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RACISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN RACE.

“We’ve learned to fly the air like birds, we’ve learned to swim the seas like fish and yet we haven’t learned to walk the earth as brothers and sisters”. These were the wise words said by Martin Luther King Jr. who was a human rights activist. The belief that one’s race is more superior over the other is simply tagged as racism and it has lasted for centuries. Its effects on people are numerous but it can be prevented or reduced by viable solutions that would reduce this horror until it barely exists. The effects of racism on the human race are mainly on the areas of health, education and economic growth.

Racism is not an issue that started some years, months or days ago. It has existed for over centuries. Research studies show that racism was at the heart of North American slavery and the colonization and empire-building activities of Western Europeans, especially in the 18th century. The idea of race then, was to differentiate between the African Americans (the descendants of the Africans who were unwillingly enslaved by the European slave masters) and the people of the European origin. The Europeans that supported slavery, attempted to justify and maintain the system of slavery while on the other hand, the United States was portrayed as a full supporter of human rights, freedom and equality. This seemed very ironic and it was viewed as dehumanization to the enslaved. By the 19th century, racism had fully grown and spread around the world. Leaders began to mark out the higher and lower races by which the lower races were discriminated and exploited for their labour. In the 20th century, precisely after World War I when Germany lost, the Nazi party which seized power in 1933, implemented policies of systematic discrimination, persecution and eventual mass murder of Jews in Germany and in the territories occupied by the country during World War II. In North America and in the South Africa apartheid era, there was segregation of the blacks and whites. They were made to have different communities, schools, churches and hospitals; it was unnatural for people of different races to get married. (“Racism”,n.d).

Racism has great effects on the health of the affected. Systemic racism, which is the form of racism that affects the very structure of the society (Ben & Jerry, para 4), affects the health of the inferior population, as they have limited healthy food choices, inadequate living conditions and substandard health care (Timothy,2018, para 10). As a result of this, the people in the inferior population suffer from malnutrition and some other nutrient deficiencies. Study also shows that the infant mortality rate in the inferior population is 12 times more than the settler communities (Timothy, 2018, para 10). This is as a result of the substandard healthcare treatment that the pregnant women receive. Also, in one U.S study, it showed that 1,574 Baltimore residents of which 20% reported that they had been racially discriminated a lot; this group was reported to have higher systolic blood pressure than others who had experienced little racial discrimination. A while later, the group that was highly discriminated had kidney problems. (Timothy, 2018, para 10). Some people, especially young kids have some traumatic experiences from school and playgrounds which affects them emotionally and psychologically; they usually have no professional to help them in therapy which in turn tends to affect their mental health.

Second, racism has its effects on education. According to the U.S Government Accountability Office Report on Discipline Disparities, black students are disproportionally suspended in schools across the country. These same students are most likely to be truants and transient students (Newman, 2019, para 5). This is as a result of the negative stereotypic beliefs of teachers and school leaders, as they view black people as brutal, causing them to carry out disciplinary actions for small offences, making the students feel stigmatized (Newman, 2019). Also, most schools that are attended by students of the inferior population are usually low funded and lack adequate resources for a high quality education whereas, schools attended by students of the superior population, are richly funded and possess facilities of high quality which enhance a high quality education. This causes a gap in achievement between the students of the different races and it creates a low self esteem in the students of the inferior race. Furthermore, some schools provide high class security mainly to protect the students of the superior race rather than all students, as they view students of the inferior race, especially the Africans or African Americans as threats to the peace and tranquility of the school environment. This will make these students feel unimportant and feared. (Newman, 2019, para 9). Racial bias should be highly discouraged by school authorities and all students should be treated equally, to reduce the above issues.

Thirdly, racism has its effects on economic growth. There has been a racial wage gap and an unequal distribution of wealth among the different races. According to research, white families hold 90% of the national wealth, Latino families hold 2.3% and black families hold 2.6%. not only that, the great recession hit minority families particularly hard and the wealth gap has increased. For every $100 white families earn as income, black families earn just $57.30. This is a huge racial issue. (Ben & Jerry, 2016, para 8). From the statistics gotten, families with low income can barely provide for their needs not to talk of paying of their taxes and investing in businesses, which would aid the growth of the economy. Research also shows that black unemployment rate has been constantly twice that of whites over the past 60 years. It also shows that blacks with college degrees are less likely employed than other graduates. This may be because, as one study found, job applicants with black sounding names are less likely called back for about 50% of the time than job applicants with white sounding names even if they have identical resumes. This is why most of the time, Nigerian students that school in foreign countries like the United States usually come back home seeking for jobs. Such students obviously have great potential which would have aided the growth of the economy but rather, they become liabilities which disrupts and slows down economic growth.

In conclusion, Martin Luther King Jr. said, “I have a dream that my four little children will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the contents of their character”. I believe this can be so if human beings keep up the fight for peace and love until the issue of racism barely exists.

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