

Forum: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Question of: Addressing the Issue of Poverty & Oppression Among Minorities in Nations

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Introduction

Despite the great technological, social, and economic advancements that define the world today, billions of individuals across the globe are plagued by poverty. Specifically, the group most susceptible to poverty are minority groups in their respective nations. Due to their susceptibility to poverty, countless minorities across the world are stuck in an endless cycle of not just poverty, but also increased chances of being incarcerated, higher unemployment rates, less education, and other inequalities.¹ This chain reaction is a result of the world's growing trend of the need for money; with less money, it becomes increasingly difficult for individuals to keep up with the world around them, whether that be being able to afford proper resources to investing a certain amount into their future (i.e. children's education, retirement plans, etc). In addition, as immigration and emigration around the world continues, if this pattern of wealth gap and poverty in minorities continues, this would not only worsen the problem of inequality, but also hinder the economic advancement of a nation as well. Thus, the issue of poverty among minorities in nations is an urgent issue that must be addressed.

To address this issue, however, it's necessary to know the causes in the first place. While there are a wide variety of reasons, the two most prevalent reasons have been found to be discrimination and social exclusion. To start, as minorities face discrimination, they are often deprived of their basic rights and are barred from the opportunities that an individual in the majority may have. For instance, as research from OHCHR states², minorities often face difficulty gaining citizenship in the country they reside in, which not only bars them from enjoying certain privileges that only a nation's citizen can enjoy (voting rights, healthcare, etc) but also places them at the risk of expulsion. In addition, discrimination plays a part in minorities being less likely to be selected for job interviews and hinders

¹ Project, Borgen. "Why Is Poverty among Minorities so High?" The Borgen Project. Borgen Project https://borgenproject.org/wp-content/uploads/The_Borgen_Project_Logo_small.jpg, August 8, 2019. <https://borgenproject.org/why-is-poverty-among-minorities-so-high/>.

² "II. Increase the Understanding of Minority Issues in the Context of Promoting Social Inclusion and Ensuring Stable Societies." OHCHR. Accessed July 23, 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-minority-issues/ii-increase-understanding-minority-issues-context-promoting-social-inclusion-and-ensuring-stable>.

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their choices of getting stable and high earning jobs. For the issue of social exclusion, as minorities lose access to the critical resources, rights, and services, they are less likely to be able to afford adequate education, have stable housing, and many more disadvantages that all inevitably lead to poverty.

Another factor worth mentioning is that this problem of poverty and oppression among minorities has been a decades long issue that has persisted to the status quo. A key reason for this persistence is that while international organizations such as the UN have minority representation, the majority of the minorities in their nations have very little to no voice in their government. As minorities, they often face discrimination and stigma, which makes it hard for minority representatives to be elected as equally as the candidates from a majority group, and because many minorities often lack citizenship of the nation they live in, it prohibits them from having a say in their country's political affairs as well.

As mentioned, this widespread poverty and oppression of minorities has been a historical problem. While the UN has acknowledged since the 1940s the need for action to ensure minority rights, the problem still persists today. One of the most notable cases of minority poverty has been in the United States, which still persists today. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, segregation in the United States had not only bred racial mistreatment of African Americans and other colored groups, but it also prevented these groups from gaining basic access to necessary services, and were instead forced to use downgraded "colored" systems.³ For instance, education systems for minority groups were often held in run-down buildings that did not even have enough desks for the minority kids, as well as fewer teachers for the minority children. As a combination of the racial discrimination and a lack of resources, segregation during the 20th century gave way to mass incarceration of minorities and poverty. Decades later, however, poverty rates among minority groups are still significantly higher than those of the majority. Despite making up only 30% of the current U.S population, African Americans and Hispanics still make up around 40% of the poverty rate. Unfortunately, this pattern is not specific to the United States. In nations all across the world that have diverse ethnic groups like India and Vietnam, the oppression and poverty that minorities face is still a major issue that has yet to be adequately addressed.

Nations, however, are not oblivious to this pattern and there has been a wide variety of past actions to aid minorities in nations. On a worldwide scale, the UN has established the United Nations Minorities Declaration that clarifies the minority rights nations should strive to achieve, and there have been countless forums on the question of minority rights. In addition, multiple individual nations have

³ Published by Statista Research Department, and Jun 21. "U.S. Poverty Rate, by Ethnicity 2020." Statista, June 21, 2022. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/200476/us-poverty-rate-by-ethnic-group/>.

