

1. Introduction
2. Challenges
 - 2.1. Underfunding in Education
 - 2.2. Socio-economic Factors
 - 2.3. Lack of Respect and Resources
3. Solutions
 - 3.1. Enhancing Education Investment
 - 3.2. Improving the Socio-economic Conditions
 - 3.3. Hiring more Indigenous Educators
4. Post Secondary Student Program (Showcase)
5. Conclusion

Abstract

This research analyzes the current problems encountered in the development of aboriginal education in Canada. Describe historical policies and practices that have contributed to the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in education. Discuss current challenges facing Indigenous students and communities in education, such as underfunding, lack of culturally responsive teaching, and language loss, socio-economic. Provide an overview of various approaches and initiatives that have been proposed or implemented to address Indigenous education issues, such as land-based education, Indigenous language revitalization, increased funding for Indigenous education, and measures to promote socio-economic growth in indigenous areas. Moreover, explain one of the Successful Indigenous Education Programs (Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) as an example of limitations and advantages.

1 Introduction

While Canada has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in the world, the rate of graduation for Indigenous students remains far lower than that of non-Indigenous students. For

Indigenous students living on reserve, the gap is vast. According to Richards, J., & Mahboubi, P. (2018) study, only 48 percent of students living on reserve have completed high school, while 75 percent living off-reserve have completed high school. In addition, although the total number of aboriginal people who attain university degrees is increasing, throughout the past 25 years, the university education attainment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples is actually increasing (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2011). Considering the disparity of discrimination in education, a blatant issue is worthy of having an in-depth discussion—First Nation students are urged to be supplied with better educational resources and funding within kindergarten to postsecondary education. At the same time, educational disparities caused by socio-economic factors need to be addressed. Only by properly addressing the impact of government funding shortages, social factors, and resource scarcity can we narrow the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and ensure that every Canadian citizen enjoys a fair education. This Project would state three major challenges the indigenous people are confronting and showcase corresponding solutions to tackle the problems. Furthermore, the project will briefly introduce of Post Secondary Student Program. Ultimately, the project will conclude and evaluate the challenges and solutions to indigenous students' education.

Body 1: Problems

Underfunding, socio-economic factors, and lack of respect are three major challenges that the indigenous people are facing in regards to education. The fund can not cover all indigenous students, and the funding increase also can not keep up with inflation. For socioeconomic

factors, household environment and income can have a positive effect on education for indigenous students. Furthermore, the lack of respect mainly showcases the shortage of indigenous educators and resources. The project will elucidate the challenges in detail as follows.

Problem 1

Firstly, underfunding in education is a pivotal issue exerted by the government of Canada for indigenous people, conducting it even more unaffordable for them to attain a college degree (Malatest, 2004). Since the PPSP claimed, educational funding has been aimed to support indigenous students getting to the university more affordably while inflation is soaring faster than the funding growth. According to Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education (2004), the number of students supported by the post-secondary program has increased from about 3,600 in 1977–1978 to approximately 27,500 in 1999–2000. The report also states that funding has not increased since 1994, when \$20 million was added; in comparison, the First Nations students receive only enough funding to cover 48% of the estimated tuition fee per academic year. Considering the lower funding covering the tuition fee, the indigenous people are now facing a more severe financial problem in finishing their studies. Aboriginal students need more help and support from the government and communities by increasing funding and providing opportunities for jobs than at any other time.

Problem 2

Secondly, socio-economic factors also contribute significantly to the educational gap in the education of indigenous peoples. The socio-economic conditions in which many Indigenous communities endure are appalling (Battiste, 2008). This is evident on First Nations Reservations where infant mortality, youth suicide, unemployment and the overall number of people living below the poverty line are higher compared to the rest of Canada (Health Canada, 2009). The unemployment rate of Indigenous people living on reservations is 27.7%, compared to only 7.3% of the general Canadian population (Health Canada, 2009). Correspondingly, the median annual income for Indigenous people living on reservations is \$10,631 compared to the general Canadian population's income of \$22,274 (Health Canada, 2009). Aboriginal students encounter more complicated obstacles than their non-Aboriginal counterparts and face several socio-economic and cultural barriers to successful academic performance at a much earlier age than secondary school (Ting, 2011).

