

## **THE PROBLEMS WITH MODERN SOCIETY ABOUT RACISM**

Have you ever encountered a racism problem before in your life? What did you do? Did you help or did you walk your way out from it? The truth is, racism is a very common issue that happens in our daily lives, sometimes we cannot ignore it any longer. This problem happens because some of the people didn't know the meaning of the word racist. Racist means prejudiced against or antagonistic towards a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized. We can always see the news about the acts of violence between people with different skin color, different beliefs, or different ethnicity. Not only that they also have their own hierarchy of people based on the majority groups and minority groups according to their country. For example, Malaysia has a majority of Malay around 50%, Chinese around 22.6%, and Indians around 6.6%. based on the report 2014.

Based on science, the color of people is based on the melanin (a pigment that determines skin color) and it varies on every person. For example, white people considered themselves as 'white' because they have less melanin and those who are considered as 'black' have more melanin. With this going there are stereotype which we can say that the person with low level melanin such as that in the 'white', they are more likely to enjoy a middle like lifestyle, whereas the 'black' with more melanin are more likely to have little education and money (Lumen,n.d).

After we know about the racism definition, we shall now get to know what are the common issues or the common problems that people encounter in their lives. People who encounter racism must have heard of racial slurs that are portrayed to the other person such as color. Racial slurs are a kind of hate speech that is made to degrade, make them feel humiliated and disempowered. The example of racial slurs are "negro" and "nigger" to the 'African American'. This slur "negro" used to be the term of describing the person with a black color skin (Anderson,2011). But after Carmichael's speeches and his landmark 1967 book, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, the term "negro" soon become only for their member or community of their people (Jim Crow, 2010). Even if it seems so, people still use this term maybe because they have no knowledge or just to discriminate against them. But how do we know that this slur is offensive and not offensive? This is briefly explained with when a person in the same community say the term to the other person by the using the term,

it is not deemed as racist but in the other hand for someone who is not in the same community, when they used the term towards the person who is in the community, it is deemed to be racist. This is because the term is made for that community and that community only. Some people use this term freely in their daily lives, because they think it is okay to say these words without any context.

Without any hesitation, we could say this problematic issue because it is still going on for years. People need to realise which is right and wrong. If nothing were to change about this issue, it may cost more lives to be taken in the future. For example, we can see how brutal the death of George Floyd was. George Floyd (46), was pinned to the ground by the Officer Chauvin for around 8 minutes before he died of suffocation outside a shop in Minneapolis, Minnesota. All of this because of a fake 20\$ bill. Police came to arrest him but it was said that he resisted being handcuffed, but once handcuffed he obliged to the officer commands while saying that he was sorry for what he had done. After that he resisted from getting into the car because he said that he was claustrophobic. After that, here comes 2 officers from one of which is Officer Chauvin. The officer pulled George Floyd causing him to fall to the ground and placed his left knee between his head and neck while ignoring his plea which said that he can't breathe calling for his mother. The victim keeps struggling until he loses his life at the hands of the officer. There were also people recording his last moments and also begging so that the officer lifts his knee because the victim said that he couldn't breathe. After only that he couldn't move, the officers brought him to the hospital but it was too late for him.

For what had been done by the officer, people were furious about his actions and they started the protest to avenge his death and bring justice towards his executioner. Starting from 26 May 2020, hundreds of demonstrators take actions by vandalising police cars and police station with graffiti, soon to be followed by the protest by the other cities with the demonstrators lying on the ground and chanting "I can't breathe" as that were the last words that were said by George Floyd before his death. This cost a lot of property damage and many crimes were let loose because of this incident. The four officers that involved in the George Floyd case was fired and Derek Chauvin was charged with murder and manslaughter (BBC,2020). This will be seen as the worst thing that happened in 2020 next to Covid-19 as the protest keeps growing more violently and not only happening in Minnesota but also in other states which also had happened some of the protesters died.

People realise that this could have been prevented with the officer not taking matters to his own hands and let the law do its justice. What was his reason to do such a thing, is it because of his color of skin? That's why he should be treated like that? This is why we need to see this racism thing as a serious problem, we don't know how much it can affect even further into the future. As people are getting into the future, he or she must not forget history, which the quote "Who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" by George Santayana. People who live in Malaysia are sure to remember the horrific or dark history of 13 May 1969, where it claims 196 lives (BERNAMA,2019).