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also been seen to be taking action. India, with 53 identified minority groups, have passed several policies to assist minorities from poverty and pave a more hopeful future. The Ministry of Minority Affairs in India⁴, for example, has established programs in multiple departments, such as education empowerment that offers scholarships and overseas education opportunities, economic empowerment that provides skill training and credit for earning certain jobs, and infrastructure development to improve the living standards of minorities. Similarly, Pakistan, another nation with a notable minority population, has taken steps to address the problems that its minorities have faced in the past, such as religious persecution, other forms of discrimination, and lack of education.⁵ To address these problems, Pakistan institutionalized minority rights into its constitution to establish a statutory commission for minority rights that with proper maintenance, has the potential to eliminate hate speech, ensure minorities' rights to education, and implement job quotas. While the problem of increased poverty and oppression among minorities has yet to be solved, there is still certain action being taken across the world to address them.

Definition of Key Terms

Minority

A minority is a specific group of people that are different from the majority of the population in the nation that they reside in. While many may associate the term minority with a difference in race, because this term is so broad, the term minority can also be attributed to a wide variety of differences such as religion, ethnicity, gender orientation, etc.⁶

Social Exclusion

Social Exclusion refers to a situation in which a specific group of individuals do not have equal access to the opportunities and services in a nation that could contribute to the group having a chance at a stable, happy life. Social exclusion also includes not having an adequate voice in the government of their

⁴ "Ministry of Minority Affairs: Government of India." Ministry of Minority Affairs | Government of India. Accessed July 23, 2022. <https://minorityaffairs.gov.in/>.

⁵ Minority Rights Group. "Beyond Commissions: Institutionalizing Minority Rights in Pakistan." Minority Rights Group, June 1, 2021. <https://minorityrights.org/2020/06/02/minority-commission-pakistan/>.

⁶ "Ethnic Minority." Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed July 15, 2022. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ethnic-minority>.

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nation and the “opportunities and services” commonly refer to infrastructure like electricity and running water, while services refers to systems like education, healthcare, and insurance.⁷

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on factors such as their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.⁸ To add, discrimination is also one of the biggest driving forces in the problem of poverty in minorities, as discrimination may lead to a certain individual not being able to get a job, being unfairly profiled by law enforcement, and other unideal situations that will worsen the problem of poverty.

Incarceration

Put simply, incarceration refers to the state of one being imprisoned. The significance of this term is that incarceration correlates strongly with poverty. As individuals in poverty are more inclined towards a life of crime that will get them incarcerated⁹, these subsequent incarcerations continue to breed even more poverty, worsening the problem at hand.

Poverty

Poverty is currently one of the biggest issues in our world today, with more than 700 millions people being affected in our current world. Poverty, or the state of lacking the necessary amount of money or material resources, has also been on the rise over the last few years as a result of the mass unemployment caused by the COVID pandemic. With poverty having so many causes and even greater effects on those affected by it, the question of how to deal with poverty is an imperative question to ponder over when answering this agenda.¹⁰

Education

⁷ Platform, E. L. (n.d.). *Social exclusion: What does it mean?* Liberties.eu. Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/social-exclusion/43579>

⁸ American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Discrimination: What it is, and how to Cope*. American Psychological Association. Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination/types-stress>

⁹ *The relationship between poverty and mass incarceration*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2022, from https://www.masslegalservices.org/system/files/library/The_Relationship_between_Poverty_and_Mass_Incarceration.pdf

¹⁰ Okalow, S. (2022, May 18). *What is poverty? it's not as simple as you think*. World Vision Canada. Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/child-sponsorship/what-is-poverty>

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Education is the process of receiving or giving education in systemic institutions, such as schools or universities. Education, with its importance in getting a stable job and general knowledge, has been pointed as one of the key solutions for solving the problem of poverty.

Wage Gap

Wage Gap refers to the difference in mean earnings of one group compared to the other, with one group earning substantially less salary despite the similar nature of both group's work. While wage gaps are most notable in the gender spectrum, the problem of wage gaps between those in the "majority" ethnic group and those of the ethnic minority is also a notable one as well.¹¹ With a smaller wage and other oppressive obstacles hindering their chances of a better life, minorities and their issue of poverty will persist unless the problem of wage gap is also accounted for, which makes this term an important one to know.

Exploitation of Labor

Connecting to the problem of wage gap above, exploitation of labor is a concept that describes a situation in which the employer unfairly and excessively benefits from the efforts of his workers.¹² As many minorities work in labor intensive jobs compared to those in the "majority", minorities are also a victim of exploitation of labor, which continues to add onto their oppression and poverty.

