**The Impact of Poverty in Mexico on Addiction and Unemployability**

**Global and Local Barriers Health Inquiry**

*YEAR 12 HEALTH STUDIES ATAR*

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**Introduction**

Asalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi. My name is Shomir, and today I will be discussing the impact of poverty on Mexico's social determinants of addiction and unemployability.

**What is Poverty?**

The state of being extremely poor. People’s basic needs for food, clothing and shelter are not being met. It is a deprivation of basic human needs which depends not only on income but also on access to services. The poverty line in the world’s poorest countries is approximately $2 a day.

**Context of Mexico**

Mexico is in the southern part of North America, sharing its borders with the United States to the north and Guatemala and Belize to the south. It is also surrounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea to the east. Mexico covers a total area of approximately 1.96 million square kilometres with a population of approximately 126 million.

**Health Issues Related to Poverty in Mexico**

Poverty in Mexico leads to:

Limited access to healthcare: Impoverished individuals face barriers such as high healthcare costs, lack of insurance coverage, and limited availability of healthcare facilities, resulting in delayed or inadequate medical care.

Malnutrition and food insecurity: Poverty restricts access to nutritious food, leading to inadequate diets and deficiencies in essential nutrients, particularly among children. This increases the risk of health conditions and affects physical and cognitive development.

Mental health issues: Poverty-related stressors, including financial strain, unstable living conditions, and limited opportunities, contribute to mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

**Focus Questions**

**Evaluate the relationship between the social determinant of unemployability and the issue of poverty in Mexico.**

Education and skills mismatch: Many individuals lack the necessary skills and qualifications required for available job opportunities, leading to higher levels of unemployment or underemployment. This mismatch hinders their employability and contributes to the persistence of poverty.

Cyclical nature: Unemployment and poverty form a cyclical relationship in Mexico. Individuals living in poverty often face barriers to accessing resources for acquiring education and skills, which would enhance their employability. Without meaningful employment, they are unable to improve their economic conditions, leading to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Lack of employment opportunities: Mexico struggles to generate a sufficient number of jobs to meet the needs of its growing population. Limited job opportunities make it difficult for individuals to secure employment, leaving them vulnerable to poverty. The lack of employment options hinders people's ability to earn a stable income and escape poverty.

**Discuss the issue of addiction and substance abuse in Mexico and how it influences the prevalence of poverty.**

Health consequences: Substance abuse in Mexico leads to severe health problems, including physical ailments, mental disorders, and impaired cognitive functioning. These health issues can hinder individuals' ability to participate in the workforce and decrease their productivity, leading to decreased earning potential and financial strain, ultimately contributing to poverty.

Loss of employment and economic instability: Substance abuse disrupts individuals' work performance, making them less useful to employers and leading to job loss or difficulty in finding and maintaining employment. This loss of employment and economic instability results in decreased income, increased financial hardships, and a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty.

Crime and social instability: Substance abuse is associated with involvement in criminal activities, including drug trafficking and related violence. The presence of drug cartels and drug-related crime in certain regions of Mexico exacerbates poverty by creating an environment of social instability, hindering economic growth, and reducing investment opportunities.

**Argument**

If poverty is not overcome in Mexico, the country will face socioeconomic inequality, compromised health and well-being and social exclusion.

Socioeconomic Inequality: Persistent poverty perpetuates socioeconomic inequality, with a wide gap between the rich and the poor. This inequality fosters social divisions, hampers social cohesion, and undermines trust in organisations. It can lead to social unrest, crime rates, and political instability, ultimately hindering the overall progress and development of Mexico.

Health and Well-being: Poverty affects the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Limited access to healthcare, proper nutrition, and sanitation facilities leads to higher rates of illness, malnutrition, and preventable diseases. Without adequate resources to address these health challenges, the cycle of poverty continues as people struggle to escape the burden of poor health and reduced productivity.

