

**DIVERSITY IN THE CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR:
UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS THAT INHIBIT INCLUSION**

BY

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in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

In recent years, Canada has experienced more demographic changes than ever before. This is due to the influx of people from diverse origins. This demographic mix means that the provision of services should be such that it meets the needs of a diverse population. In addition, the huge influx of women into the workforce raises their expectations about their participation in the labour force. Disabled persons are becoming more visible in the larger society as well as in the labour force. Aboriginal peoples are demanding for their rights, and for recognitions. The public service, as the main provider of essential services to Canadians, is faced with the task of providing these services to citizens and involving citizens in the provisions of services. One of the concerns in Canadian society is that the public service workforce does not reflect the make up of society. This, in turn suggests that diverse needs might not be given appropriate consideration, in policy and administrative terms. A guiding theme that runs through the paper is the need to strengthen and sharpen the legal and political commitment to the pursuit of greater equality of opportunity for employment in the public service for all Canadians regardless of origin or physical abilities. There is need to link policy to transformation in political attitudes and action.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The federal Public Service of Canada is the largest employer in the country. It is concerned with recruiting, placing and promoting employees in various departments. In many cases, the employees provide essential services to the public. Because of this, the Public Service plays a major role in ensuring that the public needs are met, and that it recruits the best qualified candidates for its various positions. At the same time, in recent years, Canadian society has been faced with changes in the composition of the population. More than ever before, many people are coming to Canada from different countries, giving rise to a diverse population. Since World War II, many of the new arrivals in Canada have been people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, from continental Europe. The diversity of the population affects the kind of services that are to be provided to the people. This is because service providers have to take into consideration the different needs of a diverse population. For example, a tax official in Revenue Canada is bound to interact very often with people from the business community, or other individuals, who speak languages other than English or French. Interaction between the tax official and the client(s) may not be very easy if they do not understand each other.

Canadian society looks at this diversity from different angles. Some Canadians do acknowledge and appreciate the fact that Canada is a diverse society, and are proud of this diversity. Others, on the other hand, do not support this diversity. History provides

an understanding of the perception that Canadians have about the presence of different groups of people from different cultural and national backgrounds. It is important to examine these historical elements because they may explain why the entry of many Canadians in the middle and upper level management positions in organizations, including the public sector, is being hampered.

Race

Canada is an immigrant country because all Canadians, with the exception of Aboriginal people, are immigrants. Its growth has depended a great deal on the efforts of the many immigrants who came, and still continue to come, from different parts of the world. During the post-World War II periods, Canada experienced high levels of immigration and the majority of immigrants came from continental Europe. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, immigration to Canada had been controlled with high degrees of intensity as regulations became very restrictive. These restrictions gave priorities to immigrants from countries labelled *preferred* and those least considered for immigration into Canada were from the *non-preferred* countries. (Green 1976:15). In order of preference, these *preferred* countries included the United Kingdom, the United States, countries of northern and western Europe (excluding France until 1947), countries of central and eastern Europe, and countries of southern Europe. Blacks from the United States were restricted from entering Canada until the 1960s when these restrictions were removed. The official explanation by Canadian authorities about these preferences was that immigrants from the *preferred* countries, excluding Blacks from the United States,

were considered not too different in language and mode of life. New arrivals from the *non-preferred* countries could not be assimilated as easily into Canadian society and economy as those who came from the *preferred* countries. Thus the immigration policy had a national and racial origin bias. This bias dominated the policy until the late 1950s. The policy clearly drew a line between white and non-white immigrants. This bias was implied in the speech of Prime Minister McKenzie King in 1947, concerning the unwillingness of Canadians "to make a fundamental alteration in the character of the population". (Green 1976:23). This bias may be seen as ill-will towards people who were not whites, and was also due to ignorance about the benefits that other groups of people would bring to Canada. The bias may further be due to the desire to make Canada a predominantly white man's land.

After 1957, there were major changes in immigration control. Emphasis was placed on the inflow of highly trained immigrants and the abandonment of national and racial discrimination. The government at the time shifted emphasis from unskilled immigrant workers from *preferred* countries to professionals, highly skilled immigrants, farmers and entrepreneurs with capital. Professionals and entrepreneurs were seen as job creators. The government also felt that mechanization of industry reduced the need for unskilled labour and created vacancies for professional, skilled and service workers which could not be filled by Canadians. The demand for immigrants was also explained by the fact that Canada was experiencing a zero population growth, due to constant birth and death rates. The number of immigrants from the *preferred* countries, it was believed, was not sufficient to increase the number of Canadians needed to rebuild the economy. Canada faced a

critical shortage of manpower and the demand for foreign labour centred on new arrivals from outside to fill this gap. The government emphasized the need to admit immigrants and their families who were suitable and had the required background and training to become worthwhile Canadian citizens. The key to the immigration policy was to have a consistent application of proper selection standards designed to bring the best settlers to Canada, regardless of their country of origin. (Green 1976:36).

The change in immigration policy opened the door to more and more immigrants, and the most important change in immigration since World War II was the significant shift in source. In the late 1950s, 85 percent of the total number of immigrants came from Europe, with about 30 percent coming from Great Britain. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the percentage from Europe had significantly declined to about 50 percent and the percentage from Asia had risen to 13.7 percent and to 12.5 percent from South and Central America. By the beginning of the 1980s, the percentage from Asia had increased to 35 percent, and 8 percent came from Africa. (Marr 1992:26).

Racial bias as a policy persisted until 1967, when the elimination of discrimination by racial origins or country of birth was instituted with the introduction of the **Points System**. (Marr 1992:27). The system required that an applicant obtain a certain score where points were given for possessing certain characteristics considered to provide a better chance of finding employment in Canada, and adjusting easily to Canadian society. The Points system has remained a very important element of Canada's immigration policy since it was instituted.

Against this background, the Canadian society started experiencing a racial mix at

a pace faster than ever before, thus transforming it from a relatively homogenous to a diverse one. Large cities like Toronto and Vancouver are experiencing the highest rates of immigrant increase in Canada. For example, in 1991, it was estimated that about 24 percent of Toronto's population comprised races other than white. It is further projected that by the year 2001, this will increase to 44 percent. Toronto is known as one of Canada's most multicultural cities. (Wilson 1996:10). Thus, with the easing of immigration restrictions, the demographic effects of immigration became apparent. Canadian society became, and is continuing to become, more racially diverse.

Despite the growing number of immigrants in Canada, there have been mixed feelings about the presence and inflow of immigrants from developing countries. By the second half of the 1970s, racist attitudes became apparent across major sectors of the Canadian society, including education, police, the media, social services and the employment system. (Beaujot 1992:56). Reports concerning the economic situation of immigrants reveal that immigrants from Europe and their children have been economically successful and upwardly mobile as they adjust quickly to the economic conditions. This is in contrast to immigrants from developing countries who, in many cases do not do very well in terms of labour force participation. (Beaujot 1992:57). Despite reports that serious racial problems exist in the major urban centres across the Canadian society, racial discrimination remained unacknowledged by many Canadians except those who suffer from its consequences.

In recent years, however, the government of Canada has come to the realization that discrimination, including racism, indeed exists in both its individual and institutional

forms. In 1984, the *Royal Commission on Equality in Employment*, chaired by Judge Rosalie Abella, was established to examine the employment practices of eleven crown corporations. The report of the commission revealed evidence that racial minorities, women, Aboriginal people and disabled persons experienced lower participation rates in the labour force, high unemployment and underemployment rates, occupational segregation and low income levels, and that these resulted from discrimination. (Abella 1984:24). The commission recommended that the elimination of all forms of discrimination should be given serious attention. Follow up studies were conducted to collect data on the attitudes and practices of a representative sample of Toronto employers on issues relating to both hiring and management of multiracial workforce. The study revealed a significant negative view towards racial minorities: that racial minorities in general do not have the ability to meet performance criteria as compared to whites (Collins and Henry 1994:538).

In 1971, the government adopted a multicultural policy with two main goals: the integration of Canada's many cultural groups and the need to achieve unity in a country of cultural diversity. The policy supported the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritages and ensuring that Canadians would come to appreciate and respect one another despite their differences. However, multiculturalism as a public policy has resulted in vigorous debate since its adoption. Opponents of multiculturalism, including racial minority groups, have criticized it as an inadequate framework for addressing the problem of racism and eliminating racial discrimination. Other Canadians argue that multiculturalism encourages isolation of the various cultural groups and may "tribalize Canadian society" (Collins and Henry 1994:544). Thus, the history of immigration in Canada is linked to

racism, prejudice and discrimination.

This attitude not only shaped immigration policy but it also planted the roots of racial division that continue to plague Canadian society to date. Although a number of laws have been introduced to protect the rights of all Canadians from racial discrimination, various ethnic groups, especially those identified as *racial minorities* from the *non-preferred* countries, continue to experience racial bias, receive differential treatment and suffer racial disadvantage. (Green 1976:18) Most ethnic groups are not usually treated as racial minorities, especially those from *preferred* origins. It is generally argued by some Canadians that racial minorities do not have access to positions of authority because they do not possess the qualities required for these positions. For example, they are excluded from middle and high level positions in employment on the grounds of inadequate or irrelevant training and experience. Because of this, many of them who are qualified to do professional jobs may find themselves segregated in low paying jobs not commonly done by mainstream Canadians. This segregation is based on, and reinforced by, common ideas about race, racial difference and racial inequality. The labour of people of colour is assumed to be unskilled and therefore inferior, as a result the jobs they do are considered of lesser value, justifying low status and therefore low wages. (Das Gupta 1996:15). Immigrants are seen as challenges rather than as equal members of society. As well, some Canadians believe that their values are being threatened by foreign cultures. (Das Gupta 1996:16). Although the federal government's policy of multiculturalism supports immigration, these fears continue to be expressed. This division has meant that there is a strong barrier between one's ability and his/her opportunity to demonstrate it.

Gender

Discrimination in Canada is not limited to race alone. Gender discrimination has been an aspect of the Canadian society for many years. This is reflected in the disadvantaged situation of women as compared to men. Although women are increasingly entering the workforce, they continue to work disproportionately in a limited range of jobs for which they receive low pay when compared to men. This pattern of segregation goes back in time. During World War II, women's participation in the labour force increased dramatically but these increases were not reflected in the decennial census then. This was because women often performed tasks similar to those carried out in the homes and these tasks were considered women's tasks. As a result, women's participation in these activities was not documented in census data. Unpaid work in the home has not been included in labour force statistics. (Wilson 1991:65). Women's participation in the home, and in some sectors of paid labour outside the home, was not considered to be a positive economic contribution and perhaps not considered worth documenting. This was particularly true for service oriented jobs, for example, sales and nursing. Society remained very indifferent about the positive contributions women were making.

In the early 20th century, women were mostly recruited into clerical and sales jobs, nursing and teaching. It was argued that these occupations prepared women for the demands of spinsterhood and early widowhood. Some of these occupations, it was further argued, prepared women for marriage because they received training in diet and nutrition, hygiene and home care. Women continued to do domestic work and for whatever paid work they did, for example in factories, they received less pay for the same type of

job performed by men.(Wilson 1991:67). Women were regarded as temporary members of the workforce, since they would be married and would be fully occupied rearing children. Men earned more to enable them support the family. The argument here was that women deserved less pay because they were not the bread winners, the men were. Thus the assumption was that a woman's place was in the home. This assumption justified restrictions on educational opportunities for women. Women were considered physically and intellectually weaker than men and were therefore not suited to the jobs the men did. Thus, they were concentrated in jobs that did not require the skills that men would have. These jobs included nursing, typing and shorthand. (In previous centuries, secretaries were often men, however, this changed over time to become a "women's job"). In addition, teaching and nursing were considered suitable for women because the professions prepared women for the challenges of motherhood. (Wilson 1991:78). Women were excluded from jobs that required advanced training, for example, law, medicine, commerce and engineering. One may look at this situation as a deliberate attempt to deny women the opportunity to compete alongside men.

Although women have been concentrated in service, clerical, sales and factory work, (Armstrong and Armstrong 1983:12), many are gradually moving into all occupations. These patterns of labour force segregation and pay differentials have deep historical roots. At the base of this segregation are assumptions about women's primary responsibility for domestic maintenance. These patterns have persisted into the present times, with men dominating the higher levels of organizations, and women continuing to dominate part time and temporary jobs, jobs with low pay, no benefits, pension or even prospects for

promotions. (Wilson 1991:79). Despite major changes in both family and work, the expectation by men that women will continue to assume the major responsibility for raising children and looking after the home persists. There are therefore widespread stereotypes, discriminatory and restrictive perceptions of and attitudes towards women by men. This has tended to limit women's active involvement in many of society's activities, including taking on middle and upper level management positions.

Aboriginal Peoples

The Aboriginal peoples are yet another disadvantaged group in the Canadian society. Fleras and Elliot (1992:1) defined Aboriginal peoples as:

.... the existing descendants of those who are commonly thought to be the original inhabitants of a territory, who now occupy an encapsulated status as subordinate members of a larger society, but who continue to identify with a cultural lifestyle at odds with that of the dominant sector.

There are three broad categories of peoples that are accepted by the government of Canada as Aboriginal; these are the Indians (status and non-status), the Inuit and the Metis. According to the 1986 census, Aboriginal peoples comprised 2.8 per cent of Canada's population. (Waldrum 1994:53). Although the Aboriginal peoples identify themselves as the original occupants of Canada, and therefore wish to preserve and protect their cultural heritage, their history has been that of oppression by the early European settlers. The oppression meant the loss of resources, culture and identity. Thus, in modern times, the relationship between the mainstream Canadian society and the

Aboriginal peoples focusses on the great disparities in resources and economic opportunities. With the coming of the settlers, Aboriginal land rights were not recognized. The settlers took away land from the Aboriginal peoples and assigned them to reservations (reserves). (Rubinstein and Tax 1985:303). The actions of the settlers can be looked at from two angles. First, the settlers had intruded upon the lives of the Aboriginal peoples, causing them much dissatisfaction. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the settlers had marginalized and removed the Aboriginal peoples from the mainstream of economic, social and political life to allow for the expansion of white society. This expansion was to have long term negative consequences for the Aboriginal peoples.

The European settlers had in their minds many different and sometimes contradictory images of Aboriginal peoples. There was the ambivalence of many racial attitudes. Although the different groups of settlers were not very consistent in the opinions they expressed about the Aboriginal peoples, common attitudes did emerge. Some early settlers considered the Aboriginal peoples to be the "nastiest race of people under the sun" and that they did not qualify as humans. (Fisher 1992:76). The tendency of many white settlers to dehumanize the Aboriginal peoples was further seen from comments made about the savage nature of Aboriginal peoples which distinguished them from the race of human kind, and that Aboriginal peoples behaved like brute animals rather than as rational creatures. (Fisher 1992:76). Many settlers emphasized not only the different ways that Aboriginal peoples were different from them, but also how inferior Aboriginal peoples were to them. Thus, from the first time that the European settlers came into contact with the Aboriginal peoples, they tended to emphasize those traits that established

their separateness from the latter, rather than those that demonstrated their common humanity. It therefore follows that many of the early European settlers assumed superiority over the Aboriginal peoples and developed prejudice them. The stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples as "savages, filthy, treacherous, lazy, dishonest" people developed. (Fisher 1992:77).

Because of their culture and lifestyle of hunting and gathering, Aboriginal peoples were not considered organized and civilized. The European settlers did not consider Aboriginal land occupied and therefore felt free to exploit the wealth. (Fisher 1992:77). Such exploitation and imposition of powers of the settlers on the Aboriginal people was based on coercion. Although there may have been cases of inter-tribal wars in the Aboriginal society, the traditional life of Aboriginal peoples was greatly disrupted by the coming of the settlers. This state of affairs marred the relationship between the Aboriginal peoples and the white settlers. What the Aboriginal peoples valued as their culture and tradition passed down from generation to generation was condemned by the settlers as primitive and barbaric. The reality is that the settlers were ignorant of the different cultures that existed on the face of the earth and did not understand Aboriginal way of life. This apparent lack of understanding led the settlers to undermine and look down upon the Aboriginal peoples. The settlers tried to change Aboriginal way of life by introducing Christianity, and by taking children away from their parents and putting them in residential schools. The settlers forced the children to abandon their native languages and adopt languages spoken by the settlers (Frideres 1988:78). The settlers believed that these were ways of civilizing the Aboriginal peoples and integrating them into the modern life that they

had introduced.

The Indian Act of 1876 determined the destiny of the Aboriginal peoples. The act gave the mandate to government administrators to control the lives of the Aboriginal peoples. It defined who was an Indian, Inuit and Métis and who was entitled to government benefits under the act. The act further restricted the Aboriginal peoples in many ways. For example, Aboriginal peoples could not own land or develop it without the consent of the government. They could not leave the reserves without permission, or hold large gatherings. (Friederes 1988:78). The act regulated the life of the Aboriginal peoples in many ways and removed most of whatever freedom that they previously enjoyed on their land. The negative attitudes of the European settlers towards Aboriginal peoples was further aggravated by events taking place in other parts of the world. At the time that the European settlers were establishing themselves in Canada, there were European settlements taking place elsewhere, for example, in India, South Africa and New Zealand. All these settlements were met with resistance from indigenous people (Fisher 1992:86). The resistance shocked and horrified the settlers who expected submission from the original inhabitants. These conflicts seemed to corroborate negative views of Aboriginal peoples generally and forced racial undercurrents closer to the surface. By the beginning of the 20th century, European attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples in Canada and elsewhere became more and more abusive, as did their treatment. (Fisher 1992:86). Thus, the Aboriginal peoples became marginalized and this situation can be traced to the establishment of foreign influence. This situation, when viewed as part of the employment equity problem, is one of the concerns of this thesis.

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities constitute a fourth group in the Canadian society that is being discriminated against. They have been distinguished from other citizens because of their physical and mental needs. This has resulted in differential treatment and, to some extent, fewer rights. According to the World Health Organization, WHO, disability is defined as, "any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" (Quoted in Department of Secretary of State 1986:7). These conditions do not allow the individuals to move, or see, or hear, thus limiting their abilities to function in ways important to daily living, including work. Because of these limitations, society tends to assign disabled persons a wide range of imperfections, and look at them as burdens rather than as people with various degrees of importance. (Romano 1982:66). Although disabled persons may have special skills and capabilities that many able bodied persons do not have, they still have trouble finding jobs because many employers do not believe they can perform work as well as able bodied persons. In addition, some employers find it expensive to modify the workplace to accommodate their disabilities (Romano 1982:66).

Disabled persons are becoming more visible in society as they fight for recognition. As an emerging minority, disabled persons find that they are not being met with open arms by society and its institutions. Thus the general attitudes and prejudices in society breed discrimination against persons with disabilities. This limits their choices and opportunities to live as worthwhile citizens. Instead, many of them depend on government for their livelihood, and this dependency tends to promote low self esteem.

Orientation and Organization of the Study

An understanding of these historical relationships is very important in understanding the current relationship between the mainstream Canadian society and the different groups of people discussed above. The stereotypes held by some Canadians in historical times about immigrants, women, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities, are being kept alive by some members of society in the present days, and this affects the way society perceives the above mentioned groups. The perceptions then shape the way some members of the mainstream society act towards these groups. In many cases, these actions, whether direct or indirect, are discriminatory and have negative psychological and socio-economic consequences for the said groups. These actions are found in employment, in the school systems on the streets and in social interactions.

The main focus of this paper will reflect on the disproportionate representation of visible minorities, women, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities in the Canadian public sector. These groups are herein referred to as members of the designated groups, as defined by the federal government. The disproportionate representation is due to the discrimination that these groups continue to experience. Society's perception of these groups limits their chances of getting jobs.

The thesis approaches its argument from the view that the public service, as the largest employer in Canada, is not doing enough to recruit members of the said groups, particularly in the middle and upper level management positions, on a reasonable scale. The concept of discrimination will be examined and the thesis will attempt to establish a relationship between discrimination and the current rate of absorption of members of the

said groups in the public sector, particularly in the middle and upper level management positions . Of particular interest to us will be systemic discrimination, the discrimination that is not direct but embedded in the cultures and practices of the organization. Discrimination in this context, is based on race, gender and physical abilities.

Chapter Two will discuss discrimination in Canadian society and will note that this discrimination has infiltrated the labour market on a wide scale. As a result, members of the designated groups find it difficult to compete favourably for jobs, particularly in the middle and upper management positions of the public service.

