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Employment Services Responses to Labour Market Challenges for South Asian Women: An ACCES Employment Study

Manjeet Dhiman, Ada Wong & Jody Yvonne

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Abstract

This paper explores the employment barriers that South Asian newcomer women often face as they strive for economic integration and settlement in Canada. Several themes and findings have consistently emerged, in various research reports and through ACCES's experience as an employment services provider. For example, the role of South Asian women as primary 'caregivers' in their home life, creates challenges for them in entering the labour market and with continued career progression. The data reveals a definite 'wage gap' for this racialized group of women, despite their higher education and experience levels. This correlates with how South Asian women, like many other minority groups, have a different social and cultural experience in the workplace. This paper will also highlight program interventions undertaken by ACCES to reduce the impact of these barriers and increase employment success for South Asian newcomer women. The final section of the paper examines the 'lived experience' of South Asian women with reference to a specific ACCES jobseeker and statistics from our programs and services.

Keywords: Employment, Barriers, Women, settlement in Canada, Labour market studies

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1. Introduction: ACCES Employment

Visible minority newcomer women face more challenges than any other group to enter the workforce. This isn't just about getting women jobs; it's also about providing a sense of dignity and belonging. Canada's gender equality is for all women, not just for some.

—The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development; Former Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Ayesha is a newcomer woman who has experienced economic exclusion first-hand. She came to Canada ten years ago with her husband and their 6-month-old child. In India, she had obtained a Master of Arts degree and she worked as a teacher. Upon arriving in Canada, she wasn't able to find work immediately in her field, so she took on part-time roles at Tim Horton's and KFC. Although she had teaching skills and experience, she took these roles out of necessity. Her situation corroborates a recent study by NG and Gagnon (2020) who examine the "double penalty of racialized women." With the term "double penalty" they refer, as do we, to the confluence of economic exclusion and the gendered and racialized wage gap facing visible minority women. Their data shows that "one part of this penalty can be seen in the fact that racialized women are over-represented in several sectors of the economy... many of these sectors tend to be relatively poorly compensated and include accommodation and food services, health care and social services, administrative and support, and waste management and remediation services" (p.8). This precise challenge is what Ayesha faces while working in the fast-food industry. Ayesha's experience demonstrates the struggle many South Asian women face when having to be the caregiver in their family, delaying or setting aside professional aspirations to remain flexible to care for children. Ayesha continued to work in underemployed roles as she had additional children and could not afford the high daycare costs in Ontario. Ayesha spoke about her lack of knowledge about working in Canada and some of her confusion around the way her managers communicated with her. Despite her strong English levels, it seemed to be a different style of communication and she didn't always feel like she fit in.

As an employment services provider committed to assisting diverse jobseekers to integrate into the Canadian job market, ACCES has seen first-hand the challenges that exist for newcomers to Canada. Further, ACCES has developed several specialized programs to address the particular barriers facing newcomer women as they navigate a new country, society, culture and, ultimately, employment. In this paper, ACCES will use data and insight from current employment services programs, as well as a review of Canadian immigration and labour market data, to explore aspects of the economic integration and settlement of South Asian women in Canada. Research indicates that the major factors impacting the social and economic integration of skilled newcomers include a lack of information and guidance; a lack of recognition of foreign credentials; a lack of recognition of international work experience, employers request for Canadian experience (despite existing legislation in the Ontario Human Rights Code specifying that employers are not allowed to ask candidates about Canadian experience unless they can demonstrate that it is required for the role), a lack of language skills; difficulties in obtaining references; prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination; challenges with cultural integration; lack of access to social and emotional support; and struggles with health and wellbeing (Kaushik and Drolet 2018). This research is consistent with challenges we see newcomer jobseekers face when seeking employment in Canada. Currently, newcomer women from South Asian countries (India,

Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) represent over 40% of the women that use services at ACCES. In addition to the challenges facing newcomers overall, some of the specific barriers faced by this group include economic exclusion and a racialized 'wage gap', the real and perceived role of women as the primary caregiver of children and the household within their domestic unit, and they also face a different social and cultural experience in the workplace. After considering these challenges, the paper will look closely at several ACCES programs for women and the specific components of employment support provided to newcomer women.

