sections of social welfare. However, this campaign for the national minimum has not been widely appealed to policy makers in Korea, and thus has not developed into major social agenda, but the campaign has come to turning point on

6) The public good lawsuits promoted by the Committee of Social Welfare under the PSPD at this time include: (1) the litigation claiming compensation for damages related to the National Pension Fund, (2) the litigation in relation to abuse of authorities of the Minister of Health and Welfare and the President of the Medical Insurance Association, (3) the litigation claiming nullification of levying local insurance premiums, and (4) the litigation claiming nullification of levying grants for old age.

occasion of the 1997 economic crisis. Now we turn our attention to the development of poverty issue in Korean society after the crisis.

2. Agenda Setting Stage: Emergence of the NBLSA after the 1997 Crisis

As was examined in the second section, the Korean economy had been in deep recession since the Korean government received bailout package from the IMF at the end of 1997. Along with this serious economic recession, crimes were rampant and the number of homeless was increasing day by day. Considerable number of low-income families was being broken up very quickly due to economic difficulties.

Thus, a social issue quickly came to surface to the effect that the poor should be the first priority with regards to distribution of social resources, particularly at a time of such a harsh economic crisis so that their right to survive might be systematically secured and social justice be served. It was therefore most vital to provide a systematic mechanism to maintain basic living standard for low-income families in order to unchain them from the vicious cycle of "economic crisis → mass unemployment → widespread pauperisation → family disorganisation." It was accepted that the most appropriate answer to this problem was a total reformation of the existing public assistance system and form a social agenda for the enactment of the NBLSA by which all nationals could be bestowed a social right.

The PSPD, which had been continuously interested in welfare of low-income families in Korea, has begun to call forth this issue by holding a public hearing under the title of "Social Alternatives to the High-rate Unemployment Society in Economic Crisis Era" on March 4, 1998. In May 1998, the Committee of Social Welfare under the PSPD held a press conference and released a joint statement, which around 200 professors of Social Welfare subscribed to, claiming for constructing an effective social safety net. Subsequently, "Association for Consulting Social Security Policies," which included major social organisations with the initiatives of the PSPD was formed in June 1998. It devoted itself to invoking public interest through holding a public hearing on "Enactment of the NBLSA and Maintaining the Decent Living Standard of Low-income Families". On July 23, 1998, the 'National Convention of the Petition for Enacting the NBLSA' which included 19 social organisations was formed and submitted the petition for the NBLSA.

All through the later half of 1998, the PSPD endeavoured to make a social issue of the petition. In particular, it tried to raise a social interest by focusing on a shocking incident in September 1998, when a father cut his own son's finger to receive an accidental insurance. It led to a public hearing and manifested a public statement under the catch phrase of "Enactment of the NBLSA is the only alternative to this economic crisis". It also released and distributed a manifesto of "the Declaration of National Right to Welfare" in corporation with 18 social organizations on November 26, 1998.

Mainly due to such social movements, the Bill for the NBLSA was reviewed and passed in the Subcommittee of Examination Bills under the Health and Welfare Committee in the parliament on Dec. 28, 1998. However, this bill was not submitted to the upper committee, the Health and Welfare Committee because the government strongly opposed passing the bill. It might be said that the passage of the bill in the Subcommittee, though not referred to the upper committee, would be very implicating to the further process of the enactment of the NBLSA.

3. Policy Alternative Stage: Formation of the Solidarity

At the end of 1998, when the petition movement ended in failure, the PSPD, which had primarily proposed the Bill, tried to evaluate the existing movement. The PSPD then decided to form a new organisation, which would comprise major NGOs in Korea. A priest of the Anglican Church (Rev. Gyung-Yong Song) was named as the chairman of a preparing committee for forming the new organisation. The committee formed the solidarity after many working level meetings between Jan. and Feb. 1999, and started a nationwide movement for enacting the NBLSA.

Completing its organisation, the Solidarity held its inauguration ceremony and a press conference on March 4, 1999, in which it publicised its statement and transmitted its requirement message to the Government and the Parliament. In this message, it demanded that (1) the NBLSA should be enacted during the first half of 1999, (2) the Government should decide and announce officially the poverty line, which is acceptable to the public, and (3) the Government should increase the number of social welfare officials for effective operation of the NBLSA. On March 17, 1999, immediately after the inauguration ceremony, the solidarity held a public hearing under the title of "Prospects

for the Enactment of the NBLSA" in which a sharp split in opinions came out between the Administration (the Bureau of Planning and Budgeting and the Ministry of Labour) and the solidarity concerning the NBLSA, and this split was maintained throughout the enactment process of the NBLSA.

