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Haiti, Factor 16: Education

### Lack of Education, A Major Contributor To Haiti's Downfall

Upon mentioning of the state of Haiti, many thoughts are filled with the immaculate beaches, tropical landscape, and the immense agricultural productivity within the area. Haiti's thriving state at one point could be detected by a quick glance at a satellite image of the landscape which portrayed the entirety of the island green and alive with productivity. However, analyzing the state of Haiti in recent decades, it would seem as if this description is now transforming to a legacy that was once was the present reality but now ceases to exist. The once seemingly perfect atmosphere has derailed from its course of destiny to becoming a currently overcrowded, polluted, poor and disease ridden purgatory. The island of Haiti is located in the Caribbean and occupies a total of 27,750 sq. kilometers. The country serves as the first independent black republic after claiming independence in 1804 from colonial rule. However, while this country is declared sovereign on paper, it lacks the ability to stand on its own two feet which can be demonstrated by its constant need of foreign intervention. While analyzing this issue further many factors have been found to play a role in Haiti's never-ending deterioration. However, the most prominent of these is education. The lack of education in this country has led to the emerging and continuity of many issues such as family income, agricultural productivity access to adequate nutrition and quality of food produced. Due to the lack of education in Haiti many detrimental practices that harbor agricultural productivity continue to be used and efforts to bring about change are constantly refuted by the majority without in depth understanding. While many facets that make up Haiti as a country needs revising the most impactful of these is education.

In regards to Education, this aspect is very lacking in Haitian society. With a lack of focus in improving the Education sector, Haiti's literacy rate continues to suffer. According to the World Bank, 50% percent of children do not attend school. The effects of this issue extend to the survival of the family unit, a major component of Haitian society. In many third world countries including Haiti, a family will have kids only to work the fields. This aspect of Haiti indicates its lack of development as the United States in comparison experienced this condition in the 1800s. Since then, the number of kids in a family unit has dramatically decreased. However, in Haiti this continues to be a prominent issue as families have kids for the objective of having workers to maintain the farm. This problem can also be attributed to the lack of education and societal perspective in regards to contraceptives. In a rural area, a typical subsistence farm family consists of five to ten members living together. Most family units consist of extended family members as well. Households in extreme poverty often have twice as many children in comparison to the average household. Children comprise a large portion of many family units as they account of 50% of the total population. This issue also causes numerous health complications for many Haitian women as well. According to the National health statistics discussed in the Miami Herald, 630 women lose their lives due to pregnancy related complications for every 100,000 babies born. This number has the potential to substantially decline if information in regards to family planning and contraceptives are made available to the masses. Also, being that Haiti's economy remains focused on primary agriculture, most families have children to work the fields on family farms. As a result, not only is the children population increasing to a dangerous level, but most children conceived under these circumstances have a poor quality of life.

Family units in Haiti often experience tremendous hardship and poverty especially during the months of June extending to August. These months are infamously known as the "hungry months" in which most

families endure the consequence of harsh hunger. This lack of food availability is mostly due to the inefficiency in Haiti's trading system. Being that Haiti is a developing country most of the commodities that it can trade are expensive. Thus, poor families who cannot afford to acquire these goods go hungry as the prices of food during these months are inflated past reasonable amounts. The diet of a typical family unit is very restricted to the crops produced in subsistence agriculture. This includes rice, corn, manioc, and many other vegetables.

Pertaining to healthcare many Haitian household lack access to this much-needed privilege. This problem is also due to the lack of education in Haiti. According to Unicef, 30% of children who attend primary school do not go on to the third grade and 60% drop out prior to entering sixth grade. Therefore, in this circumstance, a lack of education equates to a lack of jobs in the tertiary sector of the economy. This aberration is also caused by a lack of substantial income along with issues within the healthcare system of Haiti or lack thereof. Often the miniscule healthcare provided is derived from foreign aid. Therefore, Haiti's inhabitants are often subjected to the mercy of outside interference in the pursuit of obtaining healthcare. Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), Doctors without Borders (MSF), and Charity clinics have been responsible for providing medical care for Haitians for decades. These organizations provide tremendous help in alleviating the pressing issue in Haiti especially Healthcare. These organizations work to make known the concerns of public to the government and assist in enacting and monitoring policies to bring about change.