2. Canada as a Nation of Immigrants and Current Policy Direction

Canada has often been referred to as a "nation of immigrants," and it is true that "immigration has long been seen as a natural part of the growth of the country" (Statistics Canada 2011). Canadian immigration policies continue to position newcomers as important contributors to Canadian society, both culturally and economically. In particular, skilled and educated newcomers, from the perspective of policy and entrance requirements, are viewed as assets to our country's social and economic vibrancy. In his most recent mandate letter to The Honourable Marco Mendicino, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau outlined expectations for the Immigration portfolio to "attract more than a million new permanent residents" within the space of 2 years (2020-2022), which will "grow our economy and the richness of Canada's population" (Trudeau 2019). Embedded within this general immigration policy are more specific measures designed to attract newcomers who are skilled, educated, and deemed to have expertise in areas where there are, or will be, labour shortages. Between 2002 and 2014, Canada took in 983, 887 skilled immigrants, of which 408, 895 were principal applicants under the Federal Skilled Worker Program (Citizenship and Immigration Canada CIC 2015). In 2016, 59,999 skilled workers were accepted under this program, out of which 46.8% were principal applicants and 53.2% were spouses or dependents (Government of Canada 2017a).

The policy directives and incentives for attracting skilled newcomers, and the general immigration numbers that support these measures, encourage a prevailing perception that skilled immigrants are required for the future social and economic success of the country. When examining the barriers that exist for visible minorities and other marginalized groups to finding meaningful employment and achieving full economic integration, it is clear that there is a need to fully bridge the gap between skilled immigrants, employment and economic success in Canada. This is particularly true with regard to the settlement and integration of South Asian women into the Canadian economy and workplace, as they now make up the largest group of visible minority females in Canada (Hudon 2016).

3. The Wage Gap for Women and Visible Minorities in the Canadian Labour Market

In order to explore economic exclusion and the wage gap as it exists for South Asian Women in Canada, it is necessary to briefly consider female labour in general. Female labour in Canada moved forward significantly in 1951 with the first round of legislation that sought to eliminate discrimination by implementing fines and creating a complaints system. Provincially, the *Fair Employment Practices Act* and the *Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act* in Ontario was designed to provide women with equal pay for equal work. Federal law followed thereafter when Canada passed the *Female Employees Equal Pay Act* of 1956, which made wage discrimination based on sex against the law (Government of

Canada 2017). In practical terms, however, the wage gap, although it has been narrowing since this legislation, still exists today. In 2018, female employees aged 25 to 54 earned \$4.13 (or 13.3%) less per hour, on average, than their male counterparts. In other words, these women earned \$0.87 for every dollar earned by men. Statistics Canada explains that the gap can partially be accounted for by the uneven distribution of men and women across industries, as well as women's overrepresentation in part-time work. Beyond that, though, the same study by Statistics Canada concluded that "similar to other studies, nearly two-thirds of the gap in 2018 was unexplained. Possible explanations for this portion include gender differences in characteristics that were beyond the scope of this study, such as work experience, as well as unobservable factors, such as any gender-related biases" (Statistics Canada 2019).

The compensation gap that exists between men and women, is even wider for South Asian women. Visible minority newcomer women have the lowest median annual income of all newcomer groups at \$26,624, compared to non-visible minority newcomer women (\$30,074), visible minority newcomer men (\$35,574), and non-visible minority newcomer men (\$42,591) (Government of Canada 2018). In addition, visible minority newcomer women are more likely to be unemployed. The unemployment rate of visible minority newcomer women (9.7%) is higher than that of visible minority (8.5%) and non-visible minority (6.4%) newcomer men, based on the 2016 Census (ibid). And, when taking immigration status into account, 22% of visible minority immigrant women were in low-income situations, compared with 19% of Canadian-born visible minority women.

South Asian women experience economic exclusion and are often in the lower income ranges in this country even though many of them arrive in Canada with acquired skills and education. Immigrant women, in fact, are more likely to have completed a university education than their Canadian-born counterparts. In the core working-age group, aged 25-54, one-third (33%) of immigrant women had a university degree, compared with less than one-quarter (23%) of those women born in Canada. This data is consistent with data collected at ACCES. Over 50% of South Asian women who have utilized ACCES services have a Bachelor or post-secondary degree from outside of Canada.

Despite high levels of education from their home country, South Asian women do not always achieve full economic integration into Canadian society. What might be termed a 'racialized wage gap' is a manifestation of economic exclusion, or a lack of economic and workplace integration for this group. Economic exclusion for South Asian women also manifests in labour market segregation, unequal access to employment, employment discrimination, disproportionate vulnerability to unemployment or underemployment, income inequality and precarious employment (Galabuzi 2005).