After the colonialism of the Japanese and the government of British, it fostered inter-racial distrust between the races to the extent of having some fights between races. In the midst of this, it is the time for Malaysia to have its polling day to pick the leader to rule Malaysia on 10 May 1969. The early results show that DAP and Gerakan, dominated by the Chinese, have won many seats in Selangor. After this, on 11 and 12 May, the party marched along the streets of Kuala Lumpur KL while disrespecting the Malays with words and action such as having a broom which symbolizes getting rid of the Malays. Challenged with the action, the Umno Youth plans to march on May 13 after Maghrib time. The Malays had gathered at the home of Dato Harun Idris, around 5000 people with many of them carried wood, banners and some weapons. After that, a few Malays come with a scooter saying that Setapak have been taken which worsen the situation and they reacted by killing a innocent Chinese coffee delivery boy. The situation was getting worse and worse, and at 7 pm some 'pemuda Melayu' began attacking anyone who was Chinese and Chinese then threw bottles at them. The 'pemuda Melayu' then retaliated by burning the shops. This is when the armies step in to stop the war between the Malay and Chinese, the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) was tasked around Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Raja Laut, Jalan Chow Kit and Kg Baru (malaysiakini,2019). It is at 9 pm, the 'shoot to death' commands was given to the security officers causing more casualties which made the situation horrifying with the count of 196 deaths and 439 hurt.

The effects of this tragedy have cost many lives of people, the economy, and the state of safety of Malaysia. This has taught us to not forget the past and learn from it to improve it or not to repeat it because if it does repeat, the effects will be much larger than it was before. This is what we have to learn, we should adapt, and overcome. Being racist is not cool, or even funny, all it does is planting the seeds of hate towards other people of other races and it

will bottle up the emotion until it is enough to pop the bottle causing more casualties to happen. As a person I hope for a better future for our next generation so that we can live in harmony and we can get rid of the stuff such as racism. The only difference is the color of the skin, why should we discriminate? Like I had said, the color of the skin is because of the different level of melanin that one person has. But it doesn't change the fact that we are still human, being 'black', 'white', 'asian', or other races doesn't make us more or less than it. We should change the perspective of the people so that they think before they talk or do something that could hurt someone with their actions. For the end of this essay, I hope that people could understand that we shouldn't be racist in this world but we have to accept people for who they are and make friends with them so that we can learn more from them, and they could learn some from us because, "Conversations on racism should never be about winning." (Ijeoma Oluo,2020), instead it is something that we should understand better so that there is some understanding between races so that we could improve our communication with peoples.

## REFERENCES

### i) Academic text references

Ijeoma Oluo (2020) *So You Want To Talk About Race*. S.L., Basic Books, from [www.pdfdrive.com/so-you-want-to-talk-about-race-e195093046.html](http://www.pdfdrive.com/so-you-want-to-talk-about-race-e195093046.html). Accessed 10 Nov. 2020.

### ii) Journal Articles

Anderson, Luvell, and Ernie Lepore. “Slurring Words1.” *Noûs*, vol. 47, no. 1, 15 Sept. 2011, pp. 25–48, 10.1111/j.1468-0068.2010.00820.x.

Learning, L. (n.d.). Introduction to Sociology. Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sociology/chapter/racial-ethnic-and-minority-groups/>

Museum, Jim Crow. “When Did the Word Negro Become Socially Unacceptable? - 2010 - Question of the Month - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University.” [www.Ferris.Edu, 2010, www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/question/2010/october.htm](http://www.Ferris.Edu, 2010, www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/question/2010/october.htm). Accessed 10 Sept. 2020.

### iii) Newspaper

BBC News (2020, 30 May) The Last 30 Minutes of George Floyd’s Life. *BBC News*, from [www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52861726](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52861726).

BERNAMA (2019, 12 May) Peristiwa 13 Mei: Pengajaran Perlunya Masyarakat Bersatu Padu. *Sinar Harian*, from [www.sinarharian.com.my/article/27800/BERITA/Nasional/Peristiwa-13-Mei-Pengajaran-perlunya-masyarakat-bersatu-padu](http://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/27800/BERITA/Nasional/Peristiwa-13-Mei-Pengajaran-perlunya-masyarakat-bersatu-padu).

malaysiakini. (2019, May 13). *13 Mei, moga tak berulang: Rusuhan 1969 yang mengubah Malaysia*. *Malaysiakini*. <https://pages.malaysiakini.com/may13/my/>