The American Red Cross, the largest NGO in Haiti, serves as an example. This is because in urgent circumstances such as the 7.0 earthquake in 2010 and Hurricane Matthew the American Red Cross work quickly to accommodate the needs of Haitian citizens. This is done by providing food, water, medical care and emergency shelter for victims of natural disasters. This is just one example of foreign intervention in Haiti. Many organizations continue to support this country. According to Due to this tremendous amount of foreign aid, many Haitians refer to Haiti as a "republic of NGOs." However, including these foreign aid, Haiti is still lacking in health care availability. This is because in many areas 1 doctor is available per 4,000 people. Being that Haiti is dependent on subsistent agriculture an illness to a family member can have a great impact on the productivity of the family unity, thus further inhibiting crop production that was already astonishingly low.

Agricultural production is a very crucial facet for not only the economy but for Haitian family units as well. The practice of subsistent agriculture is very prevalent in Haiti and is mostly conducted by family units. The average holding of a family farm size in rural areas is 2.3 acres of land. The main crops grown in these agricultural estates mostly consist of rice, corn, grain sorghum, sweet potatoes, Taro, Manioc, and many other vegetables. Agricultural production is very restrictive in terms of size in Haiti. This is because only 28.3% of land is adequate for crop production and only 11.6% is used for permanent crops. This therefore indicates a small yield in agricultural production.

Agriculture practices in Haiti vary tremendously in comparisons to that of other countries as it relies mostly on superstition. Due to the lack of available education, family farmers are unaware of measures to take in order to facilitate crop production and therefore rely on myths and Superstition. As stated by Brauman Harold an Agriculture Economic Advisor of USOM, "...of the population may be characterized as... distrustful; unaware of efficient production, storage and marketing methods; resistant to change... and largely governed by superstitions." A popular practice conducted within family farmers is known as "Tie in the rain." This practice involves peasants conducting wizardry with certain leaves in pursuit of disbanding the clouds. This practice is done in order to prevent rain in one area while members of the family are working. In terms of farming methods, the use of mechanized tools is very minute and often there are no available plows or tractors. Farming is done without the use of pesticides and fertilizers which inhibits the production of a large surplus. Without the implementation of advanced agriculture techniques and machinery Haiti's role and impact in the international economy will continue to diminish.

The typical family is faced with many challenges in Haitian society that could inhibit agricultural productivity, employment and living wage, and their access to food markets. In regards to agricultural productivity, the lack of technology, proper irrigation techniques, and the dependence on superstition can inhibit crop production tremendously. As a substitute for mechanized tools, the typical farming family unit utilizes hoes, machetes, and hand labor. This compilation simply does not produce the appropriate size crop yield to accommodate a family unit. Pertaining to employment and living wages, the typical Haitian family lives on less than 2\$ a day. This lack of income can be attributed to the lack of jobs available. This large vacancy of jobs available has resulted in a stagnation of the Haitian economy thus limiting the flow of income for family units. In the matter of access to food markets, rural markets are the principal outlet for all crop production. Markets are usually located at established points and only are open on certain days known as "market days." These markets consist of predominantly of women merchants carrying fruits and vegetables on their heads while calling out to potential customers. While a typical family might have access to a market, the limiting factor in the process in acquiring food is an insufficient income.

Education is a prominent factor that has had tremendous impact on Haiti's advancement as a sovereign state. The lack of education available in Haiti has led to the deterioration of the agricultural, economic and political sector. To analyze this on the scale of the family unit, the disintegration of education in Haiti debilitates a family unit to produce an adequate supply of food. Due to the lack of education, many agriculture practices used by family farmers lack efficiency. This is due to over reliance on superstition and cultural traditions to produce crop yield. Many agricultural practices utilized in family farms are not dependent on modernized techniques but rather practices involving magic and irrationality. Also due to this lack of awareness it is very difficult to introduce new practices that will increase agricultural yields such as composting, rotation, pruning and seed selection. This setback in education has projected great impact on family income as well.

