Understanding Inequality in Race, Class and Gender

Shermaine Nash

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Inequality has been a massive concern for people and the government of all ages around the world. Inequality is a complex phenomenon to define and measure because it exists at multiple levels in various forms. In a broad spectrum, inequality can be described as a state of being unequal or lack of equality (Reinert, 2017). In other words, the uneven distribution of resources, opportunities, and rights is categorized as Inequality. It is observed in numerous forms in a society like wealth inequality, unequal income despite the same position, discriminatory treatment by government or judicial system, limited opportunities of growth or limited access of educational and health resources for a specific group of people, based on race, gender, geography or class. In the last century and today, social inequality is a significant theme for judiciary matters, political debates, legislation, social movements and protest (Prudence L. Carter & Sean F. Reardon, 2014).

Gender inequality is one of the aspects of social inequality which influences different people in unique ways. It takes numerous forms according to the social and economic organization of a region. Mostly, women are influenced by gender inequality. They are given lesser opportunities to grow and offered lesser pay than men for the same set of responsibilities and work. If this situation is closely analyzed, women are held responsible for household and childcare as well. Despite that, at work, they put the same effort as men but the outcome and facilities for them are lesser. It is assumed generally that men are more capable and deserving of promotions and leadership roles. It is concluded that women doing comparably more effort like teaching and nursing are paid less than men working in mines and construction. Other than economic differences, females are deprived of opportunities of getting quality education and adopting male dominating careers (Judith Lorber, 2010). Gender equality affects women socially, financially and psychologically.

It is also observed that in many instances, individuals receive benefits and rewards based on their social standing. The social status can be based upon earning, ranking in an economic structure, or association with an ethnic and cultural group (Rothman, 2015). Today, in a world where technology has reached its peak and almost all sectors of life are automated and advanced, the truth of the rate of inequality is extremely shocking.

**Functional** **Inequality**

Inequality can be functional in some cases, depending upon the economic standing of that region. It is observed that whenever a new technology or methodology is introduced in a society, those who are quick to implement it, get the economic and social advantage. Also, in adversity, those who adapt quickly or who have planned earlier tend to benefit or at least prevent harm. This group of people increases profit and growth rate. Their savings and profit are utilized to invest in more projects which further improve the financial status and provide job opportunities. Accumulation of capital with those who tend to improve the market increases the overall growth rate. Moreover, when other people in society observe the situation and implement similar techniques, they advance. In this way, the inequality ratio drops (*Economics 448 Lecture 15 Functional Inequality*, n.d.).

**Dysfunctional** **Inequality**

Inequality is more dysfunctional and negatively affect individuals as well as organizations. When people are deprived of resources, financial stability, and health benefits, society as a whole starts to get affected. Individuals living in a society where inequality prevails, are more likely to suffer from tension and distress. Mental and physical health deterioration appear to be the consequences. Unequal societies have a lower rate of growth and a higher rate of violence and crime. One of the major consequences of this situation is that rich people are getting richer while less-privileged ones are even losing what they had. The next generation of fortunate families tends to maintain or increase their wealth and social status. On the other hand, children of less fortunate ones take lower roles or less paying jobs. Inequality affects the behavior and mental approach as well and more deeply than it is thought to.

**Factors** **contributing** **to** **dysfunctional** **inequality**

The increasing gap between poor and rich is not a coincident or a simple consequence of social factors. It involves understanding, beliefs and practices of numerous groups at different levels of society. The factors involved in promoting inequality include the classification of people based on ethnicity, gender, and social class. These factors are not developed overnight, in fact, it takes years to build beliefs strong enough to effect on this large scale. In almost all the studies, inequality is discussed from an income perspective, however, inequality is also measured based on property, luxuries, and property. It is because, for most of the research, only data of income is available. Assets and such possessions have the benefit that they are not affected by spontaneous or brief fluctuations in earnings. As much as politics impacts the economy, the economy influences the political dynamics and it is correlated to the inequality. Public strategies for investments, redistribution and revenue are influenced by politics. They can either decline the rate of inequality or broaden the gap. In the U.S., political elements have had a crucial role in increasing inequality. Less-radical tax system helped citizens of America to accumulate wealth and property. Powerful union and central trade in Europe enhanced equality in industrial and average income earners. Many unions struggled due to inequality because of the difference in race and class which weakened the bond. Apart from the unequal income distribution, restraining employment conditions and common unemployment factors guarantee that less industrious European employees exit the market. Due to this factor, the less skilled people will be eliminated from the count of income inequality. If inequality in skills and expertise is the reason behind the unequal income, then first, the pattern of inequality of proficiency must be explored. It is a clear fact that lack of skills is due to lack of opportunities to learn, and this is directly linked to educational and training policies enforced by the government. The government’s decision to financially support certain territory or age groups affect inequality. Racial diversity and political establishments are two common factors of inequality. It reduces the chances to develop an equal and balanced society because people seem to be reluctant to help people from different races or classes (Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). Data collected from surveys, voting pattern and inter-state results in the US, including past research concludes that cultural diversity decreases relocation of resources (Edward L. Glaeser, 2005).

**Conclusion**

To eradicate inequality from all walks of life, it is very important to highlight the alarming issue of inequality at every possible platform. The government must take responsibility and educate people on the effects of inequality. Reforms and projects to eliminate factors contributing to inequality are essential in the world of today. It is not possible for a single organization or country to single-handedly fight inequality, rather a global effort has become a necessity in this regard. Providing equal benefits and opportunities are fundamental human rights belonging to everyone. A society can only flourish when societies are strong, and economies are stable.

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