

Poverty in the philippines



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Poverty reduction has been a major problem for all developing countries. As Kofi Annan stated “ The biggest enemy of health in the developing world is poverty” (Kofi Annan, cited in WHO, 2013). Poverty is experienced all over the world but its effect is most significantly seen in developing countries like Philippines, one of the nations with a high rate of poverty according to World Health Organisation.

Addressing this problem poses an extensive standing struggle to the Philippines since this has been the primary objective of previous administrations. According to Schelzig (2005), the Philippines has obvious unequal income distribution which supports the conclusion that the Filipinos in the lower distribution is highly susceptible in impoverished living conditions and depravity from basic sustenance and necessities, leaving households vulnerable (Schelzig, 2005).

Over the past decade, since Philippines embraced the millennium development goal of the United Nations to eradicate poverty and to improve the lives of its people, issues on poverty and hunger have become more and more prominent in rural and depressed areas, despite of the improvement of its economic status and the implementation of programs to address these problems, poverty rate has not been reduced to what is expected.

Based on the information that I have collated, this essay will show statistical status of poverty, examine and/or discuss briefly the primary causes of poverty, programs that is in place to address poverty and the obstacles faced by the government in implementing those programs to ease the suffering of the people. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is created to deliver the whole United Nations with a blueprint to

work collaboratively towards a common objective to fight against poverty and starvation, illnesses, illiteracy, ecological deprivation and discrimination against women.

Basically to improve lives of the people around the world specially to the developing and underdevelop countries, agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. (World Health Organisation, 2013). Poverty – defined by European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) poverty has two types; absolute and relative poverty. “ Absolute poverty is when people have shortage or even absence of basic human needs for existence”. Example of basic needs are: food, shelter, clothing and medicines to stay alive. Relative poverty is when some people’s way of life and income is so much worse than the general standard of living in the country or region in which they live that they struggle to live a normal life and to join in social, economic and cultural activities” (EAPN, 2013). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) defined poverty as “ deprivation of essential assets and opportunities to which every human is entitled” (ADB, 1999). Corruption – commonly defined as the misuse or mishandling of civic office for personal advantage (World Bank).

As Kaufmann and Siegelbaun (1996) stated that “ from this definition it should not be concluded that corruption cannot exist within private sector activities. It also exist in activities regulated by the government. In several cases of corruption, the abuse of public power is not necessarily for one’s private benefit but it can be for the benefit of one’s party, class, tribe, friends, family” (Kaufmann and Siegelbaun, 1996).

The Philippines is an island nation with the combination of “ interracial mixture of prehistoric Negritos, Indonesians, and the Malays, the Filipino

people were born” and it’s been a country of interest of other powerful nations (Nebres, Zulueta, 2008) Possibly the reason why the Philippines has never really taken control of its own economic, political, and social liberalisation is that the nation has been attacked with nonstop and unforeseen experience from the plans of other countries. The impact of these nations and states in the country gave the Philippines a very small room to be unique in its traditional culture.

Hence the case of American and Spanish cultures and values, which remain to exist at present (Ramos, 2010). From the time when it gained independence from the United States in 1946, the Philippine economy has been on an unlucky course, going from one of the wealthiest nations in Asia (next to Japan) to one of the poorest. Progress directly after the war was fast, but reduced over time. Years of economic mishandling, corruption and political instability during the Marcos dictatorship regime contributed to economic stagnation and resulted in national instability (United States Department of State) (n.).

However, economic suffering did not hinder Filipinos from seeking better opportunities elsewhere in the world. This was the starting point for the ongoing growth of the Filipino migration in the Western world. Based on National Statistics Office, Filipinos living outside the country is eleven million of the total population (NSO, 2009) Philippines is a democratic country and it is a legitimate nation with an executive structure. The Philippine government was indeed rooted in history from the Spanish invaders, and both disagreeable and influential.

As Endriga writes that “ the outstanding characteristics of the Spanish colonial regime [...] was the wide discrepancy between the letter of the law, which upheld idealistic and noble standards, and actual practice, which was repressive and oppressive” and he notes “ [w]e really have a system that is excessively dominated by the presidency, one that is almost a dictatorship”(Endriga, 2001). In relation to this, according to McCoy (1995) it is also a method in which certainly not escape from the harm called “ traditional politics” - the idea of civic influence being exercised for the advantage of a few clans and allies.

