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The influence of poverty on children and their educational outcomes

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Abstract

Beginning in the earliest years of life, poverty has an impact on a child's development and educational outcomes both directly and indirectly through mediated, regulated, and transactional processes. In India and increasingly in other developing nations, it has been acknowledged that school readiness, or a child's capacity to use and benefit from education, plays a special role in helping people transcend poverty. Although it is a crucial component, a strategy to reduce poverty must also include numerous other elements, such as better opportunity frameworks and family empowerment. The paper evaluates research on interventions to increase low-income children's preparation for education and offers suggestions for further study and action.

Keywords: Poverty, child development, educational outcomes, education

Introduction

The idea of poverty is controversial in many ways. First, consider if poverty should be defined in terms of economics or as a component of a larger social disadvantage. The absolute poverty line is determined by adding a tiny allowance for nonfood items to the food costs necessary to meet dietary recommendations. This is the standard economic definition of poverty based on income metrics ^[1]. Sen ^[2] claims that poverty is defined as a lack of competence. Second, some academics and policymakers believe that poverty and its eradication are primarily caused by individual conditions, while others place more emphasis on the social exclusion factors that prohibit particular groups or categories of individuals from escaping poverty ^[3]. Around the world, poverty is a persistent issue that negatively affects practically every element of family life as well as children's outcomes. This study looks at the ways that poverty impacts children's growth and educational outcomes as well as strategies that have been successful in enhancing these outcomes for low-income households in India and other developing nations. Poverty causes families and children in all nations to experience ongoing stress, which can hinder proper adjustment to developmental goals like academic accomplishment ^[4]. Low-income children are more likely to experience academic and social difficulties, as well as poor health and wellbeing, all of which can have a negative impact on educational success.

Direct effects of poverty

According to a direct effects model, poverty affects children's learning and development by boosting risk factors while reducing protective variables, stimulation, and enrichment chances. For instance, children from low-income households are more likely to be underweight and overweight, both of which are frequently correlated with food insecurity ^[5-6]. The behaviour of families may have an impact on many of the negative impacts of poverty on children, according to the evidence. Low-income families frequently have less education, which limits their capacity to give their kids a responsive, stimulating environment ^[7]. Instead of reciprocal, interactive parenting approaches that foster emotional growth and social competence, low-income families instead employ strict parenting methods that are based on parental control ^[8]. Early exposures to reading helps children build their comprehension and phonemic awareness abilities ^[9-10]. Children from wealthy families are more likely to be read to than those from lower socioeconomic status.

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Moderated effects of poverty

When the impacts of poverty change depending on the qualities of families or children, this is referred to as a moderated effect. For instance, less educated families may struggle more than more educated families to shield their children from the effects of poverty. Less educated households may also struggle more to make wise decisions^[11]. Modest effects may also work through offering youngster's protection. For instance, the Family Investment Model suggests that parents who are more educated or have access to financial resources invest in their kids by exposing them to educationally beneficial products and activities, including books and reading, shielding them from the disadvantages of poverty.

Mediated effects of poverty

The effects of poverty are seen in mediated models as disruptions in family dynamics, which therefore have a negative impact on the children. The 1930s Great Depression's effects on families and children were studied in order to construct this model^[12]. It is consistent with the Family Stress Model^[13], which postulates that poverty and other forms of economic hardship may cause family stress, have a detrimental effect on parents' emotional and mental health, undermine parenting behaviour, and increase the likelihood that they will use harsh and controlling parenting techniques. The children have experienced behavioral and developmental issues as a result. In other words, parents who are under stress and pressure due to poverty are unable to provide for the emotional, cognitive, and caring requirements of their kids. The Family Stress Model has been shown to be applicable to families from a variety of cultures, including Romania^[14] and Indonesia, as well as to families in the United States with multi-ethnic backgrounds^[15-17].

Transactional effects of poverty

In transactional models, both regulated and mediated processes are used to explain how poverty reverberates across family and child relationships. Children's traits may play a similar function to how parental characteristics may lessen the effects of poverty on children's development. For instance, compared to caregivers of temperamentally easy children, those of temperamentally challenging children are less likely to demonstrate sensitive-responsive caregiving and more likely to experience depressive symptoms^[18]. Given the challenges of raising a temperamentally challenging child, the detrimental effects of maternal depression symptoms on children's development are increased^[19], and when families are poor, there is probably a similar association. Similar to this, the Family Investment Model suggests that parents who believe their children are bright or academically competent are more willing to invest in educational resources, even during hard circumstances. As a result, although caregivers may feel stress related to poverty, leading to mental health issues and interfering with the quality of their connections with their children, they are also influenced by their views of the abilities and behaviors of their children. Children are similarly affected by a variety of processes. There are negative impacts of caregiver conduct, such as inconsistent caregiving or harsh parenting, which results in more disorderly child behaviour, in addition to the direct effects of a lack of resources or other risk factors connected with poverty.

Interventions to improve children's development and educational outcomes

Interventions to Enhance Children's Growth and Academic Results There has been strong evidence over the past 40 years that enhancing children's development and school preparation reduces inequities caused by poverty^[20]. Our consideration of treatments that expressly aim to increase children's school readiness or family support for education centres on those that strive to do so in line with the concepts discussed above that link poverty with child development. Programs to strengthen parents' capacity to support early learning, preschool interventions, family-based safety net programmes, and comprehensive initiatives to advance kids' development before starting school are among them. Examples from both the United States and developing nations will be given in each situation.

Improving parent education and support programs for children educational development

In order to improve children's wellbeing, parenting education and support programmes should be developed to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on family features, such as a lack of responsive stimulation or educational resources. These programmes use a range of delivery methods, such as group sessions for parents, a health center or system, home visits by a trained worker, integrating counselling with growth tracking, and media outreach. Some are intended for kids who have a certain risk factor, including prematurity or a low birth weight (LBW).

Conclusion

The risk of poverty in early years may continue to have an impact even if the family eventually escapes poverty. Poverty is certainly a risk factor for children's poor development and limited educational outcomes. For children to grow up healthy, it is crucial to find measures to reduce poverty. However, it is unlikely that either economic growth or education alone will be adequate. In order to address all aspects of the empowerment framework-more open opportunity frameworks as well as improved individual and collective agency-interventions are required. According to DST, these shifts would have further implications on children. Therefore, reducing poverty requires not only economic solutions but also the adoption of policies by communities, families, and governments that alter the harmful processes through which poverty restricts and disrupts typical development. Main effects models rarely address the processes linking poverty with child development and should be expanded to include moderated, mediated, and transactional processes inherent in DST. Intervention programmes that provide stimulating environments and help kids and families form healthy interactional patterns that can last throughout their education are needed.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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