White Privilege versus Gender Privilege

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# **Introduction**

White privilege is an issue that was invisible in the society, and people needed to be given awareness about it. White privilege needs to be seen as something with tangible and personal effects. For the most part, white privilege was and to some extent still is an invisible force. That is why it was important to make the white people realize the impact that this privilege had on the people of other races, color, and class. White privilege was mainly walking to the makeup section and not being able to find a foundation shade for deeper skin tone or going to the shampoo section and only finding products that are suitable for a specific type of hair. Now, coming to the gender privilege, it was also a problem that required more awareness. A small example of this issue is the pink tax or the glass ceiling effect. So, both identity issues have an impact that one group was unaware of. Unfortunately, people try to avoid the magnitude of this issue even today. Either white privilege or gender privilege, both have had quite an impact on society. Through this paper, different aspects and challenges regarding white privilege and gender privilege will be discussed.

**Discussion**

It is unfortunate that even today gender, as well as white privilege, is present regardless of the amount of awareness created. Things are better than before but there is still no equal representation of all the genders and ethnicities[[1]](#footnote-1). The problem was as simple as switching on the television and not finding a balance in the representation of all races. Both issues are skin deep in society and still need to be addressed time and time again to make a difference[[2]](#footnote-2). Equal and balanced representation is one thing but there are times when people of different races and genders are hired for television shows. However, their roles are heavily stereotyped in light of societal expectations and standards[[3]](#footnote-3). White privilege is the main cause of racism today while gender privilege is the cause of sexism. Both issues have caused significant inequality on various platforms. Be it media, household, shops, beauty salons and so on, name it and they all lack inclusivity at some point.

The worst part is that no one can actually give a precise origin to how it all came into existence and how it still has enough power to stick around. Looking at white privilege one can see how it has inculcated racism in every field and industry. White privilege basically started systematic racism that originated because of the presence of this toxicity on higher levels like the government. It is unfortunate that it took forever for America to finally have a black President, and just thirty years ago it was unimaginable[[4]](#footnote-4). Further, every single company in the United States of America does not have equal representation of race and gender. In fact, people who have a lighter skin tone are given preference regardless of being lesser qualified. Lastly, in accordance with research, the majority people of color have to face hurdles like poverty, discrimination, and lesser opportunities even today.

Nic Stone's "Dear Martin" is exactly what white privilege is all about. A young African American found himself writing letters to Martin Luther King Jr. telling him about his life. The youngster maintained good grades and stayed quiet regardless of how much he was bullied and discriminated by his classmates and society. The fact that he was the only African American studying on scholarship in a white school says a lot about how society has created this invisible line between the people of color and the white. The male protagonist of the book keeps on suffering until finally, he gives in saying that Martin was also killed for trying to be good. This book is without a doubt a bitter reality and explains the utter essence of white privilege in a raw manner. The book is an accurate representation of today’s reality as it is similar to the 2012 incident when an African American teenage boy named Trayvon Martin was shot by a white police officer for playing the music too loud. Another book that showcases the initiation of white privilege is I, Tituba: The Black Witch of Salem[[5]](#footnote-5). Where the female protagonist faces great discrimination to the point, she is deemed a witch. This book also gives hints to the Scarlet Letters. The fact that print media is taking an initiative to raise awareness regarding the invisible white privilege is commendable.

Coming to gender privilege, I, Tituba also sheds light on how women are objectified regardless of class, color, and race. Tituba was from a black descent and she suffered discrimination based on her gender even by her own people. Another good example of gender privilege can be seen through the real-life example of the US Open played by Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka. In the match, the umpire was very harsh with Serena and many deemed this quite sexist as male tennis players are never treated in a harsh manner. Women also face this issue in the workplace, and if that is not enough there is also a glass ceiling effect that stops women and the transgender community at a certain point and lets men go forward. This is just the American society, there are many communities that are much worse and follow the patriarchy[[6]](#footnote-6). The origination of male chauvinists is still unknown as this notion has been found for quite a long time. There are many older plays that have freely objectified women, like Shakespeare’s “The Taming of the Shrew.” This fact makes it clear that misogyny is a tale as old as time. Further, when it comes to the transgender community, their situation is far worse than women. There are countless occasions on which transgender are denied equal rights and even a job just because of their gender.

When it comes to action against this discrimination, there are no substantial steps being taken at a higher level. The media and the film industry try to raise awareness time and time again by movies like; the Blind Side, Dear White People, The Joy Luck Club, The Social Network and so on[[7]](#footnote-7). While there are movies that talk about white and gender privilege there are some that ignore these aspects altogether. So, the issues that we have over here is still skin deep in society. In fact, throughout the American history race has played a significant factor. The way the Americans have treated the people of various ethnicities has inculcated white privilege deeper in their community. The slavery of African Americans, the killing of the Native Americans, the way the Latinos were treated and still are treated, the laws that were enacted against the Chinese say a lot about the issue[[8]](#footnote-8). The fact that racism and gender privilege have been passed down from generation to generation is the reason why these elements still have the power to stay.

Racism is not something that is restricted to color alone, it is also a power relationship. Back in the 1980s Reagan and the opponents of affirmative action and civil right finally switched race politics and mainly opted for supporting a colorblind society with equality and fairness[[9]](#footnote-9). Then a few actions were taken by President Bill Clinton, who decided to establish an Advisory Commission on race. Clinton took a lot of steps to make the black backlash stop. Furthermore, it is evident that when it comes to politics there has never been a female President in the United States. This makes the male privilege evident even in the political sector. There is no equal representation of all the genders in politics.

There is no doubt in the fact that white privilege is an issue, but most people find it invisible. There are people who are aware of the invisibility of white privilege but ironically, they undermine the gender privilege[[10]](#footnote-10). Regardless of race, gender privilege is something that is more universal because a whole gender is suffering because of it regardless of the skin tone. It is unfortunate that many societies of color like Latinos, Muslims and so on follow the patriarchy but raise a question against white privilege. That is unfair and hypocritical and there needs to be awareness, so both the issues become visible to society. There are communities where women single-handedly have to take care of their children, cook, clean, take care of their husband and manage a 9 to 5 job simultaneously[[11]](#footnote-11). On the contrary, a man just has to focus on his 9 to 5 job. That is the level of inequality the female gender is facing in the world without any recognition. This fact makes it evident that how many hardships the transgender have to face. Yes, the female gender is given a hard time but transgender never even come to the point of getting a job and raising a family most of the time.

There have been many movements and theories in order to cater to the issues. They have proven to be fruitful to some extent but there is still some limitation. The feminist theory is trying to raise awareness, but the effects are not as widespread[[12]](#footnote-12). There are still many communities that are not aware of these issues and if they are aware of one dilemma, they completely ignore the other. Movements like "black lives matter" and "metoo” are trying to make a mark but the results are restricted to certain societies alone[[13]](#footnote-13). Further, the “LGBTQ” march is also trying to make awareness for all genders, because there is very little representation of their community in every other field.

**Conclusion**

Both white privilege and gender privilege are issues that are stemmed deep in society but are not visible. There are many platforms on which people are trying to make awareness, but they are still not enough to make a difference. That is why the newer generation needs to be raised as individuals who support inclusivity. White privilege and racism are wrong, and it should be stopped but the issue of gender privilege is even worse. That is where people are acting oblivious to a whole gender. It is something that is present in not just the white community, but even in the people of color and their needs to be awareness to cater to this issue. The invisibility factor of such evident issues showcases that we as a society have a long way to go to make a difference. There needs to be an acknowledgment of all the hardships and hurdles that all the genders and ethnicities face.

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