Problem 3

Thirdly, lack of respect and resources cause a critical education gap. Too often, education systems do not respect indigenous peoples' diverse cultures. There are too few teachers who speak their languages and their schools often lack basic materials. Educational materials that provide accurate and fair information on indigenous peoples and their ways of life are particularly rare (Education | United Nations For Indigenous Peoples. (n.d.). Despite the

numerous international instruments that proclaim universal rights to education, indigenous peoples do not fully enjoy these rights, and an education gap between indigenous peoples and the rest of the population remains critical, worldwide.(Education | United Nations For Indigenous Peoples. (n.d.). Similarly, research conducted in Northern Ontario (Zinga & Gordon, 2014) also found that Indigenous students routinely encountered racism and discrimination in high school. Students stressed the importance of teachers and staff understanding First Nations culture and realities and spoke about how they felt more connected to teachers who had some understanding of First Nations culture(Caddick,2020). Like their counterparts in the Six Nations community, these students from the Northern Nishnawbe Aski territory reported being “written off” by some teachers and connected to teachers who cared about them and pushed them to do their work. They also identified the need for the other mainstream students to be more aware of First Nations history and to challenge their preconceptions of First Nation people(Caddick,2020).

Body 2

The aim of the solutions presented is to address the issues faced by Indigenous education, such as the education gap, lack of funding, and socio-economic factors. Several approaches and initiatives have been proposed or implemented for these problems, including enhancing financial support for post-secondary education, enhancing socio-economic well-being through governmental policies, and employing more Indigenous educators while providing training to non-Indigenous educators.

Solution 1

Inadequate funding is a vital issue that needs to be solved to support more aboriginal students starting their post-secondary studies. The most direct way to support indigenous students is to increase the budget of post-secondary financial support, and the increase ought to be the same as the increase or faster than educational inflation (Preston, 2012). The Office of Native Student Services and the University of Alberta provide indigenous students with the aboriginal student housing program and a scholarships and bursaries program. In addition, from Aboriginal peoples and post-secondary education, there is an increased motivation to develop relationships and partnerships by incorporating private donations to set up more scholarships and bursaries and develop links with industry and employers. The report also takes the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's 2001 Scholarships for instance, with over 400 prizes and awards for indigenous students totaling over \$2 million, which are available annually to Aboriginal students (Malatest, 2004). It is glad to see that many indigenous student scholarships have more chances and opportunities to get more funding through a different approach. While the government and society still need to try more formation to support indigenous students, especially since some of them hardly get the information.

Solution 2

Solving the educational problems caused by social factors requires the government to formulate policies and provide assistance. "First Nations people tend to have significantly lower socio-economic well-being than other Canadians. Socio-economic well-being can be measured by tracking indicators in areas such as education, income, and health. Closing socio-economic gaps means improving the social well-being and economic prosperity of First Nations people living on reserves" (Government of Canada, n.d.). At the same time, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, created in 2008, had a mandate to inform Canadians about what happened in Indian residential schools. The Commission's final 2015 report included 94 calls to action, many of which referred to the socio-economic factors discussed in this audit. In 2015, the government committed to implementing these calls to action, coordinated by Indigenous Services Canada, including commitments to jointly develop strategies to eliminate education and employment gaps. Moreover, responding to the TRC, Universities Canada (2015) affirmed, "Universities have a major role to play in closing Canada's Indigenous education gap and supporting the reconciliation process" (p. 2).

Solution 3

The paragraph addresses solutions to address the education gap and the educational outcomes for Indigenous students, including hiring Indigenous educators, training non-Indigenous educators, and providing resources. The education gap for Indigenous people is a complex issue that has

roots in historical trauma, systemic discrimination, and ongoing marginalization (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015).

However, hiring more Indigenous educators and providing training to non-Indigenous educators on Indigenous history, culture, and ways of knowing is a crucial solution to improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015). Training non-Indigenous educators on Indigenous history, culture, and ways of knowing can equip them to teach Indigenous students effectively and create a more inclusive and respectful learning environment (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015). Training on Indigenous pedagogy, cultural safety, and anti-racism education can help, as can increasing funding and providing targeted support, such as tutoring and counseling services, for Indigenous students and schools (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). It is worth mentioning that, The two solutions presented seem practical and effective in creating a more inclusive learning environment. For Example, A study conducted by the University of Manitoba found that Indigenous students who had at least one Indigenous teacher in their K-12 education were more likely to succeed in high school, attend post-secondary education, and complete their studies (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, n.d.).

Post Secondary Student Program

The Post Secondary Student Program(PSSSP) provides Indigenous students in Canada with academic support, student support, including financial assistance, academic tutoring, and cultural programming, which can help Indigenous students navigate the challenges of post-secondary

education(Cameron & Vermeer, 2015). Several studies have found that the PSSSP is effective in improving Indigenous student outcomes. For example, a study by the Canadian government found that Indigenous students who received support through the program had higher retention and graduation rates than Indigenous students who did not receive the program's support (Cameron & Vermeer, 2015).