Timeline of Key Events

1954~1968: The Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was a political movement that advocated for the abolishment of racial segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement that had been oppressing the ethnic minority group: African Americans.¹³ The racial segregation during this time contributed to mass incarceration of this minority group, hindered them from getting education, and restricted access to public services, all of which led to not just oppression, but increased poverty among African Americans as well. The Civil

¹¹ Stephen Miller, C. E. B. S. (2020, August 7). *Black workers still earn less than their white counterparts*. SHRM. Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/compensation/pages/racial-wage-gaps-persistence-poses-challenge.aspx>

¹² *Minority and Indigenous Trends 2022 – focus on work - world*. ReliefWeb. (2022, June 15). Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/minority-and-indigenous-trends-2022-focus-work>

¹³ History.com Editors. (2009, October 27). *Civil Rights Movement*. History.com. Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>

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Rights Movement, as one of the most notable and influential social movements of this generation, leaves a mark as a fight back against the oppression of minorities. In fact, while racial tensions still persist in the United States, the civil rights movement was imperative in advancing the rights of minorities in the U.S.

May 17, 1992: Establishment of the National Commission for Minorities Act

Enacted in 1992, this act serves several functions for the well being of minorities. To list some of its key functions, this act evaluates the progress of development of minorities under the union or its nation and monitors the working of safeguards provided in the laws or reforms that are aimed at minorities.¹⁴

December 18, 1992: Establishment of United Nations Minorities Declaration

This event marks the enactment of the United Nations Minorities Declaration that promotes and protects the rights of minorities in order not only address problems they may face like poverty, but also contribute to the social stability of the nation in which they live.¹⁵ While the UN had recognized the need to advocate for minorities years prior, this declaration includes a more elaborate list of rights that minorities should be entitled to and sets an agreed standard to be strived for when it comes to the rights of minorities.

December 20, 1993: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is founded

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR) is a department of the Secretariat of the UN that works to promote human rights. In particular, minority rights are an integral part of OHCHR's work and it plays a leading role within the UN system when it comes to minority rights.

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2008: Establishment of UN Forum on Minority Issues(UNFMI)

¹⁴ *Act, 1992 the National Commission for Minorities*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2022, from https://minorityaffairs.gov.in/sites/default/files/ncm_act1992.pdf

¹⁵ United Nations. (n.d.). *Minorities*. United Nations. Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/minorities>

¹⁶ *OHCHR and minorities*. OHCHR. (2021, June 22). Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/minorities>

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The establishment of the UNFMI is a significant event in which it allowed direct attention and emphasis of a UN forum to be put directly towards minority rights.¹⁷ While the UN and nations around the world have discussed the matter of minority rights in the past, the UNFMI offers a unique forum in which actual minority representatives of each nation discuss the problems that they face and propose possible solutions.

2008: The founding of Directorate of Minority Welfare

The Directorate of Minority Welfare is a government initiative in India that works for the overall welfare and advancement of minority communities in India.¹⁸ This initiative offers a diverse number of opportunities for minorities, ranging from programs that help these individuals find work, foreign scholarship programs to pursue higher education, and helps in renovating housing in minority communities.

January 2012: UN FIDH Report on the rights of Minorities

In January of 2012, the UN's International Federation of Human Rights drafted a report focusing on the situation of poverty and oppression among minorities in Vietnam. As the report states, Vietnam, despite its efforts to reduce poverty among its 53 ethnic minority groups, is still experiencing the wealth disparity between the Kinh majority and the minorities to be doubling over the past two decades. In addition, the report highlights geographical remoteness and official corruption to be factors that have played into the increasing poverty of minorities as well. The significance of this report is that the problems that are highlighted in this report aren't specific to Vietnam; it is the reality of various nations across the world. Thus, this report is an appropriate resource to refer to in order to learn more about the various factors that contribute to the poverty of minorities in nations.

