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## UNVEILING THE COMPLEXITIES OF RACISM: EXPLORING COLORISM AND CASTE BASED DISCRIMINATION IN INDIA AND BEYOND

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### Abstract

*Racism is a pervasive issue that transcends borders and affects societies worldwide, including India. This article explores the complexities of racism in India, highlighting colorism and caste-based discrimination as major manifestations. It discusses the legal framework in place to combat racism in India and emphasizes the need for comprehensive approaches involving legal reforms, education, awareness campaigns, and social change. The article also addresses racism on a global scale, emphasizing its historical roots and ongoing impact. Major incidents of racism, such as the transatlantic slave trade and the Rwandan Genocide, are highlighted as stark reminders of the devastating consequences of racial hatred. The article concludes by stressing the importance of collective efforts to challenge and dismantle racism, promote inclusivity, and foster a world where every individual is treated with dignity and equality.*

**Keywords** - Racism, Colorism, Caste-based discrimination, Legal framework, Global impact, Major incidents.

### Introduction

Racism is an issue that is prevailed in the world since ancient times. Drawing a line between people based on their background and color is a practice that is highly condemned by all but still has its roots in different places. Racism is a pervasive issue that transcends borders and affects societies worldwide. It is a deeply ingrained problem that stems from prejudices, stereotypes, and power imbalances based on race or ethnicity. It is a deep-rooted social problem and it continues to plague societies across the globe, including India. While India is renowned for its diversity and inclusivity, the country still grapples with instances of racial discrimination and prejudice. It is a socio-legal issue that has been addressed several times and in this article also it will be discussed with the pretext of racism in India and the world along with major incidences that have been

seen over time that caused to highlight this issue in a greater sense.

### Racism In India

Racism in India is a complex and multifaceted issue that stems from deeply entrenched social structures, historical legacies, and cultural biases. Despite being a country known for its diversity and pluralism, India is not immune to the presence of racial discrimination and prejudice. Racism in India primarily manifests itself in the form of discrimination and marginalization against certain racial or ethnic groups, often perpetuated by social, economic, and political factors. One of the main aspects of Racism in India is colorism. Colorism refers to discriminating against people based on skin color. This form of discrimination is prevalent in various spheres of life, including marriage, job opportunities, and social interactions. India is a country where the beauty of a person is determined by the color of skin, the more a



person is fair the more attractive is he/she considered. People of darker skin tones are often advised ways to brighten up their skin tone so that they could fit in the toxic beauty standards of the country. The beauty industry in India further perpetuates these biases by promoting fairness creams and products. This factor not only discriminates against one on beauty but also sometimes results in a lesser opportunity for a person of color as they are often given less preference concerning a person of fair skin. This is a very disturbing practice as a person is born with a specific skin tone and does not have any control over it so to hold it against him is inhumane. Caste-based discrimination also intersects with racism in India. The caste system, a hierarchical social structure deeply rooted in Indian society, has historically led to the marginalization and oppression of certain castes or communities. Discrimination based on caste often overlaps with racial discrimination, as individuals from marginalized castes are more likely to face prejudices related to their physical appearance, cultural practices, and social status.

In terms of the legal framework, India has constitutional provisions that aim to combat racism and discrimination. The Constitution of India guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, caste, sex, or place of birth under different articles. Apart from that laws such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Protection of Civil Rights Act protect against discrimination and violence. However, the execution and implementation of these laws still face challenges, and incidents of racial discrimination often go unreported or inadequately addressed due to lack of awareness and sometimes due to lack of say.

Addressing racism in India requires a comprehensive approach involving legal reforms, education, awareness campaigns, and social change. It is essential to strengthen the implementation of existing laws and create an

environment where victims feel safe to report incidents of racism. Moreover, promoting diversity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity in educational institutions, workplaces, and media representation can help challenge stereotypes and foster a more inclusive society.

Ultimately, eradicating racism in India requires a collective effort from individuals, communities, civil society organizations, and policymakers.

### Racism in World

Racism, an insidious social ill, continues to inflict harm on individuals and societies around the world. Rooted in prejudice and discrimination, racism is a deeply ingrained issue that perpetuates inequality, marginalization, and injustice. While the manifestation of racism may vary across different countries and regions, its negative impact on individuals and communities remains consistent.

