



JMUNESCO'20

GENERAL  
COMMITTEE  
2:  
EDUCATION



**ISSUE:** Resolving the issue of educational discrimination with a focus on minorities.

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### **Introduction:**

Education is a basic human right, but in all regions *minorities* and *indigenous* children fail to reach a quality education and also access to schools. Education is a learning system, which also provides children a better future. There are over 101 million children off school and 776 million adults who are *illiterate*. Unfortunately, the majority of these percentages are from ethnic and religious *minorities*. They cannot receive a proper education because of financial and other reasons like providing school products and the content of the lessons. Generally, *minorities* receive an education, which doesn't include their culture, religion or their mother tongue. The purpose of the Convention Against Discrimination in Education adopted by UNESCO on 14 December 1960 is to prevent racial based discrimination in education and 102 states is a member of this convention.

From a historical perspective, the world went through a great expansion in education over the past two centuries. This can be seen across all quantity measures. Global *literacy* rates have been climbing over the course of the last two centuries, mainly though increasing rates of enrollment in primary education. Secondary and tertiary education has also seen drastic growth, with global average years of schooling being much higher now than a hundred years ago. Despite all these worldwide improvements, some countries have been lagging behind, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, where there are still countries that have *literacy* rates below 50% among the youth. That is why, governments have to notice this issue and solve the educational discrimination, especially the needs of minorities by following these conventions and also their own laws.

### **Definition of key terms:**

Minority: A minority is a small group of people that have a different ethnicity or religion than the whole.

Literate: People who are educated.

Illiterate: People who have some or no education.

Institutional discrimination: Policies or practices created to discriminate minorities, favor the majority, which are unfavorable to the minorities and are implemented into the structure of the society.

Segregating: Separating a group of people or someone from others or from the majority.

Desegregating: Releasing of measure or practice that installs isolation of the members of a race.

Legislation: Using power and function to create rules (such as laws) that are used by an authority such as an official organ of a state or an organization to establish order.

Amendment: It is the process of altering a law.

Fourth Amendment: It is the amendment made to the US constitution to protect people's right to be safe and secure from unnecessary measures and searches. People and their houses and cars can not be searched without legal permission or the search must be brief.

Indigenous people: Natives of a country.

## **Background Information:**

### **Basic Information on the Topic:**

Many children around the world, from Europe to South Asia are unable to receive proper education or any education at all. Discrimination of children based on their ethnicity, religion, gender increases the *illiteracy* rates. Boys who live in the city and are apart of families that are wealthy have a greater chance of having access to quality education than girls who live in rural areas and are apart of poor families. Gender, the region one lives in and economic standards are all factors that determine the education and quality of education of children. However, another factor that plays a part in determining this is, religion and ethnicity. Children who come from ethnic and religious *minorities* tend to receive low-quality education, drop out of school or not go to school at all.

Providing children of *minorities* with the education they deserve starts with the government. Governments do not provide satisfactory education either by violating universal laws or by not recognizing the existence of the *minorities*. For example, Japan does not recognize communities of *minorities* by labeling them as “non-national” communities. For example, the Korean community is not given subsidies and their diplomas do not allow them to enter Japanese universities. States may not have access to statistics that show what proportion of the *illiterate* population is apart of *minorities*. In 2007, China had 87 million *illiterate* adults. 33 million lived in the 10 provinces where the population of *minorities* was high and it was found out that the 5 provinces that had the highest *illiteracy* rates were included in the 10 provinces. We can come to the conclusion that *minorities* make up a large part of the *illiterate* population. Countries refuse to carry out the laws hence violate them. A small portion of national income is spent on constructing proper schools in a satisfactory quantity. The amount of money countries spend on *minorities* is less than the amount they spend on the majority. In Macedonia in 2005, \$468 was spent per Macedonian while \$404 was spent per Albanian students.

Regions, where *minorities* are located, are usually rural, poor areas. Poverty is also another reason why children are not sent to school or have to drop out. Even though there might not be any school fees, buying textbooks, uniforms, etc. can be expensive and hard to afford for some families. These families might also need help with household responsibilities. It is more common for girls to

be prevented from going to school since the boys are given more importance and value and girls might be married at a young age.

