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POVERTY- CAUSE AND REMEDIES AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

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Abstract:-“Democracy is slightly positively correlated with economic growth. So democracy's a good thing. You know what's more positively correlated with economic growth? Rule of law. Even in dictatorships that had strong rule of law, we see firms working in a predictable environment where there's recourse to people who have stolen from them. Therefore, they decide to innovate.” – Michael Fairbanks

Keywords: Poverty , Educational Approach , Democracy , economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

People are considered poor when they are unable to satisfy their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and health. Children living in poverty have a higher number of absenteeism or leave school all together because they are more likely to have to work or care for family members. No one who is knowledgeable about the subject will dispute that our education system has failed, is failing and -- unless dramatically overhauled will continue to fail particularly in regard to poor students of color.

The linkages between education and poverty can be understood in two ways:

Investment in education as a poverty reduction strategy which can enhance the skills and productivity among poor households;

Poverty as a constraint to educational achievement both at the macro-level (poor countries generally have lower levels of enrolment) and the micro-level (children of poor households receive less education).

Causes of poverty:

Overpopulation:

Overpopulation is defined as the situation of having large numbers of people with too few resources and too little space. Overpopulation can result from either a high population density (the ratio of people to land area) or from low amounts of resources, or from both. A high population density pressures the available resources in the country, as the resources can only support a certain number of people. Children, especially boys, are assets to many poor families because they provide labour, usually for farming.

Population density:

A country's level of poverty can depend greatly on its mix of population density and agricultural productivity. Bangladesh, for example, has one of the world's highest population densities, with 1,078 persons per sq km (2,791 persons per sq mi). A large majority of the people of Bangladesh engage in low-productivity manual farming, which contributes to the country's extremely high level of poverty. Some of the smaller countries in Western Europe, such as The Netherlands and Belgium, have high population densities as well. These countries practice mechanized farming and are involved in high-tech industries

Birthrates:

High birth rates contribute to overpopulation in many developing countries. Children are assets to many poor families because they provide labor, usually for farming. Cultural norms in traditionally rural societies commonly sanction the value of large families. Also, the governments of developing countries often provide little or no support, financial or political, for family planning and birth control

Distribution of sources:

In many developing countries, the problems of poverty are massive and pervasive. In recent decades most of these countries have tried to develop their economies with industry and technology with varying levels of success. Many developing countries, however, lack essential raw materials and the knowledge and skills gained through formal education and training. Because these things are necessary for the development of industry, developing countries generally must rely on trade with developed countries for manufactured goods, but they cannot afford much.

Lack of education:

Illiteracy and lack of education are common in poor countries. Governments of developing countries often cannot afford to provide for good public schools, especially in rural areas. In countries with high populations, unemployment levels of only a few percentage points mean that millions of working-age people cannot find work and earn an adequate income. Because unemployment figures indicate only the number of people eligible to work who have no job but are seeking employment, such figures are not necessarily an accurate indicator of the number of people living in poverty. Other people may not be able to find enough work or may earn wages too low to support themselves.

Environmental degradation:

Environmental degradation is the deterioration of the natural environment, including the atmosphere, bodies of water, soil, and forests — is an important cause of poverty. Environmental problems have led to shortages of food, clean water, materials for shelter, and other essential resources. As forests, land, air, and water are degraded, people who live directly off these natural resources suffer most from the effects.

Economic trends:

Poverty in many developed countries can be linked to economic trends. Changes in labor markets in developed countries have also contributed to increased poverty levels. For instance, the number of relatively high-paying manufacturing jobs has declined, while the demand for workers in service and technology related industries has increased. Historically, people have learned the skills required for jobs that involve manual labor, such as those in manufacturing, either on the job or through easily accessible school vocational programs. As these jobs are replaced by service- and technology related jobs that usually require skills taught at the college level people who cannot afford a college education find it increasingly difficult to obtain well-paying work.

