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American Dream: Reality and Disillusionment for Different Group Of People

# **Introduction**

The American dream is a land where life is fuller, richer, and better for everyone. As a broader sense, the American dream means democracy, freedom, and equality within the United States. In a narrow sense, the American dream means the hopes and beliefs everyone desires to achieve by never giving up and making efforts. With hardworking and courage along with the right opportunities, anyone can get better life.by coming to the United States. People coming to the United States with an American dream believes that they have to depend on their creativity, courage, and hardworking while not relying on other social class for assistance. In the United States, anyone can be successful and can reach the top through their own effort and hard work. This is possible due to economic freedom in the United States which allows social mobility. James Truslow Adams first ever used the term American dream in his book The Epic of American (Adams). The American dream exponentially becomes stronger in the mind of people of America. Different people have different approaches to the American dream, this is because everyone pursues their dream in a different way.

# **Background**

From 18th to 19th century American dream was the original golden dream. Serious religious discrimination, unfair wealth distribution, and severe social hierarchy in Europe result in praise of the United States as a dreamland. Due to these vulnerable groups and individual from Europe are attracted to America in the 18th century. So in early-stage, the American dream was a European immigrant’s dream. During the time of the Civil War, Industrialization started in the United States. In this period more immigrants were attracted to the United States and prosper in the manufacturing industry. In this era when the United States was in its economic growth, Ford had developed its automobile production line (Hounshell). Individuals who saw an opportunity and work hard in that era are today known as legends. After World War I American economy prospers in the 20th century with an increase in consumer demand and industrial growth. This era is known as the Roaring Twenties with spiritual poverty and material success. Corruption and money-making become a new American dream in the 20th century.

# **Women Perspective on the American Dream**

A different group of people has a different perspective on the American dream. An American dream for most groups is simply their beliefs and making them into realities. What really attracted different groups of people to an American dream is a freedom of choice. From the early era, women have been creating something beautiful and setting examples for younger generations. Like every other group, the American dream of women has changed with time. American beauty has evolved with time on the basis of her intelligence, empowerment, and strength (Lawson). With the prospering economy of the country, women have been attracted to America because of equal rights they can have. Both men and women have helped in building America, women in America are no longer dreaming of getting marrying and having children. Women are dreaming to become lawyers, doctors, engineers and CEOs which can be possible today as there are almost the same opportunities for women in America as that men get. For a woman an American dream is to focus their attention on career goals, having control over their future, and creating her own American Dream. With the rise in the Feminist movement in the seventies, woman’ focus on becoming independent by focusing on their careers (Epstein). In the 20th century, the strong American dream for women greatly depends on the new aspect of the American dream of getting an education. From an early age, the modern education system in America encourages kids to develop skills and work to achieve their own American dream. With having equal opportunities and right of education, women in America have developed their own version of American which has eventually strengthened a woman in the American community.

# **African American Perspective on the American Dream**

The American dream is different from African American as compared to other groups of people. Recognition, identity, and equality are basic components which led to the change of the American dream in the eye of the African American community. Africans who were brought to the United States in the early era were all slaves. In the early era, the American dream for African Americans was freedom. Biographies of African American can help in better understanding the African American perspective of the American dream. Most famous biography’s which tells about the selling of African American slaves and how bad they were treated are of Vincent Carretta 2005 (Lovejoy) and Olaudah Equiano 1789 (Murphy). The journey of African Americans from slaves to free men is compelling proof of the African version of the American dream. Unlike white Americans, African Americans were not struggling for financial success, but for their freedom. Even someone has achieved freedom from fleeing they had to struggle for getting equal rights in the United States. In this era, most African American fled to a newly developed safe heaven the African nation of Liberia. In the 19th century after the end of the Civil War, slavery ended in the United States. At this time African American awarded with fair and equal opportunities. Soon the African American community has realized that freedom is not just equal opportunities because of bias treatment of government and other people to the blacks. There was a time when black was harshly punished for petty crimes (Rios). And the new concept of slavery has developed under the facilities of correction (Sinha). Black people were sentenced for a long time for small petty crimes, and eventually they will be doing labor work like in the era of slavery. In this era, African Americans dream about getting equally treated by other Americans. Another aspect of the American dream for an African American is to get an identity. Ralph Ellison addressed the issue of the identity of African Americans in his book Invisible Man. According to Ralph Ellison, blacks have to achieve their identity by their actions. A new American dream for the black community in this era is to get complete freedom according to the new definition of freedom. Next aspect of the American dream is to get an equal opportunity as that of white people. Even if a black person gets his freedom, and had never been wrongly accused he still struggles to get a decent job. Unequal opportunities were not only subjected to the job market for African American. African Americans had to struggle for equal opportunities in education, healthcare, employment and justice system.