In Chapter Three, an examination of the legislation and regulations against discrimination will be undertaken. Of particular interest will be the *Human Rights laws*, *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Employment Equity* legislation of 1986 and 1996 respectively. This chapter will attempt to find out the extent to which government is making efforts in identifying discrimination as a problem of great concern, and to what extent anti-discriminatory measures have been and are being effectively implemented in government departments.

Chapter Four examines diversity as an outcome of eliminating discriminatory practices in employment. The Merit Principle, as a criterion for recruiting the best candidates for appointment to the public service, will also be discussed, with the aim of exploring the extent to which the public service is adhering to this principle.

In Chapter Five, the process of managing a diverse workforce will be discussed. The achievement of a diverse workforce will involve making changes in both the cultures and structure of the organization. This change process calls for the involvement of all

employees.

Chapter Six examines the value of diversity to the organization and how the public service could benefit from a diverse workforce, and will stress that a diverse workforce values and fully utilizes all its human resources. Furthermore, diversity based on race, gender and physical disabilities gives opportunity to those who were initially left out of the workforce to prove their worth and capabilities as productive members of society.

The research method used in Chapters Two through Six is the review of literature on employment equity in the public sector. An examination of the Public Service Commission Annual Reports provided information about the representation of members of the designated groups and to what extent they are or they are not represented on a reasonable scale, particularly in middle and upper levels of the federal public service. The review of literature is substantiated by interviews conducted among several senior public servants involved in employment equity programs. A sample of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

Finally, in the conclusion, the thesis strongly argues that the public service should have a diversified workforce, a workforce that is representative of the population it serves. The workforce should be inclusive of qualified individuals capable of meeting the needs of a diverse society and that the talents of all employees be utilized so that the public service achieves its goal. A diverse workforce will ensure a broader range of input into decisions thus improving policy making by government.

CHAPTER TWO

DISCRIMINATION IN CANADIAN SOCIETY AND INEQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Discrimination stems from the belief that one group is innately superior to another.

Discrimination is defined as:

....practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or impact, the effect of limiting an individual's or a group's right to the opportunities generally available because of attributed rather than actual characteristics. What is impeding the full development of the potential is not the individual's capacity but an external barrier that artificially inhibits growth (Abella 1984:2)

Given this definition, one may see that discrimination is one of the main problems facing Canadian society. It denies equal opportunities for full participation in the major social institutions of Canadian society to some members of the population. (Hughes and Kallen 1974:107). Because of the unequal distribution of opportunities and rewards, the groups being discriminated against do not compete favourably for jobs. Discrimination is of two kinds. *Overt* discrimination is the more open and direct practices and may be directed at an individual or a group of people. Over the years however, overt discrimination has been greatly reduced by legislation, public opinion and education. *Covert* discrimination is hidden, yet persistent and therefore difficult to eliminate, as it is embedded in the practices of institutions. Those who discriminate do so in order to maintain an established practice and in so doing they believe that they are protecting what they see as an "established social order". (Hill 1977:13). Thus, a landlord may refuse to rent an apartment to an

individual because that individual belongs to a particular group not liked by the other tenants or by the management of the building. By so refusing to rent the apartment to that individual, the landlord has not only “quietly” discriminated against the individual but is also perpetuating the established practice of the management. On the surface, the landlord will claim that the apartments are all occupied. This kind of discrimination is said to be *systemic*. However, the landlord may also be acting on the basis of his/her own personal prejudice, in which case, this is discrimination on individual basis and may not necessarily reflect the practices of the company.

In a 1974 study carried out on racism in Canada, Hughes and Kallen concluded that discrimination based on race was institutionalized and so persistent that even,

If prejudice could be (suddenly) totally eliminated from the system, the structural inequalities rooted in the everyday impersonal operation of the ethnic hierarchy would continue to exclude substantial portions of members of some ethnic minorities from full participation in the major institutions of society (1974:107).

Hill agrees with these findings and argued further that:

There probably is no more subtle form of discrimination, none more pervasive, none more difficult to combat than institutional discrimination. With its roots buried deep in Canadian social history, it makes many of our major institutions - notably our business and schools- operate to the detriment or exclusion of racial minorities (1977:15).

The employability of persons, able-bodied or disabled, depends on a number of factors: the availability of employment, the availability of the individual for employment and the possession of skills and competence needed to meet the job requirements. However, in the case of persons in the designated groups, additional factors may be present, such as

stereotypes or prejudicial attitudes that may affect recruitment and promotion. As a result, some of them are denied access to jobs which could help improve their socio-economic status. This therefore means that not every Canadian has equal opportunity to access these resources. The responsibility to distribute these resources rests in the hands of a few executives who, attempt to direct these resources to people they know or favour. (Pfeffer 1981:98). The fact that only few people are responsible for the distribution of resources means that there is unequal distribution of power. The unequal distribution of power results in power being concentrated in the hands of a few, in which case the power holders are able to exploit those who do not have access to resources. Mintzberg (1983:2) defines power as the capability of one social actor to bring about desired outcomes. Power is therefore a relationship among social actors in which one social actor has influence over another and that social actor can get another social actor to do something that the latter would not otherwise do. With respect to organizations, power relationships among groups are influenced by the organization culture, which in turn is shaped by societal factors. Accordingly, this means that the unequal distribution of power in organization is a reflection of the unequal distribution of power in the larger society in which the organization is embedded. (Mintzberg 1983:5).

On the other hand, power does not always have to be associated with bad things only. Looked at positively, power can mean efficacy and the capacity to make things happen. (Kanter 1996:400). For example, managers need power to move the organization towards its goal. In this case, having power may mean having access to resources and information and being able to act quickly and pass the resources and information to

subordinates for further action. Thus, in organizations, power may be equated with the ability to mobilize resources to do work well and convince others within the organization that their specific tasks and abilities are substantial and important. However, when this power is always concentrated in the hands of the same groups only, and the rest of the groups in the organization do not get a share of this power, then one may argue that power is associated with negative things. (Kanter 1996:400). In this case, individuals with power define the organization's culture and determine which groups get resources. This process becomes self-perpetuating cycle which then promotes inequitable and exclusionary power relationships among groups in organizations. (Kanter 1996:400). These inequitable power relationships become entrenched in the structure of the organization, which reflects and reinforces the culture by not only limiting the entry of other groups in the organization, but by segregating them to lower level positions. This means that they are not availed opportunities for promotion, or they are not given assignment of responsibilities.

Many organizations are characterized by division of labour or job specialization. This specialization allows the achievement of various kinds of tasks to be performed. Task specialization leads to the creation of power differentiation within the organization. (Pfeffer 1981:98). This is because the various functions and activities may not be equally critical to the accomplishment of the task and for the survival of the organization, but may be important nevertheless. As a result, those units or sections of the organization that are responsible for accomplishing the more critical tasks and activities tend to have more influence in the organization.(Pfeffer 1981:100). Thus the different employees are differentiated by the kind of work they do and subsequently by the amount of power that

each possesses. The amount of power each employee possesses is defined from the kind of activity performed. While all activities in the organization are important, some are more critical than others, as they involve making decisions that are critical to the survival of the organization. It is in this regard that power in organizations is said to be structurally determined.

When the public service was instituted, it predominately consisted of able bodied white males. This meant that critical tasks in the organization rested in their hands. The other groups in the public service, in this case the designated groups, had limited opportunities to enter the organization or if they did enter the organization, remained outside the leadership circles. (Poole 1997:11). For example, traditionally women in the public service found themselves in more routine low-profile jobs or served in support capacities to senior managers. They were therefore kept out of the mainstream of the public service. For those few that were senior managers, they had less power, in the sense that they had limited access to resources to enable them do their work well. In some cases, they were not given enough responsibilities to prove themselves, thus leaving them in the same position, for a long time, sometimes till retirement.(Poole 1997:12). Because most power holders in the public service have been middle aged white males, their experience has been held to be the standard by which performance is evaluated and rewarded. (Poole 1997:12). Promotions and resources for power were allocated to individuals who were believed to be appropriate for leadership roles. One result of this was that individuals who shared common physical characteristics or values with the power holders were likely to gain access to higher positions than those who were different, thus

promoting a culture of unequal power relationships among the different groups. This indeed has been the trend in the public service and has resulted in power being defined as a white, able-bodied male phenomenon. (Poole 1997:13). Access to power, in many cases, was limited to those who were seen as physically and culturally appropriate for the various roles.

In the area of employment, discrimination takes place at any point in the employment process. For example, at the level of recruitment, the members of the designated groups may not have access to job information as many jobs are not widely advertised. In many organizations, verbal recruitment is frequently used as employers may have already earmarked friends, relatives, or family members for various jobs. (Henry and Ginzberg 1985:12). Those individuals who do not have a network of friends and relatives in high level positions to give information on jobs available, find themselves left out of competitions for jobs. This is particularly true for members of racial minorities who may not have a strong network of friends and relatives in positions of authority. This leaves them with little opportunity to compete for any mid and high level positions in organizations. At the level of selection, discrimination takes place when job applicants are required to call upon the employer for an initial interview. A prejudicial employer may tell the applicant that the job is filled or quickly tell the applicant that his/her qualifications are not sufficient. It is reported that this has been the experience of many members of the designated groups in the labour market. (Henry and Ginzberg 1985:13).

Visible Minorities

Visible minorities experience discrimination in the workplace in many ways. Many of them have credentials from outside of Canada, and this poses problems when they are looking for jobs. In addition, having "Canadian experience" is known to be one of the prerequisites for getting jobs in many departments. Having a foreign accent is reported to cause problems for racial minorities who are seeking professional jobs. (Henry and Ginzberg 1985:13). This eliminates many minorities who may not necessarily have Canadian work experience but may have the academic training and transferable skills required for the jobs. Even those minorities who have had training in Canadian or other North American institutions of higher learning have problems getting jobs in middle and upper level positions. For example, a Jamaican immigrant with a BA honours degree from Harvard University, Massachusetts, and a Ph. D. from Stanford University, California, was reported to have received a letter from the Evaluation Officer of the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ministry responsible for Colleges and Universities, advising him that his educational attainment in the United States may be considered comparable to the completion of at least Grade Thirteen in the Ontario School System. (Report of Special Comm. 1984:33). While the intentions of the evaluation officer were not known, it is difficult for one to comprehend how higher university degree from such reputable institutions are equated to a high school qualification. One may interpret this act as being prejudicial and it is because of this mind-set that some groups in the population do not get the same treatment as other groups. This argument is supported by a report from Statistics Canada, which revealed that:

Visible minorities are generally more highly educated than other adults but they are less likely to be employed in professional or managerial occupations. Many are concentrated in lower paying clerical, service and manual labour jobs (Quoted in Martin 1996:12).

The educational system of many developing countries is patterned after that of western countries. For example, the predominant paradigms of medical and medical education developed in the western countries are adopted in many developing countries. (Bolaria and Li 1988:229) (2). This unified education system fosters skills that are easily transferable. However, when minorities from developing countries come to Canada, they cannot compete favourably for high level jobs. This is because their educational standards are not considered equivalent to Canadian standards. Instead they are confined to lower level positions where the pay is low and no skills are required to do the jobs. (Bolaria and Li 1988 :230) (2). On this note, one may rightly argue that the usefulness of minorities is to increase the supply of a particular type of labour, namely cheap labour, needed to work in the various sectors of the economy. Likewise, in promotional practices, racial minorities may be hired in lower level jobs and denied access to new job openings, training and upgrading opportunities on the basis of allegations of "incompetence". (Das Gupta 1996:38). At the same time, colleagues from the mainstream society with lesser qualifications and experience are known to have been mentored and eventually promoted to senior positions. Discrimination in employment may also be seen when employers' actions result in differential treatment of employees on the basis of sex, race or physical capabilities. Unequal pay for similar or the same work is a typical example of differential

treatment. (Das Gupta 1996:38).

Institutional racism has been linked to the demands of economies for large quantities of cheap and docile labour. Western capitalists placed emphasis on the dynamics of capital accumulation whereby some sectors of capitalist production required the existence of large pools of cheap labour that could be drawn upon when needed and displaced when not needed. For example, the massive migration of Chinese to North America in the latter half of the 19th century was closely related to poor economic conditions in China which was largely created by foreign domination. Although the Chinese did not come to North America as slaves, they were recruited as contract labourers in gold mines, in British Columbia, for example. The Chinese were also recruited to compensate for the shortage of white labour especially during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway of 1881 to 1885. Even after the completion of the railway line, the Chinese were recruited to work in booming industries because their labour was cheap and in large supply. They could be called upon to work when needed. In 1885, the Chief Justice of British Columbia had this to say about the Chinese in 1885: "I do not see how people would get on here at all without Chinamen. They do, and do well, what white women cannot do, and do what white men will not do". (Quoted in Bolaria and Li 1988:105) (1).

Towards the beginning of the 20th century, the attitude of the Canadians towards the Chinese began to take a different turn. For example, many anti-Chinese bills were passed in British Columbia aimed at curtailing the political and civil rights of the Chinese in the province. They were disenfranchised and were not allowed to vote in provincial and municipal elections. The Chinese were further subjected to a number of discriminatory acts

that made it difficult for them to follow certain lines of work. For example, they were not allowed to be employed in public works, or acquire crown land: they were excluded from nomination for municipal office, school trusteeship, and were barred from the professions of law and pharmacy. (Bolaria and Li, 1988:108) (1).

Discrimination against the Chinese in Canada represents a realistic perspective on racial minorities. The restrictions on occupational competition were largely sanctioned by the state, and as a result were incorporated into the institutions of Canada. From the point of view of employers, institutional racism facilitates the exploitation of labour. Thus, one may contend that institutional discrimination in Canada has more to do with economic opportunities than with foreign cultures brought in by immigrants. One may see discrimination as a cause for racial minorities being found in large numbers in menial, low paying and physically exhausting labour. The conclusion that can be drawn is that racial minorities are only valued as a source of cheap labour to capitalist development. It is important to understand that not all racial minorities are in a most disadvantaged position. Despite the systemic discrimination that is widespread in the Canadian society, in this case, the public sector, some individual racial minorities experience mobility and find themselves in middle or upper level management positions. What is interesting however, is that, many of these people continue to face barriers. They are paid less than their counterparts, and in addition, they are placed in positions which do not involve taking critical decisions. Accordingly, many do not have authority in the workplace. (Das Gupta 1996:16). Professionals experience discrimination on the job. For example, it is reported that female lawyers of colour find difficulties in getting hired, and if they do get hired, then

they are kept away from cases that deal with race or gender issues. (Das Gupta 1996:16).

Some Canadians are becoming increasingly aware that institutions and systems are harbouring inequality and this is leaving out a good section of the population from the development arena. In their report, the ***Special Committee On The Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society*** agreed with this concern and observed that:

Most visible minorities are not participating fully in Canadian society. Opportunities are being denied because ... it is believed they will not "fit" the structures of public and private institutions in Canada. One need only look at the employment practices of police departments, government services, universities, the media and private companies, to see that visible minorities are consciously or unconsciously denied full participation in almost all Canadian institutions. Visible minorities are, in fact the invisible members of our society. (Report of the Special Committee 1984:1).

Although this report is fourteen years old, there is little reason to believe that matters have changed much. As a result, these concerns and observations all point to the persistent inequality in employment that is being experienced by minorities.

Canada's multiracial and multicultural society is largely the result of immigration flow over the years, as earlier mentioned in this paper. It had been thought by some Canadians that the problems experienced by minorities were due mainly to cultural differences and to the immediate hardships resulting from their arrival into a new country. But the inequalities have persisted well into the next generation, and to recent immigrants as well. Looking back at the immigration policy that had racial bias against immigrants from countries other than western European and the United States (excluding blacks), one may argue that the current inequalities in the Canadian society in general and in the public

sector in particular, are a continuation of the racial bias of the immigration policy of the late 19th to mid 20th centuries.

Gender

Women face barriers in the labour market and some of the barriers have arisen from women's traditional social situation. According to the 1986 census, women constituted 51 per cent of Canada's total population. (Frank 1996:16). In recent years, women have attained education levels higher than at any point in history. Despite this fact, women continue to be concentrated in low paying jobs and earn less than men. The *Commission on Equality in Employment* revealed disparity in earnings between male and female. While the average earnings for male full time workers in 1982 were \$ 25,096, those of women were \$ 16,056 or 63.9 per cent of male income. (Abella 1984:73). Although the male/female earnings gap has narrowed considerably since then, women continue to earn substantially less than men. For example, women who were employed full-time throughout 1993 earned an average of \$ 28, 390 while men earned \$39, 430. This represented 72 per cent of the earnings of men who were employed full time during that year. (Frank 1996:18).

In 1991, 42 per cent of women aged fifteen and over had at least some post secondary education. In 1981, this proportion was only 34 per cent. The proportion of women with a non-university diploma or professional certificate doubled from 11 per cent in 1981 to 22 per cent in 1991. Over the same period of time, the proportion of women who had a university degree increased from 6 per cent to 10 per cent. (Frank 1996:18). Despite

this increase , women generally still assume primary responsibilities for raising children and looking after the homes. (Frank 1996:18). This affects their participation in the labour market in the sense that some of them may not be as active as the men because of domestic responsibilities.

The number of women taking on part-time jobs is on the increase. Part-time work is common among women, partly because of family responsibilities but more especially because part time work may be the only work they could easily find. (Armstrong and Armstrong 1994:15). However, women have made great improvements in labour market participation. This means that more women are actively seeking work today than they were ten years ago. It is reported that in 1991, seven out of every ten women participated in the labour market. (Armstrong and Armstrong 1994:15). Although the number of women in the labour force has increased, disproportionate numbers of women still continue to work in jobs that are characterized by low pay, low skill requirements and low prospects for advancement. Thus, these changes have meant that more and more women are doing the same types of jobs. Many continue to be confined in large numbers to jobs that are believed to be female jobs such as nursing, teaching, sales and clerical and service jobs, as earlier noted in this paper. It is estimated that 70 per cent of women work in these jobs compared to 30 per cent of men and that many women are more likely to work part time than men. In addition, what racial group a woman belongs to may also determine whether they will get jobs or not. (Wicks and Bradshaw 1995:146). For example, in 1986, the labour force participation rate was higher among the white females; it was 56 per cent, compared to 54 per cent among visible minorities and 46 per cent among Aboriginal

women. (Wicks and Bradshaw 1995:146). This points to the fact that women in the designated groups are at a more disadvantage position than other women.

Although women have made many gains in the labour market and in the labour force, it would be premature to say that equality of opportunities between the sexes has been realized. Women remain disproportionately under-represented in the labour force especially in *traditionally male occupations* and continue to bear the burden of family responsibilities. Women continue to be segregated in many job and industry divisions that are characterized by low skill requirements and low labour productivity level. Thus, the labour force is generally divided into women's work and men's work. This situation has persisted since the 19th century. In 1993, a study was undertaken by the *Consultation Group on Employment Equity For Women* in government departments. The results revealed that there had been slow progress in gender equity in the public service since the Task Force on Barriers to Women in Public Service was commissioned in 1988. The study found that women constituted 47 per cent of the public service, in 1993 up from 41.8 per cent in 1986. (See Table 3). In the executive group, women accounted for 18 per cent of the total workforce in the public service. This means that more women were and are still concentrated in administrative support positions which include secretarial, clerical and office support. These functions are stereotyped as *traditional female type* roles. (Consultation Group on Employment 1995:3).

Men continue to dominate in the higher echelon of the public service and the "old

*boys network*¹ is known to be a common practice. Because authority tends to rest in the hands of men who dominate the higher level, women find themselves in a male-dominated workplace. Women have not only to meet the work place's regular performance norms but must also meet traditional standards for women such as "... subservience, deference, non-aggression or other stereotypical behaviour". (Consultation Group on Employment 1995:9). The traditional workplace culture not only prevents women from advancing in their career, it also prevents those few senior level women from taking any action to remedy these problems. These negative attitudes about women have deep roots in the public service and have affected the progress of women. It has further limited men's expectations of what women can achieve and what women expect of themselves.

