CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

2.1 The Description of Racial Discrimination

Before describing any further the concepts of Racial Discrimination, it is necessary to quote some definition about it so that we have a clear idea of what racial discrimination is. In *The Dictionary of American Politics* (1986: 121), racial discrimination is defined as:

“…an unfair or unequal treatment accorded by custom, or law to some of a community’s members because of their color or other alleged racial characteristics”

From the quotation above, we can understand that racial discrimination usually deals with the differences in the skin color and prejudice. The word “alleged” here means ‘asserted without proof’. In a broader sense, a certain group of the people think that they are superior in education, wealth, or class rank than the other groups.

The term, racial discrimination is usually used to describe the action of a dominant majority in relation to a weak minority, of course, by implying an immoral and undemocratic behavior or way. In a broader sense, racial discrimination is the active and over aspects of negative prejudice toward a person or a group of people. However, the recognition of relationship between prejudice and discrimination is strongly related (will be discussed later).

Discrimination may permit an individual to act out a negative feeling toward a target group or people who are prevented from getting an adequate education; in
consequence, it will serve to confirm the stereotype of them as stupid and uneducated. In *the Encyclopedia americans* (1991: 545), we can find another definition of discrimination: “Discrimination is negative behavior directed toward some group of people. Discrimination, as the term is used here, is behavior that is unfair to a target group.”

We can see that an individual or an institution can practice discrimination. Institutional discrimination takes place or occurs when some large organization, or instance, the government, business, or school engages in practices that are unfair to members of some group and put them at a disadvantage. Another example, a white who through a rock at a school bus which is taking black children from attending their school, this is called an institution discrimination. Means people who are singled out for unequal treatment in the society in which they live and who consider themselves the victims of collective discrimination. In *the Encyclopedia Americans*, volume 19 (1994: 207), we can get the definition of the word ‘minorities’:

Minorities are generally groups within a society that are characterized as having lower social status, possessing less power and prestige, and exercising fewer rights than the dominant groups of the society.

Minorities are formed essentially through power relations— the ability of others to control their lives. The exercise of that control results in continual conflict, both open and concealed on the one hand, dominant groups of people work to suppress attempts by minorities to increase what power they have. On the other hand, minorities usually struggle to assert themselves, challenging the superior position taken by dominant group.
A distinction should be made between race and ethnicity. Race refers to differences based on biological inherited such as skin color ethnic group refers to difference in social characteristics, such as language, religion, birthplaces, and culture. Race is important because it is socially evaluated. Physical appearances and the genetics of the race are less important than how they are valued. People can be “color blind” but they can also see racial differences where none exists.

The absence of visible racial differences does not prevent one group from defining another as a differences race. For example, until recent years, French Canadians and Anglo Canadians were called races. In traditional Asia, outcase groups are thought to have different racial origins from those of the dominant population. Throughout the history of the United Stated, European immigrants from one country after another were called race and were considered inferior to early settlers.

At different rates they learned the language and adopted the culture of their new country- they became more or less assimilated. As the children or grandchildren of those immigrant were fully assimilated into American society, they were redefined as white- which is what they were begin with.

Ritcher, in his Exploring Sociology (1980: 96) broadly explains the term ethnic group as of follows:

When I used the term ‘ethnic group’, I shall mean by it any group which is defined or set off by race, religion, or national orional, or some combination of these categories. I do not mean to imply that these three concept mean the same thing. They do no...however, all of this categories have a common social-physchological referent, in that all of them serve to create, through historical circumstances, a sense of peoplehood.
From what Ritcher says above, we can see that the members of ethnic group share a sense togetherness and the conviction that form a special group, a ‘people’ that sets them apart from other groups. This feeling is nurtured by living in ethnic neighborhoods surrounded by members of one’s own group.

2.2 Racial Prejudice

The Latin root of the word prejudice means “judging before.” Prejudice is judgment of people, objects, or situations in terms of stereotypes or generalizations. A prejudice can be positive, such as the belief that college graduates make the best business executives, or negative, such as the belief that people on welfare are lazy.

A certain amount of prejudice is inevitable and even useful is some situations. For example, if you were alone on the street, about to be attacked by someone with a knife, and you saw two men nearby who might help you, one muscular and tall, the other skinny and short, which one would you ask for help? The tall, muscular man, of course. But that man might be afraid of knives, nauseated by the sight of blood, or not interested in getting involved in someone else’s troubles. The short, skinny man might be very brave and might have a black belt in karate. The circumstances call for a prejudgment, however, that cannot be based on anything more about the man than their relative sizes.

