

EMPLOYMENT

Visible minorities typically encounter more difficulties in being accepted in a variety of social situations than do their white counterparts. But those difficulties, however unfortunate, pale in significance if a person is unemployed. Finding work, preferably in keeping with a person's qualifications, is probably the most important issue brought before the Committee.

The Committee recognizes that not all visible minority groups are unemployed to the same extent. It may be, for example, that Chinese Canadians or Canadians with origins in India are not disproportionately unemployed when compared with other groups but they may be disproportionately under-employed in sectors of the Canadian economy where they would like to be employed. On the other hand, aboriginal people or West Indian Canadians may be disproportionately unemployed. It is important for governments to document and respond to the needs of the specific target groups.

The Committee sought submissions which would document the efforts that have been made to improve employment opportunities for visible minorities. Briefs and presentations brought to the attention of the Committee such employer initiatives as the examination of company employment practices, Native awareness workshops, pre-employment training programs and cultural accommodation. While the Committee is encouraged by these reported activities, much remains to be accomplished. From March 1, 1978 to May 31, 1983, 50.8 per cent of the complaints accepted by the Canadian Human Rights Commission citing race or colour were related to the refusal to employ or to continue to employ an individual. A further 18.7 per cent of the total race/colour complaints referred to discriminatory policies or practices by employers or employee organizations.

This chapter examines evidence of systemic discrimination and suggests approaches to increasing the employment of visible minorities in the private sector paying special attention to affirmative action, visible minority youth, the Federal Business Development Bank, and the use of contract compliance and subcontracting. This section also looks at evaluation of credentials, the plight of immigrant farm-workers, discriminating employment agencies and the importance of cross-cultural trade and communication centres in business schools.