

Why is new mexico poor politics essay



New Mexico is located on the southern parts of America and it consists of several mountains, extensive lands and also among the least densely populated states. The State is inhabited by the Native American inhabitants for several centuries such as the Indians. New Mexico State formed part of the Royal Spanish rule Spain that was a section of Mexico. As a result, New Mexico contains the highest proportion of Hispanics population than any other State who include lineage of the Spanish settlers and migrants from Latin America. The state contains a high fraction of Indigenous people of the America such as people from the native tribes of Navajo and Pueblo. Accordingly, the demographic and culture of New Mexico is predominantly Hispanic – at 46 percent – with a combination of Native American influence. The American 2011 Census Bureau report approximates the population of New Mexico at two million which is a 1. 4 percent increase in population as compared to 2010 (United States Census Bureau).

New Mexico is considered as one of the America's poorest states where the poverty levels exceed more than 20 percent of the entire population.

According to the United States 2011 Census Bureau, it is estimated that 21. 2 percent of the inhabitants of New Mexico live in poverty. Numerous factors differentiate poverty in New Mexico with poverty in the other American states; the American poverty is basically an urban occurrence, whereas in New Mexico the poverty rates are mostly in the rural areas. According to United States Census Bureau, the 2010 Census Bureau approximated that only 22 percent of individual who live in poverty reside outside of the urban areas. However, in New Mexico, it is estimated that 52 percent of the poverty-hit persons live outside the metropolitan areas, as they are

concentrated in the rural areas. The poor people in New Mexico live in isolated rural regions that are considerably far from formal job opportunities, appropriate medical care, and state organization offices from where they can obtain government assistance such as food stamps and Medical aid. As a result, poverty in New Mexico is as a result of the unfavourable geographical and climatic conditions, inadequate access to employment opportunities, education, healthcare and societal support services.

Geographic Distribution of Poverty in New Mexico

New Mexico has a total area of about 120, 981 square miles and it borders the state of Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, Colorado and Utah. The state has inadequate water resources with the surface water covering an area that is approximately 250 square miles. The landscape of New Mexico varies from expansive deserts that contain mesas and high snow peaked mountains that give the State an arid image. The Northern parts of the State, though arid in nature, form an immensely forested mountain wilderness that covers a considerable section of New Mexico. The Sangre Mountain forms a rugged and rocky landscape running unevenly across the eastern parts of the Rio Grande. As a result, the geographical landscape of New Mexico makes the land unfavourable for agricultural activities due to the ruggedness of the land and inadequate water. Several people who live in the rural area are poor and isolated from the essential areas for community support such as agriculture, education, government assistance and Medicare activities resulting in high levels of poverty (Forrest 98).

New Mexico, similar to the rest of the U. S., faces extreme poverty levels that are concentrated in the rural regions. These areas in New Mexico are

predominantly far from metropolitan areas that people can easily access, travel to work, shopping, and receiving medical care and government assistance. Garcia and Paul note that the poverty levels are higher among the remote regions where it has increased rapidly and also declined at a slower rate in comparison to the urban regions (267). In this State, the forces promoting economic growth in developed areas usually neglect the countryside or the resources are directed to suburban and metropolitan regions.

Demographics of New Mexico

The population of New Mexico according to the 2012 United States Census Bureau is estimated at more than two million people that translate to a 1. 4 percent increase. 52 percent of the inhabitants of New Mexico were born in the State, 37 percent were born in different U. S. States while about 10 percent are from different nationalities. The New Mexico population is made up of 8 percent who are under the age of 5 years, 25 percent under the age of 18 and above while 13 percent aged 65 years and above. The female population consist of approximately 50. 9 percent of the entire population in the state whereas the male population make up the remaining percentage. Among the American states, the population of New Mexico has the largest proportion of Hispanics who comprise of 47 percent according to the 2011 as well as the lineage of Spanish settlers and current migrants from the Latin America (United States Census Bureau).

New Mexico is regarded as a minority majority state in America where the citizens who are non-Hispanics make up less than 50 percent of the entire population. The American 2010 census bureau estimates that 69 percent of

the population are Whites 2. 2 percent African Americans, 9. 5 percent American Indians and 2 percent of the population consist of other races. On the other hand, the United States Census Bureau report reveals that 1. 6 percent of the population in New Mexico is Multiracial comprising of Hispanics, Asians, Whites and Africans. Majority of the Hispanics in this State have a Spanish ancestry from the Spanish colonists who inhabited the region during the 16th to the 18th century (Garcia and Paul 254).

