

Committee: Special Conference on Breaking Barriers (SPECON)

Issue: Addressing the issue of personal identity as a social boundary in employment

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Vassiliki Batzoglou, I am 16 years old and I am an IB1 student at Pierce-The American College of Greece. It is an immense pleasure and honor to be serving as a Deputy President of the Special Conference on Breaking Barriers (SPECON) of this year's ACG MUN.

Regardless of being a first-timer or experienced delegate, I would like to personally welcome you all to this year's conference. My experience with MUN started one and a half years ago and I can assure you that it is a privilege to be part of this community. It is the perfect opportunity for you to engage with controversial topics, get out of your comfort zone and last but definitely not least meet new friends. I can assure you that I fully understand that MUN might be overwhelming sometimes, especially for the newcomers, but I promise you that for any question or struggle you have I will be there for you. This year's theme is Breaking Barriers and since this is the Special Conference, you will be expected to debate upon matters that are focused on economic, social and any other form of boundaries limiting people from having access to certain activities.

This study guide provides essential information on the topic of "Addressing the issue of personal identity as a social boundary in employment" and you are advised to read it to its full extent. However you are more than encouraged to carry out further research to gain more scope on the issue. If any questions about the topic or in general arise, you can always contact me via email.

Yours truly,

Vassiliki Batzoglou

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The term personal identity includes all the characteristics that determine who we are. Race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and social class, all act as key traits that define us not only since birth but throughout our lives and determine our uniqueness. However, all these traits sometimes may stand as a barrier particularly in employment, which is vital for our well-being. Throughout history, ethnic minorities, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community and disabled people, have faced discrimination as job applicants, at their workplace or have been totally excluded from performing certain jobs. It was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, whose aim was to limit racial discrimination that minorities of Black African and Latin descent were protected by law against discriminatory behavior and segregation in labor for the first time in the USA. Nevertheless, from 1979 until 2019 the African American unemployment rate is persisting on staying double the one of white people.¹ Racism and the marginalization of these minorities in the outskirts of cities which do not allow convenient transportation to the workplace are some of the reasons for this phenomenon. Concerning women, trying to balance their work and family as well as pressure from stereotypes concerning their role in society drops the female labor force participation to 47% while male participation is at 72%. Moreover, although Western countries have adopted measures for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in society and employment, their representation in employment is still low and in some countries being a member of this community is punishable by death. Such examples are limitless even in today's society and vary across countries with different cultures and social structures.

Despite the multiple UN treaties and state policies that have been drafted condemning any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, etc. in the workplace, it is imperative to seek for their enforcement. From intervening in education, providing monetary support to asking for more frequent evaluation of workplaces, states need to closely collaborate with the International Labour Organization and other responsible organizations for the equal representation of all groups of society.

¹ Director, Madia ColemanAssociate, et al. "On the Persistence of the Black-White Unemployment Gap." *Center for American Progress*, 11 Oct. 2022, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/persistence-black-white-unemployment-gap/>

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Personal identity

It refers to a mixture of unique traits with which someone identifies himself and with which society perceives them. These traits can be determined by birth since ethnicity, race, sex and social class or can be developed throughout the life such as sexual orientation, gender identity and religious beliefs.²

Discrimination

Treating individuals differently and mostly unfairly compared to other individuals on the grounds of race, sex, gender or any other example of personal identity.³

Employment barrier

Anything making access to employment difficult. Some examples that could prevent someone from working are lack of education, child care arrangements or lack of adequate credentials.⁴

LGBTQ+

It is an acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer” and the plus sign indicates the various gender identities and sexual orientations that can be used by the members of this community.⁵

Maternity leave

“a period in which a woman is legally allowed to be absent from work in the weeks before and after she gives birth”⁶

Subsidisation

“The act of the government, organization or a group of people of paying part of the cost of something”⁷

² chris.drew.98031506. “65 Personal Identity Examples.” *Helpful Professor*, 23 Dec. 2022, <https://helpfulprofessor.com/personal-identity-examples/>

³ “Discrimination.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/discrimination>

⁴ “Barriers to Employment Definition.” *Law Insider*, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/barriers-to-employment>