Despite the program's successes, there are still some challenges and limitations to the PSSSP program.

Firstly, some Indigenous students may face systemic barriers to accessing the program.

Systemic barriers in learning institutions pose significant challenges for Indigenous students, as they are often excluded from policies, programming, and curricula that do not authentically include their histories, knowledge, and teachings. Restoule et al. (2013) identified several barriers to accessing post-secondary education for Indigenous people in Canada, including inadequate financial resources, poor academic preparation, lack of self-confidence and motivation, absence of role models with post-secondary education experience, lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture on campus, and racism on campus. The legacy of mistrust left by Indian Residential Schooling and Eurocentric educational practices has also had a profound intergenerational impact on the Indigenous population. Restoule et al. (2013) found that mature students over the age of 25, mainly enrolled in bridging programs, make up the majority of Aboriginal students pursuing post-secondary institutions in Ontario.

Secondly, the program's funding is limited, which may prevent some Indigenous students from receiving the support they need (Pidgion et al., 2016).

It is important to note that the challenges highlighted by Pidgion et al. (2016) are significant and require urgent attention. The researcher found that this program is not enough for all the indigenous people, the program fund is only enough for approximately 32,000 students but not for all (Post Secondary Education and Treaty Rights, 2021). While the PSSSP program has been shown to be effective in improving Indigenous student outcomes, it is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that the program reaches as many students as possible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the education of Indigenous people faces numerous challenges that have been shaped by historical and cultural factors. Underfunding in education, socioeconomic factors, and lack of resources have been the significant problems faced by Indigenous students in achieving

higher education. However, The proposed solutions, including increased financial support, policy formulation, and respectful learning, are crucial in addressing these problems. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from educators, policymakers, and Indigenous communities themselves to work towards creating a more inclusive and culturally sensitive education system. This can include initiatives to support Indigenous language and culture in schools, providing access to quality education in remote areas, addressing bias and stereotyping, and increase the number of Indigenous teachers and leaders in the education system. By implementing these solutions, we can bridge the educational gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada and ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed.

References

1. Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. (2011). Aboriginal access to higher education. Retrieved from http://www.aucc.ca/search/index_e.html.

2. Battiste, M. (2008). The decolonization of Aboriginal education: Dialogue, reflection, and action in Canada. Educational theories and practices from the majority world, 168-195
3. Cameron, E., & Vermeer, J. (2015). Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program: Final report. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100033694/1594736967912>
4. Caddick, A. (2020, April 14). Indigenous education in Canada : Challenging the status quo. Open Access Government.
<https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/indigenous-education-canada-challenging-status-quo/27205/>
5. Drummond, D. & Rosenbluth, E. K. (2013). *The debate on First Nations education funding: Mind the gap* (Working Paper 49). Kingston: Queen's University School of Policy Studies. Retrieved from http://queensu.ca/sps/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.spswww/files/files/Publications/workin_gpapers/49-Drummond-Rosenbluthv3.pdf
6. Education | United Nations For Indigenous Peoples. (n.d.).
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/education.html>
7. Government of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada. (n.d.). *Report 5—Socio-economic Gaps on First Nations Reserves—Indigenous Services Canada*.
https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201805_05_e_43037.html
8. Health Canada (2009). A Statistical Profile on the Health of First Nations in Canada: Determinants of Health, 1999 to 2003.
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/alt_formats/fnihb-dgspni/pdf/pubs/aborig-autoch/2009-stats-profil_eng.pdf
9. Indigenous education. (Post Secondary Education and Treaty Rights (n.d.).
https://cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Indigenous-Education_Factsheets_2021_EN.pdf
10. Malatest, R. A. (2004). Aboriginal peoples and post-secondary education: what educators have learned/prepared by RA Malatest & Associates Ltd. *Millennium research series; no. 8*.

11. Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. (n.d.). Indigenous teacher education program. Retrieved from <https://mfnerc.org/programs/itep/>
12. National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). Reclaiming power and place: The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>
13. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. (2015). Calls to action. Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.
14. Pidgeon, M., Archibald, J., & Haworth-Brockman, M. (2016). Factors affecting the success of Aboriginal learners in British Columbia's post-secondary system: A review of the literature. First Nations Education Steering Committee. Retrieved from <https://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/PSE-Report-Factors-Affecting-the-Success-of-Aboriginal-Learners-in-BCs-Post-Secondary-System.pdf>
15. Preston, J. P., Cottrell, M., Pelletier, T. R., & Pearce, J. V. (2012). Aboriginal early childhood education in Canada: Issues of context. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 10(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718x11402753>
16. Richards, J., & Mahboubi, P. (2018). Measuring Student Outcomes: The Case for Identifying Indigenous Students in Canada's PISA Sample. *CD Howe Institute e-brief*, 272. https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/C.D.%20Howe%20E-Brief%20272.pdf
17. Ting, J. (2011). Barriers to post secondary education facing Aboriginal peoples in the North: Spotting the knowledge gaps. https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/3799/Tian_Jing_MPA_2012.pdf;seq.
18. Universities Canada. (2015). Closing Canada's Indigenous education gap. <http://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/issue-closing-canadas-indigenous-gap-oct-20151.pdf>
19. Walpole, M. (2003). Socioeconomic status and college: How SES affects college experiences and outcomes. *The review of higher education*, 27(1), 45-73.

Essay about Indigenous People

The indigenous peoples are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the land now identified as Canada” (Durand-Moreau et al., 2020). The article “Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Key Results from the 2016 Census” (2019) noted that

in 2016 the number of Indigenous people in the country was approximately 1 700 000, which represents 4.9% of the country's total population. Since 2006, the Aboriginal population has grown by 42.5%. Indigenous people make up around 5% of the global population.

They account for approximately 15% of the world’s extremely poor at the bottom in Index rating (“Indigenous Peoples have a Right”, n.d.). [SP1] The main reasons they found the world poor at the bottom of the index rating are because they are facing many problems. Indigenous people are facing various systemic issues such as poor health, low level of education, lack of adequate housing and overcrowded living conditions, higher level of unemployment, higher rates of suicide unintentional injuries and early deaths, Increased incarceration rate, and many more. In my view, two critical areas are health and education. Appropriate education and health enable indigenous children and adult learners to exercise and enjoy economic, social, and cultural rights. Appropriate education and health[SP2] will also solve other issues like unemployment, decreased suicide, awareness of human rights, and fundamental freedom. [SP3]

To begin with, firstly[SP4] , the major challenge they are facing is health. “Indigenous people face systemic issues, including racism, discrimination, and bias within institutions (e.g., hospitals and healthcare facilities)” (Durand-Moreau et al., 2020). [SP5] These systemic problems help explain the health disparities between Canada's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. These disparities include increased rates of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, substance abuse, and mental health problems, and increased mortality and post-surgical complications[SP6] . Secondly[SP7] , the major and one of the key issues is the lack of quality education. The article “Indigenous Peoples have a Right to Quality Education” (n.d.) stated that education is recognized as a human right and an indispensable means of achieving other human rights and basic freedoms. In many instances around the world, education for Indigenous peoples is not only inadequate, but it also threatens the very existence of these people. The article “Indigenous Peoples have a Right to Quality Education” (n.d.) [SP8] explained that,

Education policies and systems have often been used to systemically discriminate against indigenous peoples, assimilate them (and at times “civilize” them) into the broader society, and thus destroy their culture, languages, identity, and rights, and displace them of their lands, territories, and natural resources.

[SP9]

From my perspective, education and health are key issues for Indigenous people. The right to health and education is a universal human right, fundamental to addressing gaps in human well-being, equity, and opportunity. The best education is the door through which economically and socially marginalized people can exit poverty and gain the means to participate fully in their communities. When these key questions are addressed, others are automatically resolved.

[SP10]

To conclude, Indigenous peoples in Canada face significant socio-economic inequality compared to non-Indigenous Canadians due to the impacts of colonization, inadequate quality education, not being aware of human rights, and facing too many issues. [SP11] Health and education are the main two key issues indigenous people which are they face now. If these two key issues are resolved, the remaining ones are automatically resolved. [SP12]

References

1. Durand-Moreau, Q., Lafontaine, J., & Ward, J. (2022). *Work and health challenges of Indigenous people in Canada*. The Lancet Global Health, 10(8), e1189-e1197. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(22\)00203-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(22)00203-0/fulltext) (Link will open in this tab.)Links to an external site.
2. Government of Canada, S. C. (2019, July 2). Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 census. The Daily -. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm> (Link will open in new tab.)Links to an external site.
3. *Indigenous peoples have a right to quality education. but so far, we have failed them*. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/08/indigenous-people-have-a-right-to-quality-education-but-so-far-we-ve-failed-them/> (Link will open in this tab.)Links to an external site.