Children of *minorities* also face problems at school. Quality of teaching is a factor that does determine all children's ability to learn and understand. However, *minorities* also come across different problems than the majority. They might experience abuse from teachers as well as students. Teachers might *segregate* them from the class by making them sit in the back, giving them a fewer number of textbooks and not answering their questions. Abuse and *segregation* both reduce their ability to learn. Also, lessons are not available in the mother tongue. Before learning their own language well, they are forced to learn in another language. Therefore, children struggle and do not learn as well as the majority. Their chance of completing secondary school reduces. Along with not being taught in their own language, *minorities* are taught lessons that do not include their history and culture.

### **Examples of Discrimination in Education around the World**

Educational discrimination has been an issue for hundreds of years. Girls have been prevented from going to school, disabled people have been unable to find suitable schools, and *minorities* have been unable to receive quality education or any education at all. Educational discrimination against *minorities* around the world has been present in the world ever since racism appeared. *Minorities* have occurred in different periods of history therefore, it is hard to state when educational discrimination against *minorities* and others have started.

For many years the Kurdish language has been banned from the Turkish education system to prevent the Kurdish language from becoming dominant. As the Turkish language and culture was given more importance Kurdish language lost value. While the *illiteracy* rate of the Turkish language decreased to 74.3%, the *illiteracy* rate of Kurdish increased to 94.7% in 1945. Today, in some regions of Turkey students can learn Kurdish if there are enough students that would like to.

Also, in Zimbabwe during the colonial era the Rhodesian Government separated schools as F1 and F2 schools according to race. This is a method of *institutional discrimination*. Mostly white people attended the F1 schools and those who graduated from F1 schools had a greater chance of entering college and university. Less of the academic subjects were taught in the F2 schools, which had a greater population of black people. After 1980 more black people were able to attend university and colleges in Zimbabwe. However, different types of schools were present which

were funded differently by the government. As the amount of funding differed, amount of resources available to students changed.

The United States also used *institutional discrimination* to discriminate black people from white people. It was very common in the 19th century. Financial support for black people is low, therefore admissions are low as education is unaffordable. 79% of the children of families that earn a greater income get bachelor degrees while only 11% of the lower income families' children can do the same. It was after the American Civil Rights Movement that *segregation* against black people was eliminated. *Legislation* established was sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective. With the Milliken V. Bradley case the education system in Michigan and Detroit was modified to *desegregate* African American people. In the case of Regents of the University of California vs. Bakke, the Supreme Court decided that it was illegal for a medical school to determine the number of *minority* schools that will attend after Bakke said that the schools discriminated him because of his race. Another case handled by the Supreme Court is the Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, in which the Supreme Court accepted the fact that public schools were unsuccessful in *desegregation*. Some laws developed have been ineffective in solving the issue because they have been written by a large group of white people, therefore they future the majority. These laws should be identified and changed in order for them to identify both the majority and *minorities*. Some *amendments* have already been made. One of these *amendments* is the *Fourth Amendment*. This *amendment* states that it is illegal for a person or a group of people to discriminate. Even though the *amendment* thought to protect students in the case of Homan Sweatt, he was denied the right to be enrolled in the Law School of the University of Texas by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court also suggested that a new law school was opened for black students. However, the facilities and resources were insufficient. As a result he was given the chance to attend the Law School of the University of Texas. The Law Schools Admission Test (LSAT) used by law schools to choose the students that will be allowed to enroll. However, this test prevents a large population of minorities from attending law school.

It is not only ethnic *minorities* that face discrimination in the education sector. Religious *minorities* are also a victim of discrimination. For example, the religious *minorities* in Pakistan. Muslim make up 95% of Pakistan's population. The *minority* population includes Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Parsis and Sikhs. The study conducted in 2003 states that the government does not protect the rights of the religious minorities. The *minority* groups in Pakistan are oppressed through religion. It is difficult for these *minorities* to access education. Textbooks used in schools include offensive statements against the religious *minorities*. Religious *minorities* are forced to eat at separate tables in public schools where Muslims make up are the majority and they

