

**Policy Analysis Brief**

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**Goal Statement**

Many societies around the world struggle with the problem of discrimination, discrimination is unequal treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and age. This problem can be found in various forms, from acts of prejudice to biases that result in severe consequences for these individuals. This policy brief aims to raise awareness of the negative implications of discrimination in hopes to promote the value of diversity and inclusion and to provide strategies for addressing discrimination at various levels of society. Another area of focus in this policy analysis brief will be to propose various solutions to address the concerns of discrimination across various contexts within the housing, employment, education, etc.

Having an understanding of the overview of the problem of discrimination and its impact on individuals will help create a clear picture of what is occurring within our society and how to effectively address the needs of these individuals that are being impacted by discrimination. As social workers, we have the authority to advocate for policies and show up for individuals on a micro mezzo, and macro level to help create a more equitable and just society that values diversity and promotes positive social change.

**Scope of the Problem**

Discrimination is a significant and widespread problem that not only affects individuals but also has a significant impact on communities and the economy. Discrimination takes on many forms for example racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and other biases. The various

forms of discrimination affect individuals in various settings such as education, employment, housing, healthcare, and public services.

Discrimination is taken root through stereotypes and prejudices which creates an overall perception of certain people groups. Oftentimes these perceptions aren't meant for good but actually for harm to individuals on the receiving end. Individuals are affected in their personal growth and development due to poor self-esteem, mental health, and reduced opportunities caused by discrimination. Inequality is a major result of discrimination, individuals are treated differently based on their characteristics. Unfortunately, discrimination can result in individuals experiencing stress, anxiety, and other mental health problems and can also lead to physical health problems as well.

Discrimination can also have economic consequences as individuals are limited in employment and career opportunities. Due to the limits found in areas of employment, these individuals are also found to have limited access to health care and other essential resources as well. This also leads to other social issues such as poverty which makes up most of these marginalized groups of people due to systematic discrimination.

Discrimination is often found in groups of marginalized individuals, this includes women, people of color, LGBTQA individuals, and the disabled. These are characteristics that are often 'out of control' for the individual, however, they are the ones that often face multiple forms of discrimination and are more likely to experience social and economic disadvantages as a result. Addressing discrimination is critical for social workers, as it's imperative for us to identify the root causes of discrimination, such as systemic and structural biases. As social workers we have access to work with individuals and communities that are being impacted by

discrimination, to help promote areas of inclusion, empowerment, and social justice for these people groups.

### **Past Policy**

Looking over American history and discrimination, there were several policies and laws which were put in place to address discrimination at various levels. However, these policies which were created to address discrimination were often limited in their effectiveness and scope. These policies addressed discrimination in various parts of society such as employment, education, housing, and more. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in areas of employment housing, and public accommodations. Although this particular act was created to prohibit discrimination, we see various other policies that are still in place that have structural and systematic biases towards communities of color.

One major area of discrimination was women within the workforce, “Many women face extraordinary challenges in finding and securing employment at fair wages.” (Karger, 2017) It’s often found that women find that they are in positions that have low income or are not fairly paid compared to their male counterparts. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) emerged from The Civil Rights Act of 1964 to help enforce equality and provide any interventions that involve discrimination in employment. Looking through history, women would also face discrimination in the realm of education, which was eliminated through Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which prohibits any discrimination due to gender in

educational programs funded by the government. These policies helped create more opportunities for women and girls for education and careers.

Housing has also been a key area where discrimination is ever so increasing. Oftentimes it is found that policies have been in place that wouldn't allow certain groups of individuals, specifically minority groups to have successful opportunities in purchasing or renting homes. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was created in order to prohibit any discrimination in the sales or rental of housing based on race, color, etc. At the time this act was created to combat discrimination and segregation and allow for more fair access to housing for individuals in an equal state. However, researchers have found that "discrimination took the form of less information offered about units, fewer opportunities to view units, and, in the case of home buyers, less assistance with financing and steering into less wealthy communities and neighborhoods with a higher proportion of minority residents" (Pager & Shepherd, 2008)

Social Workers play a major role in advocating for policies that address discrimination. Policies were pushed to have more equitable access to resources and opportunities, such as education, healthcare, and housing. Social workers not only have an impact at an individual level but also can push for change within community levels as well.