In this first public hearing, the solidarity has come to clearly identify a huge difference between the Administration and the solidarity around the enactment of the NBLSA, and accordingly it set two parallel strategies: one was a movement for mobilising the public⁷⁾ and the other was a movement for consulting with, lobbying and sometimes forcing the key institutions like the Blue House (the presidential office), the prime ministry and political parties. However, the movement for mobilizing the public was not successful in that it failed to stir up public opinion for the NBLSA. Thus, the solidarity's strategy to press the government through mobilizing the public inevitably needed to be suspended. The executive committee of the solidarity therefore focused on the latter strategy with special emphasis on the Blue House.

Although the solidarity proclaimed a lot of statements, held several meetings with staffs of the key institutions, and appealed to public opinion by mass media very actively for the first two months (from the early March to the end of May 1999) after its inauguration, public opinion for the NBLSA was not as much aroused as it expected, and moreover the government and the ruling party were not willing to enact the NBLSA. In short, it can be said that the movement of the solidarity in this period was at a standstill. In this regard, some staffs of the solidarity sent an official letter to the executive committee indicating problems of strategies and organisation of the solidarity. In order to resolve these problems, the executive committee of the solidarity invited a specialist for organisation consultation, and he concluded that the executive committee and the policy committee had overlapping responsibilities and were confused in decision-making. It was also revealed that the solidarity had a structure unable to quickly cope with urgent pending problems.

In order to make a quick decision, it was necessary to form a working committee, which was supposed to be held at least once a week, and to set up a standing committee that would regularly meet every two weeks. In the process of this renovation, the

7) It included the Petition for Establishing Regulations to Secure a Basic Livelihood, the Great March of Unemployed Persons in Streets Across the Nation, Connection of Human Security Network to Promote Construction of Social Security Network, and the Movement for National Subscription.

solidarity evolved into a more effective and efficient structure (Ahn, 2000: 11).

4. Decision-making: Intensive Activities of the Solidarity

In June 21, 1999, when the solidarity improved capacity to deal with pending issues after completing a structure change, the then president, Mr. Dae-Jung Kim stated in Ulsan that, "the law for securing a national basic living standards would be enacted so that low-income families may enjoy decent living standards." This statement gave a decisive impetus to the solidarity, and on the very next day the working committee mapped various strategies to press the government and political parties for the enactment of the NBLSA, and the policy committee attempted to review and partly improve some articles of the NBLSA. However the government was still very reluctant on account of financial difficulties, and accordingly the ruling party did not assume a positive attitude toward the NBLSA.

In order to break this bottleneck, the solidarity invented a new strategy whereby it could mobilize the opposition party in order to force the ruling party to actively involve in the enactment process of the NBLSA. From late June of 1999, the solidarity held a series of meetings with chief executives of the opposition party, stressing the necessity of the NBLSA, persuading them and finally acquiring their favourable responses.⁸⁾ This strategy to mobilize the opposition party was quite effective, and gave a momentum for enactment of the NBLSA (Ahn, 2000: 12-13). On July 6, 1999, the opposition proposed the bill, "National Basic Life Act" very similar to the original NBLSA, which had been prepared by the policy committee of the solidarity. Now the ruling party changed their attitude towards the NBLSA, and proposed a bill similar to the original one.

The Subcommittee of Examination of Bills reviewed the original NBLSA (prepared by the solidarity and proposed by the ruling party) and opposition party's bill altogether and decided to adopt the former. It submitted the bill to the Health and Social Committee in which both ruling and opposition parties agreed that the NBLSA should be enacted.

At last, the bill was passed in the Health and Welfare Committee and further referred to the Legislation and Judiciary Committee, and accordingly passed in the general meeting of the 206th Special Session of the National Assembly. Throughout the 206th session

8) The solidarity had a meeting with Boo-Young Lee(Floor Leader of the opposition party), Sang-deuk Lee(Head of the Policy Committee of the opposition party), and two MPs Kyoo-Sun Hwang and Hong-Shin Kim on June 28.

(August 2, 1999 – August 13, 1999), the solidarity continuously consulted with the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the MPs in both ruling and opposition parties concerning some controversial articles of the NBLSA.

V. Conclusion: Possibilities and Limitations of NGO Activities in Social Welfare Reforms

As was examined in the previous chapter, the solidarity has played key roles throughout the enactment process of the NBLSA, while the government in charge of operation of the NBLSA has been reluctant throughout the enactment processes. In fact, when the solidarity launched a nationwide movement for the NBLSA at the beginning of 1999, the government including the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Bureau of Planning and Budgeting, the Ministry of Labour did not consider the NBLSA seriously, because they assume adverse attitudes towards rapid development of welfare programmes, and more importantly because they underestimated the capacity of the solidarity. Moreover, the direct interest groups of the NBLSA, the poor were not organized to project their own interests into the NBLSA. Facing with this bottleneck, the solidarity set up strategies to focus on the key institutions such as the Blue House, political parties and the government, and finally achieved their goal.