4. Responsibility for Family and Work

In Canada, newcomer women most commonly arrive as the spouse of an economic or non-economic newcomer. There are three main classes under which people are admitted as Permanent Residents. Two of these classes are non-economic: Family Class and Refugee; and the third is the Economic Class. Almost 3 in 10 (29%) immigrant women who were admitted as permanent residents in 2009 were in the Family Class category. Women were more likely to be admitted under the Family Class category and made up 59% of all immigrants admitted from it. Another 39% of women who came that year were admitted as spouses or dependants in the Economic Class and they accounted for 56% of immigrants in that category. Statistically, South Asian women newcomers, more than any other group, are overwhelmingly likely to live with family when coming to Canada; in 2006, the rate was 95%. As such, South Asian women almost always have to balance their family life with their

efforts in finding meaningful work. In an article entitled “Immigrant Families and the Processes of Acculturation,” Hynie points to cross-cultural research which identifies the tension and difficult acculturation process one experiences in moving from a “collectivist” culture (South Asia) to an “Individualistic” culture (Canada, U.S., Australia). Hynie concludes that immigration, combined with women’s employment outside the home, may result in *some* changes in patterns of decision making and some more sharing of domestic labour, however it does not often challenge traditional gender roles. Moreover, the literature in this area points out that newcomer women, who are wives, continue to endorse a gendered division of labour (Hynie 1996). This is to say that South Asian women are often required to focus on the needs of their husbands and children while trying to advance their own personal and professional goals. Newcomer women may select roles with greater flexibility (shift work) or part-time options resulting in lower wages and less career mobility and growth in the long term. These types of roles tend to be more conducive to childcare needs (before and after school hours).

ACCES’s experience in working with highly educated South Asian newcomer women through sector-specific bridging programs (targeted sectors include: finance, human resources, engineering, sales and marketing, supply chain, information technology and healthcare) has also indicated other challenges with balancing responsibilities at home. There are several patterns ACCES has noted while providing services to this highly educated, career oriented and experienced group. Upon their initial visit to ACCES employment services, a married couple will sometimes prioritize employment security for the husband (male) before the female, despite the equal or sometimes increased possibility that the female will find meaningful employment because of her experience, education and field of work. Second, the scheduling of full-time training for several weeks is sometimes a challenge for women as they are required to pick-up children after school or care for other family members in the home. With several programs that ACCES has for newcomer women, efforts are made to schedule training around these responsibilities and to reduce the number of evening or early morning networking opportunities. This can be a challenge as networking opportunities with working professionals provides significant value for jobseekers, however, they often take place during non-office hours. Newcomer women with families are often less able to attend freely without securing childcare options. All of these factors (while not exhaustive or consistent across all individuals) contribute to the challenge of balancing home life and childcare responsibilities with the prioritization of securing employment and advancing careers once in the workplace.

5. Social and Cultural Differences in Canada and the Workplace

Edith Samuel completed a study in 2009 that explored the *acculturative stress* that South Asian Women experience in Canada. Acculturative stress results as individuals “try to adapt to a new culture and incorporate unfamiliar cultural traits of the host society into their own. It also occurs when the process of finding a suitable job is prolonged and ongoing. The entire process is distressing and is particularly so on South Asian women who have migrated to Canada” (Samuel 2009). In her findings, after in-depth interviews with South Asian women who completed the move to Canada, Samuel identified 1) intergenerational conflict with their own children, 2) discrimination, 3) depression and, subsequently, 4) the use of a variety of coping strategies as common to the experience of acculturative stress for South Asian women in Canada. Acculturative stress contributes to the overall experience of adapting to Canadian culture, the migration process overall and the experience of home and societal life in a new country. Further, the experience of discrimination in a new country compounds the challenge both on a personal and professional level. This results in

increased stress and has a negative effect on the possibility of securing jobs and advancing careers.

There is also a need to recognize the impact of social and cultural knowledge including the ability to deploy practices essential to securing employment. Newcomers face challenges with learning a new language and culture alongside their immediate search for employment in a new country. Fifty-five percent of South Asian women arriving at ACCES for employment services have been in Canada for between three and six months. Within this relatively short period of time, newcomers need to familiarize themselves with the cultural and social practices of a new county, while also learning and implementing key job search strategies. The understanding of social and cultural norms and how they affect job search strategies is highly significant and forms a major part of the training and support provided by ACCES Employment. Knowledge about business communications, small talk, networking practices, familiarity with workplace culture, language and idioms are key to the success of jobseekers in both the job search, interview and workplace-success phases of employment. Even subtle behaviours and body language such as eye contact, handshakes and other non-verbal communication techniques can affect the success of newcomers. While this knowledge may be more common for individuals who grow-up in Canada, for newcomers, these factors present a challenge that affects their job search success in the short-term and continued career growth in long-term. Although this barrier exists for all newcomers, it manifests differently for women than for men. ACCES Employment's specialized services for newcomer women addresses these barriers.

