Influence of Racism, Gender Discrimination and Stereotyping on Social Cohesion

Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion are very important factors of today's world that are becoming more and more acknowledged as crucial to the wellbeing and happiness of all the citizens of a country. There are many problems in modern society that are caused by the lack of social inclusion and cohesion in the modern world such as racism, hate crimes, segregation, discrimination and stereotyping. The three very common issues or the ones you hear about all the time in the news and in history lessons are racism, gender discrimination and stereotyping. In this essay these three different issues will be discussed and how they effect Social Cohesion in a community.

Racism is most likely the most well-known and biggest problem that has arisen where people, in this case whole different races and cultures, are being excluded from or looked down on in a society. Racism has existed in many different forms for a very long time due to different countries having different levels of technology and culture. Before modern slavery becoming an issue two thousand years before that the Roman empire spanned a large part of the world and although there wasn't racism in the same way as the modern world, the Romans ideas on the value of a person due to their culture was very prominent (Issac, 2006). This could be clearly seen due to the fact that citizens of counties that Rome occupied were often taken as slaves and treated differently due to their place of origin. The use of slaves and discrimination due to place of origin existed in most parts of the world to different extents and this caused problems such as slavery and sometimes hatred between two different countries was so strong it lead to war. This early discrimination due to difference in cultural background grew and morphed into the form it is today. Modern racism is more to do with judging people due to their skin colour instead of their country and has grown from just seeing another country/race as inferior because of their technology or worldwide standing to judging a person purely on their skin colour. The impact this has had and still has on society is huge, leading to large scale hate crimes and even genocides such as the Holocaust. Since this idea of racism has been around for such a long time it is ingrained in our society, especially in the older generations. In more recent times racism has been recognized as a terrible thing, primarily after African American slavery and the segregation caused by racism in America. The effect racism still has today is not on the scale it used to be but there are still many racist prejudices and slurs around that can cause psychological and possibly physical harm to those affected. Racism causes injustices in many areas still, such as pay, job opportunities, bullying and education. These issues can cause communities to split or individuals to be ostracized.

Gender discrimination has two different main problems. The first and larger problem is the inequality of treatment between men and women in many different areas. The second form of gender discrimination is discrimination again LGBTQ+ groups for their preferred gender being different from the norm. Gender discrimination has impacted the way society has developed and the role of women for many years based on the ancient idea that women are weak child raisers who must be protected by the strong men. This evolved as culture progressed into the idea that women are not any good for work other than looking after the "home" and having children. As it came to modern times and women started to get educated, they realised that it was unfair the way they were being treated and started to campaign for equal rights to men. Although this

campaign was successful to a certain extent in western countries, many third world countries have hardly been affected, and women still live under the “rule” of men and not treaded as equals. This goes against at least two if not more of the basic tenants of being socially included, those tenants being Resources, Capabilities and Opportunities. Often opportunities are unavailable for women in a lot of cultures where they are not even allowed to go to school. In western countries the awareness is a lot higher and gender discrimination is minimized but still seen in different wages and less opportunities for women still. For example, in the education system there is a much higher percent of male principles than female even though there are more female teachers. The other type of gender discrimination is discrimination against LGTBQ+ people. This type of discrimination has become very publicised in western countries and because of that they have seen far less discrimination in the west in recent years. On the other hand, third world countries still do not have the education to teach people western ideas and LGBTQ+ are still greatly discriminated against in some countries. Even in western countries a lot of LGBTQ+ children are scared about how their parents would react and often feel repressed and do not feel like they fit into society. This leads to many LGBTQ+ suicides still even in a mostly accepting western world. Once again, both of these forms of discrimination can cause a discordant community that leads to unhappiness and inequality.

Stereotyping is a factor of both of the problems discussed but is also an overarching problem in general that effects everyone’s views and discriminations against others. Everyone has some sort of way they have come to view the world through their experiences growing up and living. Each person’s view has some sort of discrimination as it is impossible for someone to be completely unbiased. These stereotypes can be mostly accurate in some cases, but any sort of stereotype can cause problems at some point if you believe a negative stereotype about a certain person or group of people. These negative stereotypes can cause many unsavoury situations in different communities. For example, stereotyping people as a “sporty person” or a “bookworm” can cause unknown effect on that person especially if the person is being stereotyped by people close to them. Most people are very susceptible to peer pressure especially from parents and friends. If those people stereotype them, it can force them in a direction that they are unhappy with and cause a negative effect on their mental health. Although this usually is not a direct problem, it can cause discontent in a community and lead to discordance.

These three major problems effecting social cohesion and inclusion all can have very deep and lasting effects on individuals and communities. With suicides, general discontentment and depression on the rise, individuals have to have a knowledge of these major problems so we can do our best to prevent them and increase the social cohesion and include everyone without stereotyping on ostracizing certain groups or individuals. If a happy cohesive society is what the world wants to work towards, it is up to us (as those blessed with education) to spread awareness of these major problems and avoid stigmatizing things we do not agree with.