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The Culture of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders.

Over the years, the United States has continued to receive many immigrants. People migrate to the United States in search of greener pastures. Therefore, America is referred to as the land of diversity due to its diverse cultures. Although the culture of America was originally western, it is currently influenced by ethos that are multicultural. The cultures include Native American, Latino, African American, Pacific Island, Asian, and Native Hawaii. The United States is divided historically by eleven different cultures. Cultural diversity involves different values and perceptions coming into contact with each other. As a result, members of different cultures are subjected to biases, stigmas, and stereotypes that contribute to their being discriminated against. This paper depicts the culture of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders living in the United States, the various stigmas, stereotypes, and biases they face, and what can be done to overcome the prejudices towards them.

**Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders Cultures**

Native Hawaiians date back to 1,500 years ago and originated from Polynesians who got into and settled in Hawaii. Polynesia comprises of many islands such as Hawaii, Samoa, New Zealand, among others who are settled throughout the Pacific Ocean (Kaholokula and Hermosura, n.p). The group consists of a mixture of different ethnic groups. After settling in the region, they came up with their own cuisine, art, and religion. The region embraces a dance called the Hula dance that was originally from the Polynesians. After landing on Hawaii Islands, the Polynesians developed the Hula dance further. The dance is categorized into two groups, namely "Hula Auana" and "Hula Kahiko." Hula Kahiko is originally from Polynesians that was then refined. On the other hand, Hula Auana was changed by influences from western and musical instruments that are not of Hawaiian origin are used when it is being performed. A festival was created in honor of the last king of Hawaii, known as "the Merrie Monarch Festival." The last reigning king was called David Kalakaua. After missionaries arrived in the United States, King David Kalakaua brought back Hula to the Hawaiian Islands, which he is still remembered for to date. To date, the festival is televised nationally to educate people about the Hawaiian culture.

The Hawaiians have an "Outrigger Canoe paddling," which they did not only use to get to the Hawaiian Islands, was and still is a part of their day to day life. They not only paddle the canoe for leisure but also use it to travel from island to island. Over time, the practice became part of the Hawaiian culture. Currently, the Outrigger canoe paddling has become adopted as part of international sport. It is used to educate people about Hawaiian culture globally. When they first settled in the Hawaiian Islands, there were very little edible plants. As more and more people kept on coming to the islands, they brought in many plants that they use for food. They brought with them animals such as pigs, dogs, and chicken that they bred on the islands. The most popular cuisine is called taro, which they use to make poi, which is a part of daily diet for the Hawaiian people. Other popular meals include Squid Luau, Kalau pig, Haupia, and Poke.

The Hawaiian population follows a traditional religion called "polytheistic animistic religion." They believe that spirits exist in many places, such as in the sky and waves. They believe in four gods known as Lono, Ku, Kanaloa, and Kane. Each of the four gods represents a particular thing. Kanaloa is for the ocean, Kane for creation, Lono is for rain, peace, and fertility, and Ku is for male pursuits and war. The people also have forty male gods "Ka ha)," four hundred goddesses (ke kanaha)," spirits "(na unihipili)" and guardians "(na aumakua)." The "American Indian Religious Freedom Act" protects the religion of the Hawaiian people. The people also have a cultural practice that promotes forgiveness and reconciliation that is usually accompanied by prayer. It is called "Ho'oponopono." The practice is used physical, psychological, and spiritual healing. In their traditional philosophy, the Hawaiian people do not consider taking the physical and non-physical as two separate aspects. Hence, healing is all-inclusive.

**Stigmas, Biases, and Stereotypes toward the Culture**

The populations of Hawaii islands are considered to be minority groups. The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders are generally poor. Most of them are living below the poverty line (Kam and Brown, n.p). As a result, they tend to be prejudiced and discriminated upon. At the workplace, they face racial discrimination based on their poor economic statuses. Their socioeconomic status makes them face discrimination in the day to day living as well as in accessing public services. Such public services fronts where they face discrimination is in public health, housing, and education. Most students of Native Hawaiian origin and other pacific islanders have confirmed that they face discriminations in school from other students, the teachers, and the administration. Most of the Native Hawaiians possess little English proficiency, which contributes significantly to their being discriminated against, especially in the education and health sectors (Kam and Brown, n.p). Due to their limited English proficiency, they are unable to communicate well with health care providers. Therefore, their access to proper care is limited. A study conducted by the "U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development" identified that one in five of the Native Hawaiians face discrimination when renting and buying homes. Most of the populations in Hawaii Islands are foreign-born, therefore they experience challenges when trying to fit in within society. Another study indicated that the Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders face the highest level of discrimination in employment.

**Countering Prejudices on Native Hawaii and Pacific Islanders**

To overcome the prejudice metered on the Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, there would be a need to identify and adopt mechanisms that work in the reduction of prejudice and discrimination. People would be encouraged to participate in intergroup contact, which encourages different groups interacting with each other. In so doing, each group gets to learn of the cultural practices of the other; therefore, they get to educate each other of their diverse cultures. Such kind of education promotes knowledge of diverse cultures, which encourages people to embrace and respect their differences. Therefore, cultural diversity is encouraged and embraced by intergroup (Boutwell et al., n.p). Cooperative interaction and learning would also be an effective way to ensure that the Native Hawaiians are embraced in society. The approach involves interventions in school settings, where children from different ethnic groups educate each other on their cultural expertise. As a result, children from different ethnic groups mingle and interact with each other. Therefore, children are taught to appreciate each other regardless of their different cultures, which they embrace and grow with. The approach has been effective in reducing and eliminating intergroup biases.

Interactions on an interpersonal level and friendship of cross-group is another mechanism that can help reduce prejudice against the group. When people from the group are allowed to interact with members of other groups on an interpersonal basis, they develop positive emotional reactions and recognize their attitudes, interests, and talents (Boutwell et al., n.p). Members from the prejudiced groups should be encouraged to recategorize themselves with members of other groups. They are then encouraged to act like they all belong to the same group. Finally, they intergroup integrate and learn to identify themselves with each other. The members should also be encouraged to identify themselves as members of the superior group. It does not mean that they abandon their own identity. They still maintain their identity even as they identify with the other groups. The process enables them to have a sense of belonging and identity. The Culture of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders

Works Cited

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