Demographic shifts:

Some researchers also cite demographic shifts as contributing to increases in overall poverty. In particular, demographic shifts have led to increases in poverty among children. In the United States, for instance, typical family structures have changed significantly, leading to an increase in single parent families, which tend to be poorer. There are differing beliefs about individual responsibility for poverty. Some people believe that poverty is a symptom of societal structure and that some proportion of any society inevitably will be poor. Others feel that poverty results from a failure of social institutions, such as the labor market and schools. In addition, many people in developed countries blame cycles of poverty, or the tendency for the poor to remain poor, on overly generous welfare programs.

Unfair trade

High subsidies and protective tariffs for agriculture in the developed world drains the taxed money and increases prices for consumers in the developed world, decreasing competition and efficiency and preventing exports by more competitive agricultural and other sectors in the developed world due to retaliatory trade barriers and undermining the very type of industry in which developing countries do.

Corruption (Economically-wise)

Corruption often accompanies centralization of power, when leaders are not accountable to those they serve. More directly, corruption inhibits development when leaders help themselves to money that would otherwise be used for development projects. Corruption, both in government and business, places heavy cost on society. The issue of corruption is very much inter-related with other issues. At a global level, the economic system that has shaped the current form of globalization in the past decades requires further scrutiny for it has also created conditions whereby corruption can flourish and exacerbate the conditions of people around the world who already have little say about their own destiny.

Poor Governance

Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development.

Good governance implies a capacity to turn public income into human development outcomes. Good governance is an essential pre-condition for pro-poor growth as it establishes the enabling regulatory and legal framework essential for the sound functioning of land, labor, capital and other factor markets.

Corruption (Politically-wise)

Corruption is a rampant problem in the world today, especially in third-world countries. It undermines democracy and good governance by flouting formal processes. Corruption often occurs when leaders are not accountable to those they serve. Corruption usually inhibits development when leaders help themselves to money that would otherwise be used for development projects. Corruption increases the cost of business through the price of illicit payments themselves, the management cost of negotiating with officials, and the risk of breached agreements or detection. Also, it generates economic distortions in the public sector by diverting public investment into capital projects where bribes and kick backs are more plentiful

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes have caused millions of dollars worth of infrastructure and the loss of lives. Developing countries often suffer much more extensive and acute crises at the hands of natural disasters, because limited resources become obstacles for the construction of adequate housing, infrastructure, and mechanisms for responding to crises. Natural disasters, being uncontrollable by man, affect annual agricultural output, such as floods destroying the fertility of soils by washing away mineral-rich topsoil, and take away natural decomposing agents, rendering the soil infertile. Droughts cause the land to become barren and unsuitable for cultivation.

A strategy to fight poverty

In programmes aimed at tackling poverty, specific goals have been created and efforts concentrated or focused on meeting those targeted goals. Through this approach there has been some progress in poverty reduction since 1970, although it has not been spread equally over the different parts of the world. Most of the decline in poverty took place in East Asia, notably in China. In developing countries, infant mortality was cut by more than 40% and adult illiteracy by 50%. A newborn baby can expect to live 10 years longer, and combined net primary and secondary school enrolment has increased by nearly 50%. But there have also been reversals over the last few years, and huge problems remain. Based on the experience of the past years, there is now a growing consensus among national and international policy makers on what works and what does not in fighting poverty. Policies that are part of the successful poverty reduction package of different countries include the following:

Inclusive and broad-based economic growth:

Economic growth is one of the most important factors in helping to reduce poverty, but it is not sufficient. The effectiveness of economic growth in reducing poverty depends upon the structure of growth, existing levels of inequality and on how the benefits of growth are distributed. Inequality in income is a function of the distribution of economic assets (land, industrial and financial capital), and so-called "human capital" in the form of education and skills. Governments need to work on creating more equity in the distribution of income and assets. The effectiveness of growth in reducing poverty also depends on the extent of growth and employment opportunities created, and whether it takes place in areas and sectors where the poor are located

rapid economic growth built on investment in people:

The gap in average income between China and the rest of the world has decreased by over 50 % compared to 40 years

ago. However, prospects for growth in the world economy currently are rather bleak. The world economy appears to be growing too slowly to create enough jobs or to make a real impact on poverty. Even the industrialized countries appear to be stuck with high unemployment, a major cause of poverty. This suggests that economies cannot rely on growth to pull them out of poverty, but must take specific steps to target poverty reduction directly. Growth, if it is achieved at the cost of environmental degradation, can also undermine the livelihoods of the poor who are dependent upon these resources. Hence, development policies need to be sensitive to the social and economic environments of the poor. After the 1992 Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), the Philippines was the first country to establish a council for sustainable development with partners from Government, civil society and private business. Key businesses worked to implement sustainable development initiatives – reusing by-products, controlling pollution levels and including environmental provisions in collective bargaining agreements with labour unions.

Realizing Globalization's Potential:

The phenomenon of large corporations operating in many countries, in the hands of private individuals who make decisions about opening/closing and reorganizing operations that affect the lives of many people, is a reality of this new millennium. The process called globalization and increased economic integration offer countries many positive market and employment opportunities. But there are also risks and problems associated with it. The poor in poor countries at this time are often victims of this process. (See Briefing Paper on Globalization for a more comprehensive discussion of its pros and cons.)

Countries need to prepare themselves for globalization by:

Building up the competitive advantage of their industries. Addressing the problems of those who will lose out from global competition; and improving technology and increasing productivity so as to avoid competing on the basis of low wages, poorly regulated working conditions and exploitation of the environment. Even after they have done all this, nothing is guaranteed. Markets may be saturated and despite globalization, many industrialized countries also still protect their markets with tariffs and quotas and discriminate against the products of developing countries. Better trade policies, fairer rules and terms that allow poor countries to enter developed country markets need to be put in place. The United Nations Secretary-General has urged all industrialized countries to consider granting duty-free and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the least developed countries. Governments and international agencies also need to work on preparing countries assisting them in developing regulatory policies that will soften the negative impact of volatile financial flows.

Promoting good governance, accountability and participation:

Honest and fair government practices free of corruption; decision making open to the input of the public; and follow-up actions in accordance with decisions made, are measures needed to eradicate poverty. Of prime importance are: good governance - the conduct of a government that is honest and fair (see briefing on governance); transparency;- decision making can be open to public input and scrutiny; and accountability - ensuring that follow-up actions are in accordance with decisions openly arrived at, and that they can help ensure that the benefits of growth and poverty reduction policies actually reach the poor.

Ultimately, the distribution of income depends on the distribution of productive assets. We have to do something to improve the distribution of land ownership. And finally, the one-step that the government has taken, and it was a good step, is to initiate the water sector program. I think that the government has undertaken a number of commendable initiatives for accelerating economic growth. But before we get carried away by the figures of growth, please remember to ask yourself three questions. First, can we sustain it? Second, is this growth rate high enough to make a dent into poverty? Given the level of income inequality, if the growth rate is not high enough then poverty will not go down. Third, you have to start thinking of changing the composition of growth itself, and changing the composition of growth involves issues of building new institutions, of changing the asymmetry of power, of making markets more accessible to the poor, and of providing them with health and education. These are all issues that must become the central concern of those who claim to be engaged in poverty reduction.

CONCLUSION

There are things that some people until now can't apprehend. Aside from the everyday expenditure, many people have vices such as cigarettes and alcohols which we weren't able to include in our daily expenses. When people begin to get wages or salaries, they immediately spend the money for worthless and nonsense things instead of saving it. Some of them, if it is not for their vices, they spend their money in stakes, testing their luck and expecting to be rich immediately. In summary, education is a cure for poverty but not all of it can be dispensed in the traditional packages. It must be geared to the problems and needs of the people that are still being by-passed. Involved, therefore, is a policy issue of what kind of new educational approaches we should develop, if any, and how we can be more effective in helping the low-income groups in our society. As we all know, poverty is a curse. It was written in the Bible that God has curse man, "In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life." This only

means that man can't eat without working hard. God will only provide for those who are persistent. There's no place in this world for lazy people.

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