⁵ “Glossary of Terms.” *Human Rights Campaign*, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

⁶ “Maternity Leave.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/maternity-leave>

⁷ “Subsidization.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/subsidization>

Suburbanization

“The establishment of residential communities on the outskirts of a city”⁸

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities from employment

Discrimination on the basis of race and religion has been an ongoing topic for several years despite the numerous national constitution articles and UN resolutions to solve the issue. Examples from around the globe prove that members of ethnic or religious minorities are denied equal opportunities from obtaining a job, being promoted, trained or paid fairly in respects to their academic qualifications or contribution at the workplace. For instance, the greatest minority in Europe, the Romanis, is facing systematic discrimination in the areas of education and subsequently employment with only 1 out of 3 working age Roma having a job. Despite the fact that this group always tended to be marginalized by society, it used to engage in a number of occupations including agriculture, handicrafts and street entertainment.⁹ Especially after the 1990s due to rapid industrialisation and urbanization, their function in the countryside was limited. Thus, many were left unemployed and unqualified to fit into jobs requiring technological knowledge. Countries often fail to provide a strong legal framework for their social integration due to the inability of the general population to accept the Romanis as equal.

Another recent example of personal identity standing as a barrier to unemployment is the case of many ethnic minorities in the USA. In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall unemployment rate reached 5.3%. However, unemployment among people of Latino descent was around 6.8% and of Black or African American descent around 8.6% compared to only 4.7% among white people.¹⁰ Not only were figures higher for racial minorities, but the jobs that they were able to find during the pandemic are an indicator of the difficulty they face at finding a job. Black workers, for instance, were more likely to be employed in frontline workplace positions such as food delivering or preparation and public transportation rather than

⁸ “Suburbanization Definition & Meaning.” *Dictionary.com*, Dictionary.com, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/suburbanization>

⁹ “Systemic Exclusion of Roma from Employment.” *European Roma Rights Centre*, 31 Mar. 2006, <http://www.errc.org/roma-rights-journal/systemic-exclusion-of-roma-from-employment#:~:text=The%20most%20prevalent%20incidence%20of,the%20phase%20of%20the%20in%20terview>

¹⁰ “Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2021 : BLS Reports: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.” *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 5 Jan. 2023, www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2021/home.htm.

in non-frontline positions like company managers. Thus, their own safety was risked at a higher rate since they were more frequently exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Even in the UK, a black African has half the chances of being called back after applying for a job than a white British applicant with the same qualifications.¹¹ Thus they rely more on their social networks including friends and family relatives for finding a job rather than following traditional ways such as responding to job advertisements. Racial minorities may also apply to the public sector or low-skilled jobs where discrimination against them is lower, but the working conditions are usually left unmonitored.

Religious beliefs also act as barriers to employment. Especially in Western countries people of beliefs other than Christian, such as Muslim or Hindu, are more likely to find it difficult to be employed than their Christian counterparts. A survey in the UK confirmed the existence of the “Muslim penalty” highlighting anti-Muslim discrimination at the workplace. At the same time, in India discrimination of Indian Muslims in the labor market reached 68.3% in 2020.¹² As Hinduism is India’s dominating religion with over 80% of the population being believers¹³, the existence of Muslims in the North has been causing a conflict between the two religions for years now. The Muslims are marginalized not only from society, but also from employment as they find it difficult to access work or receive equal salaries. So, especially in urban areas, Indian Muslims tend to engage with self-employment or low-quality family professions.

Reasons

A real barrier that can be present for racial minorities when trying to access a work is the lack of education, language skills and the detachment from technological developments. The Roma population can be set as an example here as well to describe the general situation. The high rate of unemployment among the youth can be explained by the low levels of education and detachment from the workplace due to lack of training and ability to have updated working skills such as handling of the technology. Despite legislations in the EU with the newest one being the EU Roma Strategy Framework, which sets targets to be reached for member states until 2030 hoping to achieve equality in employment among other areas, many governments often do not acknowledge the Roma population as the largest minority in Europe, but solely as a social group or neglect to provide solutions to the matter due to the controversiality that comes with handling the Romani population. This results in their neglect and underestimation of the discrimination they face. These real barriers are

¹¹“Ethnic Minorities Are Less Likely to Find Good Work Than Their White British Counterparts, Even when Born and Educated in the UK.” *British Politics and Policy at LSE*, 19 Jan. 2021, blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/ethnic-penalties-and-hiring-discrimination/.

