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Racism: An Embedded Irremovable Mind-set

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ABSTRACT

Racism is a stereotype that will take a longer time to vanish from the society. This article deals with the current issue of racism in the world. In addition to the current scenario we have also discussed about the history of racism, other related terms and some of the notable incidents that took place due to this cruel custom. Racism has a relation with Ethnicity, Casteism and Classism which is explained in a detailed manner in the article itself. Moving further the article talks about the incidents that took place regarding racism in South Africa and on Indians by British government, we have faced lot atrocities during the British rule. This article also puts light on the practice of new age racism; we have discussed the matter of cruelty faced by the Asians in the United States, United Kingdom and India as well. After the outbreak of a global pandemic COVID-19 the idea of new age racism emerged in a barbarous manner and attacks on Chinese other Asians were prominent now. In India the North-Eastern people have been facing this from the longer time. They are not even considered as our own. Later we have given a few suggestions to curb this problem and make world a better and a peaceful place to live.

I. INTRODUCTION

No one in this world born wants to get discriminated by others on the basis of their complexion or other things. This conduct is just not acceptable as it creates prejudice among society.

Racism has its deep root buried in the psychological thinking of the society. This root has become so hefty that now it has started dismantling the social status of some humans in the society. Those people who face such problems find it very difficult to cope up with this Psyche.

It has been finely said that “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other”– **Mother Teresa.**

This very quote by Mother Teresa tells us a lot about the spirit of common brotherhood that we have lost in the present world. World is a small place and it is important to help each other out in difficult times. As we all are currently in state of self-quarantine, safely locked down in our very own houses due to the novel Corona Virus outbreak. This is the time to show compassion

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towards the people who are not able to get a livelihood for themselves, but are we doing? It is quite easier to blame someone for the wrong that has happened; people are blaming the Chinese and Asians, attacking them as if they are the one's spreading the disease. India a nation known for its unity in diversity, the north-eastern people were attacked verbally as well as physically also over this pandemic, it is not anything new but this time it has gone too far, the **New Age Racism**.

In this paper, we will discuss about the evolution of Racism, its drastic effects, few quantitative data and most importantly about the New Age Racism.

II. HISTORY OF RACISM

Racism means Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized³. This is a feeling of strong dislike and bigotry toward a person or persons because of their race.

The origin of this word Racism is not clear; there is much ambiguity in this word. Some says that it came from the English language from Middle French and other says that it has been derived from the Arabic word. But there is no such agreement in that⁴.

The concept of Racism is all about antipathy of one person from the other on grounds of their color, place of birth, language, customs and other relatable things that describes about that person character. This discrimination paved the path in the new way that gave rise to numerous affairs like of slavery, wars, formation of nations etc.⁵. The people who show off their sophisticated thoughts and who hardly cares about someone when comes on this topic, they become so narrow minded person that no one can ever match them. These people believe that this particular race is inferior to them. Few groups have this mistaken opinion that **Bible**, the Christian holy book, talks about racial divisions among men. As a matter of fact, the Bible doesn't deal with such type of racism. No word or concept is used anywhere in the Holy book, instead of that the divisions of men are there on the basis of their tongue, language, families, nations & so on, not of races. No physical differences are done in the Holy book. It is just that some Christian writers have interpreted Bible in Racist way, which diverted the minds of people. Bible talks about only one race and i.e. Human Race.

Racism is all about doing discrimination on the basis of physical feature of a person. This

³ Lexico Dictionary, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/racism> (last visited July 27, 2020).

⁴ Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/race> (Last visited July 27, 2020).

⁵ ADL Fighting hate for good, <https://www.adl.org/racism> (Last visited July 29, 2020).

physical feature includes skin color, hair style or color, eyes shape, etc. Racism is a situation where one dominant group suppresses other groups and in some case takes benefit of those conditions from the oppression.

In numerous manners, people have made attempts to fix the base of Racism in the society and to the greater extent they got succeeded. Firstly, they interpreted **Bible** in racial way then after they connected **Religion** with racism in order to justify their racial discrimination by putting question mark on this point whether these Blacks or Indians have soul or are Humans. Then Catholic Church was the first to admit this fact that, Yes, they have soul and are Humans.

This was not their last attempt. Again, they connected **Science** with Racism and named it as **Scientific Racism**. It is considered as the modern terminology of Race, which developed during 19th century, when Charles Darwin evolved the ‘Theory of Evolution’. Darwin in his book ‘Origin of species’, talked about the process of Evolution which deals with the development of Species. Moreover, he used one phrase in that book “**The Preservation of Favoured Races in the struggle for life**”. The phrase later on was connected with racism in brutal way and from there Racism taken its Giant form. Basically, from Darwinian Theory, scientists observed that White race are superior to other groups. The main unfair treatment was done on the ground of skin color of humans i.e. of white and blacks.