Historical and Cultural Factors for Poverty in New Mexico

New Mexico was initially inhabited by the Paleo-Indians, American Indians and Ancestral Pueblo inhabitants. The initial settlement in New Mexico was established in 1609 at the foot of the Sangre Mountain range under the Spanish rule. New Mexico has passed through several claims of ownership by several nations such as Spain, Mexico, and the United States (Forrest 104). Consequently, the inhabitants of New Mexico hold diverse beliefs concerning the actual ownership of the region and the way of life.

During the Mexican War for Independence in 1821, Mexico claimed the region, which was under the control of Spain at that time. The State of Texas also claimed a considerable section of the New Mexico to the eastern parts of Rio Grande after seceding from Mexico in the year 1836. This was after the state of Texas erroneously supposed that the Hispanic settlement in the Rio Grande region was similar to the established settlement of Mexicans in Texas. The furthest northern east section of New Mexico State was under the rule of France, although it was sold to America under the deal of the Louisiana Purchase that took place in 1803. The Texas compromise in 1851 resulted in Texas ceding claims over New Mexico while the American

government created the New Mexico Territory. The American congress affirmed New Mexico as an independent forty seventh American State in 1912 (Esparza 311).

The poverty levels have ever since remained high due to the historical conflicts over the ownership of the state between Mexico, Spain and the United States. The ownership claims of New Mexico resulted in the underdevelopment of New Mexico as the authorities concentrated on acquiring and protecting new territories. However, the state has benefited from the federal spending that has increased the employment opportunities in the state. Due to the increased federal government spending, New Mexico's population increased swiftly after the Second World War from almost 550, 000 in the year 1940 to an estimated two million people in 2011. However, the poverty levels are still at record high level because the poor people in the state are in the remote places that are far from the urban regions that offer employment opportunities (Bane and Quintero 92).

The Causes of Poverty in New Mexico

Although war on poverty was declared more than fifty years ago, several states – particularly New Mexico – face high levels of poverty, which has always remained pervasive. Child poverty is also prevalent and widespread in New Mexico with more than 24 percent of the States children living in poverty. The poverty levels in New Mexico are geographically concentrated to the rural areas, while the shifting American economy has worsened the situation. Albuquerque is the leading urban region in New Mexico with more than 30 percent of the population (Bane and Quintero 99). The Metropolitan

town records significantly reduced poverty levels as compared to other regions in the State.

Large Income Disparity

The poverty levels in New Mexico are more pronounced due to the large income disparity. The income distribution in the State is uneven in New Mexico in comparison to other states in the U. S. Murphy argues that the income disparity increases the impact of poverty on the people while it also undermines the efficiency of anti poverty intervention by aggravating the poor people's sense of deficiency (91). Several studies on the poverty situation in the United States have revealed a connection between income inequality and high levels of poverty. The New Mexican Tax and Revenue Department assessment reveals that the income disparity of the State is at 13. 1 and this makes New Mexico to be ranked as the third most unequal state.

Occurrence of the Minority Groups

Another major contributor of poverty and economic disparity in the State of New Mexico is the occurrence of the minority groups such as the Hispanic, African Americans and Native Americans population who according to their history they have been prone to experiencing poverty. According to Garcia and Paul, New Mexico poor people mostly originate from the minority population that live in the remote counties (250). According to the U. S. poverty bureau, the three minority groups that live in the unrelenting high poverty remote areas of New Mexico have combined poverty levels that range from between 34 percent and 42 percent.

Lack of Employment Opportunities and Unfavourable Landscape

Poverty in New Mexico is mainly caused by the lack of well paying opportunities and unfavourable landscape for agriculture particularly in the rural areas. However, in spite of people in New Mexico engaging in some form of work, poverty is still prevalent owing to inadequate pay and a large number of dependants in the families. It is noted that more than 72 percent of the poor families in New Mexico consist of no less than one parent who engages in employment activities. The State tax data also reveals that more than 75 percent of the poverty-stricken families obtain their income from employment activities while about 28 percent of the State's working needy people are in full time employment (Bane and Quintero 87).

Overreliance on low skill and low paying industries

The high level of poverty in New Mexico is also attributed to the State's extreme overreliance on the conventionally low skill and low paying agricultural and services industries. For instance, in 2008, the poverty level for the full time workers in the agricultural sector in the state was at 16 percent of the total poverty levels in the State. In addition, more than 10 percent of the people in New Mexico who were under full time employment in the services sector were poor (Simmons 38). The low wages in the State are not limited to the agricultural and services sector but in almost all sectors of the economy. Sherman in his research reveals that in 2008, 36 percent of New Mexican workers earned less than \$8 per hour while the median wage per hour for the lowly paid workers was at \$6. 49 (103). As a result, the low wages in New Mexico is the main contributing factor why the

State is ranked in the 43rd in the work force participation in the United States. Additionally, the 2008 per capita individual income for the State was estimated at \$21, 800, which is almost 75 percent of the United States mean annual income (Esparza 316). As a result, the State is ranked in the second lowest position in income and unemployment levels.