¹² “Job Discrimination against Indian Muslims Rises by 9% in 16 Years: Report.” *Anadolu Ajansi*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/job-discrimination-against-indian-muslims-rises-by-9-in-16-years-report/2686269>

¹³ J., Hitesh. “Religion Data - Population of Hindu / Muslim / Sikh / Christian - Census India.” Hindu-Muslim Population in India | Sikh Christian Jain and Buddhist Population, Census 2011, <https://www.census2011.co.in/religion.php>

solidified by the social prejudices concerning the culture and “slowed-down” lifestyle of Romanis that is considered to make them unreliable at the workplace.

Racial and religious discrimination stands as a major catalyst of the problem. According to multiple surveys, objective variables such as the limited language knowledge or gender attitudes of Muslims, that can be used as a reason to explain their low rate of employment in the UK, does not explain the large gap differences of employed Muslim and non-Muslim people. Thus, ethno-religious discrimination is put as a stronger argument. Another frequent phenomenon linking racial discrimination with the rate of unemployment is the rejection of job applicants with “non-white traditional” names. Especially Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Black African applicants are less likely to be invited for a job interview.¹⁴

Geographical barriers also stand as a barrier for ethnic and religious minorities. Although racial residential segregation, which included the geographic separation of ethnic minorities into unequal neighborhoods, was a concept that started in the 1950s in the USA, there are still remnants of that phenomenon even today. Minorities including Latinos and Black Africans have been living away from central areas and thus lack access to inner-city jobs. Since they face high costs of transportation and are more likely to be isolated in their own neighborhood, they seek local and low-skilled jobs and thus geography stands as an impediment in their access to high-skilled positions. However, this point has been challenged by economist, David Ellwood, who argued that there is fluidity in transportation to overcome the problem of non-nearby jobs and that “the true problem isn’t space. It’s race.”¹⁵

Gender gap

Gender roles

Gender identity stands as a frequent obstacle in employment. Focusing on the female sex, women face large obstacles even today when accessing working positions. This struggle does not differ from country to country, but it is a rather worldwide phenomenon. In Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), although it would be perceived that women have job opportunities, in some cases women are forced to work due to the economic instability of their family. Despite the fact that they act as an important economic asset in their family, the overall unemployment gap remains large. Not only that, but the working conditions at their workplace are extremely poor and can include sexual harassment and discrimination. In More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs), the role of women is quite different. Despite economic

¹⁴ “The British Sociological Association.” Home, <https://www.britisoc.co.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2020/december/ethnic-minorities-more-likely-to-be-unemployed-because-employers-reject-applications-from-non-white-names/>

¹⁵ Job Accessibility and Racial Differences in Youth Employment Rates - JSTOR. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2006748>

development, women are forced to conform to marital status. The female role is the one of the married women or “child maker”. They are economically dependent on their husband, who acts as the model of the “male breadwinner”. However, these roles may change from country to country and are directly connected with the religious and cultural beliefs. In Saudi Arabia, for example, women can work in almost all professional fields. However, since this is a country deeply rooted to the Islamic tradition, women have to get their husband’s permission to work since he is their legal guardian. Thus, work can be difficult for many Saudi women which explains the low female employment rate in the country reaching only 22%.¹⁶

Work-family balance

Even in the countries where women can freely obtain jobs, the situation is difficult and faces major obstacles to sustain it. The struggle of women to balance the role of a mother with a professional employee decreases female participation chances in employment by 4 percentage points.¹⁷ This struggle is stemming firstly from the lack of affordable child care. While in most More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) child care for families and low-income single parents is subsidized, in Slovakia, Cyprus and the United States, they need to pay half of their salary to afford it. It is a matter of socio-economic inequalities, since in high-income households, almost half of children under 3 years old attend kindergarten or early childhood care, whereas less than one third of low-income households can afford to do that for their children. Thus, at least one parent has to stay at home to take care of the children. The usual case is that this will be the role of women and thus not only does the role of mother overweigh the role of employee, but the household’s income is also negatively affected as one member loses his/her job.¹⁸