June 9, 2016 ~ September 9, 2016: Pilav v. Bosnia and Herzegovina

This 2016 court case hosted by the European Court of Human Rights was based on the controversy of politician Ilijaz Pilav claiming that he was not allowed to stand for presidency because he was a Bosniak, a minority group in the Serbian dominated region. In the end, the European Court of

¹⁷ Minorityrights. (2020, November 6). *Discussing education and minority languages at the UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva*. Minority Rights Group. Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://minorityrights.org/2020/01/15/education-languages-un-forum-minority-issues/>

¹⁸ *Government of India*. Ministry of Minority Affairs. (n.d.). Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in/en/acts>

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Human Rights ruled in favor of Pilav and exposed the wrongdoings of the Bosnian authorities.¹⁹ This court case highlights the issue of minorities and their suppression from holding political positions in their nations. As a result, minority groups are less likely to have a representative in the governing power to advocate for their rights, which makes this court case and its results significant.

November 29~30, 2019: UN forum on minority education and minority languages

At Geneva, Switzerland, hundreds of UN representatives representing various nations gathered to discuss the status of education for minorities as well as preservation of minority languages.²⁰ During this forum, many representatives pointed out the lack of quality education minorities and their children are able to receive, as well as the loss of their ethnic language due to factors such as peer pressure (with the majority speaking a different language, minorities are forced to conform). In order to tackle the question at hand, it's important to approach the problem from all perspectives, and this event identified a key factor that drives the poverty and oppression of minorities.

August 10, 2019~May 27, 2021: Congress debates on the question of the NO BAN Act

From 2019 to 2021, the US congress debated on the question of the NO BAN Act. The NO BAN Act, or the proposed United States Law that imposed limitations on the President's authority to restrict immigrants from entering the country, is a vital part of minority rights. While the latest debate has ended in the act being referred to the committee of jurisdiction, because ethnic minorities are commonly made up of immigrants, the act of limiting the power of a leader from barring immigrants is a significant law that should be kept up with.²¹

Position of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies

India

The nation of India is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world, with an estimated 19.3% of its population being individuals from minority groups. However, minorities in India have had to

¹⁹ Echr. (n.d.). *European Court of Human Rights*. HUDOC. Retrieved July 24, 2022, from [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":\["001-163437](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{)

²⁰ Minorityrights. "Discussing Education and Minority Languages at the UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva." Minority Rights Group, November 6, 2020. <https://minorityrights.org/2020/01/15/education-languages-un-forum-minority-issues/>.

²¹ "The No Ban Act (HR 2214: S 1123)." Brennan Center for Justice. Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/no-ban-act-hr-2214-s-1123>.

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deal with a diversity of problems. Specifically, the three most common problems are the problem of identity, security, and equity. Because of the wide variety of culture, religion, history, and backgrounds, minorities often face identity crises that hinder their adjustment with the majority of the population. In addition, as minority communities are composed of a smaller population with less resources, minorities commonly develop a feeling of insecurity about their life and well-being. Finally, minorities are affected by the problem of equity, in which their disparity in access to education and opportunities have contributed to many minorities being stuck in the slums of poverty and oppression.²² In addition, because India's socio-economic fabric is affected by its caste, religion, and other cultural factors, immediate action is much more difficult to enact when compared to that of other countries. However, India has also been one of the most active nations when it comes to making reforms to benefit minority rights. To list just a few from many of India's actions, the Directorate of Minority Welfare works toward the overall welfare of minorities and the advancement of minority communities through opportunities such as helping to find employment, foreign scholarship opportunities, and renovation processes for old houses and infrastructure. To add, India has also extended its Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment to create the Ministry of Minority Affairs that serves a leading role in formulation of overall policy planning, evaluation of regulatory framework, and review of developmental programs. Based on India's multiple reforms and plans, it's evident that India maintains a progressive approach towards solving the oppression of minorities.

United States of America

The United States of America, as one of the biggest countries with a significant immigrant population, is also an ethnically diverse country. As of right now, the US identifies seven key groups as minority groups, including Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders. One of the most sensitive and historical issues of the US has been widespread discrimination and racism among minorities. From the genocides of Native Americans, slavery and segregation, or the Chinese Exclusion Act, minorities in the U.S have been a historically discriminated and oppressed group.²³ In fact, this problem has led to historical trauma and further problems that have contributed to poverty and oppression among these groups. For instance,

²² "3 Main Problems Faced by Minorities in India." Your Article Library, March 25, 2014. <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/3-main-problems-faced-by-minorities-in-india/31418>.

²³ Bureau, U.S. Census. "Inequalities Persist despite Decline in Poverty for All Major Race and Hispanic Origin Groups." Census.gov, December 9, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/poverty-rates-for-blacks-and-hispanics-reached-historic-lows-in-2019.html>.

