Study: Women in Canada: First Nations, Métis and Inuit women

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Released: 2016-02-23

Aboriginal women with higher levels of education had slightly higher employment rates than non-Aboriginal women in 2011. Specifically, 81.8% of Aboriginal women with a certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor level or above were employed, compared with 79.5% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The same pattern held true for all three Aboriginal identity groups: First Nations, Métis and Inuit women.

These results highlight the importance of education, especially as Aboriginal women are generally less likely than non-Aboriginal women to have a postsecondary qualification. In general, Aboriginal women are also less likely to be employed than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

These findings are taken from a new chapter, "First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women," which is part of the seventh edition of *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, released today. The chapter examines some of the demographic, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the Aboriginal female population. Wherever possible, information is provided for First Nations, Métis and Inuit women separately.

Aboriginal females make up 4% of female population in Canada

There were 718,500 Aboriginal women and girls in Canada in 2011, accounting for 4% of the female population. Of the women and girls who identified as an Aboriginal person, 61% reported a First Nations identity, 32% identified as Métis, and 4% reported an Inuit identity. The remaining women and girls reported multiple Aboriginal identities or did not identify with an Aboriginal group, but reported having registered Indian status and/or band membership.

Aboriginal women are less likely to have postsecondary qualifications

In 2011, half (51%) of Aboriginal women aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification, compared with 65% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. However, there were differences among the Aboriginal identity groups. The proportion of Métis women with a postsecondary education was 57%, while it was 47% for First Nations women and 36% for Inuit women.

Despite the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, data show that younger Aboriginal women had higher levels of education than older Aboriginal women. For example, 14% of Aboriginal women aged 35 to 44 had a university degree compared with 10% of those aged 55 to 64. A similar pattern was observed for all three Aboriginal groups.

At higher levels of educational attainment, Aboriginal women have slightly higher employment rates than non-Aboriginal women

Aboriginal women aged 25 to 64 (60.1%) were less likely than non-Aboriginal women of the same age group (71.4%) to be part of the paid work force in 2011. However, data show that among women who are university graduates, Aboriginal women (81.8%) had slightly higher employment rates than non-Aboriginal women (79.5%).

The gap in employment rates was much larger among women who did not have a certificate, diploma or degree. For example, 35.5% of Aboriginal women without a certificate, diploma or degree were employed, compared with 46.6% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts, a gap of 11.1 percentage points. Among women with a high school diploma or

equivalent certificate, 59.2% for Aboriginal women were employed compared with 65.6% of non-Aboriginal women, a gap of 6.4 percentage points.

Median income of Aboriginal women increases with education level

In 2010, the median income of Aboriginal women aged 15 and older was $19,289. That was about $5,500 less than the median income of their non-Aboriginal counterparts ($24,842).

The 2011 National Household Survey shows that median income was higher for Aboriginal women with higher education levels. For example, the median income for Aboriginal women aged 25 to 64 with no certificate, diploma or degree was $15,208 compared with $49,947 for Aboriginal women with a university certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor level or above.

Furthermore, the median income of Aboriginal women aged 25 to 64 with a university certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor level or above was slightly higher than that of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Specifically, Aboriginal women who were university graduates had a median income of $49,947 compared with $47,742 for non-Aboriginal women with the same level of education.

Note to readers

The results presented in this release are from the 2011 National Household Survey and include the on-reserve population and those living in the North. In addition, data from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies and the Canadian Survey on Disability were used in the publication chapter to highlight some of the demographic, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the Aboriginal female population living off reserve in Canada.

Products

The article "First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women" is now available as part of the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report* (Catalogue number89-503-X). From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

The seventh edition of the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report* (Catalogue number89-503-X) is also now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*. The publication is a collaborative effort of Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada

Contact information

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).

Date modified:
2016-02-23

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