Homelessness

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The term homelessness can be described as a situation in which people have to live on a street or have to move from one temporary shelter to another. Homelessness can be situational in which an individual is forced into homelessness due to various situations such as disasters, loss of job, domestic violence or loss of a family member. The second category is episodic in which a person due to mental illness or addiction falls in and out of a situation of being homelessness. The third and last category is long term homelessness in which an individual is homeless for relativity long period of time either due to lack of resources or due to various mental health issues (Dovey, 1985).

Specifically discussing about the US, there were more than 552850 people in the US in 2018 who have experienced homelessness on a single night. It has been observed that more than 65 percent of people who experience homelessness are individuals that have no families. However, the most shocking this is that more than 33 percent of the homeless people are the people having families with them ("State of Homelessness - National Alliance to End Homelessness", 2019). This is alarming as children are vulnerable and are prone to develop stress and other mental disorders when they had to suffer from situations like this.

Several reasons are there due to which people are forced to being in a situation of homelessness but the main reason of people being homeless is poverty. Owing to the economic recession many people lost their jobs and eventually their homes. Furthermore, social stratification also plays a crucial role in forcing people into homelessness (Buckley, 1958). Typically, in our society the inequality in the distribution of wealth results in poverty. This is because our society is structured in a way that rich people are getting richer while poor people are getting poor day by day. Rich people have all the facilities while poor people are unable to attain even the basic necessities of life. Rich people can facilitate their children in getting higher education that will in turn guarantee a bright and successful future while poor people are not able to bear the educational expenses of their children and therefore their children are unable to have a successful future.

Poverty also hinders social mobility and therefore many people have to experience long term homelessness. According to the conflict perspective rich people dominate over poor and week people. The theory highlights that stratification is dysfunction and harmful in society as it only benefits rich people while causing severe consequences for the poor people. Conflict theory suggests that rich people exploit working class and poor people by depriving them on basic human needs such as shelter and food and their aim to accumulate wealth by any means (Dahrendorf, 1958). Moreover, rich people see poor people unmotivated and see homeless people as people who want to live off of welfare. When in reality the circumstances like losing job or not having enough money to pay for a house let people be homeless.

In my opinion to make society functional people regardless of class, ethnicity and gender must collaborate with each other so that a society can progress. I have seen many homeless families who have to be in this situation just because of low income or lose their job. Although, they are willing to do any work to save their families from being into a state of homelessness yet due to unemployment they are forced to be homeless. According to the functionalist perspective each aspect of society is interdependent thus contributing to society’s functioning as a whole (Hilgard & Bower, 1966). So, government must revise old policies and work more upon the improvement in division of wealth among people so that no one has to be in a situation of homelessness. There is a need of social consensus or social cohesion in which every member of the society work together at attain what is in the best interest of a society.

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