

Hate Crime In The United States

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Hate crime is an illegal act against a specific person that is prompted by the culprit's prejudgments regarding the victim. A lot of these crimes are based on distinctions in race, gender, religion, political affiliations, social class, and other ethnicities in the US. Victims of these crimes are mainly Native Americans and immigrants. For a long time, many people have found themselves in the middle of hate crimes and limited, or no actions have been taken to deal with the problem, not until the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination and segregation of specific individuals because of their distinctions (Cheng, 2013).

The legislation has prompted the federal and state governments to introduce more laws protecting the victims of hate crimes. Components of these codes prohibit the members of the society from engaging in any form of hate crime, and the offenders should not be tolerated and are liable to face severe penalties equal to the magnitude of their violations. However, despite the enactment of these strict measures prohibiting victimization and allowing prosecution of offenders, offences inspired by biases have been on the rise. Various reports by law enforcement agencies indicate augmented rates of victimization of people because of their gender, race, religion, colour, and political affiliations. Sex orientations and disabilities are also reported to inspire wrong prejudices in the workplace and social resources. The recent pervasiveness of these crimes has prompted the concerned agencies and institutions, including the police and courts, to enhance their performance in the criminal justice system in an attempt to curb the issue affecting a lot of people in the country.

Hate Crime Criminals

Offenders are motivated by various reasons to engage in actions that become concerns of the criminal justice system. Many perpetrators are not involved in any group or organization when being biased, but they conduct the offences as individuals. According to the reports produced concerning hate crimes, offenders are mostly young people who have little or no contact with the law. The lack of experience with the police or courts gives them the confidence to harass or discriminate against others that they feel do not deserve equal treatment due to their distinctions. However, not all cases of hate crime in the US involve individuals or majority groups. More than 600 hate groups, such as anti-gay, anti-transgender, anti-black, anti-white, anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, and others, have been identified to exist in contemporary societies in the country (Garofalo, 1997). The groups take part in various crimes influenced by common prejudices or hatred for other people in the social resources, workplaces, or neighbourhoods.

Some of the reasons that prompt individuals or groups to commit illegal acts on other people include the following.

1. Thrill-driven
2. Achievement of a mission
3. Being defensive or reactive
4. Retaliatory driven.

First, a thrill-driven action is mainly driven by the need to feel excited about something or the urge to trigger another person's feelings. Thus, the offenders motivated by such reasons might have no personal conflict with the victims, but they just want to put them in a particularly delicate situation and observe how they will behave or feel. The types of criminals in this category are mainly young people in learning institutions, usually organized into small groups with common characteristics such as race or social class. In the United States, these offences are mainly committed in education centres where individuals from distinct ethnicities are integrated. For instance, several young white adolescents from wealthy families might form a team and start harassing, either verbally or physically, black students who are from less privileged and humble backgrounds. The criminal justice system does not tolerate these behaviours since the offenders are not only threatening the lives of the victims in the school, but they might also lead to other undesirable outcomes, such as death through suicide due to emotional distress. Hence, it is an issue that should not be ignored not only by law enforcement but also by the parents and professionals in these institutions.

Second, some radical and violent groups feel that they are not pleased by the existence of specific people because they perceive that they are not worth living in one particular part of the world because of their beliefs, morals, nationality, race, or colour. Thus, the offenders decide they have to eradicate the targeted victims to separate or remove them from that particular area. The type of hate crime is usually prompted by religion and race indifferences. For instance, in recent years, Jews and Muslims in the US have been vulnerable to hostility and discrimination because of their religions and races.

The individuals who believe in these religions have been reported to be fired or discriminated against by biased employers in the workplace because they feel that the subordinate groups do not fit to work at those particular organizations. Also, numerous attacks targeting certain individuals congregated together as one religion have been conducted by people who are against their beliefs and are not comfortable with the victims' convergences. Hence, the offenders feel they have to play their various roles in the accomplishment of missions to ensure the subordinate ethnic groups, races or religions are eliminated in the United States.