Pressure to conform to standards

Of course, stereotypical notions and social standards act as a further factor that make the access of females to work difficult. More specifically, according to a Gallup survey by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2016, 20% of men and 14% of women still believe that it is unacceptable for a woman to have a paid job outside the household. Causes can include pressure from a traditional family or the husband or even fear of disappointment of being employed. This is particularly true due to the

¹⁶ [An overview of women's rights in Saudi Arabia | Expatica](#)

¹⁷ “The Gender Gap in Employment: What's Holding Women Back?” *InfoStories*, <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/Stories/Employment/barriers-women/>

¹⁸ “Affordable, Quality Childcare Inaccessible in Many of World's Wealthiest Countries.” *UNICEF*, “Affordable, Quality Childcare Inaccessible in Many of World's Wealthiest Countries.” *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/affordable-quality-childcare-inaccessible-many-worlds-wealthiest-countries-unicef>

increasing sexual harassment rates against female employees that cultivate fear among women and discourage them from applying for a working position. ¹⁹

The issue of maternity leave

More than 120 countries globally provide maternity leave to female workers that get pregnant by law. Nevertheless, only in some countries such as Scandinavian countries or Italy provide a paid leave for an extensive period of time that can reach even five months compared to the 12-week unpaid leave provided in the USA. In 1952 ILO's Maternity Protection Convention, aiming at protecting working women after childbirth, was revised and states that women should be provided with not-less than two thirds of their initial earnings before either maternity leave. Although in some countries social security and cash benefits are provided, it is a common case that women face increased discrimination after returning to work from maternity leave. In the UK, 10% of women reported harsh treatment by their employer after having a baby. Consequently, the perception of women also being unable to be as productive as before giving birth in their effort to balance work and personal life gives ground to increased firing. The same report stated that around 54,000 new mothers lose their jobs each year. Thus, maternity leave is not a measure that provides women with safety, but rather with insecurity and worrying of being removed from the position. ²⁰

¹⁹ "The Gender Gap in Employment: What's Holding Women Back?" *InfoStories*,

<https://www.ilo.org/infostories/Stories/Employment/barriers-women/>

²⁰ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008009/lang--en/index.htm



Figure 1: Infographic showing the employment gap between men and women in the EU, aged 20-64.²¹

LGBTQ+ in employment

Being a member of the LGBTQ+ community usually comes with impediments in accessing a job. In fact, 18% of LGBTQ+ people who searched for work in the UK faced discrimination because of their sexual orientation and gender identity while trying to get a job.²² Inequality extends to harassment at the workplace, denial of employer to provide employees a promotion and salary raise merely due to the fact that they are LGBTQ+ community members. Even today, after multiple awareness campaigns and conversations on sexual orientation and genders, the social attitude towards these people remains unfair.²³

²¹ "Gender Employment Gap in the EU." *Gender Employment Gap in the EU - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20190307-1>.

²² "LGBT in Britain - Work Report." *Stonewall*, 11 Nov. 2021, <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-work-report>

²³ thisisloyal.com, Loyal |. "Bias in the Workplace." *Williams Institute*, 7 Aug. 2020, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/bias-in-the-workplace/>

Global legislation

LGBTQ+ legislation differs among countries. For example, in 7 countries, including Somalia, Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Brunei, Mauritania, Nigeria and Qatar, being a member of the LGBTQ+ community is punished by death. However, in around 70 countries homosexual activities are a crime in general. So, international travel to certain countries is dangerous and members of the community must be careful when accepting travel-related jobs. Since such a factor would not be taken into consideration by a non-LGBTQ+ person, this personal trait stands as a discriminatory barrier in employment.

The problem of reporting discriminatory incidents

Despite the fact that 1 out of 5 LGBTQ+ employees have faced negative comments and conduct from their colleagues and employers, discrimination against this group remains a hidden problem. One reason for that is the fear of losing their jobs after reporting their incidents or disappointment of no punishment. Another reason could be the exclusion of the option to report discrimination against LGBTQ+ workers on progress reports given by companies. Such a topic is often considered inappropriate or too sensitive for the workplace and so companies feel uncomfortable discussing it.



