Psychological development: racism, affirmative action and health care research pa...

Human beings have had different relationships among themselves throughout the history of mankind. However, some of these encounters have not been for the good of each party, instead, they have resulted in oppressions, discriminations and related negative consequences. Several sociopolitical factors have been identified as playing a crucial role in shaping people's psychological states.

This research paper evaluates three of them; racism, affirmative action and health care. It also discusses the potential impact on psychological development, distress and behavior on a culturally diverse individual.

According to research findings by Anderson, social and political factors determine the kind of relationships which people of different cultural backgrounds have as they interact (2003). The perceptions which members of the society have towards each other are crucial. Racism in America has been one of the most sensitive factors since it can be the source of a range of other negative aspects.

America is one of the most diverse countries in the world due to the high number of immigrants recorded as from the 17th through the 20th centuries. The number of Native Americans was overtaken by the arrival of colonists and immigrants from Europe as well as slaves brought from different parts of the world (Thompson, 2009). In general, the U. S has been mainly dominated by the Whites.

Most researchers have established that racism has been a key subject among the Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Mexican

Americans, American Jews, American Muslims, Arab Americans, Italian Americans, Irish Americans, and other immigrants into the United States (Anderson, 2003).

Many institutions in America have for a long time been structured along racial differences. They include educational institutions, training camps and government institutions.

Racism is characterized by segregation and oppression, particularly when it comes to provision of shelter, employment opportunities, and access to education (Thompson, 2009).

Despite the fact that formal racism in America was abolished during and after the World War II, it is still being witnessed across some sectors of the society for instance in politics.

A national poll conducted by Thompson revealed that the voting patterns of most Americans are significantly influenced by racial affiliation (2009). Racial discrimination against Latin Americans, African Americans, and the Muslims is significantly high among the American population. Racism has also been showed to occur across virtually all ethnic groups in the U. S.

Modern critical researchers have concluded that the involvement of U. S. in the Middle East is driven by racial overtones especially in the manner in which they perceive and handle Arabs (Anderson, 2003). Prior years saw the design of foreign policies in the U. S. guided by racial considerations where some races were considered to be superior while others inferior.

Investigators have found that America Muslims have been facing racial discrimination in airports and other immigration policies since the infamous September 11 event.

It is evident that racism has massive impacts on the general development of an individual who is culturally diverse. Someone who is born into such an environment may grow with a feeling of inferiority due to how they are treated.

Discrimination can have adverse effects on the psychological development of a person. Moreover, a person may feel distressed when being taken through detailed screening and interrogation when visiting or immigrating into the United States. Being perceived and treated like a criminal or terrorist can force an individual who feels discriminated to develop criminal behaviors.

The one who is born into the race considered superior will also propagate the same attitudes especially if the person has no chance of interacting regularly with people from other cultural backgrounds. Research findings reveal that individuals who do not meet people of different racial origins are more discriminatory compared to those who live in multi-cultural settings (Anderson, 2003).

With the significantly adverse effects of racial discrimination, there is need to develop appropriate policies that address these problems.

The oppressed members of the society need to be assisted in fighting for their rights. Different groups of people in America have employed various

means ranging from peaceful demonstrations, advocacy, agitation, to forced legislations in order to bring equality in the society.

This has led to the formulation of affirmative action in the United States. It is a policy which is designed to enhance access to education facilities and services as well as employment opportunities for the minority groups and women in the society (Wright, 1998).

Affirmative action has been very instrumental in dealing with past injustices and discriminations directed towards the minority. Currently, many institutions such as universities, companies, healthcare providers, and security forces are more representative of the diverse American population, thanks to the Human Civil Rights. Enrolment in universities, recruitment services, and employment has become less discriminatory against the minority groups and women.

Researchers have established that the members of the dominant groups argue that affirmative action increases discrimination against the majority who happen to be white men (Wright, 1998). Those against affirmative action claim that only merit should be used in selecting candidates for different positions or opportunities.

The proponents of affirmative action, on the other hand, argue that there has been no decline in opportunities for the majority group as a result of implementation of the policy. For instance, they point out that there has been notable increase in university enrollment for the majority as it has been

for the minority groups. This implies that affirmative action is not an enemy of the common good.

In fact, the proponents of affirmative action have noted that there has always been discrimination among the members of the dominant group themselves. Priority has been mostly accorded to the athletes, children of former students as well as those with special musical talents. This has not been based on merit.

Affirmative action can have tremendous impact on the development of an individual. Members of the minority groups as well as women can feel empowered to achieve their potentials.

An assurance of protection from discrimination by the policy enables them to develop positive psychological orientation. The attitudes towards life of the beneficiaries will also be positive and hence leading less distressing lives.

The primary objective of every nation is to have a healthy population which can spearhead social, political, and economic progress. Equitable provision of health care services is therefore paramount. According to research findings, however, there have been significant disparities in the provision of health care along racial lines (Wright, 1998). Both access and the quality of health care have been hampered by racial discrimination.

Significant numbers of preventable deaths among the races perceived to be inferior occur compared to those occurring among the whites. Some of the

reasons advanced to explain these deaths include lack of health insurance, poor service, and failure to seek medical attention in time (Thompson, 2009).

Infamous claims of official experimentation of some medical activities on some races have resulted in almost complete distrust of the entire medical industry. Discriminatory handling of patients by healthcare providers has also been cited as one of the major cause of inequitable health care services.

Inappropriate healthcare provision has direct impact on the psychological development of the individual and hence life in general. Uncertainty of getting proper treatment may cause further problems for the patients. These challenges may result in the development of depression and stress which only serve to worsen the situation of the culturally diverse person.

The paper has evaluated racism, affirmative action, and health care inequality as some of the most common sociopolitical factors that have significant influences on a culturally diverse individual.

The potential impacts of each factor have also been described. It is evident, therefore, that more need to be done if the negative impacts of the many sociopolitical factors are to be minimized if not eliminated from the multicultural American society.

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