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despite being in the minority, Latinos and African Americans make up over 40 percent of the U.S.'s poverty rate. In addition, the problem of police brutality and violence against African Americans have sparked active protests such as the BLM movement over the past years, and attacks against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders amid the COVID pandemic has also given rise to the Stop Asian Hate movement as well. However, the U.S has also been the site of drastic measures taken to address these issues, both in the form of civilian action to government reforms. For the instance of civilian action, the notable Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s combatted the segregation and social exclusion of African Americans and other minorities. In addition, similar social movements such as the earlier-mentioned BLM movement and Stop Asian Hate have all played a role in the U.S civilian's fight against oppression and poverty among minorities. For action being taken at the government level, the US government has attempted to address oppression and poverty from many different angles, such as the Economic Opportunity Act that provided financial aid, all the way to the Voting Rights Act that abolished mandatory literacy tests that had prevented many minorities from voting. As one of the leading developed countries with a large minority population, the U.S likely remains to be a significant nation when discussing the forum of addressing poverty and minority among minorities.

Pakistan

Pakistan is also a nation with a high minority population. However, a contrast between Pakistan and the two latter countries is that Pakistan's minorities are closer to religious minorities rather than ethnic minorities. As a result, religious groups such as Christians, Hindus, and other religious groups have dealt with many issues in the Muslim-majority nation. As a recent report shows, minorities in Pakistan often report issues of acquiring citizenships and national identity cards, access to reliable electricity, unemployment, crimes, and disparity in access to educational opportunities.²⁴ The significance of these reported problems is that it also shows that Pakistan minorities' problems are also economic in nature, and many of these problems likely resulted from issues in equality as well. In response to these issues, however, the Pakistan government has shown initiatives to take action. Most notably, the National Commission of Minorities was established in 2020 including ten out of its twelve available sports being reserved for minority representatives from Christian, Sikh, Hindu, and other minority groups. However, given the relatively recent establishment and persisted attacks, there also remains an importance in the judicial aspect as well. In particular, many human rights groups have pointed towards Pakistan's "Blasphemy Law" as needing reform. In this law, it states that any individual that insults Islam (the

²⁴ "Inequality and Discrimination Faced by Religious Minorities in Pakistan." OHRH. Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/inequality-and-discrimination-faced-by-religious-minorities-in-pakistan/>.

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religion of Muslims, the majority) can be punished by death. However, as figures show, minorities are often targets of Blasphemy accusations and even if they do not get punished by the law, it often makes them victims to lynching as well.²⁵ In short, while Pakistan has shown notable progress towards the protection of its minorities' rights, there still remains a significant need for change both on the social and judicial levels to resolve the persecution that religious minorities are facing.

Vietnam

Vietnam holds a fairly similar position as the nations mentioned above: despite a large minority population, Vietnam's minority groups are often faced with discrimination but Vietnam shows a willingness to take action for these groups. With 54 recognized ethnicities, 53 being minorities, Vietnam has the majority of its minorities coming from migrants of neighboring Southeast Asian countries. Despite these minority groups only making up 15% of the population (based on census from 2013), minorities are most affected by poverty, with minorities making up around 70% of the "extreme poor" in the country. Factors behind this poverty, similar to other nations, have been found to be geographical isolation, social exclusion, low education, and limited access to quality land in the agricultural based lifestyles of many migrant workers. Luckily for immigrants, the stance towards addressing these problems has been relatively progressive over the last few years. Most recently, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh signed a support for the policy on reforming the national target program on socio-economic development in ethnic minority areas.²⁶ As part of this policy, to name just a few of the actions, the Ministry of Education will strengthen Vietnamese language teaching classes in schools, as many minorities struggle with a language barrier, the Ministry of Labour plan to issue a program to assist employment consultations for minorities, and the Vietnamese government also plans to release a resolution that will financially support medical staff and buildings in ethnic minority areas. With this new policy being planned all the way up to 2030, additional efforts to address the harmful factors, Vietnam maintains a positive outlook towards fixing the problem of poverty among its minorities.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, along with the U.S, has been a prominent nation with a notable minority population and issues that follow along as well. Minorities in the U.K are affected by social exclusion, discrimination, and poverty. However, a sharp contrast in the issues of U.K minorities have been how

²⁵ Wani, Ayjaz. "Pakistan: Minorities under Imran Khan Govt." ORF. Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/pakistan-minorities-under-imran-khan-govt/>.

²⁶ "Why Is Ethnic Minority Poverty Persistent in Vietnam?" World Bank Blogs. Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/why-ethnic-minority-poverty-persistent-vietnam>.