Third, offenders might engage in hate crimes because they feel threatened by the existence of another party in a particular territory. They perceive that the other is trespassing and does not have the right to be at that specific place at that time. Various neighbourhoods in the country are dominated by individuals sharing a particular ethnic group, such as race, social class, political affiliation, or religion, among others. Hence, those who do not share in these groups are considered to be outsiders and, by entering the neighbourhoods, are supposed to be invading another's territory.

The offenders feel that there is a need to protect their area, and this involves committing a hate crime against the victims, such as verbally or physically assaulting them, as long as they leave where they do not belong. For example, a young white male might face hostility in a black-American-dominated neighbourhood as the residents feel that he is invading their territory in the endeavour to lure a particular woman he likes. The confrontation might involve physical harm to the victim, which is against his rights as per the constitution; thus, the perpetrators are liable to face the law and be punished for their actions.

Finally, a retaliating offender includes individuals or groups that feel they have to avenge a hate crime against another member of the ethnic group they witnessed or identified and the victim was involved. It is a way of committing a crime to solve a problem instead of utilizing the relevant institutions authorized to give justice to those offended. The offences are mostly connected with religious discrepancies where believers of a certain religion feel that they must make things even with others for an act that was committed by their ancestors. For example, some Muslims and Christians in the US usually engage in crimes that are driven by hatred for one another because either perceives that the other's ancestors harassed or assaulted members of one ethnic group. Therefore, these groups or individuals commit hate crimes, such as killing members of the subordinate religion in the endeavour to make things even with the events that occurred in the past.

Types of Hate Crime

In the United States, there are several types of crimes based on biases, and they are based on the following.

1. Religion
2. Race and ethnicity
3. Gender
4. Sex-orientation
5. Disability

Religion

It is one of the most significant factors inspiring hate crimes in the US. Various beliefs conflict with each other due to the high rise of blame games where each side feels that the other played a part in a particular issue affecting them. Groups such as anti-Jewish feel hatred for the Jews because they believe that they are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ many centuries ago. The non-Jews feel that the Jews do not deserve fair treatment because of this crime they committed, and this has led to pervasive country-wide victimization. Furthermore, the occurrences that led to the attacks on the World Trade Center in 1993 and the 9/11 bombing of the Pentagon increased the hate crimes against the followers of the Islamic religion. The Muslims are blamed for the death of many people in the country, which has led to the development of various anti-Islamic groups that are focused on

mobilizing others against Islam. Hence, with groups and organizations such as anti-Semitism, anti-Islamic, anti-Jewish and others, unity among American citizens and immigrants is rarely achieved because the rate of discrimination and segregation is high in the workplaces and within social amenities, including schools, hotels, airports, and hospitals.

Race and Ethnicity

Many people have been victimized because of their race or ethnicity, and it is a practice that dates back many decades to the era of slavery. A lot of hate crimes recorded by the criminal justice system are inspired by race, where one is harassed or discriminated against by those supporting racism. African Americans are the most vulnerable to hate crimes based on these variables, and they are continuously discriminated against and segregated in workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods, and other amenities (Woods, 2014). Also, ethnicities such as Latinos, Arabians, and Asians are exposed to various cases of hate crimes as the offenders, mainly white people, violate their rights and freedoms provided by the American constitution inconsiderably. However, in contemporary society, things are different compared to the early 20th century when whites were the only offenders of hate crimes. The inclusion of laws protecting the victims in the constitution has empowered other ethnic groups in the US such that they can defend themselves from the majority's dominance, and this implies that victimization because of one's race or ethnicity is not limited to a specific group.

Gender

Hate crimes based on gender are common in the economic and political arenas. The victims of these crimes are mainly women who are discriminated against by employers or those above them, such as political party leaders. Male-oriented employers consider that a female employee is below a male counterpart regardless of their position in the workplace, and this has resulted in crimes such as sexual assaults, unequal pay, or unfair job opportunities. It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone in the workplace because of gender, and one is eligible to face legal consequences for the crime committed according to the regulations of EEOC. Moreover, female politicians are often discriminated against because of their gender, and they are denied certain positions in their affiliate parties because males are vying for the same. Women in politics are vulnerable to verbal and physical harassment by their male counterparts, who consider them too weak to defend themselves, which is against the law.