Also, due to the overall low literacy rate, many family units occupy jobs that provide inadequate income thus inhibiting the ability to purchase food. In regards to access of adequate nutrition, because of the immense decrease in subsistence agricultural yields, this access continues to narrow. Haiti has been known to experience difficulty in regards to food security. According to The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), food security continues to be an issue as nearly a third of the population remain food insecure, and of these approximately, 600,000 need external food assistance in order to survive. This issue continues on a stance of uncertainty and severity. As of today, the numerous problems Haiti continues to face are well known. However, for most of these issue, if examined thoroughly, the cause can be traced back to the lack of education available. According to recent estimates, more than 200,000 children remain out of school. This is due to a variety of factors pertaining to education such as lack of financial support by the government for educational institutes, outdated curricula and economic hardship.

In attempt to correct this, international organization and more developed countries have stepped in to help Haiti. The USAID has taken an initiative to support 420 schools in their attempt to improve early grade reading and writing of creole and French for the first four grades. In the instance in which the education system in Haiti was reformed and modified, this could possibly lead to an increase in agricultural yield. This is because families involved in subsistent agriculture would be aware of the correct measures to take to increase crop production.

An aspect that has been found to have direct linkage to education is the Government of Haiti. The lack of adequate leadership has allowed Haiti's government to deteriorate into its current inefficient state. To counteract Haiti's decline, many actions can be taken and new policies need to be established. In regards to the Education sector, in order to create and establish an effective education system that benefits the majority, Haiti must update its curriculum, and acquire financial support from the government. Essentially Haiti should adopt an education system similar to that of the United States, in which education is mandatory for children and is compensated for in tax money.

If this were to take place, this adopted system would have to be modified upon implementation. This is because this country due to its lack of adequate development and traditions harbors a great deal of cultural restrictions and boundaries. It is human nature to be resistant to dramatic changes without some degree of recognizable facets. As a result, upon introducing this system it will have a greater chance to be accepted if it accommodates facets of Haitian culture that are already present. For example, being that the presence of children in the field is important to the survival of a family unit, a way to increase attendance in school without inhibiting a family's agricultural productivity is to allocate a school budget where a school pantries can be established. This will allow children to have access to food that they could take home to their families to compensate for their absence all the while receiving an education that could allot them greater opportunities for a higher income jobs.

A project within Haiti that is dedicated to bring relief in this facet is Hope for Haiti. This organization is focused on improving the life of the Haitian people through education and many other aspects. A way in which this project could be scaled up is if the work of this organization was advertised in the media gaining more awareness and funds to accelerate the works of this program. The work of NGOs are needed in Haiti's restoration as it could aid in bringing the issue the citizen face to the government in pursuit of their intervention. In compilation of all these sources of aid, Haiti's repair could be complete in virtually no time.

Upon examination of the last decades, Haiti has fallen on hard times and it will require tremendous effort to recuperate what has been lost. However, the possibility of this country once again becoming the admired productive landscape it was once still exists. This will require coupled efforts not only from the country but from outside aid as well. As aforementioned, many facets that constitute the state of Haiti needs a reform in particular the education sector. A modification in the area could lead to tremendous outcomes such as more adequate income for family units and most importantly greater productivity in agriculture. This is because a reform in education would lead to a change in subsistent agriculture in which crop production is no longer associated with superstitious practices. This would also lead to more participants in the tertiary and quaternary sector of the economy. This is because with greater education that can lead to a higher literacy rate, more individuals can perform jobs requiring more than basic survival skills.

Improving education could also lead to greater research in important phenomenon occurring within the county most specifically pertaining to agriculture. In the instance where this occurred, more research would eventually lead to the use of technology such as genetically modifying techniques on crops to increase yields. This will result in a much-needed agricultural revolution that could rescue Haiti from unbearable hunger as it did in India. Introducing genetically modified seeds in India has caused a chain reaction of tremendous benefits in its economy and in the lives of its inhabitants. According to an article written by Puja Mondal, this includes an increase in productivity translating to greater yields, higher rates of employment due to capital intensive techniques that also require labor, and an increase in dependency on the industrial sector of the economy. India's production of wheat has tripled in yields between 1967-68 and 2003-04. The advantages of introducing technology of this kind surpasses beyond greater outputs in farming to also advancing a country's role in the international economy as demonstrated in the case of India. Haiti conditioned resembled that of India's not too long ago but with the right approach, this country has the potential to reach the same outcome. In conclusion Haiti's condition undeniably needs revision but the education sector must be revived to cause a chain reaction of change in other aspects of Haiti's composition.

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