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disproportionate the minority populations are affected. For example, when considering the difference in median hourly earnings between ethnic groups in the U.K, the white majority do have a higher earning than the majority of minority groups yet two minority groups - the Chinese and Indian- had a higher earning than the white majority. Even more surprisingly, when comparing test scores among ethnic groups, the minority groups all did as well as or even better than their majority counterparts. However, many statistics also point to an inverted pattern, where ethnic minority students are much more likely to drop out of higher education or much higher infant mortality rates. The U.K, similar to other nations, has taken many progressive approaches to address the disparity in education and discrimination problems. However, as a result of some minorities seeming to thrive in their respective nation, this pattern could also fuel prejudices or false beliefs that all minorities must or should be doing as well, when the circumstances and factors that go into this success are unique. Therefore, this ambiguous pattern of minorities in the U.K must also be taken into account when crafting a possible resolution to solve the forum above, as a resolution that is too general could be ineffective for some groups.

Romania

Romania has been a historically homogeneous nation, but over the recent years, areas such as Roma and Transylvania have seen an increase in minority population from Hungary, Ukraine, and Germany. Moreover, the current Romanian President Klaus Iohannis was a German minority who was not only able to win the most recent democratic election, but also someone who found high success in the past as mayor and governor in parts of Romania. However, as studies²⁷ show, many minorities in these areas have also reported high levels of inequality, social exclusion, and prejudice. For instance, a 2014 research showed that around 84% of the population in Roma lacked adequate access to clean water, electricity, and sewage and a 2013 survey revealed that around 48% of those in the Romanian majority did not want a Roma individual as their co-worker. While Romania has shown some action, such as their adoption of the European Commission's Roma Inclusion Strategy, many of these similar actions have also been shown to lack adequate funding and lack regulation methods. However, the current Romanian President Klaus Iohannis was a German minority who was not only able to win the most recent democratic election, but also found high success in the past as mayor and governor in parts of Romania. Romania exemplifies a country showing potential of action, with representation of minorities at the highest government level, but their lack of progress as a result of inadequate funding and monitoring could also be used to consider the importance of these two factors when drafting resolutions as well.

²⁷ "Romania - World Directory of Minorities & Indigenous Peoples." Minority Rights Group, November 17, 2020. <https://minorityrights.org/country/romania/>.

Netherlands

The Netherlands is a nation that has been associated with positive outlooks for minorities, yet recent political changes in the nation tells a different story. Specifically, minorities with a non-Western background, such as Muslim minorities, are often targets of xenophobia. This was also amplified by the rise of extreme conservative parties such as the Party for Freedom, whose leader, Geert Wilders, has threatened the rights of many minority communities and openly expressed opposition to migration. This rise in extreme groups has also had an effect on the general population, where incidents of hate speech and crime targeting ethnic minorities also grew during that time. From 2011 to 2015, the years leading up to the election, recorded cases of hate crime doubled as well.²⁸ In addition, individuals of non-Western backgrounds have also been shown to be four times more likely to be suspected by law enforcement, and employment and education outcomes of non-Western individuals are lower than their Western counterparts. Many social rights groups have pointed out that these disparities correlate to the increasing rates of failure in the compulsory integration test, where it has been found that many minorities have been unable to afford language classes needed to pass this test ever since a mandatory fee for language classes was established in 2013. Concisely, the Netherlands is a nation that shows how large of an influence political sentiment can shift public opinion, particularly negatively, for minorities, and also shows the importance of education when it comes to helping minorities adjust adequately to their new home.

The People's Republic of China

While the constitution of China states that all ethnic groups in China are equal and the government vows to protect the rights and interests of each group,²⁹ the strict censorship and research conducted from various organizations questions China's principle when it comes to minorities. Minorities in China are subject to strict monitoring and their freedom of expression and belief is often violated. For example, thousands of Islam Mosques in China were destroyed, Islam students were forced to attend school on sacred days, and the Chinese government went as far as to post an online instruction that instructed parents to forbid their children from praying, fasting, and studying religion, all activities that have been deemed to be "illegal religious activities." In addition, most recently, satellite images and studies done by various news organizations have revealed China's use of "re-education" camps, in which millions of Uyghur Muslims and other minorities are forcibly detained. According to the reports, inside

²⁸ "Netherlands - World Directory of Minorities & Indigenous Peoples." Minority Rights Group, November 19, 2020. <https://minorityrights.org/country/netherlands/>.