Figure 2: Protest for transgender rights and the inclusion of trans people in employment²⁴

²⁴ Ozturk, Mustafa. "Transgender Inclusion at Work: Three Key Issues for HR to Tackle." *HRZone*, 18 Feb. 2020, <https://www.hrzone.com/lead/culture/transgender-inclusion-at-work-three-key-issues-for-hr-to-tackle>.

Employment and disability

In the current labor market, people with disabilities, whether these include difficulty in seeing, hearing, speaking, walking or mental disfunctioning, continue to be excluded from employment. Disabled people can be employed in two ways; either be included in jobs usually occupied by non-disabled people or work in positions that are specifically designed for disabled people. Despite Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CROPD) by the UN, which promoted equal rights in employment and involvement both in the public and private sector, unemployment rates remain higher for disabled people rather than for non-disabled people. Reasons for that include firstly the prejudices surrounding the productivity of disabled people at the workplace. In fact, they are often regarded as slower and less efficient, and although this can be the case due to differentiation in the way of working, disabled people can offer a lot of benefits to a company hiring them. For example, disabled people are great problem-solvers, show a high sense of loyalty and their inclusion at the workplace proves a company with a holistic representation. That does not only help companies expand their consumer market and appeal to disabled customers as well, but it also helps achieve inclusivity and higher working performance. Secondly, disabled people can be excluded from work due to the fear of employers of having to face large costs in their effort to make their workplace accessible to disabled people. New changes at the workplace from building new ramps to adjusting the staff's behavior to make disabled people feel inclusive may lead to a loss of efficiency. A third reason for the marginalization of disabled people from employment is the lack of access to education. Especially in developing countries where there is a lack of funds for infrastructure the opportunities are even more limited. This phenomenon stems from the lack of understanding about disabled peoples' needs, shortage of trained teachers and specifically designed facilities. A study conducted in 19 developing countries, such as Ghana and Ethiopia, showed that just six out of ten disabled children can read and write, and only a third complete secondary education. Thus, since they lack basic knowledge to be eligible for employment, rising unemployment is an expected result. However, due to their aforementioned characteristics, disabled people can be proven to be an integral part of the workforce. Since previous policies drafted not only by the UN as a whole, but by countries individually, were not successfully achieved, and the unemployment rate among disabled people of working age reaches the 80%, it is imperative that member states meet renowned targets

Employment rate of people with disability remains stubbornly low compared to people without disability

Year = 2019 or latest year available

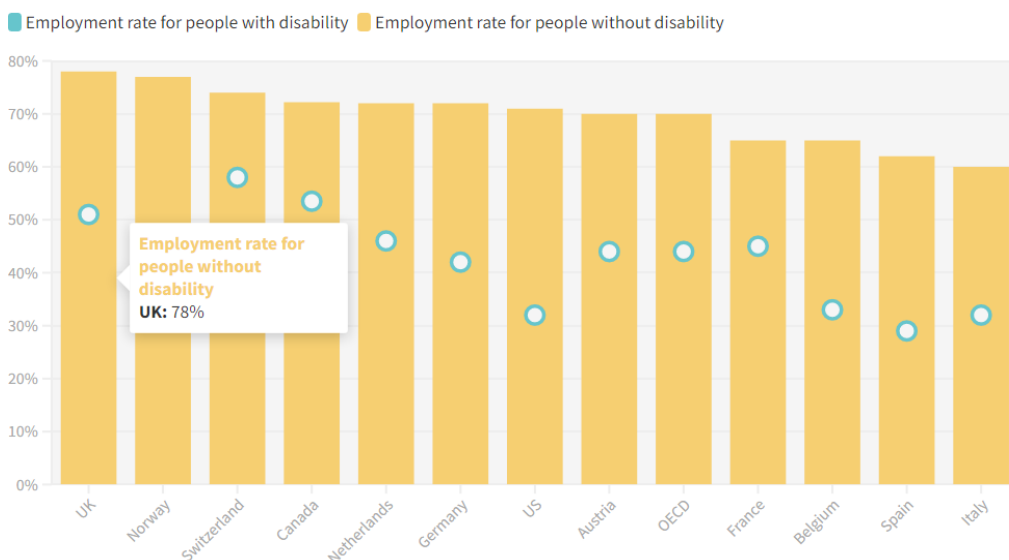


Figure 3: Graph comparing the employment rate between people with and without disabilities.
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MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