6. Addressing the Unique Needs of Newcomer Women through Employment Services

As a service provider, ACCES prides itself on developing and delivering specialized services for racialized immigrant women to find meaningful employment. Services are personalized and customized to instill confidence and a sense of agency for each individual. As the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, former Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has said, "This isn't just about getting women jobs; it's also about providing a sense of dignity and belonging."

ACCES, with the support of its government and corporate partners, has supported newcomer jobseekers for more than 34 years. Each year, about 80% of jobseekers served by the organization are new to Canada and arrive from all over the world. It should be noted for the context of this report that South Asian women with a wide range of academic, occupational and socioeconomic backgrounds participate in various programs at ACCES. Within the last 3 years (2017-2019), women from India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh make up over 40% of all female clients that ACCES has served. Of the total number of jobseekers served (women and men from all countries), 21% were South Asian women.

6.1. Job Search Skills and Connections to Employers that are Hiring

The most significant challenges facing newcomer women are hiring biases and discrimination by employers in Canada. As such, ACCES Employment's service approach is two-fold. One aspect of the model is to coach and support job seekers so they are well prepared for the Canadian labour market, ensuring they have the necessary strategy and tools (i.e., customized resumes, solid interview skills, knowledge and strategies for networking and effective communication skills) to successfully secure employment in their

targeted field. The second, equally important aspect of ACCES's service model, is to establish strong relationships with employers who are hiring across various sectors. ACCES helps employers realize the value of hiring newcomer talent and it provides direct connections to newcomer candidates. Employers gain access to a unique talent pool with an international perspective, diversity of language and experience. They are also provided with pre-screened and highly prepared candidates who will make an immediate contribution to their company upon hiring. Government hiring incentives are also available for employers to build a smoother transition for jobseekers with barriers to secure and retain employment. ACCES provides ongoing support to encourage job retention, development and coaching services to ensure success in the workplace.

ACCES has been able to not only identify the specific barriers to employment facing this high-need group, but also create programming to mitigate the detrimental effects these barriers have on their social and economic integration. ACCES currently delivers four customized programs for newcomer women including START- Customer Care, Empowering Women, Women in Technology and Career Pathways for Newcomer Women. Results from these programs and the success of recent cohorts prove their effectiveness.

In 2019-2020, ACCES programs and services achieved an 83% employed or in-training rate. For sector-specific programs, 86% of graduates find employment commensurate with their experience within one year of program completion. Upon program completion, participants have remarked on the encouragement, motivation and job search skills that were acquired through their programs. Agnes Kumar, a participant of ACCES's Leadership Connections program commented on the emotional aspect of job search in a country and the support received to succeed from the program an ACCES overall.

I was very worried when joining the program that I would never find a job in Canada. The ACCES team greatly encouraged and motivated me to succeed. They helped me to build my confidence which definitely reflects in the way I perform in interviews. I was able to land two roles and I chose the role that will allow me to further develop my career. (Agnes Kumar, Leadership Connections Program Alum, ACCES)

Similarly, Janhavi Harshe speaks to the preparation she received and the confidence she gained with learning about Canadian culture, the recruitment process and behavioral interviews, which can be challenging for newcomers that are unfamiliar with workplace communications in Canada:

I realized that there is a big difference in the way candidates are considered in Canada when compared to my home country, India. The workshop helped me build confidence and faith in myself by being prepared for interviews and I learned how to answer difficult behavioral questions.

The following section considers particular components of these programs which provide needed support to newcomer women, including South Asian newcomer women. These program components serve to address specific barriers that newcomer women face, ensuring their preparedness for jobs and careers in Canada.