²⁹ National minorities policy and its practice in China. (n.d.). Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/bjzl/t176942.htm>

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these camps, minorities are violated of their human rights, where they are forced into labor, forcibly sterilized to prevent having children of the same ethnicity, and forced to abandon their religion. While many allegations from outside China have come out such as the ones above, it is difficult for minorities inside China to speak out about these issues due to the strict censorship of China.³⁰ Ilham Tohti, an Uyghur economist and human rights activist, was sentenced to life in prison after speaking out about the human right violations that Uyghur Muslims faced in China. As a result, the People's Republic of China has continued to deny these claims as an effort to spread "anti-Chinese" sentiment, and makes it harder for action to be taken. Even with the benefit of the doubt given to China, China's position on the oppression and poverty among minorities does not seem to be that of a positive one, and instead China serves as an example of how important representation and public voice is when considering this issue, as an issue cannot be fixed if the victims are prevented from speaking out in the first place.

Canada

Canada has maintained a progressive and willing position towards addressing the problems that its minorities face. Minorities in Canada are commonly affected by historical trauma where in the past, indigenous people were separated from their families and forced into re-education schools. In addition, violence against Indigenous women has also been an issue, where reports from the No More Movement estimated that indigenous women between the ages of 25 and 44 are five times more likely to be targeted for violence than majority Canadian women. In response, however, Canada has shown significant action. As Canada's report during an OHCHR forum stated,³¹ Canada implemented multiple mechanisms and plans on a federal, provincial, and territorial level to solve issues relating to justice, human rights, health, and other issues that the UN has outlined.

South Korea

Minority populations in South Korea mainly compose of foreign expats, Chinese immigrants, and marriage immigrants most commonly from Southeast Asia. However, as a historically homogeneous society, South Korea has also recognized its need for improvement in a wide variety of ranges. Most notably, South Korea's measures to protect minority rights such as the new Refugee Act and Multicultural

³⁰ *China - World Directory of Minorities & Indigenous Peoples*. Minority Rights Group. (2021, July 28). Retrieved July 24, 2022, from <https://minorityrights.org/country/china/>

³¹ *Canada's response to the Special Rapporteur on Minority issues*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Minorities/SR/FollowCV/ResponseCANADA.pdf>

Family Support Act only apply to registered foreigners.³² Thus, this gap leaves unregistered minorities and their children in a vulnerable position with very little to no access to public services and benefits.

Suggested Solutions

As shown above, multiple nations and international organizations have attempted to solve the issue of oppression and poverty among minorities yet the need for action continues to persist. While there isn't a definitive way or an exact solution to solve this issue overnight, a combination of multiple actions may help.

To start, addressing the problem of social exclusion is an imperative starting process. As a result of social exclusion, there are disparities in opportunities, education, and other services in a nation that could assist minorities towards their strive for a better life. In addition, because social exclusion also impairs the efficient operation of market forces, economic growth is impaired in the process as well, further increasing the wealth inequality gap and worsening the problem of poverty. Therefore, international organizations such as the UN can use its influence to suggest certain actions be taken by governments that are suffering from this problem. One way to do this can be through encouraging these nations' governments to create and regulate policy frameworks that promote social inclusion in ways such as but not limited to ensuring equal benefits from public expenditure, equal social protection, etc. This will ensure that minorities can get equal access to the services and opportunities that could benefit them and lift them out of poverty. Additionally, governments can also expand upon this by creating more opportunities and access to services. As the number of minorities will likely increase with the rising globalization and immigration, creating more opportunities for more people is vital as well. Another source to fixing this situation can also be increased support for NGOs and CSOs(Civil Society Organizations) that aid minorities. These organizations can deliver services that states and governments can't, and prevent prejudices against minorities. However, recognizing the limited funding of NGOs and CSOs, donations can not only help, but action taken mainly from the government level would have a greater impact.³³

³² "South Korea - World Directory of Minorities & Indigenous Peoples." Minority Rights Group, November 17, 2020. <https://minorityrights.org/country/south-korea/>.

³³ Development, Department for International. "Reducing Poverty by Tackling Social Exclusion: A DFID Policy Paper." GSDRC, September 9, 2015. <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/reducing-poverty-by-tackling-social-exclusion-a-dfid-policy-paper/>.