III. RACISM IN CONTRAST WITH OTHER TERMS:

The term ‘Racism’ is connected with other terms which somehow have same meaning but are used in different contexts according to their conditions, circumstances, mindsets and culture. These terms are **Ethnicity, Casteism and Classism**.

Ethnicity & Racism– Both terms are related to Human Forefathers. Except for the fact, on one side, Ethnicity is associated with the cultural expression and identification while, Racism is linked with Biology and physical characteristics of Humans. **Ethnicity** means, when particular groups of people classed according to their common ancestry, traditions, language, religions or dialect. And **Racism** means, a category of Human kind that that shares distinctive physical traits. When we see both things together, then we can easily find out the difference that Ethnicity has broader scope than Racism⁶.

Casteism & Racism – Casteism is related with caste system which is prevalent in India. Indians have created Caste system as they find its essence in their pious religious books. Like in Hindus, caste has four divisions- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. In simple

⁶Erin Blakemore, Race and Ethnicity: How are they different, National Geographic (July 31, 2020, 11:30 AM), <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/topics/reference/race-ethnicity/>.

words, Casteism is an irrational discrimination of people based on the caste system in India. There is no exact definition of Caste. Nowhere this term has been clearly defined even not in books. On the other side, Racism is a discrimination of people belonging to particular race. Both Racism and Casteism effects life, education, employment facility and personal relationships of people.

Classism & Racism – From **Classism** word we themselves can able to understand what does it mean. Classism is related with class discrimination. On the basis of classification of people on upper and lower class, person gets dominated by other. Classism is nothing but a belief and cultural attitudes that ranks people based on their education level, economic status, etc. The scope of Classism is narrower than Racism as Racism covers all aspects of Physical traits, education field, personal relationships and so on while Class discrimination circumscribe the discrimination done on the basis of people's class.

IV. INCIDENTS THAT CONCRETIZED RACISM

It has been rightly said by **Toni Morrison**, “There is no such thing as Race. None. There is just a Human Race – Scientifically, Anthropologically”. In simple words, Racism is not created by God rather it is created by Humans who mould and present things in the manner they like or they desires. Many incidents had occurred which made several impacts on the lives of people. Some of them are:

(a) **Racial Discrimination in South Africa**–

In 1893, When Gandhiji came to South Africa; he was thrown out of the Train even though he was having First Class Ticket because of racial segregation of white and blacks. From there, he decided to fight injustice against them. And hence, initiated protest in order to remove this Racism by forming Indian Natal Congress. Due to this Protest, people discovered their rights who were unseemly get discriminated by White man. Lastly, this protest came to an end by an agreement with the South African Government⁷.

(b) **Dominance by Britishers on Indians** :

When Britishers started ruling India they dominated them due to the reason that they are Indians. On the basis of their place, there many rights got deprived. Basically, Britishers were Indophobic. Their suppression shook after Indian Rebellion of 1857, when Indian Sepoys rebelled against British East India Company. So we can see here that Indians were racially

⁷Gandhi's first act of Civil Disobedience, This day in History (Aug. 03, 2020, 7:55 PM), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/gandhis-first-act-of-civil-disobedience>

discriminated by the Britishers on the ground of their place.

Likewise, this there are many such incidents that paved the path to the New Age Racism wrote new history.

V. EVENTS CORROBORATING SUCH NEW AGE RACISM

United States

The Corona Virus originated in Wuhan city of China in the early December of 2019, it spread like a fire to whole world, since then people started naming it as “THE CHINESE VIRUS”. People started linking the virus with the whole race of Asians. Even Donald Trump and his leaders of the party named the virus as ‘Chinese’. He was silent on the attacks which were on the Chinese-Americans recently; in California, a lady from Thailand working at a restaurant was bullied and abused as she looked like the Chinese⁸, an elderly man jogging was attacked by 2 men and they spat at him yelling “Go Back to China!”⁹ These are just a few of the innumerable incidents that took place in the US, we can decipher from this that people are turning xenophobic to Asians. These people are living in a constant fear of being assaulted as the people there are prejudiced that this outbreak is somehow the fault of china. The Asian American advocates in the US have firmly decided to raise their voices and criticize any such racist comment passed, once we are out of such danger¹⁰.