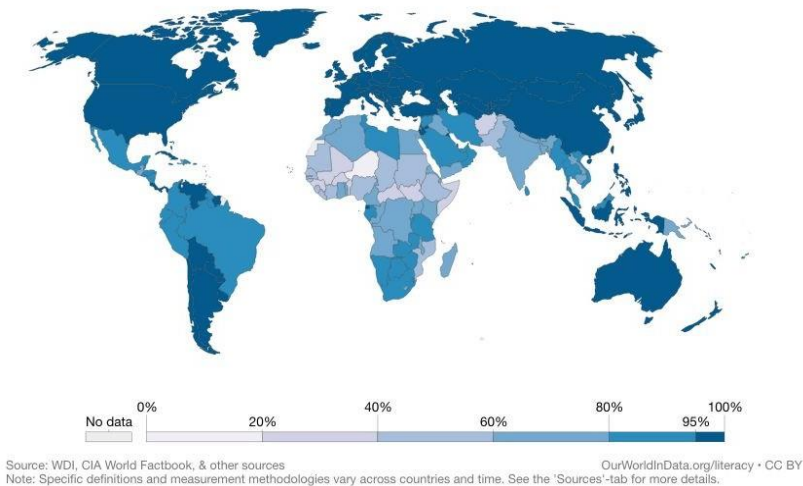
experience discrimination from their teachers. Even though they are not given the same opportunities as the Muslims, the Pakistani government remains voiceless on the issue.

## Maps and Statistics:

### Literacy rate, 2015

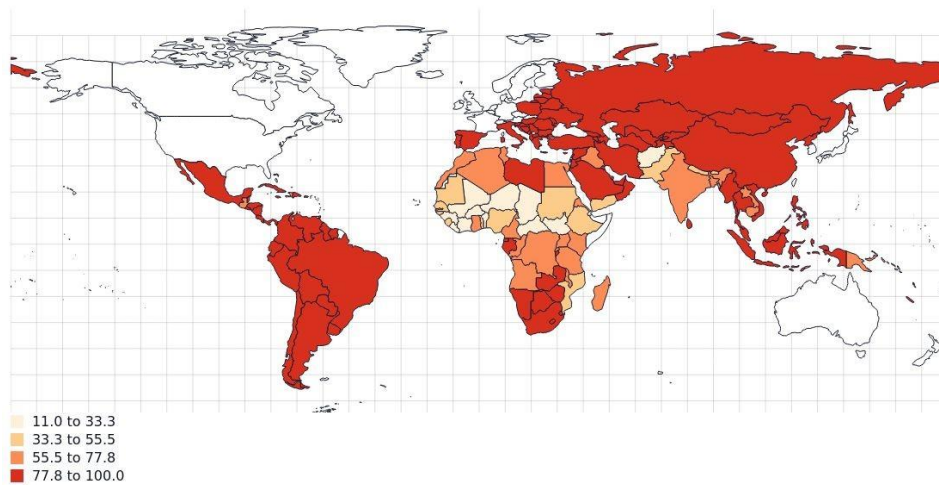
Estimates correspond to the share of the population older than 14 years that is able to read and write.

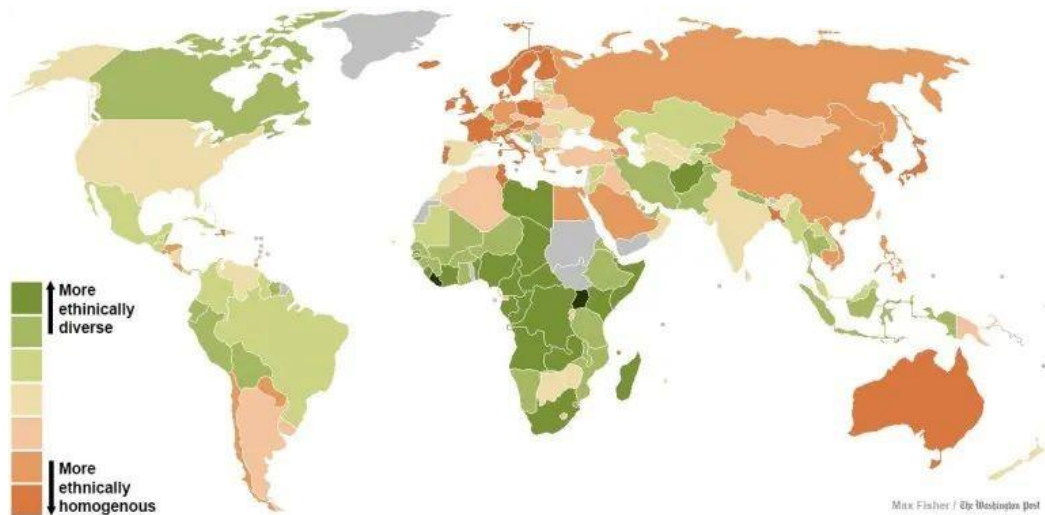
Our World  
in Data



2015

Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)





### **Involved countries and organizations:**

#### **Sub-Saharan Africa and South-West Asia**

According to UNICEF, 101 million children and 53 million girls are off-school especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-West Asia. UNESCO predicts that 29 million children in those countries will still be out of school in 2025.

#### **The Developing Countries:**

The Developing Countries have the largest number of children off-school. For example in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria and in Pakistan, a large percentage of the population is formed by the minorities away from school.



### **Nigeria:**

In Nigeria, 54% of off-school children are Hausas from mostly Muslims at the north side of the country.

### **India:**

Also there is a similar situation like this in India. In India, approximately, 41% of children off-school are from Dalits ( known as untouchables ) or from the Adivasis. According to the counting made by the Indian Government in 2001, 300 million Indian is illiterate and 60% of these people are from *minorities*.

### **Timeline of events:**

These are some of the past conventions or actions which are done by UNESCO and other establishment:

#### **Past Conventions And Actions:**

Convention Against Discrimination in Education (14 December 1960)	This convention tries to prevent racial based and religious discrimination on education.
Protocol Instituting a Conciliation and Good Offices Commission (10 December 1962)	The General Conference (UNESCO) adopted this protocol in order to facilitate the implementation of the Convention. The aim is to find possible solutions and possible recommendations.

### **Previous attempts to solve the issue:**

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been proclaimed United Nations. It protects people from any kind of abuse and

their rights with the establishment of laws. People are allowed to seek a safe place and to receive *education*. They have specific rights at every period in life. For example, children have the right to play. During adulthood people are allowed to marry and divorce. After divorce, according to the declaration, men and women have equal rights. The declaration has significantly influenced the development of human rights laws around the world and their application.

**Convention against discrimination in education (1960):** The convention states that education should be accessible to all students without discriminating them based on ethnicity, religion, sex, etc. Along with being accessible the quality of education should remain the same. The quality and number of resources should not change from student to student. Teachers should not treat students differently based on the factors stated above. The acceptance or awarding of a scholarship should not depend on the same factors. Finally, education should be directed to develop the personality of students and their understanding of human rights. This convention did help solve discrimination in education by determining the aspects states need to pay attention in the act of eliminating discrimination. However, discrimination in education still continues. The convention is still disregarded by many states.

**Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, CEDAW (1979):** The convention protects the human rights of women and draws attention to the areas in which women are denied equality with men. It ensures legal protection of the rights of women through *legislation*. Article 5 of Part 1 states that states should take action to alter the social patterns and rules in society so that women have equality with men, since society and the culture of the society has a great role in destroying or establishing the equality of women with men. The convention also ensured equal rights in other areas such as politics, *education*, employment, and social life (family and marriage). This convention has made the areas states should focus on while solving the discrimination against women however, many states do not act accordingly. It has helped women to fight for their rights but, many states are inefficient in exercising the convention.

### **Possible solutions**

- Providing high quality education for all minorities through the laws, policies and rules.
- Informing governments about the discrimination against *minorities*.
- Instructing and directing any kind of educators about how to handle this situation.
- Receiving support from institutions such as UNICEF and NGO's in a case of discrimination.
- Creating support hotlines in order to provide minorities any kind of backing.
- Sustainability of the previous attempts to solve this problem.

### **Useful links:**

- <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-education-system-discriminates-against-ethnic-religious-minorities-report-89257>
- [https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015\\_MDG\\_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf)
- <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/19/millions-indian-children-are-being-denied-school-education-due-discrimination>
- <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>
- <http://www.minorityvoices.org/news.php/en/1598/bangladesh-education-on-human-rights-for-minority-groups>

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- PopulationPyramid.net, Dec. 2019, <https://www.populationpyramid.net/hnp/literacy-rate-adult-female-of-females-ages-15-and-above/2015/>.
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