

# The effects of poverty on mental health social work essay



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Abstract No one can deny that poverty negatively impacts the life of a child. Research has proven that the development of a child mainly depends on the kind of life a child gets at a younger age. It is axiomatic to argue that a child who grows under poverty conditions is likely to have poor mental development. To have an imperative discussion of the paper, it is important to delineate the unembellished key concepts in the study which is the childhood development. This is defined as the procedural development of a being from the childhood mental capacity to maturity in the fullness of a person. Environment human beings stay influences a lot the level of their mental development. The fullness in the development of mental capacity of a child depends a lot on the environment and the background of the child. Poverty has proven to be an institution in the US impacting the lives of millions of the populace. There has been an associated structural change in the economy characterized by high rate of mental health, skyrocketing rates of incarceration with the increased number of children being injected to poor health conditions. There have also been increased family breakdown systems. Poverty influences the development of the children especially when it comes to their mental maturity. Various research that has been conducted across the under developing countries have indicated that children from these places tend to have low mental maturity. The same happens to those living in major slums like in Brazil, Soweto South Africa and Kibera in Nairobi; most of the children in these places undergo unquestionable frustrations. When they go to class, they seldom participate and understand things fully. The discussion in this paper will focus on how poverty affects the mental development of a child and how it influences their growth and development into old age. Discussion The environment affects the mental and physical

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development of human beings. The lives of children for instance are impacted great deal with the kind of people they often see in their surroundings. Some of the issues which have been discussed in the past include poverty, family squabbles, and single parenthood among others. The above variables in one way or another affects the moral upstanding of a child as he/she grows. There has been an associated structural change in the economy characterized by high rate of mental health, skyrocketing rates of incarceration with the increased number of children being injected to poor health conditions. There have also been increased family breakdown systems. The above variables influence the development of the children especially when it comes to their mental maturity. It is the duty of each and every government to ensure that they provide better conditions that can ensure the proper mental development of a child. This is seldom the case in a myriad of countries in third developed countries across the globe. The governments in these countries have tried working around the clock to fight poverty especially amongst persons living in slums in the country. Media across the world has highlighted this issue to the international community. The deplorable conditions of these people have drawn attention to myriad of philanthropic persons and organizations across the globe to help them. The main persons who are highly affected by the conditions are women and children. (Richard 1997)There are a number of theories which have been used to relate the effect of poverty on the mental development of a child. One such policy is the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. This theory holds that the development of a person is often influenced by various environmental systems. The theory asserts that the environment will live affect a lot the social development in a human being. The theory adopts five <https://assignbuster.com/the-effects-of-poverty-on-mental-health-social-work-essay/>

environmental systems which help in the explanation of the theory. Micro-system- This includes the family peer's schools one attend and the neighborhood. It is during this stage that a number of interactions with the social agents occur. These social agents include the peers, parents and teachers. The children are part of the construction of the social settings. Since this is the first level of interaction, it is worth noting that they will have poor social upbringing due to lack of basic amenities that helps in the social development of a child. Meso-system- This is the existing connection between various Microsystems in the society. Some of the common examples include the experiences in the family and also church and school experiences. Exo-system- This level is concerned with the social system where an individual does not have any direct role. For example the experience of a husband is likely to influence the child or wife experience. In most cases the husbands are often involved in manual works and in most cases when they come home they are usually frustrated and therefore might affect the life of a child. Macro-system- This level describes the where the individuals live. It includes the culture which is delineated as the ways of the people. The cultural contexts include poverty, socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Chrono-system- This is the patterning of the various environmental events and the transition over the life of a person. Various past research work has indicated that the presented negative effects of an act like divorce on children as an example of transition usually reaches peak at the first two years of the divorce. Most children find themselves in this condition. In the course of their growing up, they miss some basic necessities and therefore there are important stages they skip in life. The question that comes is on the ability of these children to properly develop mentally. It is no doubt that <https://assignbuster.com/the-effects-of-poverty-on-mental-health-social-work-essay/>