Social Exclusion: Poverty marginalizes individuals and groups, making it difficult for them to participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres. The exclusion of a significant portion of the population perpetuates a sense of alienation, erodes social cohesion, and undermines democratic processes. Overcoming poverty is crucial for fostering inclusivity, equal opportunities, and a thriving civil society.

***Sources of Information***

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| ***Source*** | ***How the source encompasses recency, relevancy, and reliability*** |
| Government Source: Government of Mexico  <https://www.gob.mx/> | Government sources are considered reliable and credible due to their authority, access to resources, independence and objectivity, peer review processes, long-term perspective, and accountability to the public. |
| Peer Reviewed: Labour income inequality.  <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-04/UNDP-RBLAC-PNUD_WckPapers_37%20%281%29.pdf> | Peer-reviewed sources are reliable and credible because they undergo a thorough evaluation by experts, ensuring that the information meets rigorous scientific and academic standards. |
| Unbiased: The World Bank  <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mexico/overview#1>. | Unbiased sources are reliable and credible because they offer objective information, free from personal biases, ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the information presented. |
| Recency: World Health Organisation  <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/countries/country-details/GHO/mexico?countryProfileId=3f585f95-5475-4cac-94b3-c55ad1ed731b>. | Recent sources are reliable and credible as they provide the most up-to-date information incorporating the latest research, developments, and understanding of a subject. |
| Geographical Location Source: | Geographical sources are reliable and credible as they provide accurate information about specific locations through comprehensive data collection, expert involvement, and adherence to rigorous research methodologies. |

**Trends and Patterns**

The graph on the left shows the poverty rate of Mexico in 2020, which was 43.9% and in 2018, it was 41.9. Therefore, the graph shows a positive trend between 2018 and 2020.

The graph on the right shows the unemployment rate in Mexico between 2005 and 2023. Between 2020 and 2023, the graph shows a negative trend. During March and April of 2023, the unemployment rate in March was 2.78 and in April was 2.83%, therefore a positive trend is shown.

**Evidence-based Conclusion**

Strengthening vocational training and job placement programs:

* Provide comprehensive vocational training programs that align with the needs of the job market, equipping individuals with in-demand skills.
* Collaborate with employers and industries to create job placement opportunities and facilitate the transition from training to employment.
* Offer support services, such as career counselling and mentorship, to enhance job readiness and retention.

Implementing integrated addiction prevention and treatment services:

* Establish a comprehensive and integrated system of addiction prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services.
* Ensure the availability of evidence-based prevention programs targeting at-risk populations, such as youth and marginalized communities.
* Enhance access to quality addiction treatment services, including counselling, medication-assisted therapy, and aftercare support.

Promoting social and economic empowerment:

* Implement social protection programs that address the underlying causes of unemployment and poverty, providing financial stability and support to vulnerable individuals and families.
* Foster entrepreneurship and small business development through training, access to capital, and mentorship programs.
* Promote initiatives that create inclusive employment opportunities, such as social enterprises and cooperatives, focusing on marginalized populations and areas with high unemployment rates.

**Strategies from the Ottawa Charter Action Areas**

Developing personal skills:

* Promote education and vocational training to equip individuals with skills for employment and poverty alleviation.
* Implement interventions and awareness campaigns to enhance health literacy and responsible decision-making regarding substance use and addiction prevention.
* Provide counselling and support services to improve mental health and resilience among those affected by poverty, unemployment, and addiction.

Creating supportive environments:

* Enhance community development programs that provide affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and recreational facilities.
* Promote community-based initiatives for employment training, skill development, and entrepreneurship opportunities.
* Establish safe and inclusive spaces that foster social connections and support networks to reduce social isolation and the risk of addiction.

Building healthy public policies:

* Advocate for policies that reduce poverty and improve social determinants of health such as education, housing, and employment opportunities.
* Encourage the implementation of comprehensive social protection programs to alleviate poverty and provide financial stability to vulnerable populations.
* Regulate and control the availability and marketing of addictive substances, including alcohol and tobacco.