6.2. Identifying and Assessing Career Goals and Objectives

The assessment of career goals and objectives forms the foundation for customizing employment services and programs towards the specific needs of individuals. For programs supporting newcomer women, the initial one-to-one consultation helps to establish a trust

relationship, which is critical for identifying personal and career goals that newcomer women have. The trust relationship acts as a foundation for guidance throughout the job search process as it creates an environment through which newcomer women are able to self-reflect, share personal circumstances and be open about what they need in a new job and their career in Canada. The initial self-assessment is also an important step for establishing a longer-term perspective of newcomer women and the recognition of their own goals and career aspirations.

Two ACCES programs, the START Customer Care Program and the Career Pathways for Newcomer Women's Program, utilize the initial self-assessment to create a sense of self-awareness, confidence and recognition of particular skills, strengths and behaviours. The START Customer Care Program utilizes various self-assessment tools such as the STRONG Interest Inventory Assessment® (Strong 1927) and Personality Dimensions® (McKim 2015). The Strong Interest Inventory® assessment provides insight into a person's interests, to help them consider potential careers, their educational path, and the world of work. The assessment considers how these interests compare to the people successfully employed in a broad range of occupations and what motivates individuals in the workplace. Personality Dimensions® is used to understand strengths and behaviours of individuals, providing guidance for potential career areas.

Career Pathways for Newcomer Women is a program that utilizes an Essential Skills Assessment to identify and strengthen core skills that individuals already have, instead of looking at new skills that need to be developed (Government of Canada 2015). Understanding these skills will help to boost newcomer women's confidence in the job search process and promote a positive self-image, which is critical throughout the job search process. The program also includes a MyPlan Development Component where newcomer women explore their unique career pathways based on their skill sets. This equips them with resources to explore career options and to think creatively about their career.

6.3. Workplace Culture and Communication in Canadian Workplaces

Programs for newcomer women emphasize Canadian workplace culture and unique differences in communication style. ACCES's Empowering Women program provides training and coaching in two critical areas. First, negotiation skills are developed to help women become comfortable with actions such as negotiating competitive employment offers, salaries, promotions, and conditions for work-life balance. Training on negotiation skills creates an overall awareness of importance of independence and self-advocacy. The second area of focus for this program is communication skills. Participants receive training and coaching on how to present with confidence, equipping women with skills on how to communicate with self-confidence. These communication components are critical to enhancing the employment success of newcomer women, including South Asian newcomer women, who are unfamiliar with Canadian workplace culture and critical aspects of job search and career advancement.

Lacking knowledge of Canadian workplaces also presents a challenge for newcomer women. For example, they may be unfamiliar with common management frameworks such as matrix style management vs. hierarchical management. In addition, they may have a different understanding of the importance of communication between team members (i.e., asking questions when necessary) and the importance of engaging in small-talk and networking opportunities to build connections with colleagues. Coaching and learning in these areas provide newcomer women with additional knowledge for both the job search process and strategies for ensuring job security and retention once they are in the workplace. This learning is provided through a combination "theoretical learning," hands-on

practice and anecdotal lessons from employers and professionals who participate as guest speakers and mentors.

Below is a table outlining participants of ACCES Employment's sector-specific bridge training programs and self-reported knowledge of workplace communication skills in five learning areas. The table includes percentages before program participation, after program participation and the differential in number of individuals that increased knowledge for each learning component.

| Workplace Communication Components (participant self-reported knowledge of) | Before program participation | After program completion | Differential |
|--|---|---|---------------------|
| Knowledge of non-verbal communication | 50% | 99% | +49% |
| Communicating in the Canadian Workplace | 22% | 94% | +72% |
| Questions and Topics for Small Talk | 26% | 96% | +70% |
| Understanding what it means to "fit in" at work | 31% | 97% | +66% |
| Know what it means to work in team | 61% | 98% | +31% |

Participants reported an increase in knowledge in all five workplace communication components. A range of between 94%-99% participants reported "good" or "excellent" knowledge in all areas upon completion of the program. This is compared to just 31%-61% reporting "good" or "excellent" knowledge in all areas before the start of the program. Of note here is the 61% of participants reporting knowledge of working in a team before the program starts. Anecdotally, participants have shared that there is a significant difference between working in a team in different cultural contexts and working in a team in the Canadian workplace. Newcomers have shared the differences to be a hierarchical structure vs. a matrix environment, the ability to question leadership or ask questions of your manager, the openness and ability to contribute new ideas, criticisms or raise problems and other cultural differences in communication style. The self-reported knowledge about teamwork is therefore enhanced with knowledge about teams in a "Canadian context."

