

How Language Can Reduce Poverty?

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This study examines the role of language in reducing poverty. Language is the medium through which human beings communicate and grow intellectually as well as socially. It should form the basis of any discussion involving the relation between development and education. In order to respond to societal changes and bridge the gap between the less privileged and the more privileged, adult-education programmes should be guided by language policies that are sensitive to this pivotal role that language plays. Language is important in any discussion of poverty reduction because it determines who has access to educational, political and economic resources.

Language is the basic tool for communication and no human life can exist without communication. It is language that has exposed the hidden though often bitter realities of the world. The main link between the poor and rich nations is language because language is full of emotions and feelings. A certain amount of income is essential for people to afford basic needs. This type of poverty focuses on material aspects of poverty such as income below the poverty datum line, unemployment and lack of ownership of assets.

Non-economic poverty, on the other hand, refers to the deprivation of non-material things, which lead to low self-esteem, loss of identity, minimal participation in civic life, inadequate access to information and education. Adult education is crucial and better placed to fight poverty than formal education because it is involved in the education of the most productive, experienced and influential sector of a population. Adults are responsible for generating a community's income, for preserving its resources and for making laws that govern the distribution of income as well as influencing attitudes about what are superior and what is inferior. It is also better placed to fight poverty. In order to participate in the affairs of one's community or country, one needs to have a linguistic proficiency that will enable one to negotiate and influence. To achieve its goal of disseminating useful information and eradicating poverty the adult education programme needs to recognize the different languages that exist in the country.