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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOUTH ASIANS IN CANADA

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DID YOU KNOW?

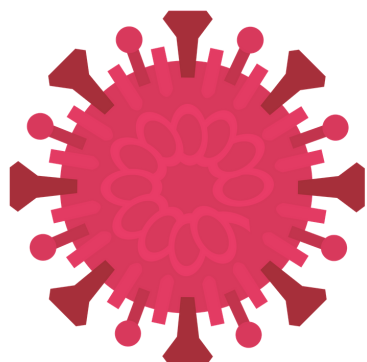
South Asians in Canada are the single largest visible minority (racialized) group, accounting for over 29.6% of visible minorities and 8.7% of Ontario's total population. 207,380 South Asian people in Ontario live in poverty. That is approximately 18% of the South Asian population of Ontario. Studies also show that racialized communities, including South Asian communities, are more likely to fall into poverty because of systemic barriers, such as racism. In Canada, South Asians continue to live in poverty at disproportionate rates.

IMPACT ON LABOUR

[A national survey by the Association for Canadian Studies](#), released on April 13th, ranked racialized communities by economic vulnerability.

- 75% of South Asians surveyed reported that the economic crisis was a threat to their personal finances
- South Asians were ranked as the most vulnerable racialized community in Canada
- Many South Asian workers have lost their jobs and are likely to be unemployed post-COVID-19 because those jobs are gone. South Asian workers are likely to face disproportionate unemployment because of COVID-19
- Thousands of South Asian temporary foreign workers continue to face abuse from employers and are working in unsafe conditions during COVID-19
- South Asians in Canada occupy a large proportion of essential frontline low-paying jobs, leaving them more susceptible to contracting COVID-19

The Government of Canada has no plan to address the disproportionate labour market outcomes for South Asian workers at this time.



IMPACT ON INCOME

Many South Asians cannot access the COVID-19 relief income supports created by provinces, territories, and the Canadian government.

- Thousands of international students from South Asian countries cannot access the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) even though they pay astronomically higher tuition than domestic students
- Thousands of South Asian workers with precarious immigration status cannot access the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
- South Asians with precarious immigration status (such as visitors and undocumented workers) cannot access any provincial income support - leaving them without any source of income and with little to no options of returning home safely
- Many South Asian seniors in Canada are not eligible for Old Age Security and live in poverty and food insecurity as a result
- Many South Asian parents in Canada are not eligible for the Canada Child Benefit

South Asians in Canada have not been fully supported by our governments to have the same stable income that other Canadians are getting during COVID-19 and are finding themselves falling deeper into poverty.

IMPACT ON FAMILY

Reports from service providers confirm that family violence may be on the rise in South Asian communities across Canada.

- In 2019, a significant number of domestic violence homicides in Ontario were of South Asian women
- Other stressors from COVID-19, such as unemployment and food insecurity, make many South Asians in Canada vulnerable to increased family violence
- We know that studies across the world have found that incidents of forced marriage have increased during COVID-19

Canada is not collecting data on family violence specifically within South Asian communities so our knowledge gap in this area is much larger in Canada than many other countries.



IMPACT ON HATE CRIME / DISCRIMINATION

Since the emergence of COVID-19 in Canada, there has been a rise in racism and hate speech targeted towards specific racialized communities including South Asian Canadian Muslims.

- The fear of the COVID-19 outbreak has been used on social media to fuel conspiracy theories, fake videos, and discriminatory memes to demonize South Asian Canadian (and other) Muslims
- Online hate speech has led to increased harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes against South Asian Canadian Muslims in various municipalities including individuals staking outside of places of worship to “catch” Muslim worshippers breaking lockdown measures
- This dangerous rise in Islamophobia is also seen around the world in countries such as the United Kingdom and India

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT ALL SOUTH ASIANS IN CANADA DURING COVID-19

- Remove all barriers to income support for South Asians in Canada during COVID-19 regardless of immigration status
- Introduce laws and support for South Asian workers to ensure they return to better and fair labour market outcomes. This includes creating better basic employment standards, safer workplaces, employment equity to tackle discrimination in the workplace, and programs targeted to improve economic prosperity for South Asian workers
- Mandate the collection of data on family violence in South Asian communities in Canada and create culturally appropriate programs to support communities to address that violence
- Collect disaggregated race-based data at the national, provincial and municipal levels so that we can better understand and support South Asian communities in Canada across all social determinants of health (poverty, health, education, justice, immigration, housing, employment, etc.)
- Incorporate strong [Anti-Hate policies](#) in the existing National Anti-Racism Strategy and work with community organizations to create programs and public awareness campaigns to tackle hate crimes and hate speech

