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Poverty among the Indigenous Australians

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Poverty among the Indigenous Australians

The indigenous groups in Australia remain the most disadvantaged and most impoverished in Australian society. This group's choice in this literature is motivated by their marginalization regarding the standard indicators of the country's poverty rate despite the government's big role in promoting economic equity. It is saddening to see many indigenous Australians languish in poverty even when the government has put too many resources to upgrade these people's economic and social status. Being considered the original people of Australia, the paper focuses on the reasons, nature, extent, and impact of their poverty concerning the government's policies to uplift them from poverty.

Quantitative Data

The indigenous group's poverty rate is higher than the rest of other Australians and, consequently country's overall poverty rate. The group makes 3.1% of the total Australian population, with only 4.8% of their population having formal employment, and notably, their poverty rate stands at 19.3%, far much ahead of the country's 12.4% (Charles, 2020). The reason for this inequity and poverty can be drawn back to the systematic exclusion and discrimination of the indigenous groups since the colonial time (Serr, 2017). It is quite notable that out of the 3.24 million Australians living in poverty, 32% of the poor aboriginals in this category are homeless.

For that reason, the indigenous group's discrimination put them to be rated below the poverty line, with most of them, despite being the country's first natives, are unable to break the poverty ceiling because of the unequal competition offered to them by other advantaged groups. In 2008, only 45% of the indigenous group children had managed to complete secondary education, which is considered in Australia to have close ties with poverty, far much lower than the non-indigenous groups (Charles, 2020). However, the government has tried to close this

poverty gap between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. Still, much has not been seen to materialize to raise this group out of poverty.

Lived Experience of Poverty

After failing to achieve life expectations like other advantaged Australian citizens due to poverty, the indigenous Australians find themselves mentally disturbed to the extent that most of them are depressed. The indigenous group of children in Australia of the age between 5 to 17 years commit suicide five times more than the children of non-indigenous citizens of the same age (Charles, 2020). As a result, this shows that poverty forces the young and ambitious aboriginal youths to lose hope in life by making them feel useless and failures having no choices but to take away their lives. Additionally, the poverty faced by the indigenous groups has made the other groups alienate them from their cultures since most people are poor and should not be given any considerable level of attention. So they are inferior beings with inferior cultures in Australia. Besides, in its aboriginal people's policies, the government has failed to embrace the bottom-up policy approaches that ensure that the cultures of these people are upheld, respected, strengthened, and recognized concerning their socio-economic improvements in their communities (Serr, 2017). Lastly, they find themselves unable to enjoy some of the country's best services and amenities, such as good roads, hospitals, and access to clean water. As a result, indigenous groups suffer ill-health and disability at higher rates than the non-indigenous, with most indigenous communities languishing in poverty due to poor infrastructure in those areas. The poverty experienced among this group of people disadvantaged them in almost all the social sectors of life, making them lag in development.

Government Policies and/or Legislation

The Australian government has considered lifting the socio-economic status of the indigenous group through legislation, funds allocations, and policymaking. To eradicate poverty from the indigenous citizens, the government ensured that it refocused and increased the indigenous participation support to enhance its policy of improving the regional delivery of higher education through bolstered regional loading (Brett & Harvey, 2017). Making education and especially higher education equal to all with special policies focusing on the indigenous groups is one of the surest ways the government has got it right. When it comes to the elevation of this group from poverty, the graduates from these marginalized areas can compete with others in the job market favourably.

Remarkably, the 1967 referendum became one of the significant political and social boost in the indigenous Australians' lives since, through the referendum, they were allowed suffrage. The two discriminative clauses against them were done away with (Rudolph, 2019). Allowing this group to vote and remove discriminatory clauses against the indigenous group from the constitution came to pass after a long talk about the need to uplift the indigenous group from the deplorable state of poverty. For that reason, education about the benefits of uplifting this group in the Australian society by the government became evident, thereby making the government draft policies and create institutions to oversee the process.

Causes of Poverty

What causes poverty to the indigenous group in the Australian society is the demographic and labor market structural contexts. The poverty for this group can be explained through the structural theory of poverty causes. Since colonization in Australia, the indigenous Australian citizens have been structurally and systematically sidelined and discriminated against. They have not been provided with the good infrastructure like the rest of the non-indigenous citizens

(Rudolph, 2019). Therefore, discrimination and lack of the required facilities to develop themselves have made them regionally alienated, making them lowly graded in society. When a group of people in the society are structurally deprived of opportunities to prosper by the majority group, they are constrained through well-structured meso and macro level demographics which deny them the available economic opportunities (Brady, 2019).

Thus, the systematic deprivation of the indigenous group the opportunities to prosper by offering them equal job opportunities, building them good infrastructures, and abandoning racial discrimination against them in most social setups is the major reason for their deeply rooted poverty level the non-indigenous group. The system has gone against them for a long time. Hence it is extremely difficult to uplift them from the situation. Again, despite the government trying through policies and fund allocation to solve the challenge, the problem persists.

Conclusively, Australia is considered a developed country faced with deep-rooted internal poverty challenged by its indigenous group, which stands at a 19.3% poverty rate. However, the government has developed policies like improving education and changing the constitution to accommodate this marginalized group to uplift them from their deplorable state of poverty. This has not, however, been an easy task for the government because poverty among this group of citizens has been for a long time been promoted and caused by a long, systematic structural marginalization. That has been subjected on them; something that has made them remain more impoverished than the rest of the citizens. Notably, poverty impacts psychological torture among the indigenous group, as evident in their higher suicide rate as non-indigenous citizens.

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