RACISM

INTRODUCTION

MEANING OF RACISM

Different definitions of “racism” exist that vary in their specificity. Clark Anderson, Clark, and Williams (1999) described racism as “beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and act that tend to denigrate individual or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethic group affiliation”.

Oxford dictionary defines racism as the inability or refusal to recognize the rights, needs, dignity, or value of people of particular races or geographical origins.

Merriam Webster defines racism as a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial difference produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.

Racism is a belief or doctrine that inherent difference among the various human racial groups determines cultural or individual achievement, usually involving the idea that one’s own race is superior and has the right to dominate others or that a particular racial group is inferior to the others.

HISTORY OF RACISM

Between 1525 and 1866, 12.5 million people were kidnapped from Africa and sent to the America through the transatlantic slave trade. Upon reaching the New World, some 3.9 million of the 10.7 million who survived the harrowing two-month journey were enslaved in the United States. Comprehending the sheer scales of this forced migration-and slavery’s subsequent spread across the country via interregional trade.

THE VICTIMS OF RACISM

Racist behavior often results in racial discrimination, with its obvious negative consequences, ranging from simple neglect, or the avoidance of those believed to be different and inferior, to more explicit forms of harassment, exploitation or exclusion.

On May 25th, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, knelt on Floyd’s neck for almost nine minutes while Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down, begging for his life and repeatedly saying “I can’t breathe”. Officers J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane further restrained Floyd, while Officer Tou Thao prevented bystanders from intervening. During the final three minutes Floyd was motionless and had no pulse while Chauvin ignored onlookers’ pleas to remove his knee, which he did not do until medics told him to.

Creuza Oliveira, a domestic worker in Brazil was born in the family of poor rural workers with no schooling; Oliveira began life as a domestic worker in Bahia when she was a mere 10 years old. Unable to balance work and school, she had to pick work and drop out of school numerous times.

At work, Oliveira is usually beaten and truanted whenever she broke something, often called lazy, monkey, even “nigger”. The physical and psychological abuse was compounded by sexual abuse from the young men in the household where she worked.

She started receiving her salary at the age of 21, until that age, food and clothes were given to her in place of her salary. She did not have a right to vacations or any basic workers rights.

PROTEST AGAINST RACISM

The civil rights movement was a struggle for social justice that took place mainly during the 1950s and 1960s for black Americans to gain equal rights under the law in the United States. The civil war had officially abolished slavery but it did not end discrimination against black people.

During Reconstruction, black people took on leadership roles like never before. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued executive order 8802 on June 25th, 1941; it opened national defense jobs and other government jobs to all Americans regardless of race, creed, color or national origin.

IMPACTS OF RACISM ON THE LIVES OF BLACK AMERCIANS

Racism has negatively impacted on the lives of Black Americans. Below are some of the impacts of racism on the lives of Black Americans

1.Across generation: The discrimination of black Americans in 20th century has impacted negatively on the health, economic, opportunity and wealth accumulation of blacks thereby diminishing opportunities for this generation.

2 .Across processes within a domain: Discrimination of black Americans at an earlier stage has led to long term cumulative effects. For instance, in the labor market, discrimination in hiring may affect outcomes in promotion and wage growth.

3 .Across domain: Discrimination in one domain has diminished opportunities in other domains. For instance, families that live in segregated neighborhoods may have limited access to adequate employment and health care.

WAYS TO HELP COMBAT RACISM

1. Education: There is a need for information to be disseminated to counter stereotypes and human rights compliant behavior should be encouraged.
2. Public leadership and legislative: Political and community leaders have a vital role to play in speaking out against racism and promoting the principles of multiculturalism and social inclusion.
3. Human rights promotion needs to be improved.

 SUMMARY AND CONCULSION

Racism originated during the era of transatlantic slave trade and there have been many victims of racism which includes George Floyd and others. Several measures have been implemented to stop racism such as the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s and also dissemination of information relating to the impacts of racism on black Americans.

In conclusion, progress had been made in civil rights, but the “evil” of racism endangered further gains for black Americans.