**Professional Ethics (HSS F343) Submitted By:**

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**Discrimination**

Everyone has the right to treated fairly and respectfully when someone is being treated badly or unfairly based on personal characteristic then it is known as **discrimination**. Discrimination simply means to favor one over another. There is nothing unjust about such decision as long as they are made for reasons that are reasonably job-related, but eliminating equal opportunity for the same chance, options and choice as other people because of that person’s race or sex is generally an act of discrimination. Discrimination can be positive and negative. Positive discrimination occurs when a person give some benefit and opportunity because he or she is a member of some specific group, it is also known as affirmative action. Although discrimination is a form of unequal treatment but not all unequal treatment is discrimination. An employer who shows favoritism in deciding on promotions, for example, is guilty of violating the principle of equality in dealing with employees but not necessarily of discriminating against them.

Discrimination is possible in Employment, housing, Education, Medical care and other important areas of public life. If we consider possible area of Employment then Hiring, Promotion, pay, Fringe Benefits, Terms and Condition of employment where discrimination may take place.

***Form of Discrimination:***

We can classify Discrimination in many forms some of these are as follows-

***Discrimination on the basis of Sex:***

Sex discrimination is discrimination which is based on the fact that a person is male or female and not on Sex-related matters, such as sexual orientation or marital status. For example, an employer can give a preference in hiring to married applicants, but it would be discriminatory to prefer married men and single women in filling jobs. This type of discrimination also includes decisions made on the basis of “pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.”

We can understand this by example not hiring woman because she is pregnant and she will need some weeks or month in future for taking care of her child.

***Religious Discrimination:***

Religious discrimination is different from discrimination based on race or sex. In Religious discrimination employers refuse to hire or promote individuals simply because of prejudice against member of certain religious groups, such as Catholics and Jews. Religious discrimination in employment involves conflicts between the religious belief and practice of employees. Member of some religious group have special dress and other requirement, **for example** Turban and a beard for Sikh men, prayer break and special food in company cafeteria etc.

***National origin discrimination:***

National origin discrimination involves treating people differently because they belong to a particular country or part of the world. It overlaps discrimination based on race, color and to some extent religion**. For** **example**, someone is harassed because he is Arab or practice Islam, or are paid less than other workers because he is Mexican.

***Age discrimination:***

Age discrimination is arising when an applicant or employee is treating differently because of his or her age. Employer believe that younger employees have up-to-date skills and innovative ideas and younger employees are less expensive to old employees because older employees generally have higher salary and make more extensive use of fringe benefits.

For example, including photos of young people in recruitment material could give rise to an inference that applications from older applicants are not welcome.

***Discrimination against the handicapped:***

Handicap discrimination refers to the unfair treatment of an individual that is affected by a mental or physical impairment that significantly limits their abilities. Employing the handicapped often requires that they should be treated differently in order to compensate for their disabilities.

**For example** some employers avoid hiring qualified people with disabilities because they fear that making any necessary accommodation would be costly or difficult (even though that's against the law).

***Sexual Harassment as a Form of Sex Discrimination:***

It is unethical to harass someone because of that person's sex. Harassment can include **sexual harassment** and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Difference in wages to men and women who perform the same or substantially similar work is valid if it is based on some valid factor other than sex ,such as seniority or productivity but whenever anyone is harass because of its sex then it comes under sexual harassment.

***Arguments against Discrimination:***

Discrimination is **morally wrong** because it accords differential treatment on **morally** irrelevant grounds. That discrimination is wrong can be shown by a variety of arguments.

***Utilitarian Arguments:***

There is a first straight forward utilitarian argument that cites the ways discrimination harms individuals, business firms, and society as a whole. It creates an economically inefficient matching of persons to jobs. The productivity of any businesses and the economy as a whole is best served by choosing the most qualified applicant to fill any particular position. When employees are treated on the basis of characteristics, such as race and sex, that are not job-related and its productivity suffers. In the same manner it is economically disadvantageous for employees to discriminate by refusing to work with blacks or women.

Another utilitarian argument focuses on the harm that discrimination does to the welfare of society as a whole by perpetuating the effects of racism and sexism.

***Kantian Arguments:***

A second kind of argument is Kantian argument .It appeals to the Kantian notions of **human dignity and respect** for persons. *Always recognize that human individuals are ends, and do not use them as means to your end.* It argues that individuals and handicap should not be treated on the basis of membership in a group because it is their fundamental moral right to be treated with dignity and respect.

***Arguments Based on Justice:***

The third kind of argument is based on various principles of justice. **According to Aristotle’s** principle of justice as **“proportional equality”.** Argument tells that discrimination is unjust because characteristics such as race and sex are generally irrelevant to the performance of a job. For example the difference in pay, should still be in proportion to that difference.

***Conclusion:***

Discrimination runs against the most fundamental values of a modern society and our life. In fact, we can say “it is a threat to democracy” because in cases of discrimination, individuals are not treated on the basis of merit but on the basis of membership in a group. Ethical arguments provide strong support for anti-discrimination. We should try to stop discrimination by not using stereotypes. And by not judging people by how they look. Just because someone is different, it doesn’t mean they should be treated differently. You may not agree with someone else's decisions doesn't mean that their decision is wrong. The ideal of a non-discriminatory society is clear but the pathway is scattered.