it is almost impossible for them to have the similar economical and social orientation as compared to their peers in the other side of the social class. The socio economic status of a family influences the development and the life of a child in a number of ways. This may run from the emotional, cognitive and physical problems. A child who is from poor social and economic background tends to have poor kind of socialization with other peers in the society. They tend to have a level of self esteem with the lack of self confidence. Because they do not have a good background they have been made to believe that those from higher standings in the community are better than them. In most cases they fear socializing with others and therefore they interact amongst themselves. Low socioeconomic development interferes with their physical lives in different ways. (Hill 1998)It is absolutely no doubt that the development process of children is interfered with. They do not have full mental development as other members of the society. Most of the people living in these conditions stay in deplorable conditions and therefore they are not in a position to grow fully.. There social statuses are very low as compared to others. They cannot afford the fundamentals, basic needs in the society. (Huston 1991)The children who are from low level families often lack exposure. They seldom get to know some of the basics in the society. This is because they are not in position to travel places to see and appreciate how other persons view things. Their level of reasoning is often localized and can likely fail to adopt solutions to address some problems which they face in the society. The development of a child from a low socio economic background is likely can result into the person also being poor. What the economists refer to as vicious cycle of poverty.

This happens because the [parents are not in a position to provide the child  
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quality education. The child is also unlikely to get quality health care. This will see the child always wallow in the den of poverty. If the child decides to break the bond then still the dependent level will make this person to remain poor. So many people will still depend on him so as to provide them with the basics they require. (Duncan, 1988) There are a number of issues which a child can face as a result of low socio economic standing in the society.

These issues often occur because the parents are not in a position to provide the basic necessities to their children. This results into the children not being free to socialize with other people. As a result of chronic disorders, poverty results in the upsurge of children's risk for a number of mental effects like depression and other behavioral risks like the use of substance. Mental illness has been one of the reasons to the increased spread of diseases, reduced longevity and homelessness. Poverty results in the early sexual behavior which results into minor pregnancies and therefore the vicious poverty continuous. Poverty means that parents are not in a position to provide the basics to their children including paying hospital bills, therefore the continued health impairments results into poor childhood moral development. They risk involving themselves in substance abuse as a result of stress and a reason for solace. Poverty results in low birth weight, disability, growth retardation, asphyxia, premature birth among others. (Fall 2009) There are the high chances of being sedentary and also higher body mass index for various young persons in the society due to lack of neighborhood resources. Most of these children seldom access these resources and are therefore susceptible to some of these problems. There are also the higher physiological makers of various chronic stressful experiences for adolescents from low socio economic status persons. Most of

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these children are often faced with these challenges because they are not in a position to access some of the quality resources in the society as compared to those from high status. The level of mental maturity amongst these children will go down. They will often be demoralized in most of the activities they involve themselves in. There is the possibility of higher cardiovascular disease at adulthood. This often happens because most of these people are not in a position to access good meals and other necessities in the family. Given that most of the families are those who do not have the financial power to visit reasonable hospitals the children are likely to develop these conditions with nobody addressing them. In a number of developing countries, a myriad of people are not in a position to offer basic meals to their families. It is therefore likely that the children will be affected by a number of nutritious illnesses. When there is poor physical growth amongst the kids then it is likely that there will be problem with their mental development. A child develops mental well if there are in position to get proper medication and require balanced diet. Proper meals will mean frustration and therefore it will be unlikely that the children will be in a position to grow to the required level of maturity. (Zeanah, 2009) Living in poverty means a child is not in a position of getting the basics such as clothing and nutritious food. Poverty results into stress in the families that might cause permanent changes in the development of the brain. A myriad of parents living in poverty are likely to spend more time away from their children as they work to get meals and other basic provisions for them, The children are left alone and faced with mental health challenges as a result of the circumstances for example anxiety and depression. The stress which the parents face is likely to make them give less time to their children. It should

