Social Justice

According to Wikipedia, social justice can be defined as “the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society”. In other words, social justice can occur in any aspect of society where inequality can arise as a result of unfair policies and prejudices. This explains why in every time and era man always tried to find reasons to be superior to their counterparts. May it be during the Jim Crow era or during the time of the German Reich, where Adolf Hitler claimed that the Aryan race is the bearer of culture and without them, the culture of the world would diminish. By saying this, he wanted to instill in his people the concept of nationalism and make them believe that all other races are truly nothing.

Throughout history, racial domination has always been a major problem worldwide. Racism is defined as discrimination directed against people of a different race based on the belief that one’s own race is superior. Racism began from Darwin’s theory of ‘survival of the fittest. Darwinism was taken to another level by the European culture, where they believed that white men are more superior. Racism has greatly impacted modern society and continues to remain a major struggle.

Charles Robert Darwin was an English naturalist, geologist, and biologist, best known for his contributions to the science of evolution. His proposition that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors is now widely accepted and considered a foundational concept in science. In a joint publication with Alfred Russel Wallace, he introduced his scientific theory that this branching pattern of evolution resulted from a process that he called natural selection, in which the struggle for existence has a similar effect to the artificial selection involved in selective breeding, which was named Social Darwinism. The widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution came about when Charles Darwin, in “Natural Selection: or The Survival of The Fittest”, presented his theory of natural selection to simplify why certain species survive and others die away in history. Darwin believed that whoever is the strongest will be more prosperous in society and will therefore have a higher chance of survival. “As more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence” (Darwin, 243). He brings an example of a wolf hunting for its prey. He states, “...The swiftest and the slimmest wolves would have the best chance of surviving and so be preserved or selected, - provided always that they retained strength to master their prey…” (Darwin, 251). Furthermore, as individuals are challenged by the limited resources needed for survival, according to Darwin, it is unavoidable that these individuals will look for an advantage over others. He questions, “Can we doubt that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind?” (Darwin, 244). Darwin's scientific theory highly developed into Social Darwinism, in which natural selection was used to authorize imperialism and the repression of inferior races. Colonizers viewed themselves as the best adaptors, and thus natural order made it acceptable, at least in their own minds, for them to be superior over those weaker than them. In addition, Darwin says that man is the most dominant of all species. Man “manifestly owes this immense superiority to his intellectual faculties”. Darwin's theory is about the strong outliving the weak. Furthermore, his theory referred to animals as opposed to human beings. However, the problem with Darwin's theory is when political leaders or just ordinary civilians take it to a new level, misuse it, and start dividing man into different groups, as to who is fit or unfit to exist.

Albeit slavery has been abolished in the late 19th century in the United States, systemic racism has persisted/continued to oppress African Americans even decades later. During the mid 20th century, people of color/blacks were still forced/mandated to have segregated schools and public facilities from those superior, the whites. In addition, they endured/experienced constant discrimination in housing, employment/work opportunities as well as lynching and abuse from the white population.

Throughout history, civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy had been fighting for social justice to ensure equality for all American citizens. For instance, the civil rights movement gained momentum when one of the most significant victories won by the activist was the remarkable 1954 Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education, which argued that segregated schools were unconstitutional. However since systemic racism remained a continuous/ongoing struggle, Martin Luther King Jr., inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, saw America as a country where whites and blacks were truly equal. Therefore, he took the lead in joining to fight for civil rights for black Americans.

Martin Luther King Jr., known as America's greatest advocate of nonviolence, led a nonviolent movement for social change in the late 1950s. King is especially famous for choosing the path such as (protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly impossible goals) in a nonviolent manner. He constantly reiterated “men and women everywhere, regardless of color or creed, are equal members of the human family.”

During the 20th century, social justice has expanded from being primarily concerned with economics to include other spheres of social life to include the environment, race, gender, and other causes and manifestations of inequality.

Unfortunately in today's society, people tend to discriminate against someone who may seem to be different due to their own concepts build upon living in a nation that has suffered from countless years of oppression and racial segregation. In essence, we are fundamentally more similar to one another than different. Instead of building up walls to separate us, we should be building bridges to bring us closer together. However pretending that race doesn't exist will not solve the problem, but rather we have to be willing to embrace our rich cultures and defy the prejudices and stereotypes.

Due to the landmark decision of the Supreme Court in 1954 regarding Brown v. Board of Education, we have desegregated schools. Perhaps/therefore I believe that racially integrated schools and colleges benefit students in numerous/several ways.

Racial diversity is essential/paramount in schools since it teaches and encourages students to be tolerant and respect their peers who are different than they are/their beliefs. These traits are especially important for students as they grow into adulthood and will eventually enter the workforce, where they are most likely to encounter people from a variety of ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds/statuses.

In other words, since children see a person beyond their color/don't perceive a person by their color is vital for them to be in settings with multiple racial groups, and as a result, it will decrease/reduce racial bias, counter stereotype, and will eventually lead to a dramatic decrease in discriminating attitudes and prejudices. In addition, this will also promote students to seek out integrated settings later in their life as well as form relationships with individuals who are not

part of their ethnic group/race.

To me, social justice means helping those people who are suffering and need help. However unfortunately many people who need help for some reason resist/oppose/refuse/deny it for various reasons. I was a social worker who will help those in dire need and advocate for their rights and relieve/alleviate their suffering. Studies have shown that people encountering racism experience severe effects on their well-being such as anxiety, feelings of anger, and sometimes depression too. In addition, it profoundly destroys/disturbs/diminishes their self-esteem and it also causes them to withdraw from working towards a career/pursuing a career. Therefore, I strongly believe that those who are battling racism should not remain to suffer, rather seek assistance from a social worker who will empower them to restore their sense of self.