

To what extent can education solve the problem of poverty?

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Singapore appears to be the epitome of how education can solve the problem of poverty. By providing a compulsory education, and a rigorous study in Mathematics and the Sciences, Singapore has moved from a third-world country with endemic poverty to a first-world nation that is highly looked upon by others, within a short span of a few decades. Undoubtedly, education has solved the problem of poverty in several countries, and has the potential to eliminate poverty worldwide. Yet, on closer inspection, education can only solve poverty so much as the system allows for it. A strong commitment by the government to build good institutions, and supporting structures such as employment institutions, is required for education to truly annihilate poverty.

Without a doubt, education enables the poor to be self-sufficient by making a living with one's own hands, and bring home the bread and butter. Educating citizens with basic literacy and numeracy skills goes a long way, as they can communicate with the outside world and find themselves a job. Of course, basic education does not entail a high-paying job. However, the manual work that basic education enables the poor to take on is sufficient in providing a source of income. For instance, many Filipinos and Indonesians get themselves equipped with the English language, and travel to Hong Kong, Singapore and other developed countries to work as domestic helpers. Working tirelessly day and night has enabled them to earn some cash, and send them back home to feed their families. The money channeled is used to send their younger siblings to school to get educated, in the hope of escaping from poverty. Therefore, education brings about a ripple effect, and poverty appears to be meeting its doom.

Moreover, education in the developed nations has spurred many individuals to alleviate poverty with their own hands. Education has bred altruistic individuals, by opening people's hearts and minds to the plight of fellow global citizens mired in poverty. The empathy gained has driven several Samaritans to make their way to rural areas around the world, setting up schools for the less fortunate to attend. Village students tend not to have the ability to afford education in the city, as cities are located far away and have expensive tuition fees. This prevents the poor from escaping the poverty cycle. Empowering village students with literacy and numeracy skills enables them to find a city job, which gives them a higher income than slogging as a farmer. Through this, it is hoped that the poor can afford a decent standard of living. Hence, education has created empathetic individuals who try to alleviate poverty using their hands and brains.

Yet, the power of education is not fully harnessed today due to several fundamental obstacles. First and foremost, uncommitted governments have prevented countries from reaping the benefits of education, leading to the continued existence of poverty. To illustrate this, the Indian government sets targets on the number of schools to build, but no targets on the literacy level of its people. Consequently, many students are still illiterate despite having attended school for a few years. The lack of commitment by the government to set up a good education system with good teachers is hindering education's usefulness in annihilating poverty. Therefore, good education, and not merely education itself, is necessary for education to bring about a better life for the poor.

Next, the government's commitment to eliminate poverty using education extends to the institutions and supporting structures they build. The lack of a strong framework is preventing education from solving the problem of poverty. This includes employment opportunities for the

poor, and support from private companies. Despite having been educated on the best practices of farming, farmers in India have no money to buy seeds. Financial institutions impose a heavy interest rate on loans the farmers take, for which the farmers have a hard time paying back. They continue to be trapped in the vicious poverty cycle and have no means from escaping from it. Another example is the lack of employment opportunities that Filipinos have. At times, Filipinos are cheated by greedy individuals. Desperate to find a job, they pay a lump sum to go overseas to become domestic workers. Unbeknownst to them, the cheaters take their money and run away, leaving them to succumb to the miserable life they had initially. Therefore, to eliminate poverty, the government has to set up strong institutions, such as interest-free loans or perhaps a ministry that aids the poor to get reliable and decent jobs.

To sum up, education has the capacity to solve the problem of poverty by equipping the poor with a set of skills to be self-sufficient, and by creating empathetic individuals who see eliminating poverty as their goals. Yet, education cannot and has not solved the problem of poverty today, due to the lack of committed governments to build a good education system and strong supporting institutions. Education has eliminated poverty in several countries, such as Singapore, and we should not despair.

Comments:

Your arguments are clearly relevant and supported with apt examples most of the time. However, range of examples need to be expanded.