

Poverty

Sociology



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Poverty is a financial condition in which an individual is not able to sufficiently meet their physical needs or the needs of their family. If a person has to make choices to go without some essential physical necessities, then he or she is living in poverty.

Why do people find themselves in poverty?

There are many reasons why people may find themselves living in poverty. Some of the reasons include unemployment, lack of adequate income, circumstances beyond one's control like divorce or a lawsuit, issues that prohibit family members from working like disability, bad choices like alcohol abuse, drug abuse or bad investments, lack of compassion i. e., people and institutions having adequate resources but are unwilling to lend a hand to help the poor and lack of educational opportunities.

What are some of the cultural components that lead to a culture of poverty?

Cultural factors like attitudes, beliefs, values and practices can lead to a 'culture of poverty' that tends to perpetuate itself over time even if the structural conditions that originally gave rise to it were to change. A family history of poverty is one of the root causes of widespread poverty. Poor children are often victims of poor parenting skills and physical, emotional and sexual abuse which they often pass down along with other unhealthy practices like drug and alcohol abuse and to their children once they become parents. Poor self esteem and feelings of apathy can also contribute to poverty. In some cultures, all people live in poverty since something better is not easily attainable.

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What other social issues can cause someone to find themselves in this situation?

Social issues that perpetuate poverty include factors like racial discrimination which can occur by contract or by contact (Susan, 2011).

Racial discrimination by contract refers to the racially discriminatory treatment that people experience when trying to access opportunities such as quality education or jobs. Racial discrimination by contact refers to the way in which people segregate themselves by choosing to interact only with those from their same racial group. Other social factors that affect poverty include sex discrimination and unequal access to opportunities. Women have been found to earn lesser pay or have smaller pensions when compared to men. Again, the level of poverty has been found to be higher in rural areas which have lower degree of urbanization and scarce educational and employment opportunities.

What can be done to improve this condition?

Poverty can be eliminated by generating more employment, raising the level of minimum education and making the social elite aware of the possibility of removing it. The government can be presented with concrete programs that will indirectly eliminate poverty like craftsmen training schools, farm schools that try to raise production, adult education, small business opportunities and development skits to help create awareness and educate the public that poverty is not inevitable. One can also draw upon the resources of social institutions like Chamber of Commerce, university, research institutions, government, voluntary organization, U. N., U. N. agencies for this purpose.

What should the role of the church and the family be in dealing with this situation?

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Churches need to be more proactive and participate in charity and voluntary programs to assist and uplift the poor instead of spending money on buildings that are over the top with architecture, modern conveniences and techie tools. They need to be more active in donating items of basic necessities and holding soup kitchens so that the needs of the poor around them could be met. Families and neighborhoods can also make a difference in the fight against poverty by reaching out to the poor in love and help them any way they can. These families may not be able to change the world, but they can make a huge impact in the life of the poor.

References

Susan, Jennifer, 2011. Social Factors That Influence Poverty in the United States. E-How.

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