This increased knowledge of workplace culture and communication is tied to both confidence and capability throughout the job search process and ultimately success of newcomers in the workplace. Employers who have hired newcomers from ACCES programs have noted the high level of soft-skills, communication skills and knowledge of workplace culture that increases the success of onboarding as well as retention. In a recent survey of ACCES's employer contacts, 85% of employer respondents noted soft skills, communication skills and emotional intelligence as one of the top three skills they were looking for in candidates and new hires. These were noted as skills that are essential to both gaining and retaining employment.

6.4. Networking and Mentoring Opportunities

One of the most significant barriers facing newcomer women is the lack of a professional network in Canada as well as the ability and opportunity to build these connections, which are critical for success in their career. Looking closely at ACCES sector-specific programming, 35% of newcomers reported a sufficient understanding of networking (good or excellent) before the program. Upon program completion, 99% of newcomers understood the importance of networking. Similarly, 16% of newcomers reported having effective networking skills (good or excellent) before the program. Upon program

completion, 85% of newcomers felt that they were effective networkers. ACCES programs both emphasize learning about the importance of networking and the techniques for connecting with employers and mentors alongside the provision of real opportunities to engage these skills in practice. Through networking and mentoring opportunities, newcomer women have the opportunity to learn from other professionals in their field, gain insight into Canadian workplace culture and communication, and gain access to the hidden job market for roles that are not always posted publicly.

A significant aspect of all ACCES programs is the integration of employer support and perspective through mentoring, networking, guest speaking and other volunteer activity. In the START Customer Care program for women, guest speakers are other women who have themselves struggled with similar barriers and challenges and have successfully navigated their initial job search challenges to secure employment. This first-hand experience provides a genuine view into the barriers, solutions and opportunities for success. The Empowering Women program includes significant volunteer and mentor support from women leaders at TD Bank. TD Bank employees participate in the program as mentors and volunteers to each cohort, supplementing the program with real-world professional experience. TD mentors are predominantly women who have achieved success and are looking to share their perspective with newcomer women who are starting out in Canada.

6.5. In-Demand Skills and Fields for the Future

ACCES programs prepare newcomer women for the “future of work,” emphasizing the acquisition of new skills that will contribute to the success of their career in Canada. Career Pathways for Newcomer Women (alongside a number of ACCES Bridging programs) provide 21st Century Skills training including creative problem solving, workplace communications and acquiring a growth mindset. These skills provide the opportunity for newcomer women to be prepared for changes and growth throughout their career.

Similarly, the START Customer Care program provides training in customer service excellence, which can be adopted and implemented across various in-demand roles in Canada. These skills enhance existing skills sets and experience while improving job prospects in various fields. Computer training and specific technology skills are also taught as part of the curriculum. Further, the START Customer Care program provides wrap-around support in areas such as financial literacy, health & wellness and work-life balance. These elements also contribute to the future success of newcomer women who complete the program.

The Women in Technology program supports newcomer women with starting a career (or switch careers) in information technology by building essential technology skills. The program accepts newcomer women from a variety of backgrounds and equips them with programming and coding skills to help them secure entry-level roles in high-demand sectors. The program also offers a series of highly customized learning pathways, which utilize LinkedIn learning to enhance technical and soft skills, such as communication and leadership. This model allows higher-skilled participants to work on additional complementary skills sets. Beginner level coders with no information technology background are given additional training and support through additional e-learning. These learning pathways complement more intense and traditional technical training provided by Seneca College in programming and coding.

7. Conclusion: Building Success for South Asian Newcomer Women in Canada

Newcomer women face unique barriers to employment in Canada which can be addressed through various employment programs and service models. A gendered and racialized wage gap exists despite policy and political commitment to strengthening the position of women and their employment in Canada. Further, newcomer women, and women in general, continue to retain significant responsibilities for the family and home life despite significant advances in society to build greater equity between men and women in this regard. Finally, cultural and communication differences, still form a significant barrier as newcomers aim to secure employment and adjust to life in a new country. ACCES Employment provides critical training and guidance that helps newcomer women secure employment and achieve career success in Canada. ACCES delivers customized programs, strategies and tailored service components for newcomer women, including South Asian newcomer women, which address the major barriers facing this group. ACCES programs have proven to be effective in preparing participants for their job search and ensuring their ultimate success with employers. These approaches are used to serve newcomer jobseekers generally and are further customized to address the specific needs of newcomer women. Overall, ACCES programs prepare newcomer women to enter the Canadian labour market by providing them with practical knowledge and coaching in job search techniques and career progression.

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