

One Nation, Underprivileged

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American is the land of opportunity, the land of freedom, and the land where milk and honey flow. As a citizen in the United States I was taught, American is the richest country in the world. It is called the land of plenty because of the resources, materials, and skills. However, millions of America lives in poverty. For example: a homeless man dying on a park bench because there is no place for him to lay his head, a single mother struggling to survive because of public assistance through our government system, and our children go to sleep hungry because there is no food in the house.

(1)The concept of Welfare is a re-current cycle of poverty. In the Urban communities most families survive by having several children at a young age, children having children which welfare and assistance programs become their lifestyle. Poverty increases at high rates in the United States. According to Rank, United States social and economic programs fail to direct economically vulnerable populations in their ability to raise families out of poverty (2005). Welfare was designed to be a safety net for Americans families, but yet, it handicapped them into greater poverty. The failure had nothing to do with the individual, but at the structure level. I think welfare in the United States is interesting because so many people need assistance from the government but do not listed in the right category, so they fall in between the cracks. These are a large number of men and women who are unemployed and needing assistance and protection from the government. The one's who use the welfare assistance programs are provided with very small amount and with restrictions, that cause individuals to become depend upon this type of programs, which undermine their self-worth and dignity.

(2)The concept of Individualism has been a strong historical sense in American. Individualism has caused Americans to be selfish and self-centered. This concept works against communities and the caring for others. Lawrence Mitchell notes that “individualism has taken pride of place in constructing our image of the our nation and ourselves with a strength that drowns out our ethic of care”(Ranks, 2005 p.12). Individualism is one of the problems that cause poverty. It works against social and economic issues in this country. Individuals have been taught to take care of their own family and oneself without depending upon others, and this type of attitude has been around for generation to generation. Our government believes that the poor should get themselves out of poverty, because hard work can overshadow anything. This has worked against seeing our connections with others and their problems.

