The Changing Face of Poverty in Canada

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Poverty is one of the major social challenges faced by many countries today. There has been a global increase in poverty in both developed and developing countries. People living in poverty are usually unable to afford the basic needs of life such as food, shelter, clothing, education and health among others.

Although poverty levels have been high in developing and underdeveloped countries, the levels of poverty in developed countries such as Canada is also alarming. In Canada, there has been a rapid increase in poverty over the past five years (Sharma, 2012). This has led to a persistent increase in the gap between the rich and the poor. Although poverty affects all people in the society equally, women and children in Canada are the most affected by the rapid increased in poverty. Raphael and Raphael (2011) also assert that poverty affects more than three million people in Canada, including two million women and six hundred thousand children. According to Goldberg (2010), one woman in every seven women in Canada lives in poverty. Women are the most affected because of traditional practices such as low salaries at the workplace, gender discrimination during employment and traditional roles such as taking of the family that reduce the ability of women to access employment opportunities and socio-economic and financial assistance. According to Kunin (2011), the vulnerability of Canadian women to poverty is also increased by factors such as race, ethnicity levels of education and immigrant status. Due to this disparity in poverty levels among men and women in Canada, there is an urgent need to establish how this disparity in socio-economy status among men and women of Canada would be eliminated. Thus, this essay aim at discussing how poverty levels among women in Canada would be reduced. The essay examines income inequality as a major cause of high levels of poverty among Canadian women. It also proposes how poverty among women in Canada can be reduced through proper policy formulation.
Like most countries across the globe, income inequality between men and women remains to be a major challenge in Canada. Women with low incomes accounts for more than sixteen percent of the Canadian population (Goldberg, 2010). The minimum wage for women is estimated to be eight dollars per hour while for men it is approximately twelve dollars per hour (Blais, 2011). In addition, the average gross earnings of employed women is estimated to be ten thousand dollars. According to Kunin (2011), most women earn only seventy percent of what men earn while performing the same tasks. Canada is ranked as the fifth country with the largest wage gap among twenty nine developed countries (Orchard, 2011). Income inequality among men and women has also been accelerated by the inability of most women to secure employment insurance and income assistance from the government. This has led to increase in poverty levels among women. Poverty among women is also fuelled by lower levels of education among women in Canada. According to Raffo (2012), nearly sixty-five percent of Canadian women do not have post-secondary education.

In my opinion, increase in poverty levels among women in Canada can be prevented or controlled by harmonizing wages between men and women. Other factors such as gender discrimination at the workplace and attainment of low levels of education which may hinder women from gaining socio-economic success should also be prevented. The government of Canada is responsible for ensuring that women are accorded adequate empowerment and assistance in order to enable them over the socio-economic challenges they face. This can be achieved through development and implementation of appropriate policies that empower women both economically and financially. For my part, decrease in levels of poverty among women would greatly help in reducing poverty in the country.
CONCLUSION

Poverty is an evitable social problem. This is because it is no caused by natural phenomena but rather by actions of human beings. Thus, the government of Canada should take appropriate measures to reduce the level of poverty in the country, and specifically among women. The government is responsible for ensuring that income inequality between men and women is reduced considerably. In my view, the elimination of poverty among women would help in reducing poverty in the country. Therefore, Canada should do its best to shield women against poverty. I would also recommend that the efforts of the government to address poverty in Canada should be increased. Additional socio-economic research studies should also be conducted to determine other factors which have led to increase in poverty among women, and to establish the most appropriate ways of eradicating poverty in the country.