

Name

Course

Name of Instructor

Date

Feminization of Poverty

One of the common cultural trends in the US and other parts of the world is the feminization of poverty. Ever since the term “Feminization of Poverty” was coined in 1978 by Diana Pearce, a lot has been done to support the original arguments or oppose them (Chant 1). In her article “Feminization of Poverty” Sylvia Chant looks into the validity of this cultural concept and how it has taken different shapes since its conception (1). While expecting Chant to support the claims of poverty being feminized, the article takes a different turn by extensively elaborating on how the society has bought into the whole concept hoping to get a reprieve from such a skewed cultural trend only to realize that this term seeks to label and disenfranchise the society (1). Throughout the paper, Chant extensively uses facts and literary sources to drive her point home credibly. She then successfully uses emotional appeals to get the attention of the audience; however, as she pens down her facts, it becomes clear that just like the rest of the society she believes that women are their enemies.

In this article, Chant starts off by paying homage to the Diana Pearce who came up with the concept of “feminization of poverty”. She further employs Diana’s data and statistics that were collected in the 1950s and 1960s to act as the premise of her whole argument about poverty being feminized (1). Indeed, during these times, poverty was prevalent among women, especially those of the African American descent. She, however, points out that the term was rather abstract

up until the 1990s when research about the relationship between gender and poverty began. Global organizations such as the United Nations began to take the matter seriously with a call for deliberate measures to ensure that women are just as economically empowered as men (Moghadam 15). Consequently, Chant proceeds to talk about the main claims that women are poorer than men, the incidences of poverty among women has increased over time, and that patriarchy is the main reason for these increased poverty incidences among women (2). She factually discusses these factors with adequate scholarly backing from previous research on the topic.

Throughout the paper, Chant appeals to ethos by employing strong arguments that are supported by facts from other literary sources. She uses the source “headship analysis cannot and should not be substituted for gender and poverty analysis” written by Lampietti and Stalker to argue against the societal norm of pinning women issues on patriarchy (1). She further goes on to discredit the claims that indeed women are poorer than men by statistically and analytically pointing out that such arguments are mostly unsubstantiated and anomalous. Finally, Chant further postulates that the whole issue of trying to claim that women have increasingly become poor over time by pointing that “there is no verifiable and consistent trend in the direction of mounting poverty among women” (1). Such extensive use of scholarly works in her favor as it increases the credibility of her arguments and shows that she has important insights and understanding with regards to this topic. In addition, she uses a variety of examples to ethically deconstruct the claims that poverty is not gender-specific.

In addition to the astute use of the ethos appeals, Chant also uses the logos appeals that are supported by statistics and data to facilitate the logical progression of her arguments. For instance, she points out that claiming that women are poor is more of a hindrance than a solution

because such arguments "do not allow for the identification of the structural causes of poverty". She then continues to substantiate her claim by arguing that for the fight against poverty to be successful there is a need for people to identify causes and potential measures that can help the poor gain economic empowerment. Hence, continuously pointing to gender as the main premise of poverty obscures the actual drivers of poverty (Abercrombie et al. 234). This argument conforms to my logical thinking about the whole issue about the feminization of poverty. Chant further points out that issues such as gender gaps in the job market should be at the top of the reasons that predispose women to poverty (205). Additionally, she claims that people should get their heads out of the sand and stop pinning every social and cultural vice to the males. According to her, poverty has no gender restrictions, and just as it can strike women, it also affects men (McLanahan et al. 130). Her scholarly supported claims logically drive the point home that there is more to feminization than just patriarchy. Chant's adequate use of various literary styles appeals to the logos and calls for a relook into the whole concept of poverty feminization.

Finally, this literary work done by Chant makes a variety of pathos appeals to the audience. She effectively taps into the emotions of the readers in many ways. For instance, she points out men have been made pawns of any gender issue. Indeed, while it is fair to pin problems with outdated social constructs such as patriarchy, men have endured the most since the start of the feminist movement (Chant 210). According to her, this is not the solution for issues regarding poverty. This is because just like women, men also endure the challenges of poverty. In other words, while it is plausible to feminize poverty in response to a variety of scholarly premises, the discussion should go beyond the ordinary gender constructs. Chant claims that "objective and subjective attention should be given to the argument of feminizing

poverty instead of the common abstract claims that men are the main enemies of women's progress" (2). In short, through vivid illustrations, Chant advocates for women to stand up and stop taking the support role to men with respect to economic empowerment.

However, while Chant makes a lot of sense, her article is significantly skewed especially with regards to the logos appeals. This is because she strives to generalize the issue of women feminization in the middle of her argument. She makes it seem like women are their enemies when we all know that the society has in many ways tried to put them second to men. Therefore, her arguments are rather inclined towards supporting patriarchy, which in the real sense is the primary premise of poverty feminization.

In conclusion, the paper vividly provides a different view of the feminization of poverty topic. Chant manages to effectively use the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos to make her argument about this concept. Her use of scholarly data, facts, and statistics make her claims more credible. However, it is easy to realize that some of her arguments are skewed towards one side of seeking to provide solutions to unidentified problems. In other words, she empowers the readers on the importance of women standing up to the vice of poverty feminization without necessarily pointing to the contributions of patriarchy as the main cause of this cultural trend.

Work Cited

Abercrombie, Sarah H., and Sarah L. Hastings. "Feminization of Poverty." *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (2016).

Chant, Sylvia. "Feminization of poverty." *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization* (2012).

Chant, Sylvia. "Re-thinking the "feminization of poverty" in relation to aggregate gender indices." *Journal of human development* 7.2 (2006): 201-220.

McLanahan, Sara S., and Erin L. Kelly. "The feminization of poverty." *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*. Springer, Boston, MA, 2006. 127-145.

Moghadam, Valentine M. "The 'Feminization of Poverty' and Women's Human Rights." (2005); 2009.