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Community – University Institute for Social Research

*Influencing Poverty Reduction Policy
Through Research Evidence:
Immigrant Women's Experience
in Saskatoon*

June, 2003



Building Healthy Sustainable Communities

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ABSTRACT

In the fall of 2001, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan (IWS), Saskatoon chapter, began a research project about immigrant women and poverty using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This report, one element of a greater IWS project, presents an analysis of the data. The quantitative data were collected from 200 immigrant women in Saskatoon and covers demographic, immigration, employment, and financial information, as well as further data from open-ended items. The qualitative data are from interviews with 40 women out of the larger sample of 200. These interviews covered general experiences of life in Saskatoon and produced four themes: racism and social rejection; employment issues; social issues; and participants' suggestions to improve their situations. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data highlight difficulties faced by immigrant women and suggest approaches that may assist their successful integration into the community.

INTRODUCTION

In fall of 2001, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan (IWS), Saskatoon Chapter, initiated a research project to investigate barriers experienced by immigrant women in Saskatoon that hinder their successful economic and social integration into the community. Researcher Ifeoma Bridget Anene developed both quantitative and qualitative tools to explore these experiences, particularly on the issue of poverty. IWS approached the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) to arrange and support an intern to analyze the collected data and prepare a report. The present report culminates ten weeks of examination of information provided by two hundred women who completed questionnaires, and the subsequent interviews with forty of those two hundred.

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were collected through a forty-three item questionnaire completed by two hundred immigrant and refugee women in Saskatoon. Variables derived from the questionnaire are grouped into four main categories: demographic information; immigration information; employment and financial information; and information from open-ended questions. These open-ended questions, asked toward the end of the questionnaire, covered participants' experiences living in Saskatoon, hopes for government actions

to improve their socio-economic situation, and personal plans to improve their own economic situation.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Variables that comprised the demographic information category included participants’ age range, marital status, number of children, and educational background. In terms of age range, 41.3% of 199 participants who answered the question fell into the 31-40 years range. The second most frequent age range was 26-30 years (25.0%). Those between 41 and 50 years made up 20.4% of those who answered. Participants between the ages of 18 and 25 comprised 5.1%, while participants aged 51-60 and 61-70 accounted for 6.6% and 1.5%, respectively, of those who responded.

Regarding marital status, participants were asked to indicate whether they were married, divorced, separated, single, or widowed. Of 197 participants who responded to this item, 164 (83.2%) indicated that they were married, 4 (2.0%) were divorced, 4 (2.0%) were separated, 21 (10.7%) were single, and 4 (2.0%) indicated that they were widowed.

Of 189 participants who answered the question regarding family size, 39 (20.6%) indicated that they had no children, 48 (25.4%) had one child, 45 (23.8%) had two children, 35 (18.5%) had three children, and 22 (11.7%) stated that they had four or more children.

The final variable included in the demographic information category was educational background. This item asked participants to indicate their level of education from one of the following categories: No Education; Elementary Education; Some High School; High School Certificate; Some College Education; Bachelor Degree; Post Graduate Degree; Doctorate Degree; or Any Other. As no participants reported No Education or Any Other, these categories were excluded from the analysis. Elementary Education and Doctorate Degree had low response rates—3 and 7 respondents, respectively, out of 197—so these were combined with other categories when the educational background variable was collapsed. As **Table 1** demonstrates, Elementary Education was combined with Some High School to create Less Than High School Certificate, while Doctorate Degree was combined with Post Graduate Degree, becoming Post Graduate Degrees.

Table 1. Educational Background (N=197)

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less Than High School Diploma	21	10.7%	10.7%
High School Diploma	26	13.2%	23.9%
Some College	47	23.9%	47.7%
Bachelor Degree	67	34.0%	81.7%
Post Graduate Degrees	36	18.3%	100%*
Total	197	100%*	

*Error due to rounding

The 197 immigrant women who provided a response to this question had relatively high levels of educational attainment, with more than half (103, or 52.3%) possessing a Bachelor Degree or higher.

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

The first question asked participants the year that they came to Canada. The range of responses fell between 1959 and 2001. Interestingly, between 1959 and 1997, inclusive, only 51.3% (102) of 199 participants came to Canada (see **Table 2**). Although response frequency was originally recorded on a year by year basis (29 categories) responses were collapsed into multiple year periods for the sake of clarity and brevity. A considerable number came to Canada relatively recently. As **Table 2** shows, 48.7% (97) of participants came to Canada during the four-year period between 1998 and 2001. Participants were also asked what year they came to Saskatoon. Again, while responses were initially recorded on a year by year basis (27 categories), the results were collapsed into multiple year periods for clarity and brevity's sake (see **Table 3**).

Table 2. Year participants came to Canada (N=199)

Years*	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1959-1969	5	2.5%	2.5%
1970-1976	12	6.0%	8.5%
1980-1985	10	5.0%	13.6%
1988-1992	25	12.6%	26.1%
1993-1997	50	25.1%	51.3%
1998-2001	97	48.7%	100%**
Total	199	100%**	

*Omitted years are those not indicated by participants

**Error due to rounding

Table 3. Year participants came to Saskatoon (N=180)

Years*	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1959-1973	3	1.7%	1.7%
1975-1980	6	3.3%	5.0%
1981-1984	9	5.0%	10.0%
1985-1989	7	3.9%	13.9%
1990-1993	14	7.8%	21.7%
1994-1997	40	22.2%	43.9%
1998-2001	101	56.1%	100%
Total	180	100%	

*Omitted years are those not indicated by participants

As **Table 3** suggests, participants also came to Saskatoon relatively recently. Of the 180 participants who responded, 101 (56.1%) indicated that they came to Saskatoon during the four-year period between 1998 and 2001. Comparison of the two tables implies a short lag-time between participants' arrival in Canada and relocation to Saskatoon.

Other questions regarding immigration information included participants' reasons for relocating to Saskatoon and current citizenship status. Specifically, participants

were asked the open-ended question, “Why did you decide to come to Saskatoon?” Their responses were categorized during analysis. When participants provided more than one answer, it was their first response that was recorded. Of the 184 immigrant women who answered, 88 (47.8%) indicated that they came to Saskatoon because of their spouse or their spouse’s opportunities, such as employment or university admission. The second most frequent response (24, or 13.0%) was that government or immigration authorities decided or recommended their relocation to Saskatoon. Other categories included: “relatives other than spouse” (10.9%); “employment” (8.2%); “education” (6.5%); “by chance/visiting” (4.3%); “city’s attributes” (4.3%); “friends” (3.8%); and “health” and “sponsor” (both at 0.5%). Participants were also requested to indicate whether they were presently a “Canadian citizen,” “independent immigrant,” “sponsored immigrant,” or “refugee.” Of the 192 participants who answered, 71 (37.0%) indicated that they were Canadian citizens, 77 (40.1%) were independent immigrants, 30 (15.6%) were sponsored immigrants, and 14 (7.3%) said that they were refugees.

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Because this project focuses on poverty, many of the survey questions dealt with employment status and other information connected to financial matters. Participants were asked if they had been working in their respective countries of origin before coming to Canada. Of 190 participants who provided a response, 155 (81.6%) indicated that they had been employed, while the remainder said that they had not. The questionnaire also asked about the work in which participants engaged in their country of origin. While the range of responses (28 categories) precludes listing all categories of work mentioned, the most frequent responses provided by 164 participants who answered were “teacher/librarian” (15.2%), “secretary/office work/reception” (15.2%), and “research (market/scientific)” (7.9%). Participants were also asked an open-ended question regarding how long they had been working before coming to Canada. The range of responses ran from “less than a year” to “more than 20 years.” These responses were collapsed for the sake of brevity and clarity. Of 149 participants who answered the question, 16.1% had worked for 2 years or less, 39.6% between 3 and 6 years, 24.2% between 7 and 10 years, and 20.1% had worked for more than 10 years.

Next, participants were asked about their work experience and history in Canada. Specifically, participants were asked, “Are you working now in Saskatoon?” Of 196 participants who provided a response, 123 (62.8%) indicated “yes,” while 73 (37.2%) reported “no.” Participants were also asked if they owned their own business. Of 182 participants who responded, 16 (8.8%) stated that they owned their own business, while 166 (91.2%) said that they did not. Participants were then asked, “What work are you doing?” Again, the range of responses is significant, with 22 categories of employment provided by 120 respondents. The most frequent responses included: “childcare/caregiver/healthcare worker/community worker” (26.7%); “secretary/office work/

reception” (13.3%); and “customer service/retail service” (11.7%).

Most of the 122 participants who answered the question reported that they worked full-time (57.4%), while 34.4% said that they worked part-time, and 8.2% worked casual hours. Participants were also asked, “Approximately how many hours do you work each week?” **Table 4** presents the results.

Table 4. Hours of (paid) work per week (N=116)

Hours per week	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Various	6	5.2%	5.2%
1-10	12	10.3%	15.5%
11-20	13	11.2%	26.7%
21-30	19	16.4%	43.1%
31-40	51	44.0%	87.1%
41-50	12	10.3%	97.4%
More than 50	3	2.6%	100%
Total	116	100%	

Most (44.0%) of the 116 respondents indicated that they worked between 31 and 40 hours per week. The second most frequent response was 21-30 hours (16.4%).

Next, participants were requested to indicate their annual income. Of 120 participants who responded, 19.2% indicated an annual income of \$5,000-9,000, 40.8% said \$10,000-20,000, 27.5% stated \$21,000-30,000, 4.2% reported \$31,000-40,000, 4.2% said \$41,000-50,000, 2.5% stated \$51,000-60,000, and 1.7% of respondents indicated an annual income of \$61,000-75,000. Participants were also asked about income source, and were provided with the following response categories: “Through money saved before coming to Saskatoon;” “Through money saved while here in Saskatoon;” “Through your current income;” “Through your assets;” “Through your investments;” “Through social assistance;” and “Through help from people/organization (Please specify).” In the response analysis, this last category grew into four additional categories. Consequently, the responses provided by 200 participants were as follows: 15.5% indicated money saved before coming to Saskatoon; 9.0% reported money saved while in Saskatoon; 56.0% stated current income; 3.5% said assets; 2.0% said investments; 4.5% reported social assistance; 8.0% mentioned their own or spouse’s scholarships or student loans; 2.5% said the Provincial Training Allowance; 1.5% reported government support; and 22.0% specified husband’s income or spousal support. Finally, participants were asked if they had money left at the end of the month after purchasing necessities. Of 187 respondents, 41.7% indicated that they did, while 58.3% said that they did not have extra money at the end of the month.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION INFORMATION

The first open-ended question that participants were asked was, “What do you have to say about your experience of life in Saskatoon?” Answers to this question were quite diverse. To facilitate analysis, answers were first categorized as “generally positive,”

“generally negative,” or “ambivalent/it’s okay.” In order to be classified as “generally positive,” the participant’s response had to specifically mention something positive, whether an attribute of the city or success in finding employment in their field, while not mentioning anything negative. To be categorized as “generally negative,” a response had to mention something negative, such as displeasure with winter weather or difficulty in securing employment, while not mentioning anything positive. An answer was classified as “ambivalent/it’s okay” if the participant mentioned both positive and negative elements or stated “it’s okay” or a similar phrase. One hundred and seventy-nine participants provided a response to this first open-ended question. Of those responses, 24.6% (44) were generally positive, 31.5% (63) were generally negative, and 40.2% were ambivalent or used the phrase “it’s okay” or something similar.

Next, each one of the above three general categories were analyzed for specific positive and negative elements. In terms of positive elements, responses included: 40 (22.4%) participants mentioned a city attribute(s); 29 (16.2%) mentioned a population attribute(s); 6 (3.4%) mentioned friends and/or community connections; 5 (2.8%) participants listed the relatively low cost of living; 3 (1.7%) mentioned finding employment in their field; and 1 participant (0.6%) mentioned increased economic freedom. Regarding negative elements, participants mentioned, in descending order: “limited job opportunities/low-status/low pay” (N=67; 37.4%); “racism/discrimination” (N=31; 17.3%); “winter weather” (N=28; 15.6%); “non-recognition of credentials and/or experience” (N=19; 10.6%); “language barriers/difficulties” (N=10; 5.6%); “difficulty immediately following migration” (N=10; 5.6%); “depression/stress/isolation/loneliness” (N=9; 5.0%); “lower standard of living than in country of origin” (N=5; 2.8%); “high taxes” (N=5; 2.8%); “lack of affordable childcare” (N=3; 1.7%); “lack of leisure time” (N=3; 1.7%); and “lack of affordable housing” (N=1; 0.6%).

The second open-ended question was, “What changes or actions would you like the Saskatchewan government to take which you believe would help to improve your socio-economic situation?” To analyze this question, participants’ responses were reviewed and developed into 14 categories. Participants who responded were put in the “mentioned” category, while those who provided no response were recorded as “not mentioned.” Two hundred participants indicated that they wanted the provincial government to focus on: “job creation,” (N=48; 24%); reconstructing/reviewing or creating a system for recognizing credentials and experience (N=31; 15.5%); expanding English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, education, and training opportunities (N=22; 11.0%); “assistance in job acquisition” (N=20, 10.0%); “reduction in taxes/expansion of tax benefits” (N=19; 9.5%); “integration programs” (N=12; 6.0%); “anti-racism” and “awareness programs for Canadians” (N=12; 6.0%); “expansion of services for immigrant and refugee women” (N=9; 4.5%); “more and affordable childcare” (N=8; 4.0%); “pay equity”/ “livable wages”/ “benefits for part-time work” (N=8; 4.0%); “better assistance and opportunities for students” (N=8; 4.0%); “more and affordable housing/

expansion of bus service” (N=2; 1.0%); creation of “immigrant women business start-up fund” (N=2; 1.0%); and “better management of the tax base” (N=1; 0.5%).

The final open-ended question requested that participants share any personal plans to improve their economic situation. Again, participants provided a number of responses, which were developed into 17 categories. The response categories and frequency are presented in **Table 5**. As **Table 5** shows, participants most often mentioned furthering their education (35.5%), finding a job (23.0%), and finding a better job or obtaining a promotion (11.5%) as avenues to improving their economic situation.

Table 5. Personal plans to improve economic condition (N within each category=200)

Category of Response	Frequency of participants who mentioned	Frequency of participants who did not mention
Further education (Canadian)	71 (35.5%)	129 (64.5%)
Find a job	46 (23.0%)	154 (77.0%)
Find better job/get a promotion	23 (11.5%)	177 (88.5%)
Retain job/keep working hard	15 (7.5%)	185 (92.5%)
Open/run a business	15 (7.5%)	185 (92.5%)
More job/vocational training	12 (6.0%)	188 (94.0%)
Increase/improve English skills	8 (4.0%)	192 (96.0%)
Expand professionally	7 (3.5%)	193 (96.5%)
Complete qualifying exams/licensing	6 (3.0%)	194 (97.0%)
Keep saving/money management	4 (2.0%)	196 (98.0%)
Gain Canadian experience/volunteer	3 (1.5%)	197 (98.5%)
Change careers	2 (1.0%)	198 (99.0%)
Expressions of hopelessness/frustration	2 (1.0%)	198 (99.0%)
Move	2 (1.0%)	198 (99.0%)
Pay off mortgage	1 (0.5%)	199 (99.5%)
Pay off government loans	1 (0.5%)	199 (99.5%)
Pay off student loans	1 (0.5%)	199 (99.5%)

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data were gathered through interviews with forty immigrant women in Saskatoon. Of these, thirty-two provided responses to requests to share their general

experiences of life in Saskatoon since their arrival. From this general question, certain themes emerged out of participants' responses. These themes included: "Racism and Social Rejection," "Employment Issues," "Social Issues," and "Participants' Suggestions." Some responses, however, were indicative of reluctance to disclose particular information. Not only were there possible cultural influences impacting responses, non-responses, and response type and quality, but also, as relatively new members of Canadian society, participants may have been disinclined to speak out about or criticize Canada. As one participant stated, "I'm so afraid to talk about Canada ... I don't hate this country. It's a very good country. We are free here, but somehow we are not free." Regardless of reluctance, though, participants generously shared their stories and provided valuable information useful in exploring and understanding the above themes.

RACISM AND SOCIAL REJECTION

While racism, social rejection, and other forms of discrimination occur subtly in all aspects of their lives, participants shared instances of overt racism. One participant related an experience while using the Saskatoon transit system. She recognized differential treatment on the part of a bus driver who helped a white woman with a baby stroller onto the bus, but then failed to provide assistance with her own stroller. Additionally, this bus driver neglected to advise her of her stop, despite her requesting his assistance with this information. Other participants mentioned barriers that seemed to exist between Canadians and immigrants, even though, they said, Canadians seemed polite and friendly on the surface. A number of people mentioned that they had no Canadian friends, even after living in this country, or Saskatoon in particular, for a number of years. One participant specifically stated that most of her social contacts were other immigrants and that it was difficult to get to know Canadian people.

Also of particular concern, however, were instances of overt racism connected to employment and the workplace. One woman disclosed mistreatment in the workplace and felt that her colleagues "watch over" her "shoulder." Additionally, she stated, "[P]eople think you're dirty because you're from South America." Another participant shared her experience applying for paid positions with childcare centres in a community organization after having performed volunteer work in that capacity. She was told that she could not be hired because children would not be able to understand her accent. It was unclear why her accent was acceptable as a volunteer but not in a paid position. Another clear and overt example involved a participant trying to find employment. This participant was trying to find a practical placement to complete requirements to become a certified public accountant. She was told by one company director that she was not given an interview because the company would lose customers if they were to see black personnel. Additionally, while at a community organization's workshop on constructing a resume, one coordinator told her "the truth": this coordinator had "never seen any

black person working in an office and why can't I just look into cleaning hotels, like the Bessborough."

While racism, social rejection, and discrimination negatively impacted immigrants' experiences, the impact on their ability to earn a decent living was of particular concern. When people are denied employment and opportunity to compete fairly in the labour market, they are more likely to have a lower living standard and live in poverty. The examples of racism in the workplace provided by participants are clear and overt incidences of unfair practices, but many raised other employment issues, often involving more discrete discrimination.

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Many participants mentioned difficulty in finding employment. Often, employers did not accept the educational qualifications and work experience from applicants' countries of origin. Participants frequently mentioned non-recognition of credentials and experience as considerable obstacles to securing employment. Covert racism may be a factor in this non-recognition. Employers seemed to assume that Canadian employment was structured in a manner unrecognizable and unfamiliar to employees from other countries. As one participant stated:

They hire high school students who have no experience at all, yet I had worked in a library in my country of origin for a year. I had experience, but it was not recognized because I wasn't Canadian. They openly told me in a particular branch of the library, "I don't think I can accept you in this library, but you can try the others." I felt so bad. Finally, I got a job at Sears.

This assumption that foreign experiences and credentials cannot translate into the Canadian workplace is unfair and allows for racism's influence. The possibility that racism influences decisions regarding immigrants' qualifications and experiences was indicated in information shared by one participant in particular. While this woman originated from an African country, she completed a Master's degree in Australia. However, her degree had been "downgraded" in regards to recognition of her qualifications in Canada. This is particularly disturbing as Canada and Australia's education systems are considered comparable.

Besides the explanation that their experiences and credentials are incompatible with the Canadian workplace, participants reported denial of employment in other ways. Participants reported submitting numerous resumes without ever receiving any response. They had also been rejected for employment on the grounds that they were overqualified. Other rejections seem influenced by covert racism. One participant shared an experience of applying in person for a dishwashing job at the same time as a young white male. While she was told that they would contact her, the young white male was invited

to stay and speak with the head cook. Another participant disclosed applying in person for a newly advertised job. As requested, she submitted her resume, but, returning moments later because she forgot something, noticed her resume in the trash.

In order to improve their employment chances, participants mentioned registering with professional bodies, writing professional examinations, and volunteering to gain “Canadian experience.” In many cases, participants felt that registration and writing examinations were a long and expensive process that required them to “start all over again.” While some participants regarded the notion that immigrants should prove their credentials, qualifications, and abilities as reasonable, they interpreted the process, as it exists, as inefficient and unfair. Many participants also referred to engaging in volunteer work, but were unable to find paid employment. Taking a volunteer position was meant to assist in obtaining paid employment—and some mentioned that their husbands were able to obtain a paid position after a period of volunteering—but participants who referenced volunteering their services had only been able to find unpaid positions.

According to participants, when immigrants obtained paid employment, they were often in low-status, low-paying positions. As one participant suggested, immigrant women often came to Canada because they were accompanying their husbands and ended up “cleaning hotels, restaurants, and nursing homes.” If immigrant women were able to find employment outside low-status, low-paying occupations, it was often engaged in contract work, as opposed to “good determinate positions.” When people are unable to obtain steady, full-time employment, they are more likely to have a lower standard of living and live in poverty. As one participant stated:

I think wages are so low, it doesn't matter how much you work, you don't get enough. It's not because we are lazy, or don't want work here. We work. Everybody works and we don't choose work places, we just work. We are usually cleaners, and the lowest position of everything is for us. We don't complain. We are only tired of it and we don't have enough.

Some participants also mentioned the difficulty in starting their own business. Immigrant women did not have access to information, resources, and financing necessary for starting a business.

SOCIAL ISSUES

When speaking about their quality of life in Saskatoon, some participants specifically mentioned the significant difficulty they experienced immediately after relocation. They referred to problems with adjustment, stress, loneliness, and depression. In particular, references were made to issues connected with refugee and migration experiences, which can be considerably traumatic and not generally understood by most Canadians. Some participants also indicated feelings of powerlessness and felt that complaining about

their difficulties was “pointless” because of this perceived powerlessness.

In terms of more specific social issues, participants mentioned family issues and access to related resources. According to participants who provided qualitative data, lack of available and affordable childcare impacted on their quality of life. One participant decided against accepting a job paying \$9.00 per hour because the cost of childcare was \$12.00 per hour. Additionally, some participants noted problems associated with immigrant women’s financial dependency on their husbands. As indicated by the quantitative data, it was relatively common for women to relocate to Saskatoon because of their spouse’s opportunities. This situation may place immigrant women in a more vulnerable position regarding employment and other factors influencing their independence. One woman, unable to find employment, wondered, “[W]hat would’ve happened to us? What would’ve happened to our children” if not for her husband’s income. This leaves women and children at greater risk of poverty, violence, and other associated social problems.

Not surprisingly, participants mentioned a number of social resources and lack of access to them during their interviews. Many women identified knowledge and eligibility as particular concerns in terms of access to resources. Because immigrant women may have been in a more vulnerable position—not only because of their personal situation but also because they are new to the community—many felt that they did not have enough information about social resources’ existence and availability. Moreover, when resources did exist, immigrant women may have found themselves ineligible for access because they were not yet citizens of the country or have not lived in the area long enough. Along with knowledge and eligibility, participants expressed concern about social service organizations’ responsiveness. Specifically, some expressed frustration with certain organizations’ failure to return “official messages” left by participants. One woman was especially frustrated that a worker did not return her message requesting assistance with an emergency situation. The specific resources to which participants expressed need for knowledge and access included appropriate and adequate ESL training, job training, social services, and social integration programs.

PARTICIPANTS’ SUGGESTIONS

Participants did not simply discuss dealing with problems, but also provided suggestions regarding how these problems could be addressed. As a response to racism, participants suggested that Canadians and, specifically, Canadian employers should be provided with anti-racism and anti-discrimination programs to assist them in understanding the perspectives of people from different cultures, societies, and races. Addressing racism may improve relations amongst Saskatoon’s diverse populations, and lead to increased employment opportunities for immigrants. Other suggestions to improve immigrant women’s employment situation included: a review of the employment system inclusive of, and responsive to, immigrant perspectives and

experiences; recognition of immigrants' credentials, experience, and qualifications; increased job creation and training; increased education opportunities; and creation of business opportunities and start-up programs for immigrant women. In terms of social issues, participants suggested a number of ideas to improve their standard of living. These included: establishment of a support centre and mental health services for immigrants; adequate time and resources to assist immigrants to adjust to their new environment; creation of more affordable daycare; a system to disseminate resource information to immigrants (especially immigrant women); and improved ESL training.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considered together, the qualitative and quantitative data provided by immigrant and refugee women in Saskatoon implied some of the difficulties faced by participants, as well as approaches that may improve their socio-economic situations. As indicated by the quantitative data, most participants in this project came to Saskatoon relatively recently. Of the 180 participants who responded to this question, 56.1% came in the four-year period between 1998 and 2001 inclusive. Because relocation occurred relatively recently, one must wonder how prepared both Saskatoon and Saskatchewan have been to accept and welcome these new citizens. In terms of successful immigration, it is necessary for the "host society" to ensure that "full rights and opportunities" are provided to immigrants (Frideres, 1999, p. 90).

As a group, the 200 participants were relatively young, educated, and experienced in the workforce. Roughly two-thirds of 199 participants who responded to the question were between the ages of 26 and 40 inclusive. Further, 52.3% of 197 participants who answered had at least a Bachelor's degree, and 81.6% of 190 participants who responded were employed in their countries of origin. Regardless of these factors, however, only 62.8% of the sample (N=196) were working in Saskatoon at the time of data collection. Moreover, there seemed to be disparity between types of employment in which participants were engaged in Saskatoon. In their countries of origin, participants were most often employed as teachers or librarians (15.2%), secretaries, receptionists, or office workers (15.2%), and market or scientific researchers (7.9%). The types of work in which participants were engaged in Saskatoon seemed more concentrated and typically involved work that was lower in status and in pay. For example, 26.7% of participants were working in Saskatoon as childcare providers, caregivers, and low-skilled healthcare workers compared to 6.1% who performed such duties in their countries of origin. Participants were also more frequently engaged in housekeeping and food service in Saskatoon (6.7% and 8.3% respectively) than in their countries of origin (1.2% for both occupations). A majority (58.3%) of participants also reported having no money left at the end of the month after purchasing necessities. The negative elements of their experiences in Saskatoon mentioned most often were lack of job

opportunities, including low status and low paying positions (37.4%), racism and discrimination (17.3%), and non-recognition of credentials and experience (10.6%). These findings were verified by qualitative interviews in which participants disclosed difficulties finding employment, having their credentials and experience recognized, and with racism and discrimination impacting not only their overall life experience but also their ability to secure decent employment.

In addition to employment and financial concerns, participants also commented on social issues that affected their quality of life. According to the quantitative data, many of those surveyed (60.8% of 184) did not choose to relocate to Saskatoon. Moreover, 47.8% specifically stated that they moved to Saskatoon because of their spouse or their spouse's opportunities. This possible indication of diminished personal control was reiterated by some who provided qualitative data regarding dependency upon their husbands. These situations, combined with the economic and employment difficulties, suggest a need for resources specifically designed for, and accessible to, immigrant women. The qualitative data also highlighted a lack of affordable childcare, but the quantitative data did not provide substantial support for this position. Of 189 participants, 79.3% had at least one child, yet only 1.7% of the participants mentioned childcare concerns, while only 4.0% mentioned creation of affordable childcare as a desired focus of government attention. However, these figures were likely not an accurate assessment of childcare's importance to participants because the questionnaire focused on poverty, and the onus was on participants to mention issues of personal importance, such as childcare, in their responses to open-ended questions. Besides childcare and dependency on spouses, the qualitative and quantitative data referred to difficulties immediately following migration, depression and other emotional/mental health concerns, and lack of access to resources, especially ESL training.

Concerns expressed by participants through the quantitative and qualitative data were emphasized again in their suggestions of how these difficulties should be addressed. In regards to specific employment issues, participants expressed a desire for job creation (24.0%); recognition of credentials and experience (15.5%); expansion of ESL and other training opportunities (11.0%); establishment of integration programs and immigrant inclusion in policy reform (6.0%); and expansion of services for immigrant women (4.5%). Six percent of participants indicated, in both qualitative and quantitative data, that anti-racism and anti-discrimination programs should be implemented for Canadians, particularly employers. Additionally, quantitative results further support a need to address socio-economic issues facing immigrant women in Saskatoon. The most frequent responses participants gave to this question were furthering their education (35.5%); finding a job (23.0%); and finding a better job or obtaining a promotion (11.5%). In order for participants to access these avenues to improve their situations, there must be attention focused on eliminating racism, recognizing immigrants' credentials and experience, expanding integration programs and resources to assist immigrants in

adjusting to the community, particularly immediately following relocation, and expanding ESL and educational opportunities and access for immigrants.

Poverty is a complex issue that is significantly impacted by a variety of social and economic factors. It is therefore necessary to approach poverty and standard of living for immigrant women in numerous ways. Through analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data provided by 200 immigrant women in Saskatoon, a number of recommendations seem especially pertinent. Resources available to immigrant women should be reviewed and evaluated for accessibility and effectiveness from an immigrant woman's perspective. Specifically, as English skills directly affect both integration of immigrants into the community and their chances of securing employment, ESL training should be expanded to provide adequate English skills. Additionally, there should be focus on providing further education and training opportunities for immigrant women. Because migration and relocation are such traumatic life experiences, and because some immigrants have come from especially tragic situations, it is important that they are provided access to support services and mental health resources designed to meet their needs, particularly immediately following relocation. Adjusting to a new environment is a long and difficult process that must not be ignored by the host society. Immigrant women must be provided with appropriate and adequate resources to ensure successful integration into the community. Moreover, there must also be some method or service through which resource information is disseminated to immigrant women. Appropriate and adequate resources and services will only be effective if the target population knows of their existence and how to access them.

Other recommendations to assist in improving the socio-economic experience of immigrant women in Saskatoon include integration programs and anti-racism/anti-discrimination programs for Canadians. Although Canada has addressed racism in the past and the pervasiveness of racism in the country has, to a degree, decreased, eradicating racism and discrimination is essential to ensure a just society. Further addressing racism and discrimination would positively impact immigrant women's chances of securing meaningful employment. Anti-racism/anti-discrimination programs can be implemented in a number of ways, including mandatory classes and workshops in schools and workplaces. Racism's pervasiveness would further be diminished through integration programs in which immigrants and Canadians connect with each other and create mutual learning situations. In addition to combating racism and achieving cross-cultural understanding, integration programs would provide immigrants with opportunities to access resources and information to aid in adjustment, as well as limit the social isolation and rejection experienced by some immigrant women.

The last recommendation is particularly important to the employment opportunities of immigrant women. A majority of women involved in this research indicated relatively high educational levels. Additionally, a greater number disclosed work experience prior to arrival in Canada. Indeed, entry into Canada for immigrants is gained, in

part, by quality and quantity of education and work experience. Despite this, however, the credentials and experience of immigrant women are often undervalued and overlooked by Canadian employers. Immigrant women are told that they cannot be hired because their credentials and experience were gained in another country. This practice is unfair and squanders human resources necessary for economic and social development. There must be a review of the system through which credentials and work experience are evaluated and recognized, conducted by qualified and knowledgeable individuals—including immigrants—and appropriate reforms implemented. It is only through this and the other recommendations that the socio-economic situations of immigrant women and, consequently, the entire community, will be improved.

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