In 1964 the Civil Rights Act was published in the USA. The multiracial state had been dealing with the multiple ethnic minorities living in the country, including Latinos, Black African, Hispanic and many more, in a discriminatory way. Up until 1964 segregation in education, employment and every day activities between the white people and the ethnic minorities was legal. From 1964 onwards, any discrimination on the basis of sex and race in employment was prohibited by law. This lawful protection of employees and job applicants against discrimination continues up until today with a most recent example the publication of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in 2022. Nevertheless, personal identity continues to be a barrier to employment for ethnic minorities. A study showed that white candidates with criminal records were more likely to be considered over black candidates with no criminal record.²⁶ Thus, the discrimination made is evident until today despite the multiple measures taken.

²⁵ “Disability, Work and Inclusion: Mainstreaming in All Policies and Practices: En.” *OECD*, <https://www.oecd.org/social/disability-work-and-inclusion-1eaa5e9c-en.htm>

²⁶ The Mark of a Criminal Record1 - Harvard University. https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/pager/files/pager_ajs.pdf

Saudi Arabia

Aspects of someone's personal identity are very likely to stand as barriers in employment in Saudi Arabia. All legal matters are guidelines by the Islamic law, the Shari'ah. Since it derives primarily from two of the holiest books of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah, there is no secularism and the legal and religious system overlap. According to the Shari'ah, women do have the right to work in fields that are only physiologically appropriate for them. On top of that, unmarried women should get the permission of their father or if they are married the permission of their husband to engage in employment. However, it is often the case that the latter will refuse, thus depriving women of their right to work. Consequently, one of the largest employment gaps, with just 30.9% comprising the labor force in contrast with the 80.1% of men, is detected in Saudi Arabia.²⁷ Being a member of the LGBTQ+ community is also punished with death in Saudi Arabia. Such people are, thus, completely marginalized from employment as well and since they lack professional engagement they face huge difficulties with survival in the country.

India

India has been one of the first UN member states to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 aiming to strengthen the role of disabled people in employment, education and health. Since 26.8 million people are disabled in India the country is targeted for their inclusivity in society and particularly employment. From 1997 and onwards, the National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation has been running and according to it any person above 18 years old with 40% or more disability can apply for a loan for starting any activity contributing to the national economy.²⁸ Through it, many potential disabled entrepreneurs have received financial assistance and have been promoted by the state. However, the caste system under which no social mobility is allowed and the ongoing marginalization of the Muslim population of India are leading these social and religious groups to mostly engage with self-employment and low-ranked jobs.

China

China has passed anti-discrimination laws, the PRC Labour Law that prohibits the discrimination of an employee on the basis of ethnicity, gender, race and disability. Despite such laws, discrimination in China continues to prevail with the most

²⁷ "The Gender Gap in Employment: What's Holding Women Back?" *InfoStories*, <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/Stories/Employment/barriers-women/#global-gap/gap-labour-force>

²⁸ "National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation: Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities: MSJE: Government of India." National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation | Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities | MSJE | Government of India, <https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/national-handicapped-finance-and-development-corporation.php>

prominent being gender discrimination. According to a 2020 report, 19% of job announcements in civil service in China noted a preference for male candidates²⁹ The intense work culture that leads workers to work for more than 12 hours a day makes it really difficult for women to engage in work. At the same time, despite the law on protection of women’s rights prohibiting firing a female worker or lowering her salary when she is on maternity leave, there is no strong enforcement of these regulations. Thus, the social norms about them being ineffective at their workplace on top of the little state support discourage women from accessing employment.

European Union

Fair treatment in employment is a basic right in the European Union. In general, the EU is seeking to be diverse and inclusive, with the most recent respective policy being the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which sets targets for the economic independence of disabled people through employment until 2030. Although the policy has not begun being implemented yet, the goal is to strengthen integration services and employment capacities while providing accommodation to the disabled people.