Aboriginal Peoples

The Aboriginal peoples have been put in a situation of dependency, leading to slow progress in their social, economic and political development. This situation came about with colonization which was characterized by three salient features:- the emergence of an urban sector, the existence of a white power elite in which power is concentrated, and the maintenance of a powerful ideology called racism. (Friederes 1988:71). This meant that the real foundation of power centres on the control of resources. Resources were distributed in such a way that those who held power, in this case the mainstream white society, got more than the other groups in society. Because resources, especially land

¹"Old boys network" is a situation whereby one is able to advance on the job because of the close ties one may have with the boss outside the office. This may involve going out for lunch with the boss, playing golf, drinking together. This network excludes women.

and capital, were not reasonably shared, the Aboriginal peoples have remained marginalized. This situation has persisted to the present times.

Land is a very important resource from which mankind obtains its livelihood. The Aboriginal peoples surrendered most of their traditional land to the European settlers. Since then, many of them have been concentrated on the reserves. This has resulted in a loss of control over resources which has proved catastrophic in terms of loss of status, economic well being and identity. Because they can no longer exploit land to their full benefit, many of them do not have adequate means of livelihood and therefore remain dependent on government. The federal government has thus retained its control over Aboriginal peoples. (Friederes 1988:71).

Education is seen as an investment and, because of this, Canadian society emphasizes the importance of education and hence the necessity of acquiring it as a means of promoting one's self-esteem and social well being. However, Aboriginal peoples have not always seen the relevance of formal education which has been imposed on them by the white man. The imposition of missionary-run residential schools on the reserves was a violation of the rights of the Aboriginals to live a free life on their land. Formal education also interfered with their traditional life. Imposed formal education meant a loss of culture, one that the Aboriginal peoples were firmly attached to. Even after the abolition of the residential schools, the integration of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian society was not easy because they could not easily fit in the mainstream society. This has resulted in low school attendance and high school drop out rates. (Frieders 1988:72).

In western societies, education is considered a basic human right. However, when

the education system does not meet the needs and expectation of the people, then it becomes harmful. This has been the case in Canada whereby formal education was imposed on the Aboriginal population by the white settlers. The dominant group used education to place control over the Aboriginal peoples and this control widened the gap between the mainstream group and the Aboriginal peoples. (Gagne 1994:96). Aboriginal residential schools founded and operated by Catholic and Protestant missionaries were the dominant institutions in Aboriginal communities across Canada. Parents were forced to send their children to these schools, which were isolated. Because the institutions were run by missionaries, Aboriginal children were forced to practice a religion that was not their own. They were forbidden to speak their various native tongues and practice any traditional ceremonial gesture. (Gagne 1994:96). It became obvious that the education system attempted to assimilate the Aboriginal peoples into the new culture, which only served to undermine the cultural basis of Aboriginal authority. The Aboriginal children found themselves torn between two cultures. White mainstream culture was trying to assimilate them into a society that apparently was not even ready to receive them. At the same time, they were not receiving the informal education they needed to learn the Aboriginal language and cultural norms. It is estimated that four generations of Aboriginal children went through this educational system, which resulted in a loss of culture. (Gagne 1994:97).

The western type formal education is therefore said to be harmful because it attempted to assimilate the Aboriginal children into the dominant culture. Instead the children were alienated because they lost touch with families and friends, at the same time,

many were not able to fit into the new culture. They were taught norms and values that they could not relate to. This harm was not felt by students who belonged to the dominant group because the values were drawn from their religion, language and expectation. What resulted was Aboriginal culture coming into conflict with the formal education system. For example, in many Aboriginal societies, children are taught not to make eye contact and that silence is a sign of thoughtfulness and reflection. On the other hand, the mainstream culture stresses that eye contact is very essential and that one should always speak up. (Gagne 1994:100). So the children are taught one thing at home, and when they go to school, they are taught that it is wrong. Perhaps only very few Aboriginals were and are able to adapt to the dominant culture. Thus, the education system introduced by the dominant group weakened generations of Aboriginal peoples and rendered them incapable of functioning both in their own societies and in the dominant system. In light of the above, Friederes rightly concludes that " Native people have not always seen the relevance of formal 'white' education and yet have been forced to accept this concept of education". (1988:78). This argument seems valid, considering that school drop out rates and, as a result, unemployment rates are high among Aboriginal peoples.

The poor attendance in schools among the Aboriginal peoples may also be due to lack of motivation on their part. This lack of motivation is due to the discrimination that they have suffered since colonization. There are reports of the formal school systems in Canada being insensitive to Aboriginal needs and culture and of racism and prejudice among teachers and students. (Friederes 1988:78). One of the reasons advanced for the high school drop out rate among Aboriginal children is the overt and systemic racism in the

education system. For example, federal funding for reserve schools is lower per student than the amounts spent in non-Aboriginal school systems. It is therefore hard to obtain resources for new schools or for children with special needs. Education levels are said to be one of the greatest barriers that Aboriginal peoples face in joining wage labour. (Gagne 1994:100). Some Aboriginal children however, do proceed to post secondary institutions; many of them are reported to register in the teaching or social work professions. This perhaps is due to their strong desire to go back on the reserves to help their respective communities, or even work within their own communities in the urban settings. This means that the overall participation of Aboriginal peoples in the labour market therefore remains very low. Those who are employed often work either part-time or on seasonal basis. This is particularly true for Aboriginals that live on reserves. Many occupy jobs that are said to be marginal to economic production and to the growth of Canadian society. (Friederes 1988:80). These are considered low paying jobs that do not contribute significantly to uplifting their standard of living.

The need to make the education system sensitive to the cultural needs of the Aboriginal people has been recognized. This can be seen in the fact that many Aboriginal children enrol in teaching, so that they may return to teach in their communities, as noted earlier. The importance of replacing residential schools with schools in Aboriginal communities has also been recognized and this has led to the establishment of band operated schools. (See Pg. 39 Table 1). Even then, these schools are not yet meeting the demands of the Aboriginal peoples. The schools are few and not all the children who wish to attend them can have access to them. Many Aboriginal children are not able to

complete their schooling and as a result they are not prepared well enough to enable them participate in the labour market. Thus discrimination and limited means of production and sources of income do explain why Aboriginal peoples occupy a marginal position in Canada. In addition, the lack of economic development on the reserves make it difficult for them to adequately provide for their needs. For example, many northern communities in Canada inhabited by Aboriginal peoples are accessible by water or air only and very few communities are accessible by both rail and roads. This therefore means that the communities are not only cut off from external systems but the lack of infrastructure incapacitates them from engaging in development projects.

This situation has resulted in a dependency relationship between the Aboriginal people and the government. Dependency is defined as:

.... a situation in which a certain group of countries have their economy conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which the former is subject.. The relation of inter-dependence between two or more economies assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant) can expand and give impulse to their own development, while other countries (the dependent) can only develop as a reflection of this expansion. In all cases, the basic situation of dependence leads to a situation in dependent countries that situates them in backwardness and under the exploitation of the dominant countries. The dominant countries have a technological, commercial, capital resource and social political predominance over the dependent countries. This permits them to impose conditions of exploitation and to extract part of the domestically produced surplus. (Johnson 1972:72).

Johnson's definition throws some light on the current situation of the Aboriginal people vis-a-vis the mainstream Canadian society whereby historical situations of dependence have

shaped present day under - development of Aboriginal land, particularly the reserves. The Aboriginal people lost their land to the early settlers and this resulted in a loss of control over resources. This situation has pushed the Aboriginal peoples to the margins of society, socially and geographically, as many were confined to reservations under centralized control and administration. In addition, the pressure of assimilation sought to undermine the cultural basis of Aboriginal authority. (Fleras and Elliot 1992:5).

Canada has been divided into a non-industrialised north and the industrial south, with industrialization being concentrated in the Toronto-Montreal-Ottawa triangle. (Gagne 1994:9). Because many Aboriginal peoples live on the reserves in the north, they are detached from the development activities of the south. Instead, their reserves, it is argued, are treated as geographical and social hinterlands for exploitation by mainstream society. This means that businesses controlled by the dominant culture exploit non-renewable primary resources such as oil, minerals, water, timber, and these are shipped to urban industrial centres for processing. (Gagne 1994:110). Because of such exploitation, the Aboriginal peoples remain exporters of natural resources, and this has meant dependence on the government. Even many of those who live in the urban centres in the south have limited access to resources, for example, jobs, to make a decent livelihood for themselves. Many of them therefore remain dependent on government through social assistance. It is reported that in 1986-87 fiscal year, over 60 per cent of Aboriginal peoples received government social assistance. In Manitoba, 80 percent of Aboriginal peoples were registered social assistance recipients. (Friederes 1988:94). The large number of registered social assistance recipients among the Aboriginal peoples suggests that there

is a highly dependent relationship that the Aboriginal peoples have with the larger system. This dependent relationship is one of inequality where the Aboriginal peoples have been deprived of the means of production and have remained consumers. They are left out of development process of the mainstream society and therefore remain marginalized.

Despite the low rate of education among the Aboriginal peoples, both the federal and provincial governments regard education as a very important instrument for improving the lives of the people, especially in a knowledge based society like present day Canada. Because of this, both levels of government support education programs for the Aboriginal peoples. Reports reveal that there has been an increase in school enrolment among the Aboriginal peoples and this increase in enrolment has been realized in all levels of the school system, from kindergarten to university. It is estimated that university enrolment went from 11,170 in 1985/1986 to 21,566 in 1992/93 (Poonwassie 1995:42).

Kindergarten, elementary and secondary school students on reserves attend four different types of school:- federal, provincial, band operated and private. Enrolment in these schools have also changed over the years. Enrolment of Aboriginal students in the different school systems are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: ENROLMENT OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN VARIOUS SCHOOLS

	Federal	Provincial	Private	Band Oper.	Totals
1975/76	29 581	38 079	1 315	2 842	71,817
1992/93	5 096	44 418	1 950	49 426	100,890

(Source:Poonwassie 1995:43)

Table 1 reveals that there has been a dramatic decrease in enrolment in federal schools. This decrease is clearly a trend towards band-operated schools and some form of control of Aboriginal education by the Aboriginals. This would make the education more relevant to them, in terms of language and cultural values. The education should also be relevant to today's job market. For example, in many Aboriginal communities today, the job market reflects both western and traditional economies. These include agriculture, fishing, hunting and gathering, traditional healing and business activities. The education should therefore aim at preparing the Aboriginal peoples to use land and resources based on their own traditional knowledge and wisdom. The long term goal would be to make Aboriginal peoples more self reliant than relying on government support and this would subsequently improve their social and economic status. The decline of jobs in the formal sector also means that attention should be focussed on education geared towards self employment for rural and urban based Aboriginal peoples. These measures, if implemented, would enable the Aboriginal peoples to integrate in the mainstream society, while at the same time maintain their identity in the society.

Some progress has been made in establishing institutions of learning for Aboriginal peoples. For example, the First Nations House of Learning has been established on the University of British Columbia campus. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College has been established and it is affiliated with the University of Regina (Poonwassie 1995:45). However, despite the progress that Aboriginal peoples have made in the school system, their number in the public service remains small.

The federal government has acknowledged that the school drop out rate among Aboriginal children is very high and that they leave the school system without the necessary skills for employment and without the language and cultural knowledge of their people. (Government of Canada 1997:26). It is in this regard that the government pledged to support education reform on reserves aimed at improving the quality and cultural relevance of education for Aboriginal children in the following ways:

- improve classroom effectiveness of teachers
- support community and parental involvement in schools
- enhance learning by providing greater access to technology for Aboriginal schools (Government of Canada 1997:27).

By improving the quality of education, it is hoped that education will be able to help them cope with the developments in their surroundings while at the same time permit them to stay in school so that they get prepared for the world of work.

However, it is not enough for government to pledge its commitment to provide education to Aboriginal children. The education being provided must be sensitive to the needs of the people and in the long run, it should be beneficial to the people. Education should aim at producing a generation of students equipped with the skills necessary to be stable, productive, self sufficient and functional in the dominant culture. Education should aim at *integrating* and not *assimilating* the Aboriginal peoples into the political, economic, social and cultural institutions of the dominant society. This will enable them to understand the dominant group and at the same time learn to know themselves within their own

cultural contexts. Integration should call for the adjustment of the school curriculum at all levels of the education system, to accommodate the needs of the Aboriginal peoples. These programs should be open to other Canadians as well. This would mean introducing courses related to Aboriginal culture and their importance in Canadian history in the expectation that this would result in a better understanding and appreciation among the different groups in Canada.

While it is not clear at this point in time whether or not the Aboriginal peoples would have made progress without a western style education, it is nonetheless important to realize that although Aboriginal education was not as formal as that imposed by the mainstream society, it was still important for maintaining social institutions at the time. Aboriginal peoples had their own and varied systems of law and order, justice, health care and economic systems. (Waldram 1994:63). Informal education helped to sustain these systems that were passed on from generation to generation. So whatever adjustment that will be effected in the curricula must take into consideration the cultural aspect of the Aboriginal peoples as well as the current changes in their surroundings. Basic knowledge in technology for example, would mean that the Aboriginal peoples will be better able to understand the world around them, while at the same time allow them to maintain their cultural systems. This kind of education, if made accessible to all Aboriginal children, would pave the way for their active participation in the labour market and ultimately many will be able to find themselves in the labour force. Many still may be able to compete for various positions in the Canadian public service.

Persons With Disabilities

Persons with disabilities have been distinguished from other citizens because of their disabilities and this has resulted in differential treatment and fewer rights. This, to some extent, has been attributed to the presence of certain myths in society about people with disabilities. These myths have persisted and are perpetuated by society. Because of this, society has negative view of disabled persons. For example, in everyday language, metaphors of disability may be used to make negative comments about non-disabled persons who are seen as lacking in some ability, or as having characteristics outside societal standards. (Woodhill 1994:209). Metaphors of disability, used by non-disabled persons in everyday life to speak about their understanding and perceptions of disability, are sometimes used to speak about other phenomena. For example, ***Are you lame?*** can be asked of a person who cannot keep pace with the other(s) while taking a walk. Likewise, ***Are you blind?*** can be asked of someone who cannot find something around the house. These negative attitudes have shaped the way society perceives the disabled persons. They are treated as being different, as being unable to provide for themselves and as being socially and economically dependent. (Woodhill 1994:209). Ward and Flynn disagree with this perception and argue that:

Disability is not measles. Disability is socially produced. The wheelchair user with an adapter car, the personal assistance she wants (at the time she wants), an allocated parking place and an accessible and adapted home and workplace is not disabled at home or at work in the same way as the wheelchair user who is contending with inaccessible home and work environment, without personal assistance or transport. The disability experienced by the latter is created by the disabling society in which we live. (1994:30)

This argument points to the fact that society promotes the disability in a disabled person by denying him/her the opportunity to prove his/her worth. From this argument, one may gather that people with disabilities would be able to participate more fully in society and the economy if only barriers to job related training and employment were removed.

Many disabled persons became disabled after completing their education and beginning their work career. Others may have been born with defects. In either case, they are viewed as lifelong dependents upon society because it is believed that their disabilities incapacitate them from participation in society's activities. Society's negative attitudes have kept many disabled persons from the workforce. No matter how determined and capable the disabled persons may be, many employers remain unwilling to take a chance and include them in the workforce. Many employers are still prisoners of the myth that disabled persons cannot do the jobs as well as able bodied persons. Many employers are unwilling to hire disabled persons because they consider it expensive to make special provision for the disabled persons, as earlier noted in this paper. For example, installing ramps or elevators to ease the movement of the disabled wheelchair employee in and out of the building, may be considered expensive by many employers.

In the United States, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 created statutory rights for disabled persons in all areas of life affected by federal programs. Section 501 of the Act prohibited discrimination in employment by federal government, while section 503 mandated affirmative action by private organizations doing contract work for federal agencies. This section also stresses reasonable accommodation. Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act was administered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

(EEOC). The EEOC asks federal agencies to: "...emphasize employment of individuals with disabilities - establish goals for their employment, recruit disabled people, encourage equal opportunity in career development and upward mobility..." (Bowe 1985:7). However, many employers protest this regulation on the basis that it would be too expensive for them to afford. For example, one company in Washington DC was reported to have protested that it would cost over \$ 100 000 US to modify its headquarters to enable it accommodate disabled persons.(Bowe 1985:7). Such fears may be relevant to small firms, but not to large ones like IBM which are capable of making modifications to their workplaces, considering that they are profit-making companies. However, many of them are reluctant to make any commitments to these changes on the grounds that it is expensive or time consuming and therefore not worth the effort. In recent years, most public sector organizations in Canada have made these modifications to accommodate their disabled employees and clients.

Canada does not have legislation in place exclusively for disabled persons. The Canadian Human Rights Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Employment Equity legislation are existing mechanisms which are used to provide similar protection for Canadians with disabilities. Thus, in principle, disabled persons are entitled to equality of opportunity and full access to the mainstream of employment and other services. However, in reality, disabled persons still face barriers in the form of discriminatory attitudes and discriminatory practices that prevent their participation in the labour force.

The ***Americans with Disabilities Act*** of 1990 aims at reducing discrimination against disabled people. It is geared towards providing appropriate employment

opportunities for disabled people, with the hope that the exclusion of disabled people from jobs would be reduced. (Bergmann 1996:91). This act may be seen as the USA government's gesture towards the disabled persons. The act is also an example of a "positive attitude" towards the disabled persons, which could be used as a model in Canada. Although there is no evidence to suggest that the absence of legislation means that disabled persons in Canada are doing worse than in the USA, it is very important that the Canadian government adopt a positive attitude towards the disabled persons to enable them participate in the labour force.

In some instances, the disabled persons themselves have to provide disability-related supports to enable them participate in the economy. These include technical aids which offers work related assistance. This is expensive and many of them are not able to afford to pay for these aids. Non-disabled persons do not have to pay these costs. For persons with disabilities, the requirements for supports may vary over time and vary in price as well. For example, upgrading of a computer or modifying a wheelchair to suit the workplace is expensive. Thus, even being employed does not guarantee adequacy of funds to provide for work related equipments and aids. This gives no motivation for the employable disabled persons to enter the labour market. However, it still remains the responsibility of the employer to provide reasonable accommodation to the disabled persons. This would include modifying the workplace to ease the movement of the disabled individuals.

Many provinces in Canada do not provide support to those ineligible for social assistance. As a result, those disabled persons who are employable may choose not to

work because the money they earn from work is not sufficient to provide for their basic needs as well as disability related needs. Studies show that in order to receive public and pension entitlements, people with disabilities must often classify themselves as "permanently unemployable" and unable to support themselves. (Young 1997:4). As a result, such people encounter barriers if they wish to return to the workforce. The "unemployable" classification gives people with disabilities access to programs that provide the supports and services they require to perform the activities of daily life. If these people demonstrate that they can hold a job, they lose these supports and services. Those with disabilities who enter the labour force, may not be able to afford to purchase these commodities.

While disabilities may be permanent, their effects can be overcome. Many disabled persons are able to support themselves if given the opportunity to do so. Many may even prefer to work if they could be given the opportunity to do so because work not only provides a livelihood but it also contributes to the community and gives them an active social life. They are capable of conquering the effects of their disabilities and equipping themselves with knowledge and skills which enable them to participate fully in the workforce if only they are given the support. This therefore means that they need education and training which may be either, or a combination of classroom and on the job training in those areas in which they are most interested. There is also need for attitudinal change among employers particularly, and among the general public, that disabled persons are as capable in some job areas as any other individual.

From the above discussion, it may be argued that discrimination against members of the designated groups is based on socially constructed rules that have been institutionalized to the extent that they are not acknowledged or challenged. Institutional discrimination results in inequality of opportunities. This suggests that some individuals are not allowed to compete fairly in an open race resulting in differential rewards and privileges. This has been the case in the Canadian society where inequality has to do with unequal access to jobs. Systemic discrimination is known to be a big problem in organizations, including the public sector. For example, in a 1990 study of systemic discrimination conducted among employees in the designated groups in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) nationwide, reports revealed that systemic discrimination existed in DIAND, and that this was preventing the department from achieving a representative workforce. The study identified barriers in some areas of the department's employment systems and practices and these were:

- Work environment and corporate culture. These negatively affect designated group members working in the department. For example, the study revealed that the department is not sensitive to the culture of Aboriginal people as well as the needs of the disabled employees. Men dominated in upper management level, while women were concentrated in junior management and support.
- Management Style and attitudes. Female employees complained of excessive supervision and control, yet they could not bring the issue up to management for fear of loss of job. Management was not willing to accommodate other needs of employees; for example, arranging alternate work arrangements for women particularly to enable them balance work with family commitments. Women were

rarely promoted, and minority employees complained of racist remarks being made to them.

