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The Effects of Discrimination

Introduction

For years Brazil has been faced with hunger problems. The lack of food and nutrition is largely attributed to the scarcity of jobs. It is not that Brazil lacks food; on the contrary, it is that Brazilians cannot afford food. For the most part, Brazil has been very successful. Rich ground has been a major feature in their success. Unfortunately, however, the rich ground has started to decline.

Biofuels could potentially be the world's leading energy source. However, most opposed argue that Biofuels will cause more hunger in the world and those that favor Biofuels believe it will cause more security for the poor. Biofuels have made the plantation farmers rich; regrettably, that money has not trickled down to the rest of the economy. The effect of this has left the poor without the resources to buy the food that is being used, in its place, for biofuels.

Along with the increase of energy needs there will also be an increase in population. In Brazil alone the population will grow forty percent by the year 2050. This could cause an enormous problem for Brazil including the need for more jobs, the upkeep of small family farms, and the increase of poverty.

The Brazilian government has allowed people to acquire jobs through the First Job program and the Family Bonus Plan. While this has helped many, others still have not received such help; many men leave their farms and families to get a job on a better-run farm. This has left many women alone with children to raise and no way of receiving an income.

Along with the need of outside income is the need of equality for women; many women experience job discrimination, which is the leading cause of poverty in women and children. The products of biofuels create large economic divisions between the poor and the rich.

Family Farms

Small family farms produce thirty percent of Brazil's sugarcane. There are four million family farms in Brazil. Most of these farms are only able to produce enough to barely sustain their family therefore the men must find jobs elsewhere for their monetary support. In addition to men leaving to attain money for their families, children are also forced into the workplace due to family poverty; forty percent of children in the North-East region work to help sustain their families. Even though Children are mandated to attend school from ages 7-14, instead the law is not enforced. In fact, the dropout rate is projected to be 33 out of 100 students of grades 1-6. Husbands and Children have left the women at home to run the family farms.

The women who run these farms make up twenty-seven percent of Brazil's poor. Other than female discrimination, another of the chief reasons keeping a large amount of women in a state of poverty is racism. In the year 1992, fifty percent of women were unemployed. Furthermore, black women receive fifty-five percent less money than white women, for the same work and hours. Males earn 4.9 times the minimum wage, while white manes earn 6.3 times the minimum wage. To add, black women only earn 1.7 times the minimum wage, whereas females

earn 2.8 times. Black women also receive very little health care and are normally sexually, domestically, otherwise abused. As a result of this tragic upset of power, a woman by the name of Maria Mulher is working to educate the country's poor women and protect their children from future abuse. Yet even with feminist organizations such as this, women still receive less education than men. With this in mind only eighty-six point four percent of adults are literate.

Without the opportunity for women to receive outside jobs they stay on the small farms and perform their necessary and daily chores. Their most important chore would be bringing the difficult to obtain, clean water into their homes for daily use. Another challenge for them is the inability to maintain the family farms due to the lack of competitive technology.

Agriculture

For the most part, Brazil has been very successful. Rich ground has been a major feature in their enormous agricultural achievement. Unfortunately the rich ground has started to lower in nutrition.

In 1977, Brazil advanced in becoming second largest exporter of crops. At the time Brazil produced seven point one percent of the world's cocoa beans. In 2002/2003 they became first in sugarcane.

Though Brazil may have a high production, the soils lost its productiveness. Acid and Aluminum content in some places are at an all time high within the ground. The loss of nutrients can, also, be attributed to weeds, pests, and high temperatures.

Programs for the Poor

The Family Bonus Plan was formed in 2003. The Family Bonus plan helps families that make less than one hundred dollars per month. The goal of the program is to "combat misery and social exclusion." It is the first time federal, social, and municipal have worked together. With the three governments uniting there has been a good deal of greater control over the items given to the families. Food Allowance, School Bursary, Food Card and Gas Allowance are some of the benefits in which this program provides. The Family benefits are an average of three times more than before the three parts of government worked together. This program helps the families financially, provides health care, and education.

In addition to the "Family Bonus Plan" there is also a "First Job Program" which provides youth ages sixteen to twenty-four with jobs; it also helps to provide these youth with education and job training for the future. The focus group for this program are youth with low-school ranking and with a family total income of half that of minimum wage. Youth in this program receive 1,500 dollars a year from the company they work for.

There is also a minimum health program. The help available would include parental care, immunizations, and physician consultations. "The Family Health Program" (FHP) has 10,473 teams that cover Brazil; which covers twenty-two percent of the population. By 2001 eighty-one percent of the Camaragibe and Pernambuco region was covered by the FHP program. The program has had its struggles. One of which would be the lack of physicians following the program. According to Municipal Health Secretary, "Conditions for nurses under the FHP are better, since they earn approximately forty to fifty percent more than the going market wages." This therefore has allowed for an abundance of nurses but a lack of physicians.

Yet another program is "The School Scholarship Program" which has helped improve family living conditions. This program is targeted towards low income families. The basic goal of

the program is to target families with children (which happen to be the poorest throughout Brazil). With this target group, they can educate the children who hopefully will eventually overcome Brazil's social status culture. This can, with any luck, alleviate poverty altogether. The program has only taken place in the Federal District and will optimistically reach the national level in Brazil, as well.

With these programs many but not all Brazilians are given opportunities and allow youth to receive the education required for future advancement that will help their families financially. The programs will help to reduce poverty levels throughout Brazil and provide basic education.

Slavery in Brazil

According to Siv O'Neill, slavery has greatly evolved within sugar production. This has created a new and fresh way of supporting slavery. It is estimated that twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand people in Brazil are slaves. Of all the people that are slaves twenty-four percent of those are slaves within the agricultural industry. This is due mainly in part to the growth of sugar production.

Many men leave their farms to support their families; however they do this by borrowing money they can never pay back. Once they arrive in a city, their only choice is to take a job that only lasts from five to eight months. In Piracicaba eighty percent of the population are men between the ages eighteen to forty-five who have traveled to find work. Many of these men fall sick, die from working accidents, or commit suicide; leaving their families on their own permanently.

The Brazilian government is working to put an end to the slavery through a program called the "Secretariat of Labor Inspection". While this has helped, it is a long process in which a person must accuse his employer of slavery, which rarely happens. There is also the "Special Mobil Inspection Group", another program fighting slavery. This program has the ability to free slaves, pay slaves past wages, and freeze the slave holders' accounts. The group is unfortunately not very effective. When a problem is reported it takes an average of forty days for an inspection to be made and of all the reports made, only forty percent is actually inspected. However, this curriculum has freed over sixteen thousand slaves from the year 1995 to 2005. In addition to the programs of the private sector, the government has passed laws against slavery with sentences of two to eight years for violators. The government has also added Penal Code 197 which punishes the use of violence in order to keep an employee.

In 2003 the government announced the "National Plan for the Eradication of Slavery". The first step Brazil has taken was promoting the program through the media. The President then asked the farmers to help stop the growth of slavery. Finally the government set up the "National Commission for the Eradication of Slave Labor". This allowed groups from different government departments to set up a council, which works on ways to combat slavery.

Even with so many programs slavery is still a large problem. Each program has its troubles that have yet to be addressed by the government. For example, "The Special mobile Inspection Group" could use more resources from the government, such as assistance from local police. It is also understood that a large section of slavery comes from agricultural areas. Governments could and should focus more energy into known problems such as this.

Formulating Public Policies

The discrimination of women, as discussed earlier, has forced men to leave the small farms. Due to men leaving women have been left to take care of the children and try to find jobs in close proximity to their homes. Along with this the men who go away to find jobs often never return because of slavery. However, there are ways in which the government can lend a hand to these citizens.

Unfortunately, even with the government's help most family farms will stay the same. It would take the larger plantations as well as the government, working together to improve the welfare of the county. If the larger plantations, which are usually sponsored by out of country groups, taught the men how to grow and use sugarcane as well as pay them a larger income, then men could return to their own farms and curb the tide of poverty. With this education provided by the plantations, the only need would be for the government to provide water and resources to make the land productive. The plantations would be helping the smaller farms and themselves in the long run. If the people knew how to grow sugarcane and produce ethanol from their own farms, there could eventually be more food available due to them producing their own food. I also believe it is up to the government to open up educational assistance for women and uneducated farmers. Also, if the government were to put women of minorities into high work places within the government then the act may serve as an example to other employers. With the government helping the poor the economy could ultimately become more stable.

Should the government set up educational classes, they may want to start with women. If a woman is educated, no matter what her race may be, she could contribute more to her family. Classes teaching farming techniques to small farmers would increase the productivity of small farmers. If men were able to learn how to farm more efficiently then they could produce more food for themselves and their families; therefore increasing food security. The next step the government must take is to regulate the larger farms; even though the government makes money off of the ethanol from plantations, there is a cost to the production. The last action the government could take is to introduce technology to all farmers, regardless of status. If the government were to provide the necessary equipment, the small farms could increase their production. While this action may seem unimportant or unreasonable there are ways for the government to set up systems in which they would be re-paid the money spent on such technologies, such as, setting up a repayment program based on the family's income.

Conclusion

After decades of hunger and malnutrition, one would hope for some advancement. The government and small groups have done their best; however, discrimination has left much of the population in financial difficulties. The lack of employment not food is the problem Brazilians face each and everyday.

The government has implemented numerous programs. One of these programs would be the "Family Bonus Plan". This plan has helped families with low income levels. It provides such families with education and basic health provision. In addition to the "Family Bonus Plan" there is also the "Family Health Care Program" which covers the poor in the country. The program provides citizens with basic health care needs and preventative care. In addition there is the "School Scholarship Program" which provides children of low income families with a basic education, assuring them a good head start in life. Finally the "First Job Program" gives youth basic job skills and readies them for life in the 'real world' of working.

Slavery has been a major problem in Brazil. Fortunately programs already in place help but have not abolished slavery completely; they include: the “National Plan for the Eradication of Slavery”, the “Secretariat of Labor Inspection”, and the “Special Mobile inspection Group”. With the help of all farmers such a problem could be completely eradicated.

With the programs mentioned in the paper, plus other yet in place; slavery, discrimination, and need for jobs outside of the home farm, may decrease. It would, however, take total collaboration from the government to completely free Brazil of such problems. With the right people in charge, it can become a reality.

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