Sex-Orientation

Individuals who have abnormal sex orientations, such as gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, are victimized by others who feel that they are immoral and disgusting (Herek, 2009). Hate groups such as anti-LGBT victimize those engaging in homosexuality because they perceive that it is disrespectful to God and nature, where one is required to only engage romantically with a person of the opposite sex. For

instance, it is impossible for a member of an anti-LGBT to work together with a gay or lesbian without harassing him or her, and this can lead to the underperformance of the victim, which will affect his or her career. Hence, it is a matter of the criminal justice system to protect those vulnerable to victimization because of their sexual orientation.

Disability

In the workplace and in socially shared resources, individuals with disabilities are always exposed to hate crimes by some people who disregard them as being inferior. Disabled people are usually taken advantage of because they cannot defend themselves from their perpetrators or might not report the instances to the concerned law enforcers. However, most states in the US do not have hate crime laws regarding the victimization of individuals with disabilities because they argue that the offenders do not hate the victims. It is just that they are vulnerable. The perception should change since taking advantage of another person's weakness is morally unethical, and such offenders should be charged with hate crimes and prosecuted according to the law.

Responding To Hate Crimes

The best and most effective ways to respond to hate crimes include strategizing efficient ways to prevent and prohibit the victimization of some people because of their vulnerabilities. First, people can be educated on the implications of hate crimes on the victims and the need for accommodating everyone regardless of the distinctions in ethnic groups. Education is a way of creating awareness across the entire country to enhance cohesion among people of diverse cultures and ethnicities and also reduce the biases leading to these crimes (Perry, 2001). People can be educated about these issues through various means, such as through learning institutions and mass media, to ensure that the intended message reaches as many people as possible.

Second, anti-hate organizations can be used to prevent and educate people on matters regarding hate crimes. They are the best ways to counter hate groups. Some of the anti-hate organizations formed in response to these crimes include Partners Against Hate (PAH), The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), among others. The organizations and others function together in an attempt to reduce hate crimes in the US.

Finally, the federal and state governments give the police and courts unlimited jurisdiction to deal with cases of hate crimes as required by the law. The victims have the right to sue individuals and hate groups that are responsible for the offences. The criminal justice system must ensure that the offenders are legally prosecuted, and in case they are guilty of the charges against them, they should face penalties equal to their crimes, including going to prison or paying fines. However, these systems might be unreliable because some individuals supposed to protect and defend the victims are equally biased as the offenders, implying that justice won't be given as required. Hence, this prompts

victimized individuals to shy away from seeking assistance from the authorities because they do not trust them or else they are fearful. The silence encourages the offenders because they feel nothing can be done to them despite their continued engagement in hate crimes. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the governments to ensure that victimization is prohibited and prevented in the country, and this can only be achieved by ensuring that the relevant authorities conduct their duties as expected by the constitution.

Conclusion

Everyone in the country has the potential to mitigate the consequences of hate crimes by taking personal stands in the fight against inequality, which is the primary contributor to the problem. Individuals should recognize the equality of every human being and that nobody should have more rights or freedoms than others because they belong to a particular ethnic group. In the recent few decades, hate crimes have been rampant and progressive countrywide just because the population is not aware of their responsibilities in eradicating the menace. For instance, a report produced in 2006 indicated that within one year, 7772 hate crimes were recorded with 9080 offenders and 9652 victims and were related to racial and ethnic discrimination. The cases suggest that the problem should be a concern for everyone involved, including the citizens and residents living in the US, to ensure that they play their roles in solving the issue. Finally, the law enforcement agencies, the anti-hate organizations, and the judiciary should ensure that they support the individuals willing to contribute to solving the problem of hate crimes in the country. Relevant resources should be made available to everyone, including the police and courts, which will motivate the victims to seek assistance when offended. For example, some states offer free attorneys to the victims of hate crimes, which aids in ensuring the offenders are adequately prosecuted and sentenced.

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