



## POVERTY-A CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE

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Poverty in simple layman's term means a state of being poor but what is the true essence of the word itself? It is a very broad and intricate word. It's basically a denial of choices and opportunities; a deprivation and violation of human dignity. It encompasses a wide range of probabilities but whatever the word means, it will always lead to hunger. Apparently, it is experienced around the world. Why is this so? In rich and poor nations, poverty has always been present, thus leading to world poverty. By international standard, this is a critical problem. It is like a cancer that spreads fast and still growing in number, hereby creating more poverty-stricken areas. Unfortunately, some of these countries which are very much affected seem to be very complacent about this crucial problem.

Fundamentally, it means lack of capability to participate effectively in a society. Does it mean impoverishment? Definitely, it means not having enough to feed or clothe a family, not having a school to be educated, not having a land to grow one's food or maybe a job so as to earn one's living and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, susceptibility to violence. Oftentimes, it implies living in fragile environments having no access to clean water or sanitation. Poverty can also mean a pronounced denial in well-being, including the inability to acquire the basic goods and services which are necessary for survival with dignity. It includes the low incomes wherein families and individuals are said to be living in poverty if their incomes fall below certain levels.

Poverty is also incorporated with low levels of health and education, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, insufficient capacity and opportunity to improve and have a better life. With these, can one not see inequality creeping in? In most nations the rate of inequality are quite high and often widening. The causes are amounting to a large number including a lack of individual responsibility, bad government policy, exploitation by people and businesses which has power and influence or it can maybe a combination of these and other factors for that matter. What then is inequality? Inequality is the gap between the rich and the poor. Whereas a lot of us feel that high levels of inequality will affect social cohesion which may lead to increasing problems in crime and violence. Therefore, we can conclude that the poorest people are the ones afflicted with the problems of hunger, malnutrition and disease consequentially leading to little representation or voice in public or political debates which makes it even harder to escape poverty. By contrast, the wealthier you are, the more likely you are to benefit from economic or political policies.

### Questions for discussion

1. How can the problem of poverty be solved?
2. Can a poor country wipe out poverty?
3. What are the measures to fight poverty?
4. Can poverty be considered a dilemma?
5. How can poverty be alleviated?