Poverty Essay, Research Paper

The Solution To Poverty in the USA

Poverty is a major problem in the United States today. Social, economical, political, and cultural factors all contribute to poverty. Education and economic development are two major issues that will help prevent poverty. The United States Census Bureau defines poverty as an economic condition in which people lack sufficient income to obtain basic needs for food, housing, clothing, health services and education. In other words poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. Poverty is an issue that the world faces everyday.

There are two ways to categorize poverty in a sociologist viewpoint. Absolute poverty simply refers to the condition in which one is unable to afford the necessities of life, whereas relative poverty refers to the condition in which one is unable to afford that which is considered a normal standard of living in society.(Heiner, 39) Absolute poverty is far more worse than relative poverty because they could quite possible not have a house or food to live on for everyday survival. Robert Kuttner states, There are basically five different categories in which each poverty stricken person can be place in. 1) Those who are not able to work because they are too old, too young, disabled, or tied down by social responsibility. 2) Those who are able and qualified to work but can not find work. 3) Those who are not equipped to fill available job either because they are undereducated. Or, because they re old skills have become outdated. 4) Those social and personal problems have brought them to a point of self-defeating discouragement. 5) Those who are underemployment, underpaid, or unable to get a fair price for what they have to sell.(pg.2) After defining which people are in poverty these categories can answer my question of why are they in poverty.

For economic factors, low wages would be the variable that would lead to poverty. Families that receive low wages can barely support their living expenses. Thus they would not have enough money for programs that would aid their children s education. Some families think that crime has better incentives than working a low paying job and thus crime could be put in as an economic factor that leads to poverty. Not having enough money for programs like education leads to the individual behavior of illiteracy and lower education, since the parents cannot afford to send their children to upper level education. And if these children know that they have no future in higher education, they will not have the motivation to do well in school and thus dropping out of school. In turn this will lead to having low self-esteem because they know that they will basically be stuck in poverty for the rest of their lives. This can eventually lead to substance abuse because they need something to overcome their high levels of stress that is produced by low-self esteem. In turn substance abuse could lead to sickness and disease, and then could possibly lead to mental illness. Once this happens, individual behavior will cause families to be in poverty.

For social factors, discrimination would be the variable that causes poverty. Racial discrimination from an employer could lead for that person to not receive a higher paying job, in which could lead to violence from the potential employee towards the employer. In turn crime could be committed in rejection of the employer. Thus the social factor of violence interconnects with the economic factor of crime. Also racial discrimination could lead to institutional discrimination. Thus this will lead to substandard schools in which teachers are told to split up a class and place each student in a designated group depending on their race and the teacher s assumptions of the student s learning ability from their social classifications.

For cultural factors, biased IQ test would be interconnected to substandard schools. These tests measure a student s school achievement. And if there are substandard schools, the students who are placed into the higher groups, they will do better than those who are placed in a lower group. And thus these IQ tests would lead to the deficiency theory, which suggests that the poor are poor because they do not measure up to the more well to do in intellectual endowment (Schifferes pg.3) . Also the social factor of racial discrimination is interconnected to the cultural factor of the minority race. Those who are the minority, the main culture will produce basic assumptions about minority s abilities to be successful or well being.

For political factors, meritocracy would be interconnected with the minority race. Meritocracy basically is the social classification by an individual s personal ability. The top wealthy and powerful elite population produces meritocracy. These are the people who believe that the fundamental assumption of capitalism is individual gain without regard for what the resulting behaviors may mean for other people, especially those in poverty (Schifferes pg.5) . Every social class has different values and means of living but the most important value that should be equal between each class is the value of education.

We must teach people who fall into the poverty status how important education is to their lives. All countries have economic development and jobs that can be filled everyday. People of the world must begin to take on poverty as their own problem and quit blaming the government. The most important factor in preventing poverty is education. How many poverty-stricken people do you see with a high school, college, or trade school degree? Not many. The point that I am trying to make is that without an education; you won t get a successful job. We need to begin to stress education at a young age so those children can learn that an education will lead them far in life. They need to be taught the up coming skills throughout their elementary, middle, and high school years that they can use in their day to day living. With the proper skills and education, children reaching adulthood will have a much better chance of staying out of poverty.

Economic development throughout the world is another contributing factor in preventing poverty. All countries need to keep their people in the labor force so they can earn money to afford the basic need of life. Without having the basic needs malnutrition, poor health, crime, drug use, mental illness, and starvation can occur. Countries need to emphasize to their citizens the importance of having work skills, which will keep then, employed and living above the poverty level. Everyone, poor or rich, needs a home, clothing, and food. There are people though that can not work due to illness, disability, or they are just too old. These people can not earn money to afford the basic needs of survival. These groups of people rely on volunteer programs, churches, government programs, and worldwide community support.

More fortunate people must also be willing to help their fellow citizens in need. Volunteer programs should be overflowing with people who want to help. For example, Habitat for Humanity is one organization who builds houses for the needy. If everyone dedicated some of their extra time and money in organizations that help poor people, poverty would begin to see a decrease. There are many other organizations that help poor people, and if everyone pitches in, one world problem may be diminished in the future.

Poverty is an issue which the world faces everyday. It is a constant struggle that cannot be ignored anymore. As you can see defeating poverty would take great efforts and contributions from all. We must better educate the youth and have education available for everyone all over the world. We also need to ensure that everyone has a job and that they are properly skilled for the job. People need to realize that poverty affects everyone, not only the poor and uneducated. Our world would be a much better place if everyone pitched in to help defeat a major problem around the world, poverty.

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