



OPOMUN

DARE TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Economic and Social Council - Research Report

The question of discrimination in the labour market on the basis of race, religion, gender and disability



Introduction of topic:

Labour is an important factor of production, which is fundamental for any single productive activity to be started, however certain labour has been discriminated and excluded from the market on social grounds such as race, religion, gender and disability. This deprives their opportunities to an adequate and desired employment, salary, promotion and decision making power.

Excluding vulnerable groups such as the disabled and those with a different religion, from the labour market, just because of their low accessibility of services and distinct cultural indicators, impedes them from catching up with the other groups in society, thus negatively impacting their livelihoods, the livelihoods of their families and children, and putting their children at risk of continuing being excluded. Therefore, dynamic inclusive labour policies must be implemented to ensure that these groups are given the same possibility of entering the labour market as other groups, for them not to be dependent solely on social help and programs, which keeps them vulnerable.

Exclusion from the labour market on the basis of gender, race, religion or disability is a concerning problem around the world. Although there were significant improvements during the last 30-40 years, exclusion still continues to be observed and practiced in several societies around the world. It is therefore imperial for rigorous and honest efforts to be done for its tackling.

Definition of Key Terms:

Factors of production: Factors of production are the inputs that are used in the production of goods or services. Labour is an example of a factor of production. It comprises both the intellectual and physical effort made by human resources, the workers, available in an economy.

Labour market: The labour market refers to the [supply and demand](#) for labour, in which employers and employees interact with each other being the former the ones providing the supply and the latter the demand. Labour market exclusion happens because many of these employers exclude certain types of workers based on their religion, race, gender, disability...

Social exclusion: Social exclusion is defined as discrimination against culturally defined groups. Social exclusion results in some groups being placed at a disadvantage in terms of access to assets and jobs, resulting in poverty and deprivation. They as a group are perceived to be inferior or are disliked by the discriminators.

Discrimination: Discrimination is making a distinction in favour of or against a person. There are two main types of discrimination which occur in the labour market: conscious and unconscious. Conscious discrimination occurs when a firm or employer has decided it wants to hire only a certain type of worker and consciously reject others, whereas unconscious is based on stereotypes or other preprogramming of the employer's attitudes in ways they are often not even aware of.

Background Information:

Labour market exclusion and discrimination of certain groups on the basis of race, religion, gender and disability has been practiced in most societies and part of social, political and economic history of many countries. It takes various dimensions including sexual division of work, discrimination in hiring, placements and promotions and differences in wages and earnings. One example is the case of the Indian labour market where although women constitute almost one half of the population, they only constitute less than one third of the workforce, of which three quarters are in agriculture, a generally low productivity and low income sector, and therefore only a small percentage of women workers are in better paying modern sectors of the Indian economy.

Existence of labour market exclusion and discrimination tends to reduce economic efficiency since it prevents hiring of the best, adversely affecting economic growth, and leads to the perpetuation of inequality and of poverty among discriminated groups. For example, the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market results in a total loss of US\$891 million/year in Bangladesh and of 9.2 billion dirhams (approximately US\$1.1 billion) in Morocco.

The disabled face economic as well as social constraints because most of them who are capable for work, are excluded from the labour market and rely solely on disability benefits, placing them in a vulnerable position. They may be excluded either because of discrimination, or because work places do not accommodate for their special needs. The fact that their special needs are not accommodated in society, be that in public transportation, education, or other services, further restricts and limits their participation in the labour market and their employability, as it results in them being unable of travelling to their workplace and having a restricted participation in the educational system, for instance. As a result, innovative solutions must be created to deal with all these issues.

The main barrier to women's equal participation in the labour market are cultural barriers, including the persistence of informal networks from which women are excluded, unease about women in positions of authority, and the continuation of working cultures in which women are not encouraged or expected to succeed. The disadvantages faced by women in society are noticeable across several areas, however by enhancing women's inclusion in the labour market, the overall empowerment of women is being enhanced, since the equality between sexes in the labour market is still a distant dream.

The notion of discrimination in the labour market includes restrictions on the entry of subordinate groups through selective inclusion and unequal treatment. This conscious discrimination is the reason for the lower workforce participation of these groups, since employers consciously decide that they prefer to employ men rather than women, or natives rather than migrants, despite the latter ones being more experienced or more appropriate for the job than the former ones. This reflects the labour market underrepresentation and exclusion that persists nowadays.

Timeline of Events:

1946: Establishment of the commission on the status of women, as a functional commission of the ECOSOC.

1965: The United Nations Development Programme is created under the jurisdiction of ECOSOC.

2015: The following targets are added as a goal to the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of sex, disability, race or religion;
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value;
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Possible solutions

1. Government intervention: The governments of several countries should evolve an inclusive labour policy at national level. Private sector employment should be under the continuous monitoring by the government to make sure exclusion and discrimination is not practiced, and if there is a sign of so, a provision of penalty and punishment incorporating acts and laws should be enacted and enforced. In addition, the increase in formal employment should be endeavoured because informal employment is very much conducive for the social exclusion and discrimination.
2. Social movements and events: Social movement striving for avoiding and controlling social exclusion and discrimination in the labour market should be developed and made dynamic around the world. The awareness about social exclusion and discrimination should be created and promoted among the employers as well as employees, which will also help in its control.
3. Supporting the excluded: Labour market exclusion increases the risk of social exclusion and poverty, which may be mitigated by generous welfare provisions or reversed by high quality employment and rehabilitation services. A budgetary provision should be made for victims of the social exclusion and discrimination in the labour market of certain countries.