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be noted that when the children are young their brain development relies on the existing relationship with other people in the society especially the primary relationship. Professionals advise that a healthy relationship is important in the growth of a child. If any child does not get the required support that is required then it is likely that his brain might not develop and the brain cells might even be killed through the surges of the stress hormone cortisol. (Duncan 1988) The other one is associated with low socio-economic status is the size of the brain and the level of reasoning. Children who are from, for instance, poor are not in a position to get good medical attention. Maltreated children are likely to have very low brain development as opposed to the children who are from upper family standards in the society. When there is a problem with the development of the brain it is likely that the child will perform poorly in class. From the description of the ideas, the question one raises is the possibility of developing a child into a full being. It is almost possible for a child to compete favorably with other members of the society. It is axiomatic to argue that most of the children who come from low class lack some of the critical stages which are required in the full development of an individual. For a number of years poverty has proven to be an institution in the country impacting the lives of millions of the populace. Most of poor children often suffer from behavioral and emotional problems. The emotional outcomes are usually categorized into two main dimensions. The first one is the externalizing behavior which includes aggression, fighting, acting out, and acting out. The internalizing behaviors include social withdrawal, anxiety and depression. Poverty amongst children or in persons from different walks of life influences a lot the way the persons interact and relate with others. Frustration will likely to make them keep off

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and members of the society. Teenage out of wedlock childbearing- Child bearing out of wedlock has been proven to be common amongst teens from or families. It is likely that children who are born out of wedlock will not get an opportunity with one of the parents. Therefore that entire fatherly love will be missed. Necessary lessons which are likely to be gotten will be missed because nobody will be in a position to offer such kind of important and relevant teachings. Mental development and maturity will therefore be lacking from these persons in the society. (Caldwell & Bradley 1984) There is also the higher likelihood of the person being too aggressive, hostile among other conditions. Emotions which are driven from the fact that they are in low socio status in the society as opposed to others make them appear as a threat to other members of the society. They are also being perceived to be likely being involved in some immoral acts in the society. This results into them having poor relationship with other members of the society. Other emotional effects includes the likelihood of the child suffering from Alzheimer disease and also the increased emotional and also behavioral difficulties which includes depression, anxiety, hyperactivity disorder and finally the conduct disorders in the society. (Powell 1983) Children from poor families in the past resulted into a number of emotional issues which includes; higher rates of attempted suicide, depression, drug abuse among others. Research has indicated that in a number of occasions, adolescents from these families involve themselves in these since they are frustrated as they cannot be in a position to get some of the basic necessities in life. To them, drugs or suicides act as a point of consolation. When they abuse drugs, they often forget some of the problems which they are facing. (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997) With weak family structures it is clear that children will constantly have

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problems with their parents. Single parents might not fully address various concerns to the child. In slums the level of interaction is poor. This will make the child survive with others even if he suffers a lot of stress. He will not have someone to confide in when faced with the challenges. Lack of information as a result of poor environmental inputs will lead to poor development and this will affect the psychological maturity and exposure of a child. Finally when a child is not in a position to take relevant and serious decisions then he is likely to involve in a number of unacceptable behaviors in the society. (Nguyen 1995)Poverty exerts unbearable weight to the children. Most of the children are never psychologically prepared to such kind of extreme lifestyles. When they are born it is the hope of the parents and their dreams of offering the best to themselves. It is unfortunate that as they grow up, the dream fades. The accomplishment of the dream requires some of the basic necessities which will help the children in achieving the best. Lack of the basics will result into poor development of the child. Research has indicated that the future of any child is molded when they are still young and therefore they should always be offered the best. Psychological interference of a child is often instigated with inability to get some of the basics to help them develop. At the end of it their total moral development is fully interfered with. The mental capacity will be less as compared to those of others who were in a position to get all they wanted to help them achieve their dreams in their lives. ConclusionPoverty itself has become a structure in the society leaving millions of people to live under deplorable condition. Low socioeconomic development has ruined the lives of many people in the society. No child can have proper mental development when faced with poverty. There is continued impairment since the children

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cannot get the solution to most of their problems. Irrespective of the problem faced by the children, the most important thing is to appreciate and fight towards getting the right solution. This Paper holds strong views that the future of a nation is properly defined by the structures it has put in place to address issues affecting children. Persons living under poverty cannot be counted for a better future within the parameters of the government. The ability of the children to develop mentally and physically is dictated going by the environments they stay in. The prerogative of the government is therefore to ensure that everyone is treated equally and so are slum dwellers. In a nutshell, poverty affects negatively the life of children and stops them from exploiting their talents in life. Their mental development is interfered with as they can afford some of the basic needs in life.