In a less dramatic way, the same kind of issue arises almost daily. A business executive who hires a secretary, a college student who request a certain type of roommate, or a family choosing a suburb to live in-all apply some prejudgment. They base their actions on preformed generalizations.
Prejudice becomes a problem when the preformed judgment remains unchanged even after facts show it to be untrue, or more broadly, when one makes unjustified assumptions. To return to our example, suppose you recognized the skinny man as someone who, the night before on television, had won the world championship in karate. In that case, your decision about which man to choose would be influenced by that knowledge. You would think: “Big, muscular men are often better fighters than short, skinny men, but this man has proved to be a good fighter, so I’ll be safer if I choose him.” In other words, you would discard your prejudice because it did not fit the situation. Some people, however, are unable to do this. They have believed for so many years that a skinny man cannot be a good fighter, and are so thoroughly convinced of it, that they simply cannot accept any evidence to the contrary, or even be open to consider such evidence.

The social problem of prejudice, then, is not so much the prejudgment, which in many cases is necessary for social interaction. Rather, it is the failure to discard that prejudgment in the light of additional evidence. In common usage, the word prejudice usually refers to this kind of biased, inflexible thinking, rather than to all forms of prejudgment.

Prejudice against ethnic or racial minorities is always learned. No one is born with prejudice. We learn it from our parents, at School or church, from our friends, from the books we read, or from other social experience. A whole system of prejudice may be built into a culture, as is true in racist societies. White children growing up in South Africa, for instance, learn prejudice blacks from nearly all their social experience.

Several studies have shown that certain groups of people are more likely to be prejudiced against minority groups than others. Because working-class whites complete
with blacks for jobs, they are usually more prejudiced against blacks than whites of higher social standing. For the same reason, prejudice against Jews is common among the upper classes of non-Jews (Williams, 1964). Some sociologists have noted that low-status groups in general tend to be more prejudiced than high-status groups (Simpson & Yinger, 1972). This tendency may be due in part to the boost in status that prejudices indirectly gives those who rank lower on the social ladder. If another group is forced still lower than themselves, their status is raised. The tendency may also be due to a scapegoat mechanism: The low status group has someone else to blame for their disadvantaged situation.

Certain personality types also seem to be associated with the formation of prejudice. T. W. Adorno (adorno et al., 1950) suggested that many prejudiced people have an “authoritarian” personality. Another study found that the prejudiced or intolerant person is characterized by an unwillingness to accept authority, and an emotional rather than a rational approach to problem solving (Hartley, 1946). And some psychologists have found a correlation between feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and prejudice attitude (Martin & Franklin, 1973).

In the encyclopedia americana (1991:545), we can the definition of prejudice as follows: “Prejudice is a negative attitude of a group of a person who has some characteristics. It is common that is not shared by all people”.

Racial prejudice is based on simplified beliefs, called stereotypes. In a stereotype, a few characteristics are accepted as a full description of any member of minority, even though they group may be composed of millions of people with a wide variety of characteristics. Stereotypes can be favorable, especially when they are applied to one’s own group, but most of the group stereotypes are negative. Even positive traits can be given
negative weight. The Jew is shared, the Yankee provident, the Jew is stingy, but the Calvinist frugal of individuals and groups are are perpetuated by prejudice, it is really a negative attitude toward an entire category of people, often an ethnic or racial minority. It also means a categorical predisposition to like or dislike people for their or imagined social characteristics.

Prejudice can lead us to make very different evaluations of the same behavior, depending on whether it is seen in members of our own group (‘in-group’) or of another group against which are prejudiced (‘out-group’) prejudice can result from ethnocentrism—the tendency to assume that one’s culture by the standards of their own group, which leads quite easily to prejudice against cultures viewed as inferior, Schejbal and Laurakas in Brand’s Ethnical Theory (1959: 217) find out that:

A random sample of 439 undergraduates was questioned about relations between racial and ethnic groups on campus. While individual student different on various responses. Both white and African American students tended to characterize relations with the other group as “too distant”. The same was true for African American and Asian Americans. In general, African American were the most likely to describe interactions with the other groups as ‘separate and distant’ Hispanics were found to be least distant in their relationship with the other groups.

One important and widespread form of prejudice is racism, they believe that one race is supreme than others who are innately inferior. When racism prevails in a society, members of subordinate groups generally experience prejudice, discrimination, and exploitation. Racism is the doctrines that some race are inherently inferior and some are inherently superior. In the colonial period, racial ideology served as a rationalization for that conquest, subjugation, exploitation, and brutalization excuse for both official segregation and unofficial discrimination in the United States. Finally, racist ideology promotes belief in sharp divisions and boundaries.
The attitude of the prejudice person often lead to discriminatory behavior. Discrimination is the process of denying opportunities and equal right to individual and groups because of prejudice and other arbitrary reasons. Discrimination also means as an exclusion or exploitation on the basis of group membership. While sometimes intentional, discrimination may also be institutional; that is, caused by a product of the regular operation of social institutions which effects groups unequally. Prejudiced attitude should not be equated with discriminatory behavior. Although they both are not related, they are not identical, and either condition can be present without the other.