Supreme Courtcases

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**Brown vs. Board of Education**

There have been numerous cases that hold a significant position in shaping American society. One of those cases is Brown v. Board of Education. Discussed below are the circumstances of the case, the court’s decision, and its impact on the American society in which are living today.

**Circumstances of Brown vs. Board of Education**

In 1954, the US Supreme Court declared a verdict in Brown vs. Board of Education that has been hailed as a watershed in the civil rights movement (Norton, 2016).

It was the year 1896 when US Supreme Court legalized racially segregated public facilities in Plessy vs. Ferguson case. However, the Supreme Court ordered to maintain a balance between the facilities for both whites and blacks. African Americans were banned from riding the same buses and admitting in the same public schools (Norton, 2016).

It was 1951, Linda Brown, daughter of a man named Oliver Brown, was denied admission in the Topeka elementary school dedicated for whites (Norton, 2016). This act infuriated Mr. Brown who decided to file a class-action suit against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (Norton, 2016).

The lawsuit contended that the number of schools dedicated for blacks is not equal to the school for whites. Furthermore, Mr. Brown highlighted that this segregation is in complete violation of the 14th Amendment which contains an “equal protection clause” (Norton, 2016). This clause states that no US state can deny any individual equal protection of the laws.

The case was forwarded to the US. District Court in Kansas which recognized the detrimental effects of the segregation but upheld the verdict passed in Plessy vs. Ferguson (Norton, 2016).

In 1952, Apart from the petition of Mr. Brown, there were 4 other petitions that were submitted into the US Supreme Court. The US Supreme Court consolidated all those 4 petitions in a single case named Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (Norton, 2016).

**Decision of the Supreme Court**

It was 1954 when the US Supreme Court declared the unanimous decision of 9-0 giving Mr. Brown the victory. The US Supreme Court in its verdict stated that it tried to investigate if the 14th amendment ended discrimination on the basis of race in public schools, but failed to reach a conclusion (Kluger, 2011).

The Supreme Court argued that when Plessy vs. Ferguson case was declared it was a time when education was meant for the white people who could easily afford it and the concept of education for the black people was nowhere to be found (Kluger, 2011). However, The Supreme Court also noted that education is imperative for every individual of the nation (Kluger, 2011).

Hence, the Supreme Court argued that the verdict of Plessy vs. Ferguson discriminated against black people. The Supreme Court also noted that this discrimination fostered inferiority in black children. Therefore, the Supreme Court stated that segregated schools were depriving the black children the equal protection of laws enshrined under the 14th Amendment (Kluger, 2011).

However, the Supreme Court did not facilitate the question that the quality of both schools dedicated for the whites and schools dedicated for the blacks should have the same quality (Kluger, 2011).

**Impact of Brown vs. Board of Education**

Although this landmark verdict did not achieve the end of segregation among blacks and whites in public schools, it gave significant momentum to the Civil Rights movement (Young, Dolph & Russo, 2015). A year after this decision, a student in Alabama was arrested who refused to give away her seat on a school bus. This arrest sparked anger which led to massive protests and sit-ins. After the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, the process of desegregation kicked off in reality (Young, Dolph & Russo, 2015). The Supreme Court in 1976 issued a verdict in Runyon vs. McCrary case those private schools that deny admissions on the racial grounds are in violation of the 14th amendment (Young, Dolph & Russo, 2015).

Although blacks were granted equal rights as of whites, this did not end racial discrimination (Young, Dolph & Russo, 2015). There are numerous incidents reported where individuals were discriminated against. To this day, the impact of Brown vs. Board of Education is widely debated.

**References**

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