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## Unemployed Black Men in America

Bing defines a social problem as “an undesirable condition that people believe should be corrected.” An undesirable condition that I believe should be corrected is the unemployment circumstances of black men. According to an article by News One, a “report released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for Black men dropped from 11.2 percent to 11.0 percent in December 2014, and the rate of African-American men participating in the labor force is on the rise: it increased from 66.9 percent in November to 67.8 percent in December.” The black race is in need of an education on the power of stability and finance. Also, a training to implement those practices would be very useful to decrease the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate with black men will continue to fluctuate if we do not fix the situations that are causing difficulties in the community, such as; criminal records, shortage of education, racial discrimination, and a lack of effort.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, research shows that African American men ages eighteen through fifty-four have the highest unemployment rate in America. This information was last updated on July 6, 2018; with that being said I consider this to be an active problem in society. According to Heather Long of the Washington Post, “Black unemployment fell to 6.8 percent in December, and it was the lowest ever recorded by the U.S. Labor Department since it began tracking the black unemployment rate in 1972.” To some people this report seems okay, but to me it is positive, but it reiterates that we have 6.8 percent left to go.

Criminal records are a big part of a job search. With certain background history a person is not allowed in any form of government or certified positions. The Law Dictionary states that “most common rights of convicted felons are lost or severely curtailed; these rights include: voting, traveling abroad, the right to bear arms or own guns, jury service, employment in certain fields, parental benefits, public social benefits and housing.” One problem that sticks out to me in particular is that convicted felons lose the right to housing. Meaning that they have to parole out to a family member and that is only if there is no felon already present in the resident. In some states felons are not allowed to be in a resident with children under a certain age. This makes it harder for stability and every felon is not able to stay in a halfway house. For example, De’shawn Johnson is the son of a single mother who dies from a heart attack. His mother could not afford life insurance and the bills fell on him. He has to take on a second job to keep up with all of the bills that his mother left and child support payments. Picking up a second job causes him to have to take a semester off from college. He falls into depression and gets into trouble for stealing. He is now a convicted felon and has no family to parole out to and not eligible for residence at a halfway house. How is he supposed to maintain a job with no address, no money for supplies or a way to contact an employer? I do not agree with stealing but, I do understand that De’shawn is in a tight situation.

In the African American community, there is a shortage of educational resources. This is an issue because there is a preconceived notion that the African American race does not want to put in an effort to work. Throughout time society tells us that the black man is lazy and does not want to work. One of the issues that I see consistently is that most of the black men that are unemployed were not afford the luxury of a quality education. I believe in the saying “different strokes for different folks.” This slogan is pertaining to school systems and teachers that have

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allowed black student athletes to slip through the cracks of the educational system and testing, just to benefit the school through a touchdown rather than an academic scholarship. The more touchdowns and baskets that are made increases the school's funding and allows room for under educated athletes not to prosper after high school. According to Education Next article, "when they enter primary school, low-income, inner-city black youth are clustered in failing schools. They are more likely to be suspended or enrolled in special education classes, less likely to graduate from high school on time, and, indeed, more likely to drop out of school altogether. Consequently, as they enter adulthood, many young blacks, particularly males, are less likely to enter the workforce or postsecondary educational institutions...etc. young black males have experienced unemployment and been disconnected from schools and vocational institutions at rates ranging from 20 to 32 percent. By 2011, after the end of the last recession, more than one-quarter of young black males were neither employed nor enrolled in school or vocational educational training." My interpretation of this article is that the school system is setting students up to fail, if they do not retain the information at the same pace everyone is on. There is always, a shortage of funding or a lack of space to fill the class rooms. I remember when I was in first grade; we had three different grades in one class. All of the students had the same teacher but the grades sat at different tables. All class assignments were worksheets and recess. When the class attendance was full the first graders sat on the rug all day to let the older kids have the chairs. Why did this happen to a town with four school districts? There was no personal time with teachers and discipline was at an all-time high. The Education Next article could not have said it any better because a lot of the medial jobs now require at least a bachelor's degree or other types of training to be able to acquire some positions of minimum wage pay. Minorities have not put aside funds for their children to attend a higher education or training institution. The Economic challenges that single parent households face are not conducive to be able to save for college. Therefore most students rely on being able to obtain Federal Student Aid and student loans. The lack of a quality education foundation affects the student's ability to maintain a decent grade point average, and they end up losing the funding and dropping of school out to work.

Racial discrimination can take on many forms in the workplace. According to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment." Racial discrimination is harassment and shows the mindset of the person and not the company in particular. One employee's actions can have severe consequences on the company. With that being said you would think that employees would behave and keep their personal preferences out of the work place, but that is not the case. According to the European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies, "African Americans face employment discrimination as the requirement for soft skills such as interaction skills and motivational skills is high. Hence, African American men's chance of getting jobs is less. It is believed that White men have greater soft skills as compared to African American men." I believe that one way that black men can help themselves is to have a clear mindset towards the workplace. They should not automatically think that they are being discriminated against. Society tells them that they are being discriminated against but to me that causes negativity and a carnal mindset before they even fill out the application. Yes, I do believe that there are many racial discriminatory things that go on in the work place and it causes some black men to be unemployed but, I do not agree with society trying to make that slogan fit every company or business.

I absolutely dislike the way some African American men accuse the system of discriminating

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against them and they have not put enough effort in on finding a job. If you want it bad enough you can achieve it. I am a strong believer in using all of your resources and if you have not, then you are not finished. Friends of friends are resources to me and it is sad for black men to sit like a bump on a log and not work towards any goals. I believe the black men that show lack of effort; believe that the government is going to support them for the rest of their life. Anyone who does not work is dead weight and dead weight has to be shredded or we as a whole will not succeed and prosper in our communities.

In conclusion, this problem interests me because I feel like that the African American community is disserving itself and is being disserved by other races through discrimination in education, criminal history, racial aspect, and the lack of self-confidence. The unemployment rate with black men will continue to fluctuate if we do not fix the situations that are causing difficulties in the community, such as; criminal records, shortage of education, racial discrimination, and a lack of effort. I believe that if the African American community uses all of its resources, they can have a nonexistent unemployment rate.

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