It should be noted, however, that some split of opinions has appeared among members of the solidarity, though not serious, soon after the enactment of the NBLSA, and leading role was handed over to the Government part. In accordance with the opinions of the Government, some part of the NBLSA was restricted and some schemes were postponed in formulation of the enforcement ordinance and regulations, though its basic sprits and essentials remained intact. Now it seems necessary to shed light on the question why the solidarity was not able to keep organisational ability and failed to maintain original schemes of the NBLSA. This subject requires further elaboration in terms of the prospect of NGOs in social welfare reforms.

In short, the enactment process of the NBLSA shows both possibilities and limitations of NGO activities in the social welfare reforms. While the NBLSA was enacted by the leading role and skilful strategies of the solidarity through full utilization of temporal

emergency of the IMF economic crisis, the poor, the very recipients of the NBLSA, did not back up the movement of the solidarity politically. It means that the solidarity had clear limitations to organise the poor towards general social reforms. In conclusion, it should be noted that organized and active participation of interested parties is indispensable not only in the enactment process, but still more important in the practical operation.

문진영은 연세대학교에서 사회복지학으로 문학사와 문학석사를 받고 영국 Hull대학교에서 철학박사 학위를 받았으며, 현재 서강대학교에서 교수로 재직 중이다. 주요 관심분야는 사회적 배제, 빈곤, 유럽통합이며, 현재 동아시아 복지레짐, 사회적 권리 등을 연구하고 있다(E-mail: jymoon@sogang.ac.kr).

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국민기초생활보장제도의 제정과정에 관한 연구 - NGO의 역할을 중심으로 -

문진영

서강대학교

20세기 후반 시민사회의 급성장으로 인하여 근대 산업사회의 전통적인 3주체라고 할 수 있는 시장, 국가 그리고 시민사회의 위상이 변화하고 있으며, 그 변화의 핵심에 비정부기구(NGO: Non Government Organisation, 이하 NGO)의 비약적인 발전이 자리잡고 있다. 흔히들 협회혁명(associational revolution)으로도 불리는 NGO 혁명은 구미의 선진국뿐만 아니라 아시아 아프리카 그리고 남미 및 구(舊)소련권 국가에 이르는 지구촌 곳곳에서 활발하게 이루어지고 있고, 그 활동영역과 영향력도 개별 국민국가의 틀을 넘어 서서 세계적인 차원에서 이루어지고 있다. 실로 21세기는 'NGO의 세기'라는 말이 실감되고 있다.

이러한 점에서, 본 논문은 NGO의 역할과 기능을 우리나라의 사회복지분야에 적용하여 설명할 목적으로 작성되었다. 이를 위하여 제2장에서는 국민기초생활보장법이 제정되는 배경적 맥락으로서, IMF 경제위기를 전후로 나타난 사회경제적 변화를 기술하고자 한다. 이어 제3장에서는 일반적인 관점에서 사회복지분야에서의 NGO의 기능과 역할을 살펴보고, 이를 기초로 DJ 정부 출범 이후 활발하게 전개된 사회복지제도의 발전과정을 NGO의 역할이라는 측면에서 살펴본다. 그리고 본 논문의 본문에 해당하는 제4장에서는 '국민기초생활보장법 제정추진 운동'이라는 사례분석을 통하여 국가제도의 형성에 있어서 새롭게 등장하는 NGO의 역할과 기능을 살펴보고, 제5장 결론부분에서는 사회복지분야에서의 NGO 활동의 가능성과 한계를 통해서 앞으로의 과제를 정리하고자 한다.

결론적으로, 국민기초생활보장법 제정추진과정은 사회복지분야에서의 NGO 활동의 가능성과 한계를 동시에 보여주고 있다고 할 수 있다. 국민복지기본선 확보라는 운동의 목표를 줄곧 견지해온 참여연대 사회복지위원회를 중심으로 우리 사회의 대표적인 시민단체를 망라한 연대회의를 결성하고, IMF 경제위기라는 시대적 급박성을 심분 활용하여 법제정을 성사시켰으나, 제도의 시행단계에서 직접적 이해당사자인 빈민에 대한 역할대행의 한계를 보이게 되었다. 결국 국민기초생활보장법 제정의 과정에서 우리가 배울 수 있는 교

훈은 법을 제정시키는 단계뿐만 아니라 제도의 구체적인 시행단계까지 법제정의 정신과 취지가 훼손되지 않기 위해서는 이해당사자의 조직화된 적극적인 참여가 필수적이라는 명백한 사실이다.