

# Literature review on violence against aboriginal women in canada

[Countries](#), [Canada](#)



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## **Introduction**

Aboriginal women undergo a lot of distress as victims in a typical Canadian society. They are discriminated against and fall victims of sexism, racism and domestic violence. The Canadian justice system has not been at par either, to offer them any form of protection from these assaults. Noticeably, Aboriginal women are the ones commonly affected, for instance, they compose the highest percentage in the prison systems than their fellow counterparts. Across the various communities in Canada, a common fact stands out, that the plight of the Aboriginal women must be given priority, in all facets of the society, from the social to legal compartments. In doing this, it is mandatory to let these women be part and parcel of the solution.

## **Synthesis**

Within the aboriginal families, a woman originally played a very central role; this was similar in the spiritual and government fraternity. It was evidence that both men and women had a considerable personal independence and the aboriginal societies performed very vital functions to ensure their

survival. Men provided food, clothing and shelter, with the women being responsible for the domestic arenas. Women were seen as life givers and caretakers of life. Women were thus responsible for socialization of children and the whole community. Very little families experienced breakdowns, wives and husbands held each other with respect and honor.

Cultural changes then took toll, and were a major contributor to the destructive state of the culture; European cultural expansion and economy encroached into their system. Studies done in the Aboriginal inmates in Kingston described that, “ the critical difference is racism, and we spend our lives in it since we are born in it, racism lies at the root of our life experiences. The effect is violence, violence against aboriginal society”.

According to these articles, abuse and violence in Aboriginal communities has marked the highest levels and the maximum proportion of all time in Canada. The violence has taken a number of forms, and at times physical assaults are experienced between men. More disturbingly, victimization of the women and children has been a major concern. The Manitoba Women’s Directorate acquiesced to a document called “ Native Perspective on Rape”, according to the study, rape is a widespread experience and is very common, rape in this society dates back in history, however, these people have dealt with rape as private and personal and avoid talking about it unless it is completely unavoidable. The aboriginal woman who is raped views violence as a norm. According to Josie Hill, the director of the Native Women’s Transition center, aboriginal women see sexual abuse as a tragedy so insurmountable and hard to treat. This sexual impunity has destroyed these communities. Professor LaRocque wrote that, people violate laws and

persons, this is not as a result of cultural differences, and however, it is because of the potential of the human being evil, a fact that is influenced by socio-economic environment, the pegging question is; has the Aboriginal