Lack of Appropriate Homes

According to Simmons, New Mexico records high incidences of severe poverty where more than 52 percent of the poor households receiving low incomes that are below 50 percent of the United States poverty threshold (32). In comparison, it is estimated that 41 percent of the American poor households live below the federal poverty threshold of extreme poverty. The high incidences of extreme poverty in New Mexico are connected to lack of appropriate homes and diseases that are caused from deprivation, for instance malnutrition. As a result, the USDA in 2009 ranked New Mexico as the leading State in incidents of food insecurity and hunger. Consequently, poverty affects children negatively in New Mexico in terms of school performance, physical wellbeing and cognitive abilities for children experiencing unrelenting and severe poverty (Sherman 93).

Solution to Poverty in New Mexico

Promoting economic security

Economic security ensures that families do not enter into severe poverty the economy becomes unstable and the employment opportunities cease. Consequently, eligible families should embrace federal and state programs that offer family assistance such as the Nutrition Assistance Programs and unemployed insurance. The economic security entails opportunities that are <https://assignbuster.com/why-is-new-mexico-poor-politics-essay/>

essential in helping families establish their assets for the future needs (Nieto-Phillips 53). Financial or economic security in New Mexico is essential so as the people can have enough income in meeting their basic requirements. As a result, they should be protected against extreme charges on the financial services and provided with feasible means in generating wealth. According to Licher, enhancing financial security is a sure way of reducing poverty and protecting other stable families and people from the traps of poverty (160). As a result, the families should be supported in ensuring that stable employment opportunities are created for them apart from the introduction of Children Care Tax Credit, minimum wages and creating personal savings accounts in promoting financial security.

Training and Employment Opportunities

In addressing poverty in New Mexico, the population should have access to quality education and training in the appropriate fields so as to participate in development activities. In New Mexico, several people require vital work support, for instance, reliable transport system and proper care services in advancing their education and career. Additionally, the people in New Mexico require employment opportunities so that they can be financially secure in developing their monetary assets and accumulating their savings. Several studies reveal that the poverty stricken population in New Mexico should be empowered to help themselves rather than giving them public assistance and grants. As a result, education, labour force training and proper work support, for instance financial literacy training is a crucial base in breaking the detrimental cycle of poverty in New Mexico (Bane and Quintero 87).

Improving Educational Achievement

It is widely recognized that higher education to an individual is the most suitable course in any community or nation in fighting poverty. When individual have received high education, there is usually a possibility that they will participate in the active workforce, receive a high income and proper health care. As a result, the strength of economies in America is often correlated to the general levels of educational achievement. Consequently, the population in New Mexico should adopt the long term plans of higher education attainment in ensuring that they effectively minimise the severe poverty in the State. According to Licherter, the federal government should seek for ways of raising the whole levels of educational attainment in New Mexico by making college education affordable among the low – income earners in the State (153).

Strengthening Families and Communities

Enhancing the health and stability of the poverty stricken families is a vital tool in successfully reducing poverty in New Mexico. As a result, the federal government and the State should ensure that the increasing numbers of low income families have sufficient access to proper health care services. The parents, mainly single parents, should be given adequate assistance by the government such as basic shelter and food expenses as they are usually prone to poverty. These policies should also aid the families to live in unity and assist the youths in finding stable homes so as to reduce teen parenting and alleviate poverty (Esparza 321).

Affordable Housing for Poor People

Housing affordability in New Mexico is a significant issue in the State and the entire country. In New Mexico, the affordability challenge has resulted in an acute decrease in the housing market throughout the nation leading to an intense housing market recession and devaluation. The high costs of housing have resulted in several people in New Mexico being forced to significantly reduce their permissible expenditure so as meet the basic needs, for instance food, clothes, health and child care and education (Sherman 90).

Conclusion

In conclusion, New Mexico faces extreme poverty levels that are concentrated in the rural regions. The extreme poverty levels are mainly cause by large income and economic disparity, occurrence of the minority groups, lack of appropriate homes and extreme overreliance on the conventionally low skill and low paying agricultural and services industries. However, these challenges can be managed and offer a solution to the high poverty levels that are experienced in New Mexico (Nieto-Phillips 65). As a result, the federal government and the New Mexico authorities should ensure that the extreme levels of poverty are solved so as to achieve a poverty free society in the United States.