- Selection and staffing. The study found that the Merit Principle was not being adhered to. Recruitment, especially in the National Capital Region, was unfairly carried out through the “old boys’ network”. This, employees felt, reduced chances for prospective candidates who may wish to compete for these jobs.²
- Training and development was carried out for mid and upper level management. Those in support positions, mostly women, were rarely given these training opportunities. This implied that men, who dominated the middle and upper level positions, received training and therefore stood a good chance of advancement on the job .(DIAND 1991:6-11)

The study concluded that systemic discrimination was prevalent in the DIAND in the 11 regions of the country. Although this study relates only to one federal government department, the findings may be reflective of what goes on in other federal government departments as well. Another example is the Department of Agriculture and Agri Food Canada, AAFC, which supports this view.

AAFC reported under-representation of members of designated groups as of December 31, 1996, as is shown in Table 2 below:

²Some members of the designated groups felt that even if they had qualifications for the various jobs, these were overlooked. Some felt that the requirement for experience at DIAND and knowledge of the department were sometimes used to unfairly screen out candidates.

Table 2: REPRESENTATION OF THE DESIGNATED GROUPS IN AAFC

	Population	Women	Visible Minorities	Persons with Disabilities	Aboriginal
EX	120	15%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Non EX	9, 675	38.6%	3.5%	1.5%	0.9%
AAFC Total w/f	9, 795	38.3%	3.5%	1.5%	0.9%
PS Total wf	201, 009	48.1%	4.5%	3.2%	2.3%

(Source: CD ROM on *La Releve* Task Force)

Key

EX: Executive

PS: Public Service

wf: workforce

The table above indicates that there is no representation of visible minorities in the executive level and the representation of the other designated groups in the executive and non-executive in Agriculture and Agri Food Canada and in the public service as a whole remains very small. Agriculture and Agri Food Canada has acknowledged this under-representation and, as part of the *La Releve* initiative, it has emphasized a need to adopt a human resource strategy that will take into account the increasing participation of Canada's diverse groups in the labour market.

Table 3 below reveals percentages of representation of members of the designated groups in the entire public service, as evidence of unequal access.

Table 3: REPRESENTATION OF MEMBERS OF THE DESIGNATED GROUPS IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE IN VARIOUS JOB CATEGORIES

	EXE	S & P	A & FS	TECH	AS	OP	TOT	AWF
Aboriginal 1986	1.0%	2.3%	2.1%	1.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	-
1996	1.5%	1.4%	2.3%	1.4%	2.6%	2.7%	2.3%	2.6%
Visible M 1986	1.9%	7.2%	3.0%	2.0%	3.0%	1.5%	3.0%	-
1996	2.1%	9.0%	4.3%	2.5%	4.4%	2.0%	4.5%	9.0%
Disabled P 1986	2.8%	2.8%	4.5%	2.3%	4.4%	3.0%	3.8%	-
1996	2.0%	1.9%	3.6%	1.9%	4.0%	2.2%	3.2%	4.8%
Women 1986	8.0%	24.0%	36.0%	12.0%	83%	13.0%	41.8%	-
1996	20%	30.0%	48.0%	20.0%	84%	14.0%	48.1%	47.3%

(Source: Public Service Commission of Canada Annual Report, 1996-97, Pg. 21-23).

KEY TO JOB CATEGORIES

EXEC	Executive
S & P	Scientific and Professional
A & FS	Administrative and Foreign Services
TECH	Technical
AS	Administrative Support
OP	Operational
AWF	Availability in Workforce
TOT	Total representation

Table 3 reveals that there has been an increase in the recruitment of members of the designated groups in the public service in the various job categories in the last ten years. However, some job categories seem to have more people from some groups than others. For example, women are concentrated in the Administrative Support categories while the percentage is small in the Operational, Technical and Executive. Aboriginal people experienced a drop in percentage in the Scientific and Professional category but a slight increase in the executive. The percentage for visible minorities remain small, particularly in Executive and Operational. Disabled persons experienced a decrease in their overall participation in the public service, from 3.8 % in 1986 to 3.2 in 1996. This decline is explained by the fact that many disabled employees in the public service held term positions. Due to the public service program review and hiring freezes which resulted in downsizing of the public service, many term positions were eliminated and this affected many disabled employees. It is estimated that between 1995 and 1998, 45 000 to 50 000 positions were eliminated nationwide, representing 20 to 30 per cent of public servants. Some of these employees were transferred to other jurisdictions, for example, Nav Canada and Airport Authority. (Charrette 1998).

Another reason for the decline in representation of disabled persons is that the nature of disability did not allow the disabled persons to perform multitask duties. The downsizing meant that employees had to handle more tasks than they previously did. Many disabled employees lack the specialized tools to enable them cope with the task before them and the situation rendered them less productive. Some became discouraged from continuing with work. (Hannibal 1998).

Overall, there has been some improvement in the employment of designated groups in the public service but efforts are still slow at hiring more members of the designated groups, despite the employment equity legislation. There is therefore a wide gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. Consequently, a lot of talent is being lost, and in some cases to the private sector. Jobs are sometimes not advertised widely and therefore not every qualified individual gets to know about the jobs. (Henry and Ginzberg 1985:13). In addition, many people are not motivated to apply for positions in the public service for fear that they will not be selected anyway. The public service therefore needs to reach out to the public and encourage people to apply for what ever positions that are available. The restructuring and downsizing of the public service has meant loss of jobs and reduction of job opportunities. However, care can still be taken to ensure that every qualified candidate is given the opportunity to compete for the few jobs available.

Clearly, while fair and equitable employment opportunities for designated groups are a responsibility of society as a whole, it remains imperative that government should show initiative, demonstrate strong leadership and lay the foundation for full participation of designated groups in the public service. This may involve committing more resources to support programs geared towards the promotion of employment equity.

The above tables (1 and 2), and the preceding discussion contend that members of the designated groups are disproportionately under represented in the public service. As a result, there is still widespread concern about inequality in employment opportunities. In earlier years, government responded to similar data by enacting legislation that would end discrimination in society and in the workplace.

CHAPTER THREE

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION

The origin of legal control of discrimination, overt and covert, goes back to the post World War II era. There were scattered attempts to control discrimination before this time, but the war was a turning point which marked the beginning of a steady growth and consolidation of anti-discrimination policies. The horrors of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination were made very evident by the Nazi destruction in Europe. During this time, many Canadians became more and more sensitized to the problem of discrimination. The 1940s saw the enactment of "quasi-criminal" prohibitions of discrimination. For example, Ontario enacted the *Racial Discrimination Act* in 1944. This legislation applied only to the public display of discriminatory signs or symbols. In 1947, Saskatchewan enacted anti-discrimination provisions in its Bills of Rights. This legislation was much broader in scope. It prohibited discrimination in several areas of activities such as employment and accommodation. (Knopff 1989:36).

The formation of the United Nations during this time also helped to create awareness in Canada, as well as in other parts of the world about human rights. Section 3 of article 1 of the United Nations Charter states that one of the purposes and principles of the United Nations is " in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion". (Quoted in Goodrich et al 1969:25). Article 68 of the Charter provided for the creation of a functional commission that would be specifically concerned with the promotion of human

rights in member countries. (Goodrich et al 1969:435). This led to the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in 1946, and subsequently to the proclamation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Canada ratified the declaration and, since then, it has been involved in international human rights issues. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* has greatly influenced the enhancement of human rights issues in Canada. Following the ratification of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Canada passed anti-discrimination legislation characterized by special purpose statutes which applied to employment. The legislation also prohibited discrimination in remuneration; that is equal pay for the sexes (Kinsella 1982:29).

By mid 1960s, the trend in anti-discrimination legislation had shifted to comprehensive human rights codes that prohibited discrimination on several specified grounds and in a number of areas of activity. In 1962, Ontario led the way in enacting the Human Rights code, which was the first such code in Canada. The code declared clearly that, “ it is public policy in Ontario that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, creed, colour”. (Ontario Human Rights Commission 1977:17). The code reflects a recognition that there are tendencies in society that affect other people negatively and that there is need to restrain these tendencies, by law if necessary, so that all may live in harmony. A year before enacting the code however, Ontario had established a human rights commission to administer its anti-discrimination statutes.

The other provinces followed Ontario in enacting comprehensive human rights codes which went hand in hand with the establishment of commissions to administer the codes. By the end of the 1960s, most of the provinces had formulated human rights laws and provided for their enactment. In 1977, Parliament enacted the Canadian Human Rights Act and appointed the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In these areas, all of the human rights acts outlaw discrimination based on a number of prohibited grounds. Race, colour, ethnicity and religion were among the first grounds to be specified and are included in the legislation of every jurisdiction. Sex, age and physical handicap were gradually added and are included in all the codes. Section 3 (1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act states that:

....the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability and conviction for which a pardon has been given (Canadian Human Rights Act 1987)

These codes have also been amended from time to time to include discrimination in employment. Section 7 states that:

It is discriminatory practice, directly or indirectly,

- a). to refuse to employ or continue to employ any individual, or
- b). in the course of employment, to differentiate adversely in relation to an employee, on a prohibited ground of discrimination (Canadian Human Rights Act).

The Human Rights laws, supported by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, disallow discrimination based on many grounds, as mentioned above. However, there are three

types of defences that are acceptable regarding direct discrimination. According to Vizkelety (1987), these defences are:-

1. Legitimate non-discriminatory reason (194)

It is generally recognized that an alleged victim of discrimination must prove that he is being discriminated against. However, in this type of defence, the person accused of discrimination must show that there was a genuine, non-discriminatory reason for whatever action that was taken. (Vizkelety 1987:194). For example, a director of an institution may refuse to admit a student, not because of the student's gender or colour of skin, as may be alleged, but because the student did not have the grades required for admission to the institution. Likewise, a building manager may refuse to rent an apartment to a female applicant, not because of her gender or marital status as may be alleged. The female applicant may have failed to provide proof of income and three references, as was required by the building company. In this case, the director of the institution and the building manager will attempt to show legitimate reason for the refusal. However, if the individual applying to the institution had all the required grades and good references but still did not gain admission, then this may be cause to believe that discrimination against the applicant had taken place.

2. Exceptions and Exemptions (195)

Anti-discrimination laws are not absolute as they are sometimes governed by exceptions and exemptions, which may limit the liability of the person alleged to have

discriminated, in this case the employer. For example, bona fide retirement may be an acceptable exemption in favour of an employer and may not be construed as discrimination. Likewise, a company may refuse to hire someone whose relative already works for the company, because of the company's policy which prohibits hiring more than one member of the same family. These are exceptional cases and the company may be exempted from any victimization.

3. Bona Fide Occupational Qualification/Requirement (BFOQ)

This defence is perhaps the most important in employment matters and all anti-discrimination statutes recognize it, although in different forms. BFOQ attempts to justify an act which is said to be discriminatory. In defence of the BFOQ, section 15 of the Canadian Human Rights Act establishes that: "...it is not discriminatory practice if a). any refusal, exclusion, expulsion, suspension, limitation, specification or preference in relation to any employment is established by an employer to be based on a bona fide occupational requirement." (Vizkelety 1987:202). Thus, the BFOQ attempts to establish that the discriminatory act was done so in good faith. If so, then the individual alleged to have disobeyed the law, for example an employer, has to show that the discrimination was necessary and was done so in good faith. The BFOQ allows a form of discrimination to persist but should only be permitted in exceptional and limited circumstances, to the extent that it does not weaken the rule. The Supreme Court defended BFOQ thus:

To be a bone fide occupational qualification and requirement, such as mandatory retirement at a fixed age, must be imposed honestly, in good faith, and in the sincerely held belief that such limitation is imposed in the interests of the adequate performance of the work involved with all reasonable dispatch, safety and economy, and not for ulterior or extraneous reasons aimed at objectives which could defeat the purpose of the code. In addition, it must be related in an objective sense to the performance of the employment concerned, in that it is reasonably necessary to assure the efficient and economical performance of the job without endangering the employees and the general public. (Quoted in Vizkelety 1987:203).

According to BFOQ, employers must prove a number of elements when making a defence. First, the employer must prove that the BFOQ was imposed in good faith. The employer must prove that the action taken was necessary to the company to assure efficient and economical performance or to ensure the safety of the employee affected by the action.

Secondly, the employer must base the justification for the action on facts about an employee's abilities, not on false assumptions. An employer who sends an employee on early retirement on the grounds that the employee is unable to perform his/her duties, without any medical evidence to provide a sound basis, has insufficient justification for the action. Some employers are reported to have advanced defences of gender discrimination based on stereotypical views about women, including the need to allegedly protect them from strenuous jobs.(Vizkelety 1987:206). Likewise, there are false assumptions regarding the abilities of handicapped persons. These are generalizations and impressions that are sometimes bases for a BFOQ defence. These generalizations are not always related to

the needs of the jobs. In addition, there is usually no evidence that the handicapped applicant is unable to perform the job as well as a non-handicapped individual. In many instances therefore, employers make assumptions that an applicant by virtue of having a handicap, is unable to do a particular job, based on the employer's prejudiced attitudes about what the handicap can and cannot do. If an employer decides not to hire an applicant based on a physician's recommendation, it may be considered BFOQ. However, even the physician's decision must be based on facts arising from evaluations of the applicant, not on generalizations.

Thirdly, the employer must prove that the safe and efficient operation of the organization would be undermined if the discriminatory action was not taken. (Vizkelety 1987:213). For example, refusing to employ an applicant as a transit operator because the individual does not have a valid license to operate heavy vehicles is considered BFOQ. In this case, the employer is concerned about the safety of the citizens and therefore cannot hire someone who will put the life of the citizens in danger. However, defences based on customers' preferences are not a BFOQ. An employer's customers or clients may prefer service from employees of particular race or gender. The employer may succumb to this preference on the ground that this preference will result in economic success. Accepting the prejudices of customers as relevant reason for giving differential treatment to a particular race or gender in the hiring process is not consistent with the idea of equality. In addition, this preference fails to consider individual merit but concentrates on race classifications of employees thus, promoting discrimination in the workplace.

In many instances, employers use the defences discussed above to justify their actions against their employees, but without satisfactorily explaining why the actions could not have been avoided. What is important to note here is that, despite policies that have been formulated to eliminate discrimination and guarantee equality to all Canadians, discrimination, particularly systemic, seems to have firm roots in organizations, including the public service. However there has been some improvement in reducing this discrimination. Section 15 (1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms proclaims that:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of law without discrimination and in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

With systemic discrimination being so persistent in the public sector, as well as in other sectors of society, it became very obvious that many Canadians were being deprived of their rights to work and improve their socio-economic status. *The Royal Commission on Equality in Employment* confirmed this discrimination, after its nation-wide findings. Following the commission's report of 1984, Bill C-62 was passed and become known as the *Employment Equity Act*. The act, which became effective in 1986, attempted to:

... achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfilment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, are in a visible minority in Canada by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences. (Section 2).

The act provides for the establishment of employment equity programs in all corporations under federal jurisdictions, including crown corporations, that have one hundred employees or more. It did not include the federal public service then, however. Employment equity, often known as affirmative action, is seen as a means of correcting the irregularities in the public sector, and giving employment opportunities to all Canadians, especially those groups that have been discriminated against.³

Thus all of the human rights acts, supported by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and by the Employment Equity Act, outlaw discrimination based on many grounds. However, the prohibition of systemic discrimination is not explicit in the legislation of some jurisdictions, and yet the concept of systemic discrimination is important because it is a barrier to some groups in the employment process. This imbalance therefore means that not all the different groups in Canadian society are being treated fairly. As a result, those

³ Affirmative Action is a deliberate approach aimed at removing pre- and post-employment barriers faced by some groups in Canadian society and achieving improvement in hiring, training and promoting qualified individuals from the said groups. Because of this, equality of opportunity is created. Employment equity is the result of this approach which places emphasis on fair treatment for all employees. For example, equality of opportunity to use the stairs to enter an office building would not result in equity between individuals who are trying to apply for a job if some of the individuals are in wheelchairs. Equity would result only when a ramp has been built to cater for wheel chair users. Employment equity ensures that people are treated fairly and not equally, in this way according to their different needs.

being discriminated against do not enjoy the same opportunities in employment relative to other members of society. The issue of equality in employment therefore brings to mind the idea of social justice. Because some groups in the Canadian society do not enjoy equal opportunities in employment, one may argue that injustice prevails in society since there is no justification for denying them these opportunities. Equality attempts to remove barriers, thus giving all members of society opportunity to compete for resources, including jobs. The Abella Commission emphasizes this point and argues that:

Equality in employment is not a concept that produces the same results for everyone. It is a concept that seeks to identify and remove, barrier by barrier, discriminatory disadvantages. Equality in employment is access to the fullest opportunity to exercise individual potential. (Abella 1984:3).

The meaning of equality is specified by the principle of justice. According to John Rawls, there are two principles of justice:

- i). each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others
- ii). Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both a). reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and b). attached to positions and offices open to all.
(1971:60).

According to Rawls, these principles govern the assignment of rights and duties to all citizens, and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages. For example, the first principle applies to the basic liberties of all citizens, which include the right to political participation; freedom of speech, assembly and movement; and choice of occupation. The second principle applies to the distribution of resources in such a way that

every citizen should be allocated some resources. According to Rawls, although the distribution of resources may not be equal among all citizens, there should nevertheless be some inherent benefit to the less advantaged citizens. This may involve allowing the less advantaged citizens take some responsibilities which would not only benefit them but benefit society as a whole. Those who do not have resources cannot therefore be continually made poorer by the action of those fortunate ones. (Rawls 1971:62). Rawls therefore emphasizes that all social values (which include wealth, income and opportunity) are to be fairly distributed so that all citizens benefit. If this is not done, then injustice in the form of inequalities, will prevail in society. In the second part of the principle, Rawls argues that everyone may not necessarily have the same opportunity to compete according to one common standard but that positions are to be open so that all citizens should have a fair chance to attain them. (73).

Rawls' theory may be applied to the way organizations function. The functioning of organizations is based on inherent rules. These rules have been in existence since organizations came into being and are passed down to incoming employees, although they are subject to modifications over time. These rules are set to work against some members of society and because of this, injustice often prevails in many organizations. Rawls himself emphasizes that:

.... we may reject the contention that the justice of institutions is always imperfect because the distribution of natural talents and the contingencies of social circumstances are unjust, and this injustice must inevitably carry over to human arrangements. Occasionally, this reflection is offered as an excuse for ignoring injustice, as if the refusal to acquiesce in injustice is on a par with being unable to accept death. The natural distribution is neither just nor unjust, nor is it unjust that men are born into society at some particular position. These are simply natural fact. What is just and unjust is the way that institutions deal with these facts. (Rawls 1971;102).

The Abella Commission agrees with Rawls' contention about injustice in society. The commission therefore noted that the roots of employment discrimination were a complex networking of different people in different ways with institutional forces in certain circumstances. The commission further noted that in order that equality of opportunity be created, "we have to systematically eradicate the impediments to these options according to the actual needs of these groups, not according to what we think their needs should be." (Abella 1984:4).

Two important courses may be taken in order that barriers to equality of opportunity be removed. The first is the creation or promotion of pre-employment conditions that would provide for equality of opportunity. Group inequalities are caused not only by direct discrimination but also by the inability of some group members to meet generally accepted standards of excellence or qualification. These standards constitute systemic discrimination against groups that are negatively affected by them. The discrimination is not legitimate because the standard requirements are set as if everybody affected by these standards are the same. For example, the public service commission conducts English

employment tests for candidates who apply for various positions. Many people speak English or French as a second language. As a result, they may not perform as well as is expected of all candidates. Even those who speak French as a first language may not perform as well as those who speak English as a first language. Because of this, they will most likely not be as able to compete for the public service jobs as those who speak English as a first language. This may be seen as systemic discrimination. Likewise, a minimum height and weight requirement for police work that is too high for the average woman to meet may be considered systemic discrimination against women. The concern with systemic discrimination therefore comes from a dissatisfaction with the equal opportunity to compete when the standards of competition themselves contribute to inequality of results. The inequality of results can be overcome in two ways. The first one is that the group that is being disadvantaged should be upgraded so that it meets the required standard, or the standard be changed to accommodate the group. (Knopff 1989:185). The public service may not want to make any changes in its standards which may be considered legitimate.⁴ What it can do is to upgrade the groups affected by these standards so that they are able to compete with the rest of the groups.