Human Rights Campaign Foundation

The HRC Foundation is a non-profit organization initiating 11 programs with the aim of completely transforming the lives of LGBTQ+ people and the quality among humans in general. For example, the Workplace Equality Program has been the source for information and guidance to respond to workplace problems regarding LGBTQ+ people. Since 1998, members of the community facing discrimination have been facing up to this program and succeeded at forcing their workplaces to adopt inclusive protection and benefits. In the USA, more than 500 employers offer to 13 million employees transgender-inclusive healthcare and family formation support in their benefit packages. Thus, people and especially LGBTQ+ are even more encouraged and it is easier for them to be included in employment to reach economic independence.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
25 June 1958	Adoption of “Discrimination (employment and Occupation) Convention (No.111)” by the International Labour Organization
2 July 1964	Publication of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting any discrimination on the

²⁹ Nadworny, Katie. “Gender Discrimination in the Chinese Workplace.” *SHRM*, SHRM, 23 Dec. 2021, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/global-hr/pages/gender-discrimination-in-the-chinese-workplace-global-hr.aspx>

	basis of sex and race in employment in the U.S.A
18 December 1979	Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the United Nations General Assembly with a focus of Article 11 on employment
1997	Adoption of the National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation in India for the inclusion of disabled people in employment
1998	Publication of the Workplace Equality Program by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation
27 November 2000	Publication of EU Council Directive 2000/78/EC by the EU aiming at eliminating discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, disability and gender in employment
30 March 2006	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 aiming to strengthen the role of disabled people in employment, education and health
2020	EU Roma Strategic Framework for the elimination of discrimination against the Romani population in the EU
26 September 2022	Publication of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy for the legal protection of employees and job applicants against discrimination in the U.S.A

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO is a UN agency consisting of 187 member states responsible for drafting policies and setting standards aiming at the decent work of men and women. In 1958, in a Geneva convention it set out the “Discrimination (employment and Occupation)

Convention (No.111)".³⁰ Through educational programmes, annual reports and enforced national monitoring for the application of the policies, member states are obliged to combat discrimination in employment as it is a violation of human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UN Women

UN Women is a UN organization collecting data, setting programmes and standards and drafting policies to maintain women's human rights and ensure their equal role in society. The organization has researched on the topic of barriers in employment and provided solutions multiple times. An example is the mobilization of women in Pakistan in collaboration with the ILO to the country's first Home-Based Workers Policy. According to it, finance and the labor market becomes more accessible to women. UN Women and the ILO have visited leaning businesses in Pakistan to secure more career opportunities and provide women with equal pay. The mobilization was quite successful since more than 1,000 women who were previously unemployed, now have new working positions.³¹

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The present convention adopted on 18 December 1979, condemns all forms of discrimination against women and calls member states to establish equality between men and women. This can happen through change or complete abolition of laws to ensure the full legal protection of women and even calls for sanctions where appropriate to prevent discrimination. More particularly, Article 11 highlights the importance of equal treatment in employment. Measures include the same criteria for women in job applications and hiring as with men, the provision of vocational training and right to promotion as well as the provision of social security and finally the right to get paid in case of leaving.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

It was signed on 30 March 2006 and seeks for the legal protection and maintenance of dignity among the disabled population. By abiding to the principle of equal recognition of both disabled and non-disabled people before the law, the convention calls that no one should be excluded from free and compulsory primary and secondary

³⁰ "C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)." Convention c111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB%3A12100%3A0%3A%3ANO%3A%3AP12100_ILO_CODE%3AC111

³¹ "Employment and Migration." *UN Women – Headquarters*, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/employment-and-migration>

education on the basis of their disability. Since lack of adequate education is a root problem to the marginalization of disabled people from employment, the Convention also states on Article 27³² that disabled people are provided with technical vocational training, do not face discrimination at their workplace and that there is national assistance in finding, maintaining and returning to employment.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC)

