Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping

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**Introduction**

 As human beings, we tend to form judgments about different things. Humans observe different things, phenomena, processes and people, and then come up with the best possible explanation or understanding of these processes and phenomena according to their own understanding and perception. Sometimes, this judgment is positive and brings positive results for the people and society in general, while in some cases, it proves to be negative and even dangerous for the people about whom the judgment is. This case is called “Stereotyping”. Stereotyping further proves to be the root of many other evils like prejudice and discrimination. The following paper will look into the details of these evils and how stereotyping adds fuel to the fire of prejudice and discrimination.

**Discussion**

**Prejudice**

The literal definition of prejudice is “the preconceived opinion that is based on reasoning or actual experience”. A person having prejudice forms an opinion or judgment about a specific individual, class, community and even object on the basis of some rumor or illogical observation, which may not be true. Most of the time, prejudices are formed on the basis of false news and rumors and are generally unjustified.

**Discrimination**

The term discrimination refers to the differential and unjust treatment of any individual or group of individuals on the basis of some false perception generally believed about them. Most of the time, discriminatory behavior is exhibited on the basis of race, gender, color, nationality, sexual orientation, economic class and even religion (Whitley Jr. & Kite, 2016). Prejudice and discrimination are very closely linked with each other and the discriminatory behavior exhibited towards this specific class or individual belonging to that class is also referred to as prejudicial behavior.

**Difference between Prejudice and Discrimination**

Although prejudice and discrimination are very much similar in nature and discrimination stems right out of prejudice, there exists a very fine line between the two (Bodenhausen, Macrae, & Sherman, 2016). The difference between prejudice and discrimination is the same as the variation between attitude and behavior. Prejudice is the attitude, the perception that is built up, and thrives in the mind of an individual regarding any specific group or class of people; that individual may choose not to show it through their actions and speech. However, discrimination is the actual behavior based upon the prejudice and unjustified thinking that an individual exhibits towards the members of a certain group or class.

**Stereotyping**

Stereotyping refers to holding an overgeneralized image or perception towards a specific class or group and the members belonging to it. Stereotypes are considered true and generalized because a person perceives that every individual belonging to that particular category is the same, as per the general belief.

**How Stereotyping Plays a Role in Prejudice and Discrimination**

Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination are all closely interlinked. All these three concepts are also heavily interdependent upon each other. Stereotypes are closer in meaning to prejudice as compared to discrimination. Prejudices are usually built upon stereotypes that are overgeneralized beliefs and then gives birth to discrimination; the actual action based upon that stereotype.

**How Can This Way of Prejudice Reduction Be Directly Applied To Family Growth and Development**

Practices related to the reduction of prejudice and discrimination are extremely vital for the propagation of a happy and healthy society. These practices should be introduced in every field, whether it is education or professional life, in order to reduce the illogical beliefs generally believed about a particular class. It will help in the breeding of a culture of love and corporation among the people in society and help in reducing the hatred and negativity in society.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it can be seen that stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination are all interconnected and interdependent upon each other. Almost all of them stem out of prejudice and unjustified illogical thinking, mostly regarding some specific class or group of people, however, there is a small difference between the three of them.

**References**

Bodenhausen, G. V., Macrae, C. N., & Sherman, J. W. (2016). On the dialectics of discrimination: Dual processes in social stereotyping.

Whitley Jr, B. E., & Kite, M. E. (2016). *Psychology of prejudice and discrimination*. Routledge.