Past policies have been key to the start of promoting diversity and inclusion, however, some of these policies still are subject to criticism due to underlying biases that contribute to discrimination overall. There is still much to be done to address ongoing discrimination and promote a more inclusive and equitable society. Moving forward, as social workers our aim is to continue to advocate for the continual implementation of policies that promote social justice and equity. These policies should have an evidence-based practice that can help implement effective approaches when dealing with the issue of discrimination.

## **Current Policy**

Current Policies are implemented to protect individuals from the various forms of discrimination found in society. There are various policies found at the federal, state, and local levels. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 are two significant federal laws that started a movement toward the prohibition of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, etc. Federal agencies such as the EEOC are in place to implement equality and investigate any complaints of discrimination.

State and local laws have implemented various policies specifically to combat discrimination at a local level, for example, the NYC Human Rights Law was created to help protect individuals on a wide range of characteristics, including age, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The emergence of these policies has established various organizations to continue to develop and implement the best practices to promote great equity and inclusion. Social Workers play a key role in implementing these policies on various levels of society, the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics helps provide a guideline to emphasize the importance of social justice and non-discrimination within social work practice, similarly, various organizations and companies have implemented efforts to create a more inclusive and diverse environment to prohibit discrimination.

However, despite these policies, discrimination remains to be a significant challenge in various areas of society. Racial and ethnic minorities continue to face disparities in housing, education, and employment opportunities despite the policies in place.. To address these ongoing challenges, policymakers, social workers and members of the community should continue to

work together to identify and address ongoing discrimination. Current policies should be reevaluated and adjusted according to the needs of the community. Policies should be put into place that are sustainable and responsive to the ever-changing challenges and trends involving discrimination.

### **Proposed Solutions**

Discrimination continues to be a persistent social problem that affects most marginalized individuals, groups, and communities across various contexts in housing, employment, education, etc. While there are current policies to help address these forms of discrimination, there continues to be a persistent problem in regard to discrimination within our society. Effective solutions are in need to help combat the effects of discrimination not just on a surface level but also addressing it on a root and systematic level. Structural changes which address systematic discrimination can be effective in promoting greater equity and inclusion in society. These changes will be needed to address discrimination that is happening at the root level to ensure that all systems in place are promoting inclusivity and equality.

One approach is to promote policies and interventions that address the root causes of structural and systemic biases. Which includes identifying disparities in education, healthcare, housing, and policies that promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Another approach is also developing programs and policies that support individuals and communities directly. Such as interventions that tackle mental health and well-being through support and counseling groups.

Education and awareness campaigns are effective to build a deeper understanding of the negative consequences of discrimination and promote acceptance of diversity within education

and the workplace. This can be done through bias training, creating space and conversation for individuals to identify their own unconscious biases and build self-awareness.

Continual research and evaluation of these policies are also needed on a regular basis, to continue to identify what is effective in addressing discrimination. Evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of policies giving room for improvement and refinement. Social workers can play a key role in these areas through research, developing policies, and directly working with individuals and communities to combat the negative consequences discrimination brings.

Overall addressing discrimination will continue to be an ongoing matter, and it's important to tackle this issue on a micro, mezzo, and macro level to ensure increased awareness of discrimination and the promotion of diversity within society. There are several proposed solutions for addressing discrimination, however, it's required for everyone to work together to continue to advocate for effective policies to see social change happen.

### **Involvement of Local Communities**

Our local communities play a huge role in our outlook on discrimination. They are the first form of contact for individuals who are experiencing discrimination, where they can go to for support and resources, and possibly legal advice to navigate their experiences. The local community can play a huge role in the continual effort to promote an understanding of equality.