It has the authority to pass federal laws on the prohibition of discrimination against employees on the basis of religion, gender, race etc., which are approved by the US Congress and then signed by the President. It can also carry out investigations at the workplace to witness the implementation of the measures. One of the initiatives is the E-Race Initiative which began in 2008 and continues up until today with a clear focus on race discrimination. Its five main objectives include “the improvement on data collection and analysis on the matter for investigation, the improvement of the federal sector systems, the development of training modules and legal theories to address the issue of race and discrimination and the engagement of the public, employers and other stakeholders to promote voluntary compliance for the eradication of race and color discrimination.”³³

EU Roma Strategic Framework

Adopted in 2020, it is a set of targets that have to be met by 2030 by all EU member states for the inclusion of Roma groups in the areas of education, equality, employment and many others. With regards to education, which a great percentage of the Roma youth is deprived of, the Strategy aims to eliminate Roma segregation in primary schools and to cut the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma population in Europe by half . To secure its application, there will be extensive monitoring of the member states along with completion of surveys every 2 years. Despite the small reduction in discrimination that was detected as an immediate effect of the adoption of this framework, anti-gypsyism continues to prevail in Europe and there is a great room for improvement.

EU Council Directive 2000/78/EC

³² “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.” *OHCHR*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20present,respect%20for%20their%20inherent%20dignity>

³³ Miller, Bridget. “What Is the E-Race Initiative?” *HR Daily Advisor*, 20 Jan. 2016, <https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2016/01/27/what-is-the-e-race-initiative/>

The directive was launched on 27 November 2000 and aims at eliminating discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, disability and gender in employment.³⁴ These measures, involving the improvement of the legal protection and promotion of such groups, must be implemented by both the private and private sector of all member states. It sets out the equal treatment of men and women at the workplace, it provides solutions for disabled people including the adoption of equipment and distribution of tasks and provision of proper training for their better inclusion. It encourages discussions between member states and non-governmental organizations on the matter and allows dissuasive sanctions in case of not aligning with the Directive.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Affordable child care

Since child care has been a pull-factor from employment for many parents and especially women it is important to address the matter. As previously mentioned, child care continues to be unaffordable in many UN countries thus placing a huge economic burden on a family. In the case of no support from family relatives, at least one of the parents has to stay home and take care of the child.

Member states could provide subsidies or more accessible state-owned childcare services to these families for financial assistance and to give them the ability to balance work and personal life. However, since many countries and especially developing ones, do not have sufficient economic resources to commit to this cause, a UN organization can be involved for their monetary support.

Although child care subsidization does in fact increase the female enrollment rates in employment, another UN organ should continuously monitor and draft reports on the improvement of the country's situation using annual reports or surveys in order to prevent corruption.

Identity-neutral evaluation

It is a common circumstance that job applicants are discriminated against based on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion. Despite the multiple attempts from both the UN and national policies, social groups continue to be underrepresented at the workplace regardless of having the same qualifications. Thus, member states should work in closer collaboration with the ILO, other responsible UN organs and NGOs to achieve higher targets and further eliminate employment discrimination.

For example, member states should impose to both private and public sectors a gender-, ethnicity-, gender identity- and sexual orientation-neutral evaluation of job applicants. The application of such measures can be ensured through direct UN

³⁴ "32000L0078." *EUR-Lex — Access to European Union Law — Choose Your Language*, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0078.

supervision. This could happen through regular visits of the responsible supervisor at companies, the drafting of regular reports and gathering of data from evaluations made by job-applicants and employees.

Dissuasive sanctions on companies

Many workers that have been discriminated against at their workplace or during the job-application process, do not report such incidents due to their lack of faith that systematic change will happen and their employer or company will be left unpunished. This not only allows the continuation of this phenomenon and leaves the barriers of vulnerable groups on employment standing, but it also creates an atmosphere of fear and distrust between the employer and the employee that could affect the latter's productivity.

Thus, if there was the possibility of issuing dissuasive sanctions on the company in the case of reporting discriminatory behavior and after required assessment has been conducted, employees would be given an incentive. However, such sanctions can be imposed after judicial proceedings and inspections take place which take a lot of time. At the same time, it is a usual case that underrepresented migrant workers and women do not receive a just verdict.

A collaboration between the state mechanism of member states and a UN organ can conduct face-to face assessments and surveys on staff and other employees and through more frequent evaluation of the employers, just dissuasive sanctions can be imposed at a quicker pace.

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