And he also say that “ the subversion of the public weal in the service of private, familial wealth. ” Filipinos also termed this practice as a " Political dynasty", the same with oligarchy in dogmatic discipline. It is a tradition for a legislator's descendant, partner, associate, or relatives, to have or to run the similar or other administrative position (unknown source). Philippines is moving forward from agrarian centered to more on service and industry. The total number of workers in the country is around 38. 1 million. Rural sectors comprises 32 percent but only contributes about 13. of GDP. While the 13. 7 percent is on industrial sector and credits for 30 percent of GDP.

Meanwhile the remaining 46. 5 percent is in the service division and are accountable for 56. 2 percent of GDP (UN, 2006). According to Aldaba (2009) and Schelzig (2005), some of the main cause of poverty are: High population growth rate; control concerns comprising dishonesty and a frail government; persistent blows and experience to hazards and threats such as financial crisis, conflicts, and natural calamities; failure to develop the agriculture sector.

In the past several years, the country experience so many problems – from worldwide financial crises, increased petroleum and food prices, political shames, and overwhelming natural disasters. These have aggravated the condition of those people already in extreme situation and dragging even more people into poverty. That is why government effort seem either too weak or useless to even cause a slight improvement to the lives of the people (Datu, 2010). However, international organisation have been working with the Philippine government to continue to pursue its goal to reduce poverty in the country.

The Philippines has been on a constant chase of poverty improvement. However, with the recent international financial crisis, continuous severe natural disasters, and escalating fuel and food prices, the government's goal of decreasing poverty is becoming more difficult since these situations have been dragging more individuals into poverty (Rivera, Pizarro, Aliping, Reyes, 2012). The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) recently released an official poverty statistics that the annual per capita poverty threshold goes up by 26. percent from 2006 to 2009, equated to 21. 6 percent between 2003 and 2006. And 26. 5 percent of the total population or an equivalent of 25 million poor Filipinos live below poverty line (NSCB, 2009). Although poverty incidence between families has slightly declined from 2006 to 2009, the scarcity occurrence amongst the inhabitants has improved by 0. 1 percentage point (NSCB, 2009). And is still comparatively high compared to that of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam as per the reports from the United Nations development Program (UNDP, 2009).

Sustenance rate or percentage of nourishment of poor family has enhanced since 8.7 percent in 2006 to 7.9 percent in 2009. And according to the report solitary household per 100 was raised out of foodstuff scarcity between the periods of 3 years. And in relation of poverty occurrence among families, there was an insignificant drop to 20.9 percent in 2009 from 21.1 percent in 2006. And based on these statistics two families were shifted out of poverty per 1000 in the above period (UNDP, 2009). Moreover, subsistence incidence among population has slightly enhanced from 11.1 percent in 2006 to 10.8 percent in 2009. And based on these data one in 100 Filipinos stepped away from the poverty line during these period (UNDP, 2009). Although the general movement of poverty rates is going downward, the decline has not been persistent enough to give the country a better chance of attaining the MDGs (Datu, 2010). Moreover, about 75 percent of all poor families live in rural areas (UNDP, 2009). As Aldaba cited, “important economic growth only happened in sectors and areas far from where the poor are.

Poverty is an agricultural occurrence” (Aldaba, 2009). Government programs and initiatives towards the alleviation of poverty has been laid since the country embraced the United Nations Millennium Development Goal. Based on the data that I have gathered, Philippines is really struggling to reduce poverty because of the obstacles that hinders development. The government is lacking the drive to push the programs and initiatives of domestic and international organisations. They should address first the real cause why these programs were not successful.

They should create a concrete solution to overcome these hindrances like corruption, overpopulation. Poverty cannot be reduce whatever programs they create if they don't know the real cause of it. The programs should focus most on rural and depressed areas. Allocate more monetary support on education, health, and social awareness. Poverty is a real huge problem worldwide especially to the developing countries. Poverty is a broad problem that should be address in many ways. That is why this is the primary millennium development goal of the United Nations.

Poverty has been the long standing struggle of the country because the government don't have a clear direction to fight this overwhelming crisis. Despite the improvement of its economic status and the implementation of programs to address this crisis, poverty has not been significantly reduced to what is expected. The Philippines is still left behind by its neighbouring countries in terms of poverty reduction. If these obstacles that hinders progress in reducing poverty is not overcome, more and more Filipinos will suffer from the horrifying effects of poverty.