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Another possible solution to aid in solving the problem of poverty among minorities is through increased political participation from minorities themselves. While there has been an increased minority representation in international forums, actual minority representation in the nations they live in is still rare. Accordingly, governments can create initiatives and promotion programs that encourage eligible minorities to vote and participate in local or national elections. Additionally, to respect sovereignty of a nation, investigations on nations with significantly low rates of minority political representation/participation could also be conducted with agreement based on prior discussions during international gatherings (UN conferences, private diplomatic meetings, etc). The reason for this is that in some nations, minorities are openly intimidated or prevented from the government itself from participating in politics. For instance, Bosnian minority politician Ilijaz Pilav was found, from an investigation and trial of the European Court of Human Rights, to be a victim of intimidation and unjust actions from Bosnian authorities who had prevented him from taking part in the election. While the move may be controversial, further investigations such as the one from the European Court of Human Rights may be necessary to prevent further preventions of minorities taking part in politics. With increased political participation and representation from minorities, nations would be able to further understand the main issues that minorities face and would be better able to create beneficial solutions accordingly.

Discrimination is also a factor that cannot be left out when addressing the issue of oppression and poverty among minorities. Discrimination plays a factor in mistreatment of minorities, less likelihood of them being selected for jobs, and incarceration as well. For example, in the United States, the minority group of African Americans have not only reported that they have felt unsafe around law enforcement (60%), but were also hospitalized at a rate 4.5 times higher than their caucasian counterparts as a result of a lack of access to services. Tackling discrimination, however, is more difficult than it sounds. Because discrimination and bias are inherent factors that vary for each individual, it would be better for governments to take general measures that can promote anti-discrimination to the entire population. For instance, governments can be encouraged to implement discrimination discouraging education programs for the youth to prevent discrimination being continued throughout generations, establishing hotlines or other organizations that minorities can report discrimination they suspect, and promote creating comfortable environments in everyday settings like workplaces, schools, etc. Social media can also play a role in tackling discrimination. With technology use at its peak in the status quo, the use of online campaigns and social media can be an effective way to promote anti-discrimination ideals throughout the world and assist minorities in the process.

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Education can also play a vital role as a solution to oppression and poverty among minorities. Often, because minorities are deprived of educational opportunities, they are less likely to pursue education at a higher level and pursue degrees that can help them earn high paying and stable jobs. One way to improve education among minorities can be through the establishment of institutions that focus directly on minority education. Similar to India and its Ministry of Minority Affairs, nations can establish organizations that assist minorities pursue higher education through providing scholarships or overseas studying opportunities. Additionally, nations or educational NGOs could establish a specific guideline of the minimum education one should have access to. With a set standard, it may be easier for minorities to gain access to education as a minimum number of education becomes a legal asset. Further regulations of minority education could also aid by ensuring that minorities are getting access to necessary materials and not facing any unfair treatment from their educators or peers. Educating the general public about the discrimination and other issues that have hindered minorities' chances of a better life can incline the general public to not only abandon prejudices, but also even incline them to take initiatives in helping minorities in ways such as donating to minority causes, taking interest in reforms to help these groups, etc. Because LEDCs may not have the adequate funding for such educational programs listed above, educating the general public to eliminate prejudice from the general eye can assist with preventing oppression and other issues faced by minorities.

Lastly, making direct reforms to target poverty can be an effective solution. More specifically, addressing the causes of poverty can provide a more sustainable method of solution.. Hunger and thirst, for instance, has been found to have a negative effect on poverty. With limited access to clean water and a lack of food, those in poverty are more susceptible to diseases and having a lack of energy or strength to work. Having adequate housing is also imperative when escaping from poverty. With poor infrastructure in minority communities, minorities are exposed to unideal environments that fuels the lack of opportunities and inequalities they face. Therefore, exercised with caution, allocating a certain amount of tax money or funds to rebuilding minority communities and providing them with better housing and facilities can help them. Building upon this, with renovations such as the one mentioned, this process could even assist minority students who are unable to participate in school assignments due to a lack of things like a quiet and clean environment to study, internet access, etc. Lastly, although the financial situation of each nation and the freedom of governments to decide what they want to do with their money should be respected, promoting the use of aid bills can create an immediate effect. With money from the

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aid bills, minorities could use this money to invest in their children's education, buy/rent houses, provide adequate water and food for themselves, and many more services that they need as well.³⁴

The solutions to fix the problem of oppression and poverty among minorities, however, are not limited to just those written above. It must be noted that because the issue at hand is a historical problem that involves so many factors, crafting an effective solution will require time, innovation, and cooperation.

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