

Racist Attitudes towards African Americans, Muslim Immigrants and Ethnic minorities.

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Abstract— The United States has a broad history; eras of ups and downs. But, despite having a history of celebrating civil rights activists and touting religious tolerance, the United States' general population continues to show racist attitudes toward Muslims and other ethnic groups and minorities. Racism against Islamic groups sparked the most after the incident of 9/11 where a Muslim-claiming terrorist group attacked the twin towers in New York, U.S.A. This incident made the general public of America, have a judgemental point of view for all the Muslims around the nation which degraded their pride and integrity. A survey conducted in 2011, suggests that almost 52% of Americans don't respect Muslims or the Islamic culture (Gallup, 2020). However, this gets proven when a Muslim teen boy is accused of making a bomb when he creates a digital clock with his innovative mind and science and has to go through discomfort, caused by the legal authorities. Prejudice against Islam, not only contempts Muslim out of the American culture but also breaks apart the unity of the nation as a whole.

Index Terms— African Americans, Civil Rights, Islamophobia, Muslims, Muslim Immigrants, Race prejudice, Racial discrimination, Stereotype

1 INTRODUCTION

Civil rights leaders like W.E.B. DuBois, Ida B. Wells, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez have fought for equal rights and opportunities for all human beings by introducing civil rights movements, campaigns, organizations like NAACP, etc. Additionally, "The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons." ("NAACP | What is the Mission of the NAACP?", 2020). NAACP brings out issues regarding social justice and equality in the public. Despite such civil rights leaders and organizations, racism hasn't ended yet around the world but has expanded from color to religion and ethnicity. In 2011, discrimination against ethnic minorities received a spark because "Hearings of the US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security on the alleged radicalization of the Muslim American community threaten to unjustly conflate Islam with violence and encourage discrimination against a minority population, Human Rights Watch said today." ("US: Hearings on Muslim Americans Encourage Discrimination", 2020). There are approximately 3.45 million Muslims in the entire U.S. and such a hearing ignited the fire to more discrimination against Muslims and ethnic minorities. Several human rights organizations (such as NAACP, HRW, etc) strive hard to bring out such racial discrimination among the American public by connecting it to various issues and aspects of the society to reduce or eradicate racism against such ethnic/religious groups.

2 THE PROBLEM

2.1 Review of the Problem

The main focus of this paper is to highlight racial discrimination against Muslim immigrants and other ethnic minorities who face this problem in their daily lives. In 2017, The Pew Research Center conducted a far-reaching new survey of Muslims across the United States in which it was found, "A large majority — 75 percent — said there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims in the United States." (Hauslohner, 2020). Such a huge number of Muslims in the U.S. face racial discrimination just because their proposition of religion is disparate from others. This shows that Muslim immigrants and other ethnic minorities are more vulnerable to be the targets of racism in the United States which makes this a serious social issue in society. Furthermore, "Racial discrimination is a serious human rights problem in the United States . . . to surveillance of specific groups, such as Muslims or political activists from other ethnic or religious minorities, to immigration policies that scapegoat immigrants as criminals, or subject asylum seekers and refugees to disparate treatment based on their national origin." ("World Report 2020: Rights Trends in United States", 2020). People from minority groups are being suspected and discriminated according to the nation they belong to, or the religion they follow. Such ethnic minorities have to go through racism in their everyday life, whether its school, college, or workplace, judgemental comments are passed which

makes them feel that they are not important or they don't assimilate into the American culture.

2.2 Causes of the Problem

The discrimination against Muslim immigrants gave a spark to a new term known as "Islamophobia". It means, "An exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life." (Gallup, 2020). This fear against Islam and its followers aroused after the attacks of 9/11, whom attackers were supposed, Muslims. After that incident, a feeling of hatred and cruelty initiated amongst Americans for Muslims and Islamic minorities. Additionally, "Research shows that the U.S. identified more than 160 Muslim-American terrorist suspects and perpetrators in the decade since 9/11, just a percentage of the thousands of acts of violence that occur in the United States each year." Researches and surveys prove the approximation of statistics to the outside world. Such researches do bring out the distorted or false individuals into the limelight but fail to protect those who belong to that particular community from hatred and violence.

The idea of all Muslims being engaged in illegal activities should come to an end as soon as possible; it not only degrades Islam as a religion but also goes against innocence and truthfulness. For instance, "Had we been able to see the Muslim world as diverse and complicated, with nuances and differences, if we saw Muslims as human beings--and not as we do today, as "apes or worse"--do you think we would've invaded Baghdad? Hundreds of billions of dollars later, hundreds of thousands dead, a haven for one of the most brutal movements in modern history, there's no end in sight, but Muslims here and abroad get blamed for the outcomes." (Moghul, 2016). Islamophobia has ruined the state of unity of the United States.

People blame others for causing distress around the nation while forgetting to look out for the mistakes they have done themselves. It not only leads to people being misled but also taking violent or verbal action against Islamic minorities.

2.3 Effects of the Problem

After 9/11, "Islamophobia" started spreading widely across the U.S., many incidents took place which was against the favor of Muslims living in the country. Such incidents not only defame the whole community but take away the true and innocent individuals from the exposure of society. For example, the incident of teenager Ahmed Mohamed took place in 2015. The headline "Muslim teen Ahmed Mohamed creates clock,

shows teachers, gets arrested" (Ashley Fantz, 2020), provides a legitimate testimony to the public about how Islamophobia still exists and how innocent Muslims are defamed or troubled. The teen boy tried to create something new by leveraging his knowledge of science at a very young age. He was accused and arrested for making a bomb which his high school teachers thought, but was just a digital clock. Although eventually, the truth came out the difficulty he and his family had to go through cannot be expressed. "Mohamed's arrest led to an uproar on social media with many alleging that the teen had been the victim of profiling because he is Muslim. President Barack Obama and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton were among the many supporters who wished him well." (Worland, 2015). This makes it a solid example of how Islamophobia still exists around society. Other than

such examples, it changes the mindset of the people towards Muslims and other ethnic minorities.

After terror attacks, a stereotype that develops into every person's mind is that an Islamic group is associated with it. Sometimes, it's the prejudice that causes discrimination; for example, "The promotion of Islamophobia creates both prejudice and discrimination among the general population." (Gallup, 2020). This prejudice leads to the ignorance of Muslims around the world and neglecting their culture. Islam and related races are directly targeted to be terrorizing or associated with terror, although not all individuals belonging to the same race commit or spread negativity. Furthermore, "Prejudice plays a key role in the existence and proliferation of Islamophobia. Prejudice alone, as a negative judgment, opinion, or attitude, is a detriment to a population's overall well-being." (Gallup, 2020). This prejudice leads to the growth of Anti-Muslim sentiment, impact on the quality of Muslim life, growth of Muslim hate, employment and workplace discrimination, bullying of Muslim students, etc.

4 CONCLUSION

Race prejudice not only leads to the humiliation of a particular race but also the disintegration of a solidly united nation. It brainwashes the minds of people through the propagation of speech by critics and media, which spreads negativity among the people of the nation. Hatred impacts negatively on all aspects of society and one who gets targeted by racial discrimination starts questioning his/her own identity leading to the loss of faith in mankind. I believe that religion doesn't favor spread of negativity or violence; and if someone performs the act of violence on the name of religion, isn't a human being at all. A solution for such a social issue is to give up on this prejudiced thinking and have more optimistic and positive thinking towards all human beings. As humans, let us all unite to

diminish and reduce racism to the least so that the spread of love and respect keeps the nation and the world as a whole, united and running for the benefit of all; because after all, a change starts from you, yourself.

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