# **A Mexican American perspective on the American Dream**

Now the American dream from the perspective of Mexican Americans will be discussed and, how it is related to white and African Americans. Mexicans cared more for the American dream as compared to any other community in the United States. This is because Mexican Americans have seen America in its golden era of economic boost and been working hard to achieve the American dream along with the whites. For them, America was a golden land of opportunities and therefore in current time, Mexican American believe in the American dream more than white people. If the history of Mexican American is seen, it will clear that hard work pays off and the coming generation of Mexican is more successful. According to various surveys, it is observed that Mexican American Americans have a better life as compare to their parents and they want an even better life for their kids. Almost 51% of Mexican American has achieved their American dream (Mark Hugo Lopez). For Mexican American, American dream is almost the same as that of white which is career success, financial security, hard work and surety that each new generation better than one before them. Mexican Americans who claim that they have achieved the American dream owns a home, have enough resources to provide for their family, are successful married, and have provided better opportunities for the next generation. Having a better life than before generations, this statement is enough to justify that Mexican Americans has achieved their American dream.

# **Asian Immigrant Perspective on the American Dream**

Next group of people who comes to America to achieve their American dream are the Asian immigrants. For Asians, the American dream is a desire to escape from political, social, and economic hardship in their homeland. Moreover, the American dream for Asian is to achieve success and prosperity. Like other immigrants, Asians also sees the American land of opportunities (Kim). Some saw American as a place to earn money and support their families back home but some see America as a place to secure a new identity and lifestyle. Eventually Asian American has settled there and next-generation becomes Asian Americans. In nineteenth, Chinese immigrant became a significant part of the American population and helped in the development of the United States. In 1870s Chinese immigrates substitute conventional labor in railroad construction, factories, fishing, farming, and mining. The term immigrants are taking our jobs has started in the 1870s, this because of cheap labor that Chinese community offers. This forces congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act and the relation between American employer and Chinese labor becomes volatile (Gyory). Still, the American dream for Chinese immigrants was not lost. America replaced Chinese immigrants with immigrants from Korea, Japan, India, and Pakistan. A similar movement like stealing jobs against Asia again raised in the American community. Asians are known for working hard in their homeland and therefore American dream for them was quite easy as compared to another group of people. Immigrants from Asian figured out the American dream that white little effort, one can achieve success in the United States.

# **Conclusion**

Although an American dream has been different for a different group of people, it has been disillusionment for some community in the beginning. Evidence and reasons of this disillusionment are given in the previous paragraph, where different perspective of the American dream is discussed in detail. Overall the American dream has been a reality for different groups and even for women. In the early 18 century, the American dream has been disillusionment for African Americans and women. But with time both women and African Americans got equal rights. In the 18th century, the American dream for women was to give birth and raise a family. With the rise of the feminist movement, women in American got a way dream big and participated in developing the economy of the United States. Slavery was the biggest issue for African Americans, but after the civil war absolute freedom, equal rights, equal opportunities, equal justice system has become the biggest issues of the African American community. The beauty of the American dream is that it has changed over the course of the period. The change has been different for each community and eventually, each community has achieved its version of the American dream.

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