**Social Issues Affecting African-Americans and the Policies to Implement**

Student’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course

Professor’s Name

Date

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Racial inequality in housing, employment, and an assortment of multiple social domains tends to have renewed interest in the imaginable role of discrimination. In this case, distinct from the pre-civil rights era when racial prejudice and discrimination were widespread and overt, discrimination among African Americans tends to be prevalent in the contemporary age. To be racially prejudiced entails having an unfavorable or discriminatory attitude or belief towards an individual, or a particular group of persons, on the grounds of their ethnicity or skin color (Mandalaywala, 2020). When laws and institutions back racial prejudice, racism becomes imminent. Racial prejudice and racism have in recent years been perpetrated in the US, primarily by individuals of the white race on not only African-Americans but also Latinos and Asians, among others. Although social problems affect a wide variety of individuals from all classes, and races in line with cultures, minorities, particularly African-Americans, encounter social issues such as poverty, unemployment, lack of sustainable education, and criminal injustice, in line with drugs and substance abuse. There is a need for policies to be put in place to address social issues affecting African Americans.

**Poverty**

Poverty encompasses the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. It has been known to be the worst form of violence and entails the condition where the family's basic needs remain unfilled. The various manifestations of poverty include exclusion, malnutrition, and social discrimination, in line with the lack of participation in the decision-making process within society. Across the US, there tends to be a high rate of poverty among the African-American populace, which impairs economic progress. For instance, childhood poverty has been estimated to cost the US economy 500 billion dollars to tackle poverty issues. Also, most African-Americans expect to be poor or near poor at some point, with 60% ranging between 25 to 70 years (Gillum, 2019). Poverty increases the crime rate and has been known to establish multiple social issues affecting individuals across the socioeconomic ladder. Among the African-American population, poverty is fueled by war, lack of education, natural disaster, and political instability. Poor individuals experience worse health, and family issues, in line with prostitution and many other problems.

**Unemployment**

Regarding the Bureau of Labor Statistics, African Americans between the ages of 18 and 45 tend to have the highest unemployment rate across the US. Millions of individuals from the Black community in the US reside in neighborhoods that lack access to formal and suitable jobs. Also, African American adults are about twice as likely to turn out to be unemployed as whites, with learners of African descent delaying educational accomplishment and completion. In this case, education can be considered one of the most significant factors as to why the unemployment rate is so high among African Americans. In particular, African American men tend to have the highest unemployment rate of civilian non-institutionalized Black individuals aged above 20 years. There has been a large racial gap in unemployment even before the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic that swept over the US (Reyes, 2020). The African American community still lacks lucrative jobs due to a shortage of educational resources.

**Lack of Sustainable Education**

Although the Brown v Board of Education was over 60 years ago, African Americans still seem to champion equal education opportunities across the US. Many learning institutions remain segregated in the contemporary era, even before the ruling, with black kids performing at the bottom of the American educational system (Kopnina, 2020). Education is still considered a key to success since it provides the masses with the knowledge to combat various social issues. In recent years, the most visible evidence is that the color line still creates a divide within the public policy arena and mainly within the education sector. Racism and discrimination within the US educational system remain rampant and adversely affect the growth and development of the African American learner. The majority of African American schools continue to receive inadequate funding in line with experiencing inefficient teaching methods, which tends to affect the performance of black students.

**Criminal Injustices**

African Americans have grieved from rejection due to their race through the scheme of slavery for ages. With enslaved people depicted as assertions to their masters, they were denied various rights and freedoms, with a view of the justice system. The pattern seems to have replaced segregation and exclusion from law-making and decision-making processes. In the contemporary era, African American youths are primarily affected by discretion and discrimination through the court systems (Hinton & Cook, 2021). The African American race has suffered from unfair and unjust treatment within the criminal justice system. Discrimination and racism within the US courts commenced in 1986 when black people were described as thieves, sneaky, and lazy. The Black individuals were frequently accused of being violent and were primarily involved in mass gun shootouts. These criminal offenses were associated with the black community, which was accused of being part of criminal gangs, which was not the case. Although Black Americans have worked to sustain themselves following the abolishment of slavery, their white counterparts have similar perspectives within the justice department.

**Drugs and Substance Abuse**

Young black kids have been arrested multiple times due to possession of marijuana, and when questioned, they blame it on depression, anxiety, and stress. The social problem of drugs and substance abuse has affected many African Americans and has resulted in a rise in crime rates and prostitution, among other social issues (Planey et al., 2019). Drug addictions have become a vast ongoing issue among the African American Community. However, despite the notion that drugs and substance abuse occurs globally, there remain to be limited studies that have investigated drug misuse among the black community. Lack of formal education has been highly linked to drug and abuse cases, with the number of school dropouts within the black community increasing annually.

**Policies to Deal with Social Problems**

**Criminal Justice Reform Policies**

These policies are vital in addressing the various social issues affecting African Americans. The Black community seems drastically overrepresented, especially within the prison populace. For instance, Black men comprise about 35% of the prison population. There is a need for criminal justice reforms that will ensure justice is served with equality (Mears, 2022). Black community individuals are likely to be five times more likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime as compared to their white counterparts. African Americans receive a more severe and prolonged sentence than their white counterparts. This phenomenon carries multiplicative impacts on the life chances that the community across the US upholds. These reforms would be vital in eliminating uncertainties within the court systems, labor markets, and housing issues; to address these and other obstacles, criminal justice reform needs to be made a priority.

**Education Policies**

Improving the education system among African Americans necessitates affirmative policies that ensure strategic options are put in motion. Educational policies should cater to both learners and the general public. When the general public is educated on various social problems, it becomes more informed, with high chances of achieving sustainable growth and development. With about 27% of African American men having a bachelor's degree and only 35% of Black women having a degree, educational policies need to be introduced within the US economy (García & Weiss, 2020). Education which is the key to success must be provided to the African American community to create job prospects that will foster economic growth. In improving and ensuring favorable social outcomes, an education policy needs to be formulated and implemented for the African American community for sustainable social programs.

**Place-based Policies**

According to recent data, 25% of Black households resided in high-poverty neighborhoods, more than white households, constituting only 5%. With the higher-poverty neighborhoods majorly characterized by poorer quality learning institutions, unfavorable social networks, less access to jobs, and increased crime rates, there is a need to introduce place-based policies (Parker et al., 2022). These policies aid the government in planning effectively to deal with other social vices such as pollution, congestion, and noise. Place-based policies effectively foster and create physical environments conducive to bringing up kids. These environments aid in dealing with behavioral problems and promoting an education culture. The government must integrate mentorship programs vital for strengthening connections within the African American populace.

**Conclusion**

Social Issues can be categorized as the subjects for topics that affect a particular group of individuals. In this case, the plight of African Americans was deliberated on, focusing on various social issues. One of the issues affecting this population is poverty, which encompasses the lack of basic needs. On the other hand, there is also the social issue of unemployment which has been rampant, affecting various households within the black communities. The youth are the most affected by the issue of unemployment, which has been attributed to a lack of sustainable education. Not only has the issue of sustainable education been affected by a lack of funds but also the ineffective teaching methods within the black learners' institutions. There has also been the issue of drug abuse which results in other vices such as increased crime rates, prostitution, and increased cases of school dropouts. The criminal justice system has also affected the African Am, American population as a result of increased racism and discrimination. The US government needs to formulate and implement place-based, educational, and criminal justice reform policies to deal with the multiple social issues affecting African Americans.

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