

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Dr. Subini Annamma, Associate Professor at Stanford University.

DR. SUBINI ANNAMMA:

Mass incarceration is a disability justice issue, so let's start with that. It's also a eugenicist project, and I want us to understand eugenics in multiple ways. I think there are very direct forms of eugenics that get a lot of news and a lot of attention, but I think we also need to pay attention to what I think of as slow eugenics processes. And I'll explain what I mean by that in a minute.

DR. SUBINI ANNAMMA:

So one, we know that prisons and youth prisons, both adult and youth prisons, target disabled youth of color. So youth prisons, about 38% of kids in youth prisons have a disability, and we know that about 85% of that 38% are kids of color. Now we don't know exactly those numbers. Those are all estimates, I should be clear, because we actually don't collect that kind of intersectional identity data, which is what we need to do. But it gives you a sense of, because we have so many kids of color or kids who are disabled, so many kids of color, we think they're multiple ... The majority are disabled kids of color.

DR. SUBINI ANNAMMA:

So that's who's fed into prisons, but also remember that prisons cause disability. So not only are disabled people of color targeted for incarceration, but prisons cause disability through cultivating violent practices.

DR. SUBINI ANNAMMA:

So examples of this are physical beatings permitted by or committed by guards. And if you look into it, you can find these in youth prisons, the violence that guards either encouraged by getting other inmates to jump other kids, or do themselves. But also things that are less obvious, like the food that is served in youth prisons and the lack of nutrition that harms bodies. The mental health that focuses on youth as offenders, while ignoring the systemic inequities that contribute to incarceration. The trauma of family and community separation while all this is happening. And also resistance, youth prisons often punish kids who resist in any kind of way to the demand for compliance through restraint and seclusion.

DR. SUBINI ANNAMMA:

So again, I want us to think about both the direct eugenics, but also the slow eugenics. And I'm thinking about slow eugenics in this way. I'm just thinking about this definition that we're playing with it, and it needs to be stronger. But the ways in which targeting disabled people of color for pathologizing logics and carceral pedagogy, in order to eradicate via removal, the undesirable from the public.

NARRATOR:

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