Policymakers can make the effort to provide funding and resources for community-based organizations that work with marginalized individuals. Services provided in these local communities can include counseling, legal advice, advocacy, and more to help individuals be supported in their experiences. Through continual support for these organizations, policymakers

are able to build a stronger and more resilient community which are effectively addressing discrimination.

Our communities are homes to various individuals that come from diverse backgrounds, and having programs, and events that promote diversity can help individuals connect with one another. Community-based dialogues help address discrimination that occurs within various minority groups and can be a great way to understand the needs of specific people groups and develop effective plans to ensure equality.

The involvement of local communities helps address many discrimination issues at a micro and mezzo levels that directly impact the individual. The provision of funding and resources to community-based organizations helps enable the community to be better equipped to address issues involving discrimination in society.

### **Involvement of Faith Community**

The Faith community may not have all members of the community engaged however, they do have the ability to play a significant role in addressing discrimination. Despite what faith you may subscribe to, all faith traditions are geared towards having a strong commitment to promoting social justice and equality through faith and love. The faith community can be an effective voice in society to help empower and create systems of change within society at a spiritual level. The involvement of faith communities can be crucial to addressing discrimination, as these communities are deeply rooted in their community and typically are geared to serving those in need.

In order to be effective with this involvement is to have education and training provided for leaders of these faith communities, to better understand the needs of the community and recognize their own personal biases and strengths that can help contribute to addressing discrimination issues. They also can offer education for their community to challenge stereotypes and become more aware of the negative impact of discrimination on individuals. Faith communities can also be involved in providing support and resources to those who have experienced discrimination. They can provide safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences, offer counseling and support groups, and connect individuals with legal and other resources to address their concerns. Additionally, they can work with community organizations and policymakers to advocate for policies and practices that promote equality and combat discrimination in various contexts, such as employment, housing, and education.

Faith is often what many people can turn to in a time of distress, and individuals that face discrimination may turn to leaders in the faith community for guidance. Having resources and proper support for these faith communities can create better opportunities for individuals to feel supported when experiencing discrimination.

Overall, involving the faith community in addressing discrimination is crucial for promoting greater understanding and acceptance of diversity and building a more inclusive and equitable society. By partnering with faith-based organizations, providing resources and support to individuals who have experienced discrimination, and promoting social justice and equality within faith communities, policymakers can help to build stronger and more resilient communities and promote positive social change.

## **Conclusion**

This policy analysis brief on discrimination has the potential to make a significant difference in the community by raising awareness of the negative implications of discrimination and proposing solutions for addressing it. By highlighting the various forms of discrimination that exist, the brief will help individuals and communities understand the impact of discriminatory practices on people's lives, and the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion.

The proposed strategies for addressing discrimination in various contexts, such as housing, employment, education, and healthcare, can serve as a guide for policymakers, organizations, and community leaders to implement changes that can help mitigate the effects of discrimination. These changes could range from policy changes to awareness campaigns and training programs that promote inclusivity and tolerance.

Furthermore, by involving the faith community in the policy analysis brief, the brief can tap into the power of faith-based organizations to promote positive social change. Faith-based organizations can help foster a sense of community and solidarity, promote the value of diversity, and advocate for social justice issues. Involving the faith community in addressing discrimination can help create a more inclusive and compassionate society, where people from all walks of life are valued and respected.

Overall, this policy analysis brief has the potential to make a difference by creating awareness of discrimination, proposing solutions to address it, and involving the faith community in promoting positive social change.

Discrimination is rooted in stereotypes and prejudices which create an overall perception of certain people groups that leads to inequality in various areas of society. Looking through

history we see that there has been an effort to address discrimination, but not a continual effort to see that policies were created for effectiveness. It is important to address issues such as discrimination to create a positive social change. As social workers, we have the authority to work directly with individuals, communities, and policymakers to ensure effective change is taking place. It is important to identify the root causes of discrimination to address systemic and structural biases to promote inclusion, empowerment, and social justice for marginalized people groups. Overall we together should work towards the strategies and solutions provided to continue to address these issues at various levels of society and promote the value of diversity and inclusion.

**Bibliography**

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