Racism has historical roots and has been perpetuated through colonization, slavery, and the legacy of discriminatory policies. It continues to manifest in various ways, including systemic racism, interpersonal discrimination, and institutional biases. In many parts of the world, racial minorities face unequal access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, housing, and justice systems. They often experience higher rates of poverty, violence, and social exclusion, perpetuating cycles of inequality. In some countries, racism is evident through overt acts of hate crimes, racial profiling, and xenophobia. Minority groups are often unwelcomed and are humiliated for the way they look. They face verbal abuse, physical violence, and discrimination in public spaces, exacerbating feelings of fear, insecurity, and marginalization.

Legally, many countries have frameworks in place to address racism and promote equality. International human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, provide a



basis for combating racism globally. National laws and policies aim to protect individuals from discrimination, promote diversity, and provide legal recourse for victims of racism. Furthermore, media representation and public discourse have a significant impact on shaping societal attitudes toward racism. Media outlets should strive for diversity and accurate representation, avoiding the perpetuation of racial stereotypes. It is essential to encourage dialogue, create safe spaces for discussions on race and racism, and amplify the voices of those affected by discrimination.

### Major incidents of Racism

Racism manifests in various forms and has been witnessed through numerous major incidents throughout history. Though these incidents could not be stopped but had a major impact on society as they led to movements and protests. Here are some major incidents of Racism-

#### Transatlantic Slave Trade

One of the most egregious examples of racism is the transatlantic slave trade, spanning from the 16th to the 19th century. Millions of Africans were forcibly captured, transported, and enslaved in the Americas, Europe, and other parts of the world, enduring unimaginable suffering and exploitation. In Africa, the slave trade had a terrible impact. A culture of violence was encouraged by the financial incentives that were provided to warlords and tribes in exchange of human slaves. Economic and agricultural development in a large portion of western Africa was virtually impossible due to depopulation and persistent fear of enslavement. The majority of those taken prisoner were young men and women in their reproductive years who would have otherwise been starting families. Those who were aged, crippled, or otherwise dependent—groups least able to contribute to the economic health of their societies—were frequently left behind by the European enslavers.

#### Rwanda Genocide

The Rwandan Genocide, which occurred in 1994, was a brutal and devastating conflict that resulted in the mass killing of approximately 800,000 people in just 100 days. The genocide primarily targeted the Tutsi ethnic minority, along with moderate Hutus. It was driven by long-standing ethnic tensions, political power struggles, and the manipulation of ethnic identities. Extremist Hutu militias orchestrated widespread violence, including massacres, sexual violence, and systematic killings. The international community's response to the genocide was largely criticized for its inaction and failure to intervene effectively. The Rwandan Genocide serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of unchecked hatred, prejudice, and the urgent need to promote tolerance, reconciliation, and justice to prevent such atrocities in the future.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, racism is a deeply rooted and pervasive issue that affects societies both in India and around the world. In India, racism manifests through colorism, caste-based discrimination, and marginalization of certain communities. The existence of legal provisions against racism is a positive step, but their effective implementation remains a challenge. Addressing racism in India requires a comprehensive approach that involves legal reforms, education, awareness campaigns, and social change. It is crucial to create an environment where victims feel safe to report incidents of racism and to promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of society.

On a global scale, racism has historical roots and continues to perpetuate inequality and marginalization. It is evident in systemic racism, interpersonal discrimination, and institutional biases. Major incidents of racism, such as the transatlantic slave trade and the Rwandan Genocide, serve as reminders of the devastating consequences of unchecked racial hatred. Efforts to combat racism require international cooperation, legal frameworks,

and public discourse that promote equality, diversity, and understanding.

While progress has been made in raising awareness and combating racism, there is still much work to be done. It is the collective responsibility of individuals, communities, organizations, and governments to challenge and dismantle racist attitudes and structures. By fostering inclusivity, embracing diversity, and promoting empathy and respect, we can strive towards a world free from racism, where every individual is treated with dignity and equality.

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