

## **Immigrants' Sustainable Economic Integration in Canada through Social Enterprises**

The proposed paper seeks to explore the dynamics of immigrants' persistent economic isolation following their professional displacement they experience after arriving in Canada, and juxtaposing this to their emerging social and economic integration through social enterprises.

Evidence suggests i) there are structural contradictions in Canadian economic planning, which, over the years, ii) influenced the professional choices of landed immigrants by impelling them to undertake (underpaid) jobs, but iii) there has not been systemic encouragement in favour of small and medium enterprises and/ or immigrants' self employment. The combination of these factors led to their economic isolation, impeded their social integration and Canadian economy also suffered from immigrants' apparent underutilization.

Notwithstanding the structural contradictions and systemic exclusion, the immigrants have made significant contributions. In 2004, 70% of the net labour force growth was due to Immigrants; by 2011, this will reach 100%. The birth rate in Canada is only 1.5 children per woman; if current trends continue, there will be more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 15 in 2017. In the 1995-2005 decade, net immigration accounted for 60% of the population growth; by 2030, the international migration would become the only factor of population growth.

According to StasCan, Canada attracts over 250,000 immigrants each year and majority of them are highly qualified and accomplished. This is evident from the fact that immigrants who arrived during the 1990s helped lift the education level in Canada. According to StasCan, conditions for immigrants have been continuous deteriorating since 1980s and becoming more unfavorable, with their incomes dropping and impeding their settlement in Canada, which is now taking far longer as compared to the skilled immigrants of previous decades.

Regrettably, majority of the immigrants find a bumpy road to settlement & integration awaiting them in Canada, as 6 in 10 immigrants are forced to change their careers. The key barrier being failure of planning to provide them fair access to opportunities that could help them settle in jobs which correspond to their skills and credentials.

Human Endeavour, a grassroots organization in Ontario Canada, has worked extensively with immigrants since 2005, by helping the newcomers in finding innovative economic solutions by overcoming systemic barriers and using entrepreneurial skills to find enabling avenues leading to their self reliance through community rooted social enterprises. This helped immigrants in their sustainable, social and economic integration as well.

Using official data on one hand, and several case studies on the other, the paper will demonstrate how social enterprises have helped immigrants in increasing as well as sustaining incomes, attaining economic integration and helping settle with dignity. The paper will also analyze how the contradictions in the system - which expects immigrants to take up menial jobs as there are many structural hurdles in the way of finding suitable jobs – are negatively impacting Canadian economy by making the immigrants suffer, avoidably; and how these flaws can be corrected by promoting sustainable social enterprises.

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