

Poverty level in papua new guinea: critical analysis



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About more than half (85%) of the total population of Papua New Guinea live in poverty. The article about the level of poverty in Papua New Guinea by a researcher -Dr Bourke was thrilling especially when only 15% of our population have access to quality living. Meaning good education, health, infrastructures services and a healthy diet. Dr Bourke's data's were extracted from the various studies conducted between 1963 -1990 which is quite outdated . The report stressed mainly on the implications and level of poverty in the rural areas than urban areas.

According to the research, Papua New Guineans were categorized into three classes: 1)Poorest 2)Less Poor 3)Least Poor The poorest were 18. 4% , less poor -42. 3% and the least poor was 39. 2% of the total population of P. N. G.. The latter, as stated in the article were from the rural villages. In my opinion i think those people are having some kind of access to basic developments may be because they were assisted by the government in terms of health, education , improved diet through subsidizing subsistence farming of home grown foods and other infrastructures.

However on a bigger scale we are still categorized as one of the poverty stricken nation in the pacific. According to Dr Bourke,'The implications of poverty in PNG were as result of low cash income, inaccessibility to health facilities, and limited access to secondary or tertiary education and the limited access to market. I strongly support this because it is a reality for the most remotest parts of Papua New Guinea including rural areas where the location is a barrier for them to have access to the basic services such as employment, health, education and trade.

One of the classic example is where i come from,(chimbu province) a district called Karamuvi is living in extreme poverty even though they have the land to produce food crops they don't have the markets to sell their surplus for money. They can not go to school or get proper health treatment because they don't have money as well as isolated from the main health centres. Currently there is only one form of transport linking to this place, is through airplanes.

Therefore i define poverty as a situation in which people are not having access to the basic services. In addition , Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on line, defines Poverty as: the condition of not having the means to afford basic human needs such as clean water, health care, nutrition, clothing and shelter. Dr Bourke said; that “ PNG has an overall life expectancy rate of 54 years while the worse provinces of Sandaun and Gulf provinces have an average of 46 years life expectancy rate”.

Generally speaking i think he is absolutely right because since 1963 when the research was first carried out to (21st)this century there wasn't any great improvements in the life expectancy rates of the Papua New Guineans. The current life expectancy rate is still below (54-57 years)60 years: world development indicators-2009. However they are certain people living over the age of 70 years and above simply because of improved health services, healthy diet, and Physical fitness.

For example they were two particular colonial leaders in my district who lived up to the age of 101. They were interviewed and asked how they lived their lives and this is what they said,"Mitupla save kaikai fresh kaikai long

garden na abuse bilong wara na bus tasol na save waswas olgeta de na wok na malolo gut na taim mitupla i sik mitupla save tokim ol pikinini blo mitupla kisim mitupla go long bikpla haus sik. " Another obvious example is Sir Micheal Somare and Grand Chief Palius Matane , they are over the age of 70 years.

The research further indicated that PNG has the highest infant mortality rate of 73/1000 births and has the highest maternal death rates of 930 every pregnancy, which means that every mother who is pregnant has about 1% chances of surviving due to birth complication. In comparison with the current situation , i disagree with the above statement because statistics of economic indicators have shown that our population is growing rapidly which implies that more babies are born every year .

According to the report , " a lot of people from the poor areas migrate into towns and cities hoping for better services and conditions of life while very few students complete secondary and tertiary education". This is very true especially for rural-urban migrants who are moving consistently into urban centres in search of what they call "easy life". For instance most people from the rural parts of highlands provinces and some rural parts of Morobe are settling in the vicinity of the city trying to earn their living.

They left their homes and are in Lae city because they want to enjoy a decent life meaning basic education(primary), health services and a good diet. The research further indicated that PNG has one of the highest illiteracy rates among rural villages except for Mortlock island with the highest educated citizens while Pomio has the least and poorly educated population.

In my opinion i think it is right to say that the highest illiteracy is among rural villages because most of the population are living in the rural areas where they don't go to school.

One reason of them not going to school are inaccessibility and unavailability of schools and school fees which resulted in them being illiterate. Dr Bourke has mentioned that the high poverty rate among the rural villages can be addressed through the following : Better quality of primary education, Improved access to secondary education; High cash income especially from agriculture and livestock; Better food security; Repair infrastructure and bettercommunication.

I strongly believe that the above remedies will help address the issue of poverty in rural villages because other developing nations like East Asia and Sub -Sharan Africa have taken a similar approach and have at least achieved some changes. For instance as cited in the BA 367 lecture Notes," these two regions have been the homes to three quarters of the worlds poor, despite this East Asia has experienced the most rapid poverty reduction due to sustained economic growth.

The latter will be achieved by us if the government and elite citizens of PNG unite and look into the rural areas of PNG and try to develop it by using the available resources efficient reference to Dr Bourke's mention about reducing poverty in rural areas i seriously think that the PNG government really need to take serious initiatives in addressing this issue because Majority of the population are affected and PNG is heading for the worse . Though we say PNG is rich we are still ranked as the lower income earning

countries at the global scale as well as one of the poor countries in the Pacific.

We are in fact rich in natural resources like gas, minerals, timber, coffee, cocoa and oil palm but we don't have the appropriate technology to process and manufacture them into useful finished products. Therefore I suggest that the government should implement long-term development goals and other positive options such as improve education, health, subsidizing agriculture and livestock, improve infrastructure services by maximizing the available resources that we have. In conclusion, the report has stressed a lot on rural areas because this is where most of PNG's population are and they are the main victims of poverty.

The main causes of poverty were: inaccessibility to improve health, education and unavailability of markets. To reduce poverty rate I seriously would recommend both the government and the citizens of PNG to think and act positively by using the free natural resources with other given resources such as human resource and capital to be integrated and share the benefits equally among the various parts of the country including the remotest location. REFERENCE LIST BA 367 Hand outs, 2010. Mr Morrow, Development Economics Lecturer. University of Technology, Papua New Guinea.

[Http://www. google. com](http://www.google.com), Economic development Indicators, 1997 retrieved on 7th April, 2010 Free, Encyclopedia on line, 19th march 2010 TOPIC: CRITIQUE ON THE LEVEL OF POVERTY IN RURAL AREAS IN PNG. About more than half (85%) of the total population of Papua New Guinea live in poverty.

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