⁴Legitimate standards are those standards set as requirements for eligibility for certain jobs. Some standards are not legitimate, especially when they are not stipulated in the job descriptions. For example, having experience in certain jobs or departments is usually considered a standard requirement. However, during the hiring process, no consideration is given to transferable skills that the individual has and could bring into the new department that he/she hopes to join. This is not considered to be legitimate standard. Likewise, a minimum height requirement is considered legitimate standard for some jobs. People of minimum to average height provide as good a service as those with the required height. Even in police or military work, size may be less important than the physical ability to use appropriate methods to do the work well.

The second course is active intervention in the workplace to make direct impact on the day-to day interaction of institutional forces, and such intervention includes affirmative action. The aim of these measures is to give opportunities to all Canadians to participate in activities that will improve their socio-economic status, and thus achieve social justice. The commission saw affirmative action as a key instrument for realizing social justice and promoting economic growth. The commission argued further that a "properly implemented, Canadian-style affirmative action approach would further social and economic objectives through the combined efforts of government, business, labour and the target groups themselves". (Abella 1985:55). In a just society, individuals will be hired and promoted on the basis of merit, so that the best qualified individuals get the opportunity to be hired, regardless of racial, ethnic, religious background or physical abilities. This is the argument that is implied by Rawls. From an economic standpoint, the argument is that equal opportunity is needed to ensure that human resources are not wasted because of discriminatory practices and that everybody is given an opportunity to compete for available resources. A healthy economy needs the contribution of all qualified citizens in the labour force. The exclusion of the other groups of people from job opportunities and benefits only contribute to the high cost of government social service programs, and low self esteem for those being affected by discrimination.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action is a remedial measure which was taken by the federal government to eliminate discrimination and achieve a more proportional representation of the designated groups in the federal public service. Federal government departments are required to draw affirmative action programs with a view to having a more representative workforce. Many provincial, as well as municipal, governments followed suit and established affirmative action programs. It is generally argued by proponents of affirmative action that affirmative action cannot achieve its goal of proportionality unless it is composed of: an *equal opportunity response*, *special measures* and the *use of preferences* and *time tables* to achieve predetermined goals. This would result in a more proportional workforce representation in terms of demographic composition. (Knopff 1989:61). (This point will be addressed later in the chapter). Equal opportunity response would mean putting an end to direct discrimination and dismantling of systemic barriers in favour of practices that do not have a negative impact on the designated groups. Special measures would include those aimed at correcting past discrimination by providing benefits enjoyed by other Canadians to the designated groups. Such measures would include for example, the preferential hiring of women or minorities from a pool of otherwise equally qualified applicants. It may also include training programs for the designated groups to upgrade them so that they attain the standard required for the jobs. Thus it is argued that affirmative action may include *equal opportunity response*, *special measures* and the *use of preferences* and *time tables* so that it achieves its main objective of achieving the desired goals and subsequently, changing the current employment

distribution. (Knopff 1989:62).

Considering that systemic discrimination is institutional and very difficult to eliminate, this argument is valid. This validity is seen in the attempt of affirmative action to improve the opportunities of the designated groups to enable them compete for employment, like every other Canadian. The mere cessation of discrimination may not be sufficient to enable the designated groups to compete favourably for jobs. There is, therefore, a need to end discrimination and, at the same time, to upgrade the standards of the said groups to the level required by the public service. This is particularly so in cases where the public service feels that the individuals do not meet their hiring standards. This will in turn improve the opportunities of the groups to get jobs. In addition, upgrading the qualifications may limit the employer from basing hiring decisions on prejudicial stereotypes. The employer will have no excuse for not hiring the applicants from the designated groups because their qualifications stand at par with those of the rest of the population. However, in cases where the individuals have all the required qualifications, he/she should be given the opportunity to compete favourably for the job(s) and be allowed to work where appropriate.

A lot of controversy surrounds affirmative action in Canada because it is being equated with that of the United States, which was mandatory. The best known USA affirmative action, developed by Executive Order No. 11246 in 1969, also known as the Philadelphia Plan, was originally ordered into effect by the federal government when voluntary efforts to eliminate discrimination in the area's construction had failed. The

Philadelphia plan applied to all invitations for bids for federal construction contracts of \$ 500,000 or more. Contractors were expected to agree to meet certain goals and timetables to correct deficiencies in minority employment. The contractor had to hire enough minority workers to fall within certain percentage ranges which were established in the invitation for bids. (Aaron 1978:83). Those companies that did not comply with these requirements were not awarded contracts by the government. Thus, the USA model of affirmative action has elements of mandatory compliance. In Canada, while it is not mandatory to meet goals, employers have nevertheless been required to demonstrate "good faith" efforts to hire qualified members of the designated groups. The success of affirmative action program of each department would be based on the level of attainment of the quantitative goal set by departments and agencies. Although rigid goals have not been a big issue in Canada, it appears to be gaining momentum, especially with the enactment of the new employment equity act, discussed later in this chapter.

The Abella Commission defends affirmative action as a program for achieving equality in employment, which includes making recruitment, hiring, promotion and income more equitable. However, the commission explained that:

The language that has collected around the issue of equality often produces overwhelmingly emotional responsesOften the words themselves rather than the issues trigger intellectual resistance. Their use almost instantly produces a protective wall through which reason cannot easily penetratePeople generally have a sense that "affirmative action" refers to interventionist government policies, and that this is enough to prompt a negative reaction from many.... The Commission notes this in order to propose that a new term, employment equity, be adopted to describe programs of positive remedy for discrimination in the Canadian workplace. No great principle is sacrificed in exchanging phrases of disputed definition for newer one that may be more accurate and less destructive of reasoned debate. (Abella 1984:6-7)

Thus the commission preferred the term employment equity to affirmative action, to avoid the connotations of the American term. However, both terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The ***Employment Equity Act*** that was formulated in 1986, following the report of the Abella Commission, requires federal departments to identify and eliminate those practices that result in barriers against persons in the designated groups. This would allow the said groups to enjoy opportunities for employment, subsequently improving their representation in the public service. Employment Equity, as a social policy, falls into the same category as human rights legislation because it attempts to break a continuing system of persistent discrimination. In fact, proponents of affirmative action defend the preferential selection of the said previously less qualified members of the designated groups, but who have had upgrading. They argue that in the absence of discrimination, such candidates would have had equal or better chances of getting jobs. (Knopff 1989:186). Upgrading and selecting them is thus simply restoring them to what they would have enjoyed had they not been victimized by discrimination. Thus the "unqualified" are

selected because in a just world they would have been employed had they not been victimized by discrimination.

As noted earlier, one problem with affirmative action in Canada is that it is constantly being compared to that which existed in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s.. For example, many people do not like the idea of targets and argue that targets are really quotas that will be filled at the cost of selecting the unqualified, thus diluting the standard of the public service. The fear here is that affirmative action conflicts with the *Merit Principle*. The Canadian affirmative action is turning away from quotas and is critical of the American approach to equality in employment, as is expressed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The Commission notes that:

Some jurisdictions, particularly in the United States, have attempted to remedy long established patterns of discrimination against various groups by requiring employers to hire quotas of people belonging to those groups. The Commission believes that this is a crude and simplistic approach to a complex problem. Such an approach casts doubt on the legitimacy of minority group achievements. Moreover, it betrays the basic principle of equality of opportunity if people are given jobs or promoted not because they are competent, but because they belong to a minority group. Such reverse discrimination though well intentioned, is discrimination none the less. It still spells condescension and, in the long run, it may do far more harm than good. At bottom, it is the antithesis of human rights legislation. (Ontario H.C. 1977:35)

Quotas are numbers that are externally imposed and constitute a complete preference based on group affiliation without necessarily regard to qualifications. They are not necessarily based on an organization's needs but on fulfilling regulations. For example, if a company is found to be guilty of discrimination against a particular group in the hiring

process, then the company may be ordered to set a hiring quota of the group said to be discriminated against. The quota may be that one of every four new hires should be from the group being discriminated against. Goals on the other hand do not require hiring the unqualified. Goals are set to balance the number of qualified members of the target group in the population and the number in the employer's workforce, as will be seen below.

The objective of affirmative action is to ensure that target groups participate and are represented equitably in the public service based on their availability, qualification and interest in the public service. Thus goals based on availability require that designated group members are recruited from a pool of equally qualified and interested candidates. This is said not to violate the *merit principle*. The public service argues that affirmative action does not violate the merit principle because individual abilities are emphasized when considering appointments and promotion. Secondly, the public service also argues that to have more representation from designated groups is not to place emphasis on the number but rather to make the public service more responsive in providing for the needs of the diverse citizens. (Kernaghan and Siegel 1995:571). The public service opposes the setting of quotas for recruitment of members of the designated groups because quotas contradict the merit principle. Quotas would mean that employees are recruited into the public service not because they are qualified for the jobs but because they belonged to the designated groups. It is argued that this has been true in the United States, where employers were required to have a certain number of employees from the designated groups, as mentioned earlier. There may be cases in which pressure to achieve a numerical goal is necessary, for example, when the best candidates are from the

designated groups. But in situations where a candidate from the designated group has little chance of getting the job, regardless of his/her qualifications, then there may be pressure to hire the candidates. Those who argue that affirmative action means quotas are talking about those goals and the pressure to fulfill them.

THE MERIT PRINCIPLE

In Canada, the merit principle places emphasis on "matching of applicant's qualifications to position requirements in order to achieve the most effective job performance". (Best 1987:56). This means that the merit principle places emphasis on getting the best qualified candidates, with the expectation that these candidates will be able to perform the work effectively, and ultimately the public service will be able to meet the needs of the citizens. Proponents of the merit principle argue that the principle operates like a free-market. (Prager, 1986:24). Those selected are individuals that demonstrate high performance best suited to occupy the various positions of responsibility. These qualities will enable the public service to achieve its goals. An employee recruited because of merit possess the ability to meet the expectations of the employer and ultimately of the citizens who receive the services. Thus when the public service looks at individual ability more than the social context of that individual, then the institution stands to gain. This is the essence of employment equity programs which are supposed to give all qualified individuals equal opportunity to compete for the various positions in the public service, regardless of their social affiliations. However, the designated groups are left out of the competition and preference is given to other Canadians. In this case, employers

tend to look at applicants' social contexts and not their qualifications and capabilities. Although all legislation points toward equality for all, not all Canadians enjoy equal opportunities for competing for jobs.

In the USA, the issue of individual merit has been replaced by a preeminent focus on racial diversity and representation. Proponents of affirmative action in the USA argued instead for race and gender per se as a merit. It is the assertion that racial and feminine group membership, at least in part, is a criterion of merit that has produced controversy over the affirmative action debate. (Prager 1986:25). In identifying race and gender as a condition of merit, the aspiration for the merit principle seems to have been abandoned. It was therefore argued by opponents of affirmative action in the USA that affirmative action did not strive to produce the best employees suited for the jobs available.

The public service in Canada acknowledges the importance of merit in the selection process, and that merit be understood in relation to four main factors:

- **Efficiency and Effectiveness**
Organizations should look for the best qualified candidates that will ensure that the best services are provided to the public at a minimal cost to the taxpayers
- **Sensitivity and Responsiveness**
Public servants must possess the background knowledge to understand the interests of the various groups that they provide services for.
- **Equality of Access**
All candidates competing for positions in the public service should not be discriminated against and thus should all have equal opportunity to compete for the jobs available
- **Equity**
All employees and aspiring employees of the public service should be treated justly and impartially. (Annual Report PSC 1992-93:10-12).

If merit is to be achieved, then all four factors mentioned should be considered. It is important to take the candidates' professional qualifications and potentials into consideration to determine their capabilities to perform the jobs they are applying for. Thus the merit principle relies heavily on education and capabilities as selection criteria. If all these conditions are met, then the public service will be able to meet the expectations of the people that it provides services for.

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that legislation has become an important component of the management process. Compensation and benefit packages, health and safety legislation have all become very important components of human resource management. (Kelly 1990:20). Human rights legislation, supported by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is perhaps the most important because its effect is all encompassing. It strongly influences and regulates many of the traditional human relations aspects of human resource management. For example, this legislation can change benefit and compensation packages through a number of regulatory provisions. Labour relations, health and safety and almost any other area of human resource management are being directly affected by human rights legislation. Kelly observes that, "Today, human rights regulations are increasingly giving legal status to a viewpoint that is prevalent in the workplace ... that is, acceptance of equality of opportunity and employment equity". (1991:4).

However, one may look at the role of human rights legislation in the workplace in two different ways. On the one hand, one may optimistically look at the legislation as modifiers of behaviour. This is because they prohibit those behaviours that discriminate

against other groups in the workplace. On the other hand, the legislation may be seen as unwarranted government interference into the domain of management and the workplace. The reality is that in today's organizations human resource management is being affected by human rights legislation, a force that is outside and to some extent beyond the boundary of administrative principles and practices. The fact that Human Rights Commissions have been established at the national and provincial levels only serves to emphasize the importance that the legislation carries. Thus, human rights legislation and the Employment Equity Act of 1986 became important milestones in the history of Canada. They demonstrate the steps taken by government to attempt to eliminate discrimination and achieve equality in employment regardless of differences based on race, sex, national or ethnic origin, religion, or physical abilities. This therefore means that Canadian human rights are defined in terms of prohibited discrimination.

The national and provincial human rights commissions in Canada have a role to play, among others, in analysing employment equity progress reports for evidence of discrimination. Through their research and education programs, the commissions have the powers to use persuasion and publicity to discourage and reduce discriminatory practices. The commissions also investigate complaints by employees, or discriminatory practices in government departments, crown corporations and businesses under federal or provincial jurisdiction. (Kelly 1991:10). The commissions may also appoint a board of enquiry to hear complaints and to issue an order against an employer who is found to have discriminated. The order may require that discriminatory practices cease and that the complainant be compensated. The commissions thus have the same power as any other

court to carry out their decisions and judgements. (Kelly 1991:12).

In light of the above discussion therefore, one may argue that the public service is faced with the challenge of eliminating discrimination and achieving a workforce that represents, in a fair manner, the composition of the Canadian society. Despite the efforts that the government appears to be making in eliminating discrimination in the public sector, change in the area of achieving employment equity is very slow. As might be expected, there are debates surrounding employment equity programs. Some Canadians see these programs as promoting reverse discrimination. They believe that preferential treatment is being given to members of the designated groups, leaving white males in a disadvantaged position. This is replacing discrimination with more discrimination. The Abella Commission disagreed with this argument and said that:

Interventions to adjust the systems are thus both justified and essential. Whether they are called employment equity or affirmative action, their purpose is to open competition to all who would have been eligible but for the existence of discrimination. The effect may be to end the hegemony of one group over the economic spoils, but the end of exclusivity is not reverse discrimination, it is the beginning of equality. The economic advancement of women and minorities is not the granting of privilege or advantage to them; it is the removal of a bias in favour of white males that has operated at the expense of other groups. (Abella 1984:10).

This argument is strengthened by the proponents of affirmative action who say that affirmative action is justified because it is an appropriate way of restoring the balance of justice, and the obligation to offer such benefits to the groups as a whole is an obligation that falls on society in general. (Taylor 1995:13). The debate about affirmative action seems to contribute to the lack of support for the program. Indeed the recruitment of

candidates from the designated groups may be necessary to overcome inequalities of opportunity that are in existence. However, this does not constitute reverse discrimination because standard criteria are used in the recruitment decisions. In this case, all candidates compete favourably for jobs based on merit. This promotes equal opportunity and cannot be seriously challenged. This is said to be justice because it is only fair that all qualified candidates, regardless of social backgrounds, be represented in the workforce if Canadian society is to appreciate its diversity.

The slow change in achieving employment equity in the public sector may also be explained by the lack of political will. For example, the Multicultural Policy in Canada was adopted and made official by the federal government in 1971. According to the then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, its purpose was to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and maintain a society that offers equal opportunities to all Canadians. The Prime Minister emphasized that:

A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all (House of Commons Debate, Oct. 8, 1971:8545).

Despite the good intentions of the policy to offer protection to all Canadians, prejudice, racism and stereotypes have persisted in Canadian society and this has

penetrated the workplace. The persistence of inequality in the labour force is emphasized and well documented by the Abella Commission in their report, *Equality in Employment* (1984). However, the commission made no mention of the multicultural policy in its report. This omission may be seen as reflecting the ineffectiveness of the government in addressing discriminatory practice in society. It is important to realize that discriminatory attitudes from the larger society permeate the labour market as well as the labour force. Addressing the problem in the public sector alone and omitting the problem in the larger society is tackling only a small portion of the problem.

The Abella Commission did a good job in exposing the persistent discrimination in the workplace. Although the Employment Equity legislation was passed to address the problem of discrimination in the federal public service and open doors for more members of designated groups, full fledged diversity in the public service has not yet been realized. As a result, the public service still maintains its culture of having one dominant group, particularly in the middle and upper level management. By so doing, the public service is leaving out talented people whose input would be beneficial. What remains to be done is for the legislation to be enforced so that the public service becomes open to all Canadians who are qualified to work in it, regardless of what these Canadians look like. The argument here is that the legislation should be able to modify those behaviours that result in discriminatory practices. If this is achieved, then the public service would be able to attract a cross section of the Canadian population.

In fact, the government came to the realization that slow progress was being made in implementing the employment equity legislation and realizing a fairly diverse public

service. As a result, the Employment Equity Act of 1986 was revised and passed in 1995, and came into effect in October 1996. The new Employment Equity Act provides for the achievement of equality in the workplace, as does that of 1986. However, unlike the 1986 act which required employment equity programs to be established in corporations under federal jurisdiction, the 1996 employment equity act now applies to federal government departments and agencies of all sizes for whom Treasury Board is the employer, federally regulated private employers with one hundred or more employees, and separate federal public sector employers with one hundred or more employees (for example, National Film Board, National Research Council).

An important characteristic of the new act is that it requires federal employers to analyse their workforce and review their employment systems in order that appropriate employment equity action plans be developed. The act also requires that employers report annually on the representation in their workforce of persons from the designated groups. (Section 9:1:a). What is new in the act is the inclusion of the federal public service and the authority given to the Canadian Human Rights Commission to undertake compliance audits of both public and private sector employers to ensure enforcement of the provisions of the act. While the act of 1986 depended on complaints of discrimination brought under the Human Rights act, the new act places emphasis on having employers systematically achieve the kind of diversity that exists in Canadian society. This means that employers are expected to collect information and conduct an analysis of the workforce to determine the extent of the under representation of persons in the designated groups in each occupational group. Subsequently, employers are to establish timetables

for hiring, training and retention of persons in designated groups. (Section 10:1:c).

The act further requires that employers establish numerical goals for hiring and promotion of the designated groups to increase their representation in the various occupational groups.(Section 10:1:d). The act further recognizes the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving equality in the workplace. In this regard, the act encourages consultation and cooperation between the following parties: employers, employees, union, designated group organizations and government, in realizing the principles of employment equity. One major concern with the act of 1986 was that the federal public service was not covered by the act, which at the same time did not enforce employers' obligations. The new act is more aggressive, with the sole purpose of promoting employment equity in some sectors of the Canadian workforce. One may therefore hope that the new act will bring fundamental changes into the workforce, and particularly in the public sector.

The federal government has realized that the public service had been deficient in its activities and that there was need to revitalize the public service and staff it with highly qualified and committed professionals. **La Releve** is the expression of government's commitment and duty to overcome the deficiency that has been in existence, and build a public service that will be able to meet the needs of its citizens. Under La Releve, federal government departments have committed themselves to effecting fundamental changes. Among the initiatives are human resources issues aimed at meeting the challenges of the present and the years ahead. (La Releve CD-Rom 1997). In a knowledge based economy like Canada, it is important, if not imperative, to bring many talented people into the

workforce. It is only after these potentials have been absorbed and developed that the public service will be able to fulfill its obligations to the citizens. Eliminating discrimination and embracing diversity in the workforce by giving opportunity to all that are capable of doing the work, regardless of social background, is a matter of social justice and fairness. A diverse workforce will reflect the diverse society that it serves.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIVERSITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Diversity has become a popular word in human resource management today. Diversity may be defined as a mix of people of different socially relevant group identities working or living together in a defined social system. (Cox and Ruby 1997:13). These identities include gender, nationality, age categories and level or types of physical abilities. Identities may also include other group affiliations such as occupational specialization. Diversity in organizations is thus seen to be composed of variations in race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, physical abilities, social class and age together with the additional differences caused by these categorizations. Although the study of diversity has expanded from an exclusive emphasis on demographic diversity to include more task-related dimensions such as functional specialization, this paper dwells mainly on demographic diversity.

To have a diverse workforce does not only mean having the different groups in the population represented in the workforce; it also means valuing the different qualities that these diverse employees bring into the organization. (Poole 1997:8). Diversity goes a step further than employment equity, and subsequently looks at every employee in the organization. Diversity is inclusive and ensures that all initiatives benefit *all* employees in the workforce. (Poole 1997:8). It ensures that the differences found in a diverse workforce are recognized, valued and properly used for the benefit of the organization and

ultimately the clientele that the organization serves. Diversity looks at differences positively, and values every different aspect of the employees which they bring with them into the organization. In a diverse workforce, treating people equally may mean ignoring individual differences and this may result in inequitable treatment. Employees should be treated according to their different needs.

When talking about diversity, one tends to think of the representation of the different groups in the workforce and to what extent this representation is reasonable, hence the phrase, *representative bureaucracy*. This means that the public service should be an epitome of the total society, including race, religion, language, education and social class. (Kernaghan and Siegel 1995:567). Representative bureaucracy therefore involves looking at the demographic trend in the public service and society and trying to more closely match the public service's employee profile to that of the external labour pool. A lot of debate has been going on in Canadian society about the usefulness of representative bureaucracy and to what extent this should be emphasized. Proponents of representative bureaucracy argue that a public service that is representative of the population it serves will be able to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of the citizens. (Kernaghan and Siegel 1995:567). Emphasis here is placed on the input from a diverse population in the decision making process, with the result that all concerns are addressed, both in policy development and program delivery.

Critics of representative bureaucracy argue that representativeness may not necessarily end up in effective decision making because the public service as a whole does not make decisions. Rather, decisions are made by individual public servants who

serve the interests of particular segments of the population rather than the total population. Therefore, for all interests to be represented in the decision making process, each major administrative unit, for example regions, must be representative of the total population. This, critics argue, is important especially at the senior levels, where vital recommendations and decisions are made. (Kernaghan and Siegel 1995:568). On the other hand, representation based on administrative units may not necessarily be reflective of the total population in Canadian society, and will not address the interests of all the citizens. It is not therefore possible to have a precise representation from each administrative unit. Related to this, Kernaghan and Siegel argue that it is not the policy of the federal government to pursue exact demographic representation of all groups in society in the public service. It is nevertheless the aim of the government to have a more proportionate representation of a limited number of *politically significant* but under-represented groups. They argue that the under-representation of these groups would "... diminish the sensitivity of the public service to the needs of certain segments of the population". (1995:571). The argument implies that representativeness is important but only for those that are politically influential members of the designated groups. This argument tends to favour only those that may be politically active under-represented groups. This leaves out those that may be qualified but not necessarily politically influential, and thus goes against the policy of equal opportunity for all Canadians. In principle, all groups of people should be involved in matters affecting their lives. Making decisions for people without their involvement is not only undemocratic, but may not necessarily address the real issues affecting their lives. Therefore, giving opportunity to

all those who qualify to join the public service is appreciating the contributions of these individuals.

A meritorious person is said to be one that is most qualified to perform effectively the duties associated with a given position. (Best 1987:56). According to the **Merit Principle**, the most qualified applicant is awarded a position with the expectation that this individual will be able to do the work well. Thus in normal circumstances, the pursuance of the merit principle would involve determining the functions of the various positions, establishing the skills and knowledge needed to perform the functions, screening all the applicants to determine their suitability for the various positions and making the appointments accordingly. However, there has been a lot of disagreement among managers in many organizations, public and private, about what selection criteria to use; education or experience, or both, or other criteria like tests and interviews. Some managers argue in favour of highly educated applicants as the best qualified and therefore meritorious. Other managers argue that those with many years of experience on the job are competent and best qualified and therefore meritorious. Some managers use a combination of criteria to pick out appropriate candidates for the various positions. (Best 1987:77). Thus, it follows that in a typical representative bureaucracy, the best qualified candidates who get hired in the public service will be drawn from the various groups in the population and therefore will be fairly reflective of the society as a whole, as long as the standards chosen are equally distributed amongst all the groups

Selection of candidates into the Canadian public service depends heavily on education and experience as selection criteria. In many cases, the education and

experience recognized is Canadian-attained. This therefore rules out minorities who obtain their education outside of Canada or who may have many years of experience in their own countries or elsewhere. Despite their education and skills that in many cases are transferable, their competitions for positions in the public service are usually very unfavourable. This paper noted earlier that the school drop-out rates among Aboriginal children was high due to the irrelevance of formal education to their way of life. However, there are those Aboriginal people who have made it successfully through the Canadian school system up to the university level. These are the categories that do not enjoy equal opportunity, compared to the mainstream group, in attaining jobs in the public service. One may appreciate the fact that the public service does want to maintain a high standard of performance by recruiting only those candidates who meet their requirements. However, it is also important to give opportunities to those who may have foreign earned educational and work experiences and have the potential and the interest to do the jobs. This means that the federal government may have to commit some resources to elevate the intending applicants to the standard required to enable them apply for jobs. This may be in the areas where the public service feels the candidates show weakness, for example, in either of the official languages.

Representative bureaucracy should occur automatically if only the public service could recognize the qualities that intending public servants possess rather than their social contexts. Many of these intending public servants have potentials that only need to be harnessed. In light of this argument, therefore, it is very important to note that while education and experience may be appropriate criteria, there is need to look at the

potentials that applicants have to offer. Hiring based on merit is looking past those physical characteristics that make an individual different from the others. It means looking beyond skin colour, wheel chair, accent, gender and all those factors that are not relevant to job performance. Rather, it places emphasis on what an individual's brain has to offer. A meritorious individual is one that not only has the knowledge and skills necessary to do a job, but also has the ability to do the job in question. Thus, a typical meritocracy attempts to match transferable skills of a candidate to the required skills of a job in question, without regard to irrelevant characteristics such as race, gender, and physical abilities. For example, having a foreign accent should not be an impediment to join the public service. Those who have accents do so because they speak other languages that may be beneficial to the public service. Representative bureaucracy in the public service may therefore be looked at positively. A government can be compared to a stool that has three strong legs: one leg is parliament which makes the laws, the judiciary interprets them and the public service administers and enforces them. The public service therefore needs input from the different groups in the population to support its efforts in administering and enforcing the laws. In a vast country with demographic diversity like Canada, having one or two groups dominate in the administration and enforcement of these laws is denying the other groups the opportunity to contribute in this noble process. This means that decisions made for the citizens may not necessarily reflect their needs. Citizen input in this process is therefore important because it is these inputs that guide the government in fulfilling its obligations to the citizens.

The public service has an obligation to sell itself as widely as possible to make citizens understand what it is doing and how it is doing it, and in a way that intending candidates may have in mind what to expect. The public service has several awareness creation initiatives particularly for secondary and post secondary institutions. These initiatives include post secondary recruitment programs conducted in the fall, and targeted at recruiting university graduates into the public service. (Hannibal 1998). The student employment program is active in the summer for secondary and post secondary students. Other programs include Aboriginal students programs, career fairs, outreach activities, (White 1998), and coop programs for technical and trade schools. (Charrette 1998). All these programs are geared to universities, colleges and community colleges. These programs are given higher profile because it is in the government's interest to bring the younger generation into the public service. (Hannibal 1998). This is because there is a high percentage of older workers in the public service and when these retire, the public service workforce will be depleted. The young generation will be able to fill this gap. (Hannibal 1988). However, the public service should take these campaigns to communities to give it more publicity. In this way, more and more people will be able to gather information about prospects open to them. This will pave the way for favourable competition for whatever positions that may be available.

Not many organizations, private or public, seem committed to having a diverse workforce and developing the talents in these employees. Many organizations place emphasis on diversity initiatives driven by federal mandates, but not motivated by genuine concern for diversity. They carry out diversity initiatives to avoid being accused by

government of discriminatory practices. (Ricucci 1997:37). Diversity initiatives may mean committing resources above the usual limit, and many organizations do not want to go through this. The diversity programs that are genuinely essential but not driven by federal regulations are very few. Some programs are only aimed at recruitment of the designated groups and there are no additional programs aimed at helping them get promoted to higher levels of the bureaucracy. Generally, diversity in organizations has been given low priority and perhaps is not considered essential.

Another reason for the lack of commitment to diversity efforts is the belief that it will violate the merit principle and consequently lower the standards of the public service (Ricucci 1997:39). This fear, said to be held by many white males, is that they would lose out to less qualified employees. These fears build up and end up in resistance rather than support until the backlash against diversity overpowers the effort. Some of these fears come from the very nature of the debate surrounding the employment equity programs, (as discussed in Chapter Three) and the labels used to identify the various players in the program. The groups designated under the legislated equity programs are sometimes referred to as *disadvantaged*. This could be interpreted to mean disadvantaged in education, income, social status or even intelligence. The label disadvantage create the impression that these groups cannot succeed unless they are assisted by special programs.

A third reason why diversity efforts have not being taken seriously is due to the failure of the bureaucracy to address the fears of those who oppose the diversity efforts. (Ricucci 1997:40). As a result, there is a lack of understanding on the part of society

about diversity and why and how it is important to the public service. There is need for the public service to work closely with all employees, including those who feel intimidated by these efforts. This is important and indeed necessary to make employees understand that models of diversity are based on inclusion, not exclusion. This means that diversity programs do not seek to eliminate white males as the understanding may be, but are aimed at preparing all employees, regardless of race, gender and physical ability, to work in a heterogenous team environment. There is also need on the part of the public service to educate its employees in the idea that diversity efforts will not lower standards, but will prepare all employees to develop their competencies for effective performance of their jobs. It is important that managers should show the benefit of diversity programs to employees so that the latter are motivated to get involved in the diversity programs.

Wilson (1996:60) reveals that the best way to have an effective diversity program is to link the objective of the program to the main objectives of the organization. Organizations aim at providing the best goods and services to their customers and they rely on the employees to help them achieve these objectives. This means that organizations will need a workforce that is knowledgeable, skilful and capable of steering them to fulfill their obligations to the customers. Because this process is critical to the success of the organizations, the collective contribution of all employees is very important. This means that the organizations should develop the talents of every employee. This is the essence of diversity programs and it is important that all employees understand them so that they participate without reservations. Human capital is the most important resource that organizations can invest in; its development is very important as it is linked to the main

objective of the organization.

One of the major problems in Canada seems to be the inability to effectively utilize all its human resources, and this is an argument that runs throughout this paper. In fact there are indications that Canada has a pool of overqualified, under-used workers, and this is especially true for at least the members of the designated groups. Reports reveal, for example, that many minorities are more likely than the white majority to have a university degree, but fewer are employed in higher paying professional or managerial jobs. Many of these hold more manual labour jobs than the other groups in society. (See page 25). This means that individuals who could be contributing more to the competitive performance of organizations are being under-utilized. The transferable skills of these individuals are not being acknowledged and are therefore being wasted. Thus, it would be in the interest of the public service to understand that the under-utilization of human resources tends to affect, in a negative way, the efficient operation of the organization.

A second motivation to pursue diversity is the change in the local and international marketplace. (Wilson 1996:62). This is particularly so for many private sector organizations which have shifted their businesses to international markets. This is done to attract more and more customers. The public sector has a role to play in these international activities, through the departments of International Trade and Foreign Service. In addition, public sector clients and customers come from diverse backgrounds. This means that health care, taxation services, immigration, commerce, social services and customs all require competence because the clientele is varied and changing. The needs

of a diverse clientele are very complex and often require the concerted efforts of a workforce. The public service has to invest in a diverse workforce, a workforce that reflects the clients. This will give the public service a better chance of understanding what its clientele values. The public service has a responsibility to serve all citizens and meet their needs. It therefore needs the contributions from the different groups in the population to help it achieve its goal.

An example of this problem can be seen in the case of Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). CSC is an important department which, as part of the criminal justice system, encourages and assists offenders to become law abiding citizens, thus contributing to the protection of society. However, the department has acknowledged under-representation with Aboriginal, visible minorities and disabled persons in all levels. Women are under-represented in the executive category. The department is therefore faced with a challenge to meet targets which are determined by the Treasury Board, as indicated in Table 4 below:

TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT EQUITY RECRUITMENT TARGETS FOR THE EXECUTIVE GROUP BY DESIGNATED GROUPS FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OF CANADA, CSC

Designated Group	Target Expressed as a Percentage of Representation of Recruitment for the Period ending in 1998
Aboriginal	1.3
Persons with Disabilities	2.6
Visible Minorities	5.4
Women	22.3

Source: La Releve Task Force CD-ROM 1997

(Statistics on workforce composition of CSC not available but see Table 3, p.51 for workforce availability of designated groups in the Public Service).

The department is also faced with another challenge, and that is a significant gap between the representation of Aboriginals and visible minorities among offenders and their representation among employees. Aboriginal representation among offenders was 12.0 per cent and 8.3 per cent for visible minorities as of September 1996. As of this date, the department had 22 000 offenders and a workforce of 12 000. (La Releve CD-ROM 1997). As part of the La Releve initiative, the department reported being committed to increasing the representation of the workforce. In addition, because of the complexity of correctional services due to the increasingly diversified demographic composition of the offender population, there is need for concerted efforts to cope with this complexity. As a result, this calls for a more diversified workforce than the department currently has.

In light of these arguments, it is important that the public service make it a point that diversity initiatives go beyond legislative requirements. It must be seen as an inevitable process that is needed to help it fulfill its obligations to the citizens. This calls for the commitment of managers to diversify so that it becomes an "all encompassing workplace philosophy". (Poole 1997:61). There is therefore a need to develop the potentials of all employees to make them more competent in their every day official capacities. Even in the face of restructuring and downsizing in the public service, the commitment towards achieving diversity should be maintained. This means that the downsizing should be carried out across the organization and should not affect only particular demographic groups in the workforce. If this trend is not followed, then one may rightly argue that the public service does discriminate against some groups in the population.

CHAPTER FIVE

MANAGING DIVERSITY

The rationale for having a diverse workforce includes moral and legal reasons such as fairness, and honouring human rights and employment equity laws which have been well established. This has been the guiding principle of diversity efforts. This motive lays emphasis on the responsibility of employers to operate within the moral and legal norms of the organization. Although this motive is strong, the rationale for diversity also includes the maximization of human resource utilization in pursuit of the organization's mission. Thus, having a diverse workforce should go beyond providing access to jobs for people who were traditionally discriminated against and improving their representation in the public service. It means focussing attention on creating an organization culture in which people of different backgrounds can work together, achieve their full potential and contribute to the attainment of the goal of the organization. This means that the diversity must be accompanied by specific plans to develop talents of the different groups so that the organization benefits from these talents. This is ***Managing Diversity***. (Loden 1996;23). This means that an organizational environment is created and maintained in which each individual employee is respected because of his/her differences. Managing diversity creates the opportunity to attract and retain the best employees. Changing the employee profile alone is not synonymous with diversity. It is possible to have demographic diversity in an organization for the sake of complying with state regulations,

and yet not harness the potentials that this diversity may offer to an organization. Therefore managing diversity and diversity per se are two different things.

Managing diversity is a process that consists of taking steps to create and sustain an organizational environment in which the potential of all employees is developed to enhance performance. It therefore places emphasis on improving organizational performance by utilizing every employees' abilities and appreciating diversity as a resource. Valuing diversity, on the other hand, is a philosophy about how diversity affects organizational outcomes. It stresses that the presence of a diverse workforce represents a distinct organizational resource which if properly managed, will bring positive rewards, relative to organizations that fail to successfully utilize their diverse workforce. (Loden 1996:21). Employment equity law and affirmative action focus on preventing and correcting discriminatory employment practices that have impact on workplace representation, as earlier pointed out in this paper. These efforts may be called *profile improvement* initiatives because they look at demographic trends in the workplace and society and try to more closely match an organization's employee profile to that of the external labour pool. (Loden 1996:21). Valuing diversity is an outgrowth of these efforts but goes beyond profile improvement that is focussed solely on race and gender, as it seeks to maximize the potential of every employee in the organization.

Valuing diversity focuses on the different talents and the degree to which they are appreciated and subsequently utilized to meet the objectives of the organization. The goal is not merely satisfying legal requirements. Instead, it expands to include correcting

workplace issues and enhancing the morale of all employees so that they perform their best. Valuing diversity is said to be a new management paradigm that holds organizations accountable for creating cultures in which diversity thrives and for fully utilizing the diverse talents of every employee. This diversity in talents can be used for enhanced provision of goods and services. (Loden 1996:23). Valuing diversity is fostering relationships in which all workers feel that their contribution is vital to the organization's success. The organization should foster a kind of relationship necessary to make employees have a say in decision making processes. When organizations invite this level of participation and trust in employees, the employees on their part will begin to develop self confidence, individually and as members of a team. By focussing on the quality of the work environment and on the full utilization of the skills of all employees, valuing and managing diversity places emphasis on inclusion and respect.

MANAGING DIVERSITY

Managing diversity is a process that is driven mainly by the needs of the citizens for satisfactory services and the quest of the public sector to maximize its performance to meet citizens' needs and ultimately fulfill its mission. This therefore means that effective management of diversity requires organizational change at two different levels: cultural and structural.

1. Cultural Level Change

Organizational culture comprises the values, rituals, symbols and practices that are shared by all the members. This value system affects how the organization's members think and act. Organizations operate within a societal environment and culture that influences its internal activities. Organizations are therefore not entities that exist alone but are part of a larger social system and culture. In fact it is even argued that organizations are a reflection of the larger society in which they strive. (Ragins 1995:93). So, if a belief system in the larger society is centred on the understanding that other groups in society should not be treated fairly, then this will also be transferred to and reflected in the organization's culture. This, for example, can be seen with discrimination that is found in Canadian society, based on various grounds. This discrimination is found in various organizations as well.

The public service in Canada has not been reflective of the demographic make-up of the society. This meant that authority tended to rest in the hands of the dominant group, and the other groups largely have been excluded from important processes like decision making. This culture has guided the behaviour of employees to the extent that these behaviours have become unconscious and automatic. Many public servants have been socialized in values and norms of white male supremacy and patriarchy and some don't even know it. To successfully attain and manage a diverse workforce, one critical requirement is to adopt the "***diversity mind-set***" (Loden 1996:61). This mind-set would help change and keep employees beliefs and actions consistent. The mind-set would mean that employees will be involved in promoting a cultural change in which

understanding, respect, acceptance and the sharing of responsibilities prevail. The diversity mind-set is an attitudinal state that can be achieved through learning from those that put it into practice. This also means challenging attitudes and assumptions that have built up over the years and have been passed down from generation to generation. These attitudes, behaviours and perceptions will take time to change, since it is a fundamental change for most employees and for every organization. Not many people may be willing to change what, in their conviction, is rightful belief and practice.

Stereotypes, attitudes and attributions may all combine to influence behaviours towards the designated groups and this will in turn influence role expectation in the work environment. For example, designated group members are generally expected to perform low paying jobs even if they have the qualifications to do higher level and better paying jobs. They accept these jobs because these are the only jobs available. Because they accepted these jobs, perhaps in desperation, it is expected that they will be the ones to continue doing these jobs, even if they are over-qualified for them.

Managing diversity in the public service requires effecting change in discriminatory behaviours among employees. These behaviours, whether intentional or not, have the effect of marginalizing members of the designated groups, and ultimately undermining their self confidence, performance and development of power. A mental attitudinal shift is based on the understanding that undesirable behaviour derives from lack of awareness and understanding. The main argument here is that employees' values should be changed and this in turn will alter the stereotypes that are embedded in the organization. This will enable one to view the public service as an organization where all Canadians can serve

regardless of social background. Organizational culture can be changed with the commitment of top management and all employees, a process that goes through three main phases:-

i). Education and Awareness Training

Education and awareness training are used to change organization culture. They focus on prejudice identification, bias reduction, cultural awareness and sensitivity and appreciation of the different groups in society. (Loden 1996:99). The training is therefore aimed at helping employees see and understand the workplace from the perspectives of others. In a typical hierarchical administrative bureaucracy, power and authority have always come from the top. Because of this, the intervention process must rightly begin from top management. (Cross 1996:20). Workshops for senior executives should aim at openly discussing any problems, concerns or needs that have been expressed by employees. There must be diversity of perspectives, which means that managers from all the different groups (if any) should participate in these discussions. Eventually, as the education and awareness program progresses, employees from every level will participate in these workshops.

There are bound to be differences in perception on the issues discussed at the workshops. For example, some employees - including management - may feel that their department has no problem of discriminatory nature and may argue that all employees are treated fairly. Others will see that there is indeed a problem in the organization. It is very important for management to be aware of these differences in perceptions and that it

should focus attention on making employees aware that the problem of discrimination is of concern to some employees. Emphasis should thus be placed on the fact that all employees are responsible for portraying behaviours of good intentions towards one another. Accordingly, unless the authorities change their own practices of unfair treatment of other employees, they may not be able to identify and correct inappropriate behaviours. The workshops enable management to confront problems affecting its workforce. Because the problem is systemic in nature, management should be committed to a change to create a culture that encourages all employees' contributions to the success of the organization. (Cross 1996:21).

Many employees enter the workforce with a mind-set that was acquired from the larger society. They may not be comfortable when dealing with diverse groups, leave alone being respectful of people outside their own social contexts. This situation can create a big gap in experience and understanding among employees in the same work groups. An employee may find it amusing to see a female Muslim employee dress up in a long robe, covering her whole body except her face. Likewise, a disabled employee on a wheel chair using audio-aids may be a spectacular sight to some employees. The lack of understanding about employees' different situations and backgrounds is bound to result in non-acceptance among employees and will result in an unfriendly environment. It is very important that organizations address these issues from time to time so that employees accept one another as equal partners.

Employees bring into the organization different cultures, needs and expectations. For example, every culture has its rules and conventions about how people greet one

another. In some cultures for example, it is done by nodding, shaking hands or hugging. In some cultures, it is appropriate to look the person you are greeting in the eye, while in others, one should not look at an older person or an authority figure in the eye. However, in the typical business world which is basically governed by white male Anglo-Saxon cultural ways, looking a person in the eye and shaking hands is the most commonly used greetings. Because there are different ways of doing things, people tend to take all these cultural norms into the workplace. Those who do things differently from what is considered essential in the mainstream culture are a disadvantage. Very often what is considered the right way to do things is so much part of the mainstream culture that the other different ways are considered bad, and cultural biases sets in. Because of such biases, people with different cultural norms may not be hired, yet these are people who may bring new perspectives into the workplace. (Kendall 1995:83). To build support and help bridge these gaps, awareness training and education should be used from time to time to introduce employees to appreciating, understanding and respecting diversity. Such training will ultimately sensitize employees to the need for alternative focus of communication and behaviour and will encourage trust, openness and collaboration. (Loden 1996:100). Therefore, managing diversity is about being sensitive to differences in experiences, beliefs, principles and customs. To be able to manage diversity effectively, managers must create and maintain an environment that is hospitable for all employees. Being sensitive, and indeed accommodative, of the different cultures that employees bring into the workplace will make employees feel valued for their contributions to the organization.

It is important to point out that as people return to their familiar, everyday world, they tend to fall back on familiar assumptions, attitudes and behaviour. This has been a concern in the public service where some employees are sceptical and therefore resistant to diversity initiatives. (Charrette 1998). Many are insensitive to the different cultures around them (White 1998), and this tends to affect, in a negative way, relationships among employees. There is, therefore, a need to regularly reinforce their learning so that its impact will be long lasting in terms of changing the mind-set of employees. (Lambert 1998). A more culturally sensitive and skilled workforce will promote a culture of mutual respect and understanding and will help the public service survive in more difficult times. This will in turn enable the public service to respond more effectively to the needs of the increasingly diverse clientele. The federal government departments have various programs aimed at assisting employees develop and maintain behaviours that reflect the commitment to respecting and valuing diversity. These programs include Managing Change and Diversity Training (Charrette 1998), Aboriginal Awareness Sessions, Ability in Disability Workshops (White 1998), and Cross Cultural Training which is mandatory. (Lambert 1998). In addition, departments undertake to observe periods considered important to promoting understanding and appreciations from one another. These include Disability Week and Black History Month. (Hannibal 1998).

Another way of effecting mental change is through the ***re-framing perspectives strategy***. This approach involves attendance at organizational workshops that aim to examine organizational missions, policies and underlying assumptions so as to understand how diversity can be managed. (Newell 1995:146). This initiative encourages employee

involvement in creating and re-visioning a new organizational mission, so that they may feel that they have a share in the process, thereby reducing the fear and uncertainty associated with organizational change. As well, the initiative places emphasis on the importance of having policy statements that support organizational commitment to diversity. Thus, an organization should pledge its commitment to a code of conduct that guarantees each individual the right to work in an environment that is respectful, supportive and free from any type of discrimination.

ii). Capacity Building

After management and employees have fully become aware of the problems affecting the organization, they may be able to develop a capacity for managing the organization. (Cross 1996:22). Using the recommendations obtained from workshops , meetings or conferences, management together with employees, will be able to effect the necessary changes that will benefit all employees regardless of backgrounds. For example, if a decision is arrived at that a diversity committee be formed in a department, then it should comprise a representative from every group in the workforce (female, white, minority, disabled person and Aboriginal person). The representatives may come from every level of the department so that issues affecting employees at all levels are addressed and dealt with. It would also be of benefit to all employees that management keep a close watch over this phase so that it provides resources needed to support the change efforts.

iii). Culture Change

In this phase, it is assumed that employee awareness has taken place and therefore it is necessary that the employees know what behaviours and norms are the accepted culture of the organization. (Cross 1996:22). Consequently, there is need for management to inform the department about the requirement and expected behaviour for maintaining this new culture. The communication strategy needed may be frequent staff meetings and one on one meeting between staff and management. The process of changing organization culture is long but with the commitment of management and all employees, it can be realized. The new culture will also allow employees to relate to one another on the basis of integration rather than assimilation. Employees will be able to consider themselves as equals, working for a common goal of sustaining the organization. This will therefore mean that power is shared across the organization rather than it being distributed from top down. Positions of responsibilities will be spread across the organization. In this way, the organization will be more flexible in terms of allowing employees take responsibility in the organizations with limited instructions or supervision. This flexibility will not only allow employees prove their worth as capable and responsible individuals, but will promote their self esteem and satisfaction. These will in turn motivate them to work harder consequently leading to better performance.

2. Structural Level Change

Structural level change in the organization would involve change in the hierarchy, span of control and task functions. These structural changes are necessary if diversity is to be promoted. (Ragins 1995:93). Many designated groups face barriers to gaining access to positions or power, where decisions are made. They are sometimes placed in positions where chances for career development are limited. There is therefore need for ***structural integration*** which would involve the achievement of proportional heterogeneity in employment positions across departments, specialization and rank. (Ragins 1995:93). In this way, structural integration will not only allow all the various groups to have access to power, but may reduce stereotypes and prejudice, by allowing more contact among the different groups in the workforce. Two approaches may be used to achieve structural change in the organization:

i). Career Development System

An important approach to structural changes is implementing a career development system, which is defined as an organized, formalized, planned effort to achieve a balance between the individual's career needs and the requirement of the organization to have a competent workforce. (Wilson 1996:147). This system should aim at improving employees' performance on the job and enable them acquire additional skills to enable them move on in their career. Traditional approaches to career development include:

- a). Institutional Training
- b). Career Development Assignments
- c). Job Rotations
- d). In-House Training Courses
- e). Internships
- f). Subsidized Educational Leaves of Absence (Wilson 1996:147).

It is therefore important that information regarding career development programs be available to all employees and that they be encouraged to take advantage of whatever opportunities that are available. In addition, there should be no restrictions to the career development opportunities based on occupational levels and earnings. Many organizations have training and development systems that concentrate on opportunities for employees in the higher management levels only; employees in the middle and lower level management do not get these opportunities too often. This means that employees in the middle and lower levels remain in their positions for long periods of time, perhaps till retirement, because they lack the necessary qualifications to move on.

The public service conducts various career development programs to help employees advance on the job. For example, in the Interdepartmental Career Management Program, employees get assignments between departments. This assists employees to know their options and enables them to deal with these options. This program places emphasis on creative thinking to enable employees to develop abilities to work in different situations. (Charrette 1998). Other programs include Career Counselling

and Training of Trainers sessions, Career Assignment, and Middle Management Training programs. There are also local developmental assignments/rotations. (White 1998). Departments also send employees on acting assignments and secondments to other departments. (Lambert 1998). The various career development programs are in line with *La Releve*, a renewal of the public service which places emphasis on human resource development. The career development programs enable employees try out diverse jobs and develop multiple skills that allow them move up the ladder, and at the same time, enable them work across the organization. This will mean that no one demographic group will be concentrated in one level of the organization, if indeed the career development system is made use of. The available opportunity to move up the ladder and work across the organization ensures flexibility which will recognize the input of every employee in the daily life of the organization.

ii). Mentoring

Mentoring is another important approach to achieving structural change in the organization. It is the practice of coaching, guiding and teaching the success strategy in one's field to an individual in a dissimilar position. Mentors are individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support for their clients' careers. (Ragins 1995:108).

Mentors provide two main types of roles. The first one is that they provide career development roles which involve coaching to promote advancement of proteges, protecting clients' from hostile forces within the organization, providing challenging assignments and

promoting positive visibility of clients. Secondly, mentors are known to provide psychosocial roles. These include functions such as personal support, friendship, acceptance, counselling and role modelling. (Ragins 1995:108). Many organizations in North America, public and private, are reported to be using the mentorship approach to assist minorities advance on the job, and this creates a comfortable atmosphere where racial and ethnic group members can grow and develop. There has, therefore, been a consistent relationship between mentorship and advancement in many organizations. Individuals with mentors are known to receive more promotions and advancement on the job at a faster rate than those lacking mentors. (Ragins 1995:111).

Mentors may influence and shape organizational culture by articulating and supporting the values and norms of the organization. This influence is known to have the potential for both negative and positive effects. This is particularly so in diversified mentoring relationship where the mentor is from the dominant culture and the clients are from the minority. In terms of negative effects, by promoting socialization and adaptation to organizational culture, mentors in diversified relationships may advise their clients to assimilate to the dominant culture rather than maintain their separate identity. Assimilation is a process in which one group loses its distinctiveness through absorption into a dominant culture. (Fine et al 1990:305). In this case, through assimilation, the mentor imposes him/herself on the clients because he/she (mentor) seeks to undermine the culturally unique basis of the clients. This is done to facilitate the entry of the clients into the dominant culture of the organization, and the clients are expected to conform to the

norms and values of the dominant group. An assimilation model rests on the assumption and belief that those who already hold positions in organizations possess the appropriate behaviour and skills needed to hold these positions. (Fine et al 1990:305).

Assimilation strategy may have negative consequences for the individuals being assimilated and the organization itself. Enforced assimilation may create an environment in which the clients may feel uncomfortable, stressed, angry, alienated and oppressed. They are caught between two worlds; they feel they are denied the ability to express their genuine self because they are being forced to repress significant parts of their daily lives and of their own identity. At the same time they spend time and energy dealing with an alien and strange environment that they cannot relate to. Yet they must stay in this environment if they want to earn a living. This is likely to create an environment where the clients will lack self esteem and feel angry and ultimately affect performance on the job and also his/her interaction with co-workers.

Assimilation places emphasis on using individuals as they are and ignores untapped potentials since assimilated people are made to fit in and adapt. Assimilated people therefore do whatever is expected of them and cannot go beyond to foster creativity and innovativeness because they are repressed. (Thomas 1993:59). Considering that the world of work is changing very fast due to factors such as globalization, technological advancement, and increased immigration across borders, there is need to develop flexible and innovative approaches to deal with the many changes in the environment. These qualities cannot come from a few individuals in the workplace; all employees in an organization are assets in the everyday activities. Thus,

managing diversity suggests that success be based less on assimilation and more on inclusion and integration.

On the other hand, mentorship, diversified or homogenous, may have a positive or negative influence in the organization. In an organization that typically does not implement diversity, officials in positions of authority are detached from the employees in the lower echelons. Because of this they have limited exposure and experience interacting with those individuals who are in the lower ranks and differ from them; However, diversified mentoring relationships provide a one-on-one experience involving support, friendship and some degree of intimacy. (Ragins 1995:112). Through such experiences, mentors who are in positions of authority will be able to understand and appreciate the obstacles that those being mentored are facing. This experience may be able to influence the values, beliefs, perceptions and ideologies of those who are in authority. Because those in authority influence the culture of the organization, diversified mentorship relationships, for example, may have a significant influence on the culture of the organization. Thus, while diversified relationships may create an opportunity for the organization culture to accept diversity, they may also function to assimilate the individuals being mentored into the existing culture. From this, one may therefore argue that diversified mentoring relationships may function either to facilitate an appreciation of diversity or to undermine diversity issues.

The public service does not have vigorous mentorship programs. Although every department has some mentoring, they are isolated cases, and some departments are in the process of establishing them. (Charrette 1998). Revenue Canada is in the process of

establishing a formal mentorship program for Aboriginal peoples. It also has less formal mentoring for Middle Management Development program and Management Training Program candidates. (White 1998).

The scope of the diversity initiatives should include all groups so that the initiatives remain effective. (Ragins 1995:94). For example, if the public service were to implement diversity initiatives by instituting structural integration for the physically disabled only, but maintains a culture that values and promotes homogeneity with respect to religion or gender only, then this initiative would not be very effective. It is therefore very important that all groups should be included in these initiatives so that effective cultural and structural change may occur. It is important to note that the cultural and structural levels of change are interdependent because change in one level will affect the other level as well. For example, attitudinal and behavioural changes in the individual and in the work group will tend to influence the culture of the organization. Similarly, structural changes that place women and minorities only in positions of leadership have an impact on the culture of the organizations as well as on the attitudes and behaviours of the individual employees and work groups.

In many respects, managing diversity in organizations addresses issues that the larger society is not addressing. Managing diversity is a change that encourages people to look deeper and challenges every employee to demonstrate respect, cooperation and sensitivity in interactions with another. Employees, in this case the public servants, must therefore develop long term views and see managing diversity as a comprehensive, long term process. Managing diversity means that the public service must be able to create

and maintain an environment which empowers employees so that they are able to better serve its socially, racially and ethnically diverse clientele. (Coleman 1994:11). The public service should therefore attract, develop and retain the best talents available regardless of race, gender and physical capabilities.

An organization that manages diversity is one that creates and maintains an environment in which each employee is respected because of his/her differences, and in which each employee can contribute and be rewarded based on his/her input and results obtained. (Coleman 1994:12). Having different employees does not necessarily mean that they are less qualified but that the different employees may have different perspectives that are beneficial in the decision making process. Thus, what an employee is able to offer an organization in terms of his/her talents is far more important than what he/she looks like. Diversity brings into the workplace people with varying needs and managing diversity means understanding these differences and showing flexibility towards all these different needs, even if these differences cause inconvenience to other employees. (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1994:126). For example, a government department holds its monthly two hour staff meetings on Fridays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. One staff member, a mother, has a baby in the day care and needs to pick up the baby at 5:00 pm. This means that the staff member cannot attend the meeting in full. The department will therefore have to change its meeting time to one that is convenient to all employees. This is one aspect of effective diversity management.

It is clear, then, that the successful implementation and maintenance of diversity will depend a lot on the inclusion and indeed commitment of all employees. (Loden 1996:65). All diverse groups must support the diversity initiatives. Self-interests may affect the priorities set, and while employees may want to be inclusive, some employees may advocate strongly for changes that may have direct impacts on them and those groups to which they belong, and less direct impact for others. These selective views may affect, in a negative way, the diversity initiatives. Thus, achieving diversity must be recognized as the shared responsibility of every individual employee and not the responsibility of top management alone. (Coleman 1994:15). There has to be firm commitment of the upper level managers to create and maintain a diverse workforce. The public service stands to benefit from a diverse workforce, as the diverse employees will reach out to meet the needs of the diverse population.

CHAPTER SIX

THE VALUES OF DIVERSITY

The need and indeed importance of demographic diversity are being emphasized in many organizations today. Organizations are increasingly changing their policies and practices, and employers are addressing some of the previously unquestioned biases that interfere with effective functioning of the organization. In addition, many organizations today are restructuring their activities around work teams as opposed to individual contributors. Work teams often bring together diverse employees who offer different points of view, ideas, skills, abilities and knowledge while addressing the same problem. When all these differences are brought together, there is performance benefit.(Sessa 1995:140). In a team based environment, differences in experiences and perspectives lead members to approach problems and decisions by drawing on different information from different angles. On the other hand, conflict may also result from having diverse groups in the workplace. Education and awareness training may help to address this, as discussed

Diverse values offer a variety of perspectives which lead to new ideas. The new ideas bring in innovations and creativity. In the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) for example, the percentage of Aboriginal in the workforce is fairly high, about 20.7 per cent in 1995, but over half of these are in the lower and middle classifications. (Annual Report: 1994-5:18). This means that the percentage of Aboriginal in the executive category in DIAND is small, as is the percentage in the public service as a whole. (See Table 3, pg. 51). The department offers direct services to the Aboriginal

people. The fact that the Aboriginal people themselves are not fairly well represented in the executive level of a department that offers them services means that programs are most likely going to be implemented without significant input from them. This is because decisions made may not necessarily reflect their needs. Their heterogeneity in terms of needs, aspirations, capabilities, socio-cultural orientations are likely not taken into great consideration. They are left out of the decision making process that directly affects them.

A fair representation of Aboriginal people in DIAND may enable the department to address some of those issues that directly affect the Aboriginal people. Services may therefore tend to be more effective in addressing these needs than if the Aboriginal people were not involved in reasonable numbers. (Hanson 1987:123). It is therefore not only fair and just that a good number of the population are given the opportunity to contribute to processes that determine their destiny, it is also morally wrong to exclude the more traditional people from important decision making processes. Diversity may be able to bring in some more employees who will take into account the socio-cultural relationships, traditional organizational forms and the set of attitudes, beliefs and values that have guided the Aboriginal people for many years. However, it is important to point out that DIAND should not exclusively consist of Aboriginal people. This will limit knowledge of Aboriginal people to their own culture only. The argument here is that the department should be open to all groups of people, including the Aboriginal people who receive direct services from the department.

Diversity may increase efficiency in some cases. For example, where there has been discrimination and care is taken to find qualified candidates from previously excluded groups, a diverse workforce may result in people who do better than those who would otherwise have been chosen. When sections of the population are left out of competition for jobs, then the highly talented individuals among them are lost. This means that less adequate services are being rendered to the diverse public.

In a diverse workforce, fair employment policies and practices will attract, motivate and retain the most qualified employees due to high levels of employee satisfaction and morale. (Poole 1997:32). Dissatisfied employees who feel they are not being treated fairly will begin to look for work elsewhere. For example, some employees may feel they are never given training opportunities to assist them advance on the job. Female employees may encounter harassment, sexual or otherwise, by co-workers or senior officials. When physical, emotional and psychological conditions deteriorate, it is difficult for employees to maintain their positions in the organization. Treating all employees fairly and according them all the respect of a workplace will go a long way in ensuring a healthy, motivating workplace for all of them. Thus, an organization's ability to attract and maintain a high calibre workforce will depend partly on its reputation as an employer and on the perceived equity or fairness of its employment system.

Teams made up of diverse groups of people are said to have the potential to achieve higher levels of performance than homogenous teams. This, it is argued, is due to the fact that diverse groups of people bring a broad range of perspectives and insights into the discussion. (Poole 1997:34). Diverse groups tend to offer more ideas and

potential solutions to problems than homogenous teams. Some academic studies in North America suggest that diversity can enhance performance. For example, in 1993 at the University of Texas, a study was conducted among diverse teams consisting of ethnic and white business students without their knowledge. A similar study was also conducted among a group of all white business students teams, also without their knowledge. The study lasted for seventeen weeks. The researchers found that at first, the homogenous team did well in terms of solving the team problems. By the end of the study however, the heterogeneous groups were looking at the issues being discussed from a broader range of perspectives, and were coming up with more innovative solutions to problems. One of the professors who conducted the study observed that although cultural diversity in the United States was seen as a "*dark cloud*", their study suggested that it has a "*silver lining*". (Rice 1994:79)

Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994: 77) stress the importance of teams in a diversified workforce. They argue that each member brings a set of values into the team, and these values can lead to creativity and dynamic problem solving when valued and utilized. There may be similarities or differences in these values and it is these that may lead to creativity. Together, this combination of backgrounds, values, and perspectives forges the team's ability to make progress on its tasks, to form productive relationships, to work together as a team. However, these values can also create problems when the different cultural values in the group are not understood. In fact the current interest in managing diversity grew out of the recognition that people often do not get along well with other organizational employees who are dissimilar in physical outlook or cultural characteristics.

It is therefore important that management create an environment that allows people to talk about their values, differences and share their preferences. This will help accomplish two things. First, it increases understanding among employees about their differences. Secondly, it builds relationships among employees so they are more comfortable talking about whatever problems that may come up. (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1994:79). It is very important that employees build this understanding and connection among themselves while maintaining their differences so that a healthy workplace environment prevails. When cultural differences are not understood, they can be a source of disruptive conflict and interpersonal bitterness that can reduce team harmony. When differences in cultures are understood, on the other hand, there is less chance for behaviour to be misinterpreted. Direct eye contact, for example, will not be seen as aggression, and downcast eyes will not be interpreted as deceitful or disrespectful. Diversity training is an important tool in bridging this cultural gap.

Gonzalez and Payne (1995: 115) agree with the contention that teamwork is very important. They argue that a diverse workforce working in teams brings diverse people together. This creates an environment that allows them to learn from each other and help each other as they handle the various tasks before them. Working in teams makes members stronger through sharing knowledge and information and considering every information acquired through team interaction, as being very valuable. Team work reduces and eventually eliminates the hierarchical structure in organizations This is because people work together towards a common goal. Effective team work is therefore built on the foundation of cooperation, a sharing of work and a sharing of power. In this case, the

active involvement of all employees, regardless of physical characteristics, is considered very vital to the survival of the organization. Because of the importance of the team in achieving organizational goals, there has been growing focus on teams and employee empowerment.(Gonzalez and Payne 1995:116). Work teams are therefore becoming the functional unit charged with task accomplishment that ensures survival in unstable social and economic environment. In recent years, organizations, public and private, have been downsizing and reducing budgetary expenditures. They are turning to teams to achieve performance and maximize production of goods and services. Team building has therefore become a dominant response as organizations try to maximize output and commitment of their human resources.

Another important value of diversity is that it prevents power from being concentrated in any one group, thus giving opportunity to all employees to participate in decision making processes. It also means that there will be fewer complaints from the under-represented segments of the client base and community. In this regard, Bergmann (1995:106) for example, argues that a racially diverse community needs a racially diverse police force, if the community and the police are to gain the trust and confidence of each other. Indeed one may agree that education and physical fitness are important aspects of merit in the recruitment of police officers. While it is appropriate to set standards of merit which should be strictly adhered to, including education and physical fitness, it is also important to ensure that the qualified candidates are selected from the different groups in the community. It might also be important to ensure that only legitimate standards are used in the hiring process. For example, requiring that an individual should

have no accent would be considered illegitimate. If the police force is not reflective of the community it serves, then it may be necessary to take race into consideration and select *qualified* candidates to balance diversity in the police force. In this way, the community will have and maintain its trust and confidence in the police force.

Effort at achieving a diverse workforce is reducing gender gap in the workplace. This is because a number of women in the public service are gradually permeating the ***glass ceiling***, although the stereotypes about women persists. Historically, women's lack of representation at higher levels of organizations has been dismissed as a function of their not yet being in those positions long enough to have worked their way up the ladder. (Maier 1991:2). While this may have been valid in the 1969's and 1970's, it no longer applies today. The reality is that the stereotypes against women has been so strong that women have not really been regarded as equal partners on the job. Employment equity programs are trying to break the glass ceiling so that all Canadians may work together. In defending women's participation in the labour force, Maier argues that:

If women and men are to work together on equal footing, the glass ceiling within organization - the negative stereotypes and basic scepticism that men have of women managers, their reluctance to accept women into the networks upon which advancement to highest levels so vitally depends, and their restriction of women's access to the inner sanctum of senior management has to crack. (1991:3).

Thus, because of diversity, more people, who had been previously excluded from serving in the public service are slowly getting the opportunity to do so.

To value diversity in the public service implies appreciating differences as sources of strength. One of the reasons why many men fail to recognize the positive contributions of women is perhaps the assumption that the masculine model of management, upon which the public service was built, is the most appropriate and effective and that men are better leaders than women. (Maier 1991:14). This argument does not take into consideration the fact that leadership roles can be effectively performed by men and women. What is important is to give everybody the opportunity to prove their worth and to not assess them only on masculine terms. Today the Canadian population has changed and has become more diverse. This demographic shift calls for a more flexible public service, a public service that will give opportunities to qualified Canadians serve in it, in the hope that a diverse workforce will help in meeting the needs and expectations of a diverse population. Diversity is already a fact of life, and the public service is faced with the challenge of creating an environment in which all Canadians can work together with mutual respect and promote their effectiveness because of their differences.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has noted that discrimination based on race, gender and physical abilities remains deeply rooted in Canadian society. When the public service was instituted, it predominantly consisted of able-bodied white males. The public service then provided services to a Canadian population that was fairly homogenous, comprised mostly of Anglo-Saxons. Over the years, Canada's population has become more and more diverse. This diversity has not been a welcome factor by some Canadians and this has resulted in discrimination. The discrimination that exists in society is reflected in public service as well as in private sector organizations. The federal government acknowledged this discrimination and the negative impact it has had on the victims of discrimination. This acknowledgement led to the formulation of the Employment Equity Act of 1985, which came into effect in 1986. Despite this legislation, there has been limited success in achieving fair representation in the federal public service. A contributory factor to this limited success could have been due to the fact that the act did not apply to the federal public service, but only to federal crown corporations and federally regulated private firms. The new Employment Equity Act of 1996 now includes the federal public service, in addition to the crown corporations and federally regulated firms.

Although the government has acknowledged the slow progress in achieving a more representative public service, there does not seem to be acknowledgement of the need to address the problem of discrimination from the grassroots levels, particularly in the school systems. While this thesis does not permit the time or space to examine this view in detail,

it is apparent that addressing the problem in the schools would help weaken the attitudinal traits that allow discrimination and subsequent inequality to persist. There appears to be little understanding on the part of Canadian society about the important contributions that the different groups have made towards the growth of Canada. The school system does not appear to address these issues seriously. As a result, the children grow up to see Canada as a white man's land and they see the other groups in the population as outsiders.(Shadd 1991:3). Canada remains open to immigration to the present day and this is in realization that people from different backgrounds have helped build and continue to help build Canada. It is therefore important that this reality be reflected in the school curricula. The education system should be at the forefront of eliminating many of the myths and stereotypes which fan discriminatory thinking and practices.

At all levels of government, there are laws which prohibit discrimination of any form and guarantees for equality. However, laws alone can never be the main instrument for the abolition of discrimination in Canadian society. The acceptance of all groups as equal partners will only occur when the diverse cultures are accepted on an equal basis. The education system can therefore be used as an instrument of attitudinal and behavioural change. Without a change of attitude that may help change behaviour, legislation may not be effective. Education gives clear direction to the children in the early stage of their lives, and this direction will help them develop positive attitude towards other people. Change of attitude will enable the young generation to be accepting and appreciating of the different groups in society. With a change of attitude, the young generation will be better equipped to face the challenges of working with colleagues from diverse

backgrounds. Because education is a continuous process, the efforts at attitudinal and behavioural change through the school system should be continuous well into the workplace. The education system may contribute towards creating an egalitarian society. Cultural pluralism and multiculturalism are the policies supported by the Canadian government. In this process, immigrants integrate into Canadian social and economic institutions, and Canadian society on its part accepts the immigrant population as a lasting entity, with freedom to maintain its own cultural institutions, including language, religion, familial patterns that may differ from the majority. However, positions of power, influence and prestige have been divided unequally among the different groups in society. Some groups have more access to resources than others. This therefore suggests that, until the attitudes and behaviour of majority group members change such that equality of opportunity and achievement becomes the norm, and all members of Canadian society are provided opportunities to share in the power structure, the problem of discrimination will persist. It is easier to change behaviours than attitudes. However, a change in behaviours and attitudes will come about as people from diverse backgrounds gain experience working with each other. As a result, this change will open avenues for more people from different backgrounds to join the public service.

Canada is increasingly witnessing a significant internationalization of the workforce and subsequent internationalization of cultures within the public service. In this regard, the public service will have to accept this demographic reality and adapt fully to this internationalization of culture. It will only be able to do this effectively if there is commitment to valuing the increasingly diverse workforce. By managing and valuing

diversity, the public service will be able to capitalize on utilizing the full potentials of the diverse workforce. In this way, the public service will be able to adapt productively and creatively to the changes and challenges of modern times.

There is lack of motivation on the part of some designated group members to apply for positions in the public service. They fear that even if they apply for positions in the public service, they will not get the jobs. The public service is a non-partisan institution that provides services to all Canadians, and is therefore expected to employ all Canadians who meet their requirements. It therefore needs to motivate all intending applicants even in times of downsizing and restructuring. This means that the public service should open its doors and advertise widely, not only in schools and institutions but also in communities, through community papers. This is because some groups use such papers as their main source of information. Some jobs are advertised on web sites only, but not all Canadians have access to these systems. So, by advertising these jobs in community, local and national papers, more people will be exposed to opportunities available to them. In this way, no group will feel it has missed out any information on available positions. This would also be an indication that the public service is committed to letting Canadians know what opportunities are available to them.

Commitment to diversity by all employees of the public service is an important element of ensuring the success of the diversity process. This means that all employees must develop attitudes and behaviour that respect one another. Entrusting all the responsibility of the diversity process to top management alone is leaving out the employees from the implementation process. However, active involvement of senior

managers is a motivating factor to the other managers, supervisors and employees to be involved, otherwise the latter may deduce that there is lack of genuine commitment from the top. Top management must put in time, energy and whatever resources that are needed. Like any other organizational change issue, it may start off with enthusiasm, particularly from those employees who may take a special interest in it. But without the commitment of top management, it may not become a reality. It is equally important for top management to emphasize that while moral and legislative reasons are important, emphasis should also be placed on the fact that employment equity and diversity should be linked to the provision of satisfactory services to the citizens. In this respect, therefore diversity should not be seen as being imposed, but should be looked at as an essential change in the organizational culture. Diversity should thus occur naturally and at all levels, without constant reminders that it has to be achieved. When this natural occurrence has taken place, then the public service will have reached a milestone in its diversity efforts. (Charrette 1998).

There is apparent lack of understanding on the part of the general public about employment equity and diversity and their importance in the workplace. This lack of understanding in the larger society has an influence in the public service and this results in a lack of support for employment equity and diversity initiatives. Accordingly, it is important that politicians get involved, particularly in educating their constituents about the meaning and importance of employment equity, and subsequently diversity, to Canadian society as a whole. Input from politicians would go a long way in changing the mind-set of those who see employment equity initiatives as reverse discrimination against

white able bodied males. The public service needs a diverse workforce because diversity is about investing in Canada's most competitive resource, the people.

The public service has made some progress in terms of bringing in people from diverse backgrounds however, a lot still remains to be done in order to achieve a fair representation of the different groups in the workforce. Policies are already in place to eliminate discrimination; what needs to be done is a more aggressive implementation of the policies. This means that the federal government should commit more resources to enable departments implement equity and diversity programs. While the success of these programs depends on the active involvement of all employees, it is strongly recommended that every department should have an employment equity/diversity manager to coordinate the department's activities in these areas. In addition, the departments activities should be closely monitored by Treasury Board and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to ensure that departments are actually implementing these programs.

In Canada, knowledge has become a crucial factor in production. It allows more creativity, inventions, efficiency and hence increased productivity. It is therefore important that barriers be removed so that qualified individuals from diverse backgrounds be given the opportunity to serve in the public service. The full potentials of every employee should then be developed to achieve productivity, efficiency and innovation. Only then will the public service be able to achieve its goal of providing services that Canadians will appreciate. Because the client base of the public service is a reflection of Canadian society, employees from diverse backgrounds can provide understandings of the needs of service recipients. Hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds is important because it

provides a greater understanding of the public service clients' needs and enables government to effectively address these needs and respond to them accordingly. This means that input from the diverse workforce will help government in developing and implementing policies and programs that will be able to address the changing needs of an increasingly diverse Canadian population.

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INTERVIEWS

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Hannibal, Emmett Staffing/Regional Consultant, Diversity Management, Public Service Commission, Central Prairie Region, Winnipeg June 1998 (In person interview)

White, Arlene, Director, Human Resources, Revenue Canada Regional Office, Saskatoon July 1998
(Survey returned by facsimile)

Fred Lambert, Head, Human Resources/Employment Equity, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Winnipeg, July 1998 (Survey returned by mail)

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SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY IN FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

This survey is part of a thesis research in the Master of Public Administration, UM/UW Joint Program. The survey is designed to give the researcher some insight into the implementation of Employment Equity in federal government departments. The survey attempts to establish what diversity initiatives federal government departments are pursuing and how effective these initiatives have been in bringing into the public service people from diverse backgrounds.

Each question is important to the survey. It would therefore be highly appreciated if all questions are answered. All questions are open-ended, so feel free to express yourself as much as possible.

The investigator will fill out the questionnaire during the interview however, in cases where a government department official will not have time to meet with the investigator, the questionnaire will be filled by the official.

Before we begin, do we have your consent to continue with the interview?

Yes _____

No _____

If at any time you choose to withdraw from the interview, you may do so.

For the purpose of this survey, members of the designated groups comprise women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities, as defined by the federal government.

1.a). Canadian society is known to comprise people from diverse backgrounds. *Diversity* has therefore become a commonly used word in organizations today, with emphasis being placed on hiring qualified candidates from the different groups in the population. Would you say that your department has a fairly diverse workforce whereby all the different demographic groups are represented on a reasonable scale?

b). If not, please explain

2. According to the 1996/97 Public Service Commission Report, the representation of persons with disabilities decreased from 3.8 per cent in 1986 to 3.2 per cent in 1996. In your view, why did this decline come about?

3 a). Have there been any expressed concerns and needs of members of the designated groups? If so, what?

b). How has your department responded to these issues, if any?

4. Many Canadians, particularly the young generation, do not seem to understand what the public service is. Do you have any awareness creation programs for schools, junior high and high schools? Please describe briefly.

5. What employment equity programs do you have in the department?

6. What impact have these programs had on the performance of the public service?

7. Does your department have any awareness training programs that attempt to assist employees develop behaviours that reflect the commitment to respecting and valuing contributions from the different groups? Please describe.

8.a). What career development programs does your department have to assist employees advance on the job?

b). Are these programs open to all employees in the three levels of the department: lower, middle and upper management?

c). If not, which level(s) is/are affected and why?

9. How would you rate your department's commitment to diversity?

10.a). Does your department have any mentorship program? Please describe briefly.

b). If so, how has it enhanced the career development of the individuals who have participated in it?

11. What would be a significant milestone that may show that your department has made real progress in managing diversity? In your view, are further milestones needed? Why?

12.a). What problems do you encounter in managing diversity?

b). How do you deal with these problems?

13. What else should be done in the area of diversity management?

14. There are allegations of persistent discrimination in the public service against members of the designated groups, particularly in recruitment and promotion. Would you say that your department has fair employment policies towards all its employees that reduce or eliminate discrimination?

15. Does your department have an equity manager/coordinator? If not, would you suggest that the department should have one?

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any comments about the research or the questionnaire, please feel free to add them on the attached pages. Please go to next page and fill out the next section.

1. **Name** _____

2. **Male** _____

Female _____

3. **Department** _____

4. **Position** _____

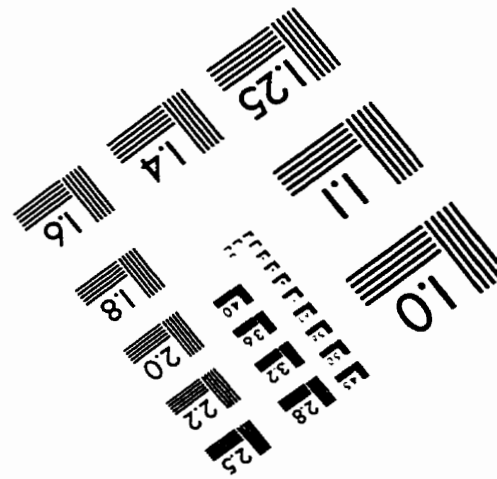
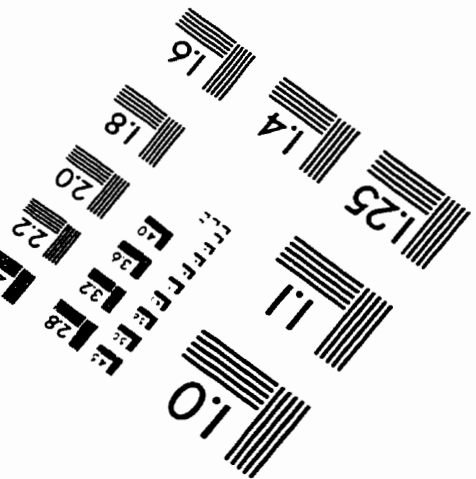
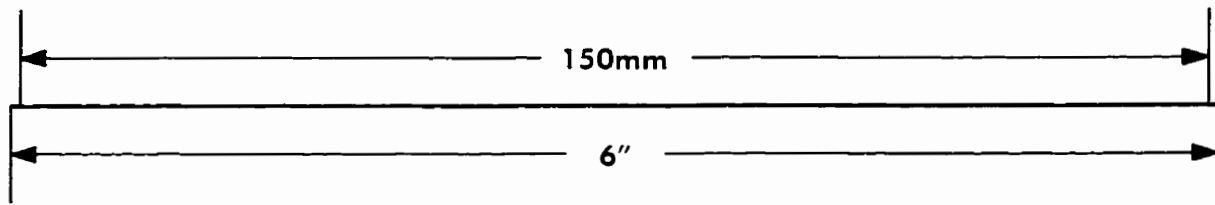
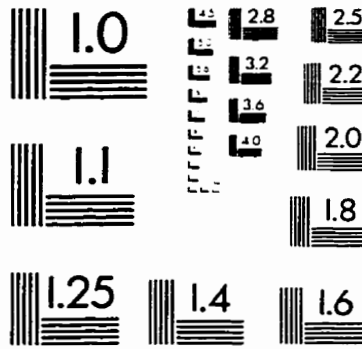
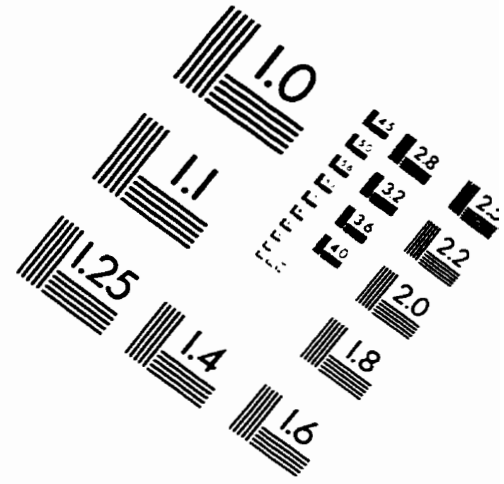
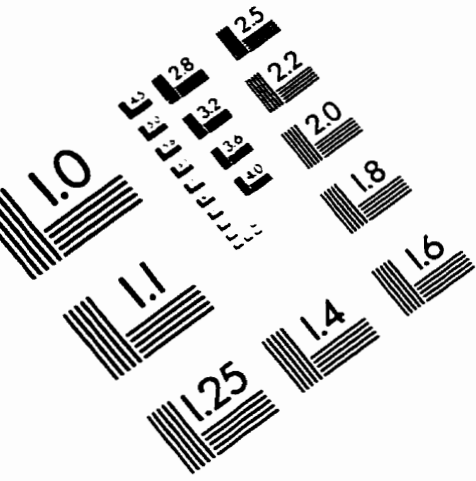
5. ***The researcher may wish to incorporate your opinion in the research report. Please indicate whether you grant permission to be quoted or not.***

_____ ***Permission granted***

_____ ***Permission not granted (in which case confidentiality will be maintained).***

6. ***Please note that copies of the thesis will be retained by the libraries at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg, and that you may access them there after August 1998. A summary of the results of this interview can be supplied to you upon request.***

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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