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Sociology 101

November 14, 2008

The Cycle of Prejudice and Discrimination

There are many different types of people that inhabit this world. People can vary from their race, cultural background, gender, or sexual orientation. Many people think that others who are different, in those ways, are an asset to the world. However, there are also a lot of people who do not like others who differ from their way of life. Many of these people who think that their standards and way of life are better will participate in prejudice and discrimination. By participating in prejudice and discrimination people create a never ending cycle of social disadvantage for minorities, or people who are different from themselves.

Although many may not realize it, prejudice and discrimination can create an unneeded cycle in society that sets people up for inferiority. If a person, or group of people, are not accepted by the majority others will think poorly of them. This is just the first part of this terrible cycle. It is called prejudice and it is an unfair assumption or stereotype about a group of people. Another type of harsh treatment is discrimination which is when people will take unfair actions against others who are different. Although prejudice and discrimination can be acted out against everyone, it is mostly minorities who get the worst of it. Since there are fewer minorities, they are usually blamed by everyone else for the problems in the world. This is shown in the scapegoat theory when people who are irritated with their own lives find someone of lesser importance and blame their issues on them. This leads to the mistreatment of minorities.

Since minorities have so much blame put on them by prejudice and discrimination they are more likely to be at a social disadvantage. If a minority keeps being seen by others as lower than them, they will keep putting them down in all aspects of life. They will hold a poor attitude about the minorities, and will give them social obstacles. These social obstacles can vary from poor jobs to mistreatment in social environments, or even unequal schooling. Because people think they can bully minorities they eventually give them unjust treatment. This puts minorities in a low class category.

Since minorities are categorized lowly among social classes it is hard for them to rise above their station and better themselves. Although the majority do not realize it, but a lot of it has to do with them. Because the majority have wrongly judged the minorities, they have been keeping the minorities in a low social class. By having prejudice attitudes and discriminating against the minorities they have held them back. The minorities social disadvantage is seen by others as their own fault by simply being the minorities. This makes the majority think that they were right all along about their prejudice against them which keeps feeding the cycle so it continues.

During my life time I have seen this cycle occur many times. The most vivid personal example I have of this cycle is from when I was in middle school. When I was in the seventh grade there was a Mexican-American girl who went to school with me. She had a large family and few friends. There were a lot of people who did not like here and discriminated against her for her Mexican race and heritage. She kept doing poorly in school and always looked unkempt and sad. Everyone would always say it was her fault for being poor and pathetic because she was a “foreigner” and a “dirty Mexican”. Later in the year I sat beside her in a class and we became friends. She told me her father could not get a job because he had a thick Spanish accent and they did not want “his kind”. So that is why they stayed poor. This example just goes to show how prejudice and discrimination can ruin lives and hurt minorities.

Many people do not realize the cycle that keeps minorities in a low social rank and disadvantage. By acting on prejudice and discriminating against people different from themselves they are making it hard for those people to have the same social advantages that they have. This cycle will only continue if people can become more accepting of others instead of hurting them.