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Poverty: Its Causes and Consequences

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POVERTY: ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES
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The purpose of this paper is to examine poverty in Indiana. More specifically, characteristics of poverty in Indiana in relation to those of national poverty figures, from 1990 to present, are examined. It is hypothesized that education level and employment level will be negatively correlated with poverty levels. This hypothesis is tested using the data from published sources. Further, the social categories of gender and race have an influence on the percent of population in poverty. Households headed by single women represent a higher proportion of families in poverty than other family structures. Race-ethnicity is also a determinant of the make-up of the population in poverty. Our findings, among other things, suggest that due to lack of tracking of people in poverty the true extent of poverty and how it changes across time remain unclear. Social policy is ineffective if nature of individuals in poverty is not known. Therefore, one implication is that to make progress in eradicating this social ill, we need an improvement in systems of gathering reliable data more frequently. This will need to be followed by a careful examination of data, and timely formulation and implementation of policies designed to eliminate the true causes of poverty.