

Overlooked: Canada's Fastest-Emerging, Highest-Educated Workforce

New study finds South Asian women twice as likely to say they are treated unfairly in the workplace, with almost 60 per cent ready quit their jobs

Toronto, March 2, 2022 – Ahead of International Women's Day, a newly released study is shedding light on the reasons South Asian women have the highest unemployment rate in Canada and what employers can do to unlock the potential of this growing labour force. The report, released today, reveals that more than half (57 per cent) of South Asian women are planning to leave their jobs for other opportunities. That is more than any other female group in Canada and 19 per cent more than the average of all the females surveyed.

The study also noted that South Asian women are twice as likely to report unfair treatment in the workplace: 34 per cent compared to the 17 per cent average of all females surveyed and 20 per cent for all the men surveyed.

The findings are significant considering that over the next five years 100 per cent of Canada's labour force growth will be from immigration. Especially given that in 2018 newcomers from South Asia and the Philippines comprised almost 39 per cent of all newcomers in Canada (Immigration Refugees, and Citizenship Canada).

South Asian women are also the largest female immigrant labour force and the highest educated, according to the 2016 Census.

The study follows a 2020 Statistics Canada report which discovered that South Asian women have almost twice the national unemployment rate (20.4 per cent compared to 11.3 per cent). They are also more likely to be both underemployed and underpaid compared to non-visible minority women.

Other findings include:

- The pandemic has exacerbated challenges facing South Asian women, with 47 per cent they considering leaving the workforce altogether due to the pandemic – compared to the 25 per cent for women and 32 per cent for men in general.
- South Asian women are most likely (64 per cent) to admit that they have lowered their career salary expectations in the last few years, compared to the 50 percent average of all females surveyed and 45 per cent for all men surveyed.
- 58 per cent reveal empty promises made by work managers about their career progression, compared to the 46.5 per cent of all females surveyed, and almost double when compared to non-racialized women (37 per cent). Furthermore, 65 per cent would rather leave their job than wait in vain for those empty promises to come into fruition.

Nevertheless, the study also reveals the resilience of South Asian women, who remain committed to professional growth:

- 71 per cent feel there is room for upward mobility and 66 per cent currently feel empowered in the workplace, the highest percentages of any female ethnic group and even higher than the 63 per cent average among all men surveyed.

Important contrasts within the study suggest that South Asian women born in Canada, and those already established in this country face different obstacles and will need distinct supports to succeed. Established South Asian women, for example, can be role models of the future but say they first need mentorship to break through the glass ceiling. This group is also more likely to have confidence in their abilities and be prepared to change employers if they don't get the supports they need. Meanwhile, newcomers are more concerned with being effectively integrated into the workforce and acknowledge that they are struggling to settle into corporate Canada.

The research focuses on career focused South Asian women and has been conducted by [CulturaliQ](#) in partnership with [Pink Attitude](#), the first non-profit organization of its kind in Canada where women of South Asian heritage are empowered to achieve their full potential in their chosen fields. It consists of a qualitative component, including interviews with employers, employees and community leaders for South Asian women and will be followed by quantitative online surveys.

"The findings tell a story of a workforce of systemic barriers and negative perceptions in the workplace, not only when compared to non-racialized women, but also when compared to other racialized Canadian women," says Ruby Dhillon, CEO and Founder of Pink Attitude Evolution. What is also important to note, however, that these women are highly entrepreneurial, and they have the skills that are needed to thrive in their workplace. They're saying, 'give us a chance to excel, otherwise we're going to go somewhere else and build our career.' They have choices." she adds.

"We have been keenly aware of the ongoing underutilization of South Asian women in the Canadian workplace. The first step in developing a support plan is to understand the reasons for these statistics then we can go on to demonstrate how incredibly important and valuable this asset is to the current Canadian economy," says John Stevenson, Founding Partner, CulturaliQ.

The report is available at pinkattitude.ca/national-study. It also includes insights on what employers can do to ensure employee retention and career progression, including:

- Offering opportunities to build new skills, continuing education, and providing mentors who are from a similar cultural background
- Amplifying and encouraging internships, co-op programs and educational assistance programs

This research, supported by several top organizations across Canada, including TD, Deloitte, NATIONAL Public Relations, Sephora, City of Brampton, Automotive Parts Manufacturer's Association, EY, Scotiabank and IGM Financial.

For more information, to receive a PDF version of the study or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Andrea Chrysanthou
Director
NATIONAL Public Relations
achrysanthou@national.ca
416-797-8194

About Pink Attitude:

Pink Attitude Evolution was founded in 2015 as the first non-profit organization of its kind in Canada where women of South-Asian origin are empowered to achieve their full potential in their chosen endeavours.

We represent the superior strides that South-Asian women accomplish while uplifting others to be prominent leaders regardless of age, gender, orientation, race, religion, or abilities. We also recognize the valiant efforts of our allies as impactful supporters of women; ultimately building stronger generations together.

About CulturaliQ

CulturaliQ is a market research and strategy company committed to helping Canadian organizations and institutions embrace diversity and realize their full potential in a rapidly changing landscape.

We help identify cultural nuances and untapped market opportunities. We partner with our clients to leverage actionable insights that drives strategy, optimizes marketing investments, and supports them in delivering a culturally optimized pathway to success.



info@pinkattitude.ca



www.pinkattitude.ca