United Kingdom

Here the situation is no different from the US, people considering the Asians and Chinese as disgrace to their society. As the coronavirus spreads over the world so does the xenophobia against the people of Asian descent; Jonathan Mok, a UCL law student originally from Singapore, was walking in London recently when he heard someone shout: “Coronavirus!” He was then attacked so brutally that he may require facial surgery. The British police are now pursuing another case in which attackers allegedly tore the clothes off a University of Glasgow PhD student from China¹¹. A 24 year old Thai taxi driver was attacked and robbed by

⁸ Ali Gostanian et al, Asians worldwide share examples of corona virus related xenophobia on social media(Aug. 02, 2020, 6:49AM) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asians-worldwide-share-examples-coronavirus-related-xenophobia-social-media-n1132036>

⁹ Esther Yoon-ki Jang, Asian Americans In Chicago Feel The Bite Of Prejudice During The Spread Of The Coronavirus_(July 28, 2020, 6:53AM) <https://www.wbez.org/stories/asian-americans-in-chicago-feel-the-bite-of-prejudice-during-the-spread-of-the-coronavirus/687b0f4e-fed8-4fca-90c4-b7c3c495b4cf>

¹⁰ Lauren Aratani, Coughing while Asian: living in fear as racism feeds off coronavirus panic (July 30, 2020, 7:08 AM) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/24/coronavirus-us-asian-americans-racism>

¹¹ Joyce Lau, Coronavirus sparks a rising tide of xenophobia worldwide (July 30, 2020, 6:54 PM) <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/coronavirus-sparks-rising-tide-ofxenophobia-worldwide>

two masked men, while they kept yelling “coronavirus” at the man¹².

VI. GROWTH OF ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

Above were the examples of racial attacks in the developed nations. Over 650 such cases were reported in the United States according to the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council. This is not the first time Asians are targeted for and outbreak of a pandemic. 100 years ago also white labeled Chinese as “dangerous to whites”. Let’s take an example of small pox which spread during the 19th Century, the ports were ordered to appoint officers to keep people quarantined and then also the Chinese were blamed for the outbreak for a period of 20 long years¹³.

VII. NORTH-EAST INDIANS FACING ATROCITIES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY

Recently the students in Delhi University were attacked and abused by some goons and they even spat on them, bullying them and yelling at them as if they were solely responsible for the corona virus. There are many such incidents even before this period of COVID-19, they have always been facing the atrocities and people just don’t want to accept them as fellow Indians. Their rights are protected under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 and it keeps amended by the government from time to time. Things went out of hand when residents filed official complaints against the northeast Indians in Ahmedabad. In the furtherance of such attacks the Chief Minister of Mizoram asked the Prime minister and Home minister to look into the matter and take appropriate actions against the offenders. The MHA on March 21 issued an advisory to all the states as well as Union territories to act strictly against such racial attacks¹⁴.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

We know that these are the tough times for us; we are not used to sit in our houses like we are under some house arrest. But this social distancing is the only cure to this disease until we find a vaccine for the same. Let’s all show some love and respect to the people around us and make world a better place amidst all this chaos. Instead of blaming a particular nation and a race, let

¹² Nosheen Iqbal, ‘They yelled Coronavirus’ – East Asian attack victim speaks of fear, (July 29, 2020, 8:05 PM) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/16/they-yelled-coronavirus-first-british-attack-victim-east-asian-man>

¹³ Paula Larson, Anti-Asian racism during coronavirus: How the language of disease produces hate and violence, (July 31, 2020, 8:28 PM) <https://theconversation.com/anti-asian-racism-during-coronavirus-how-the-language-of-disease-produces-hate-and-violence-134496>

¹⁴ Sumir Karmakar, Coronavirus outbreak has increased racial attacks on people from the Northeast: NGO report (Aug. 2, 2020, 9:13 PM) <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/east-and-northeast/coronavirus-outbreak-has-increased-racial-attacks-on-people-from-the-northeast-ngo-report-817899.html>

them help and make us help them. **Theodore Roosevelt** rightly said and it suits the situation: **“The spirit of brotherhood recognizes of necessity both the need of self-help and also the need of helping others in the only way which every ultimately does great god, that is, of helping them to help themselves”.**

We must always show this type of help to all people. It's not that when they will ask for help then only we should come forward to help them. It is our duty to make them feel comfortable when they are not in that comfort zone. And as society is getting educated and is excelling in all fields then we must also understand this fact that discrimination doesn't give fruitful result. If one day, we do such type of bad act with someone then that act will come back to us and teach us Lesson; Karma is omnipresent. As soon as you do some good or bad thing with someone that act of yours will back to you in that form. So, be human first and show your humanity. Never ever discriminate anyone racially.
