

Free essay on white privilege and colorism

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White privilege is also known as White 'skin' privilege. It is a term that refers to the privileges that are enjoyed by people of western countries whose skin colour is white. These privileges are provided in the social, political as well as economic contexts. However, such a privilege is mainly witnessed in the American society.

White privilege was not only experienced by the Whites in the 1900s but it is also experienced by them today. I have found many examples that make me realise that we, the Whites, still enjoy a lot of privileges and that prejudice still exists in our everyday life against the Black population. One of the most common examples of enjoying White privilege is the issue of being arrested. I have found that even if the Whites make mistakes, they are sometimes overlooked. We would find that the majority of the criminals in the American society are not actually White. (Maxwell, 2014) " Research shows that white Americans are less likely to be arrested and jailed. While people of color only make up 30% of the total population, they are 60% of the U. S. prison population." Other examples include the high chance of the White population being more open to opportunities in college admissions and jobs, the label of not being called 'angry' or a thug and whenever we see a missing report, we notice that it is only about whites and not the coloured. Finally, another common example of enjoying white privilege is the opportunity of being able to afford adequate standards of living. It has been found that the whites seem to enjoy the most luxurious lives and usually live in suburbs.

When we compare the lives of the Whites and the coloured in America, we find that there are a lot of opportunities that the coloured are denied. In terms of college, the coloured are not preferred over the Whites. The

coloured only have limited access to educational institutions. It is only the rich ones who can afford to send their children to good colleges. The coloured are also denied the right to live in places which are clean and well-built. The Blacks are assumed to live in places which are unsafe. Because of this, a common term known as 'Sesame Street' has been derived. Finally, we also see that sometimes the coloured are denied of jobs as well. There is a common notion in the minds of the people that they are not 'qualified' enough for high-grade jobs. In a more personal term, we see that marriage is mainly restricted among the Blacks' own community. The Whites do not usually want to marry coloured people. They only want to marry someone from their 'own kind'.

There are many other kinds of privileges existing in the American society. "Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do". (McIntosh, 2003). Privileges are enjoyed in terms of one's income as well. No matter what the background, if one has high income, he or she is more likely to enjoy luxury and other privileges than the ones with very little income. This class privilege is an essential feature of the American society. Other privileges are Jewish privilege, special ordinances for the disabled and reservation for women in many spheres of the society. It has been found that many privileges change due to disabilities and other issues. For example, if a coloured child is disabled as well, he or she is provided special opportunities and privileges than the other children of the same school. The same is in the case of offices and other work places.

Colourism refers to a term which signifies the discrimination or prejudice against people who have a skin tone which is dark and usually occurs between individuals belonging to the same racial or ethnic group. The development of colourism dates back to the time when slavery was prevalent in the American society. During this time, both the populations, the dark and the light-skinned, gave birth to children who belonged to the same ancestors. But then a law was established which strongly opposed the mixing of both the populations. This law came to be known as the One Drop Rule. According to this law, the children who had even a little mix of black ancestry, were considered to be black and usually children adopted their mother's status, which was of slaves. Because of this law, the two populations were separated from one another and in time, this separation grew wider. Thus, the idea of colourism developed.

Colourism is still prevalent in the American society. It is seen in terms of marriages as well as other spheres of life. We usually find that people with darker skin prefer to get married to dark-skinned people and the same is the case of people with lighter skin. We would hardly find a few marriages in which people of both light and dark skin are involved. Further, we also find people with lighter skin and other features, which are close to the European people, have more opportunities available to them than the people with dark skin. The former group of people seem to be involved in the mainstream more than the latter group of people. Colourism exists among many other minorities in the American society. Differences among these minorities come about on the basis of their colour that they are born with. For example, the Native Americans with darker skin are said to be entire pure, whereas the

ones with lighter skin are considered to have a mix of European culture in them and are thus, discriminated against in the Native community.

Today, the American society is full of variations and differences. The groups in the society are similar in one way and different in the other. Therefore, such differences not only exist between the communities but also within the people of each minority community of the American society. However, such differences are not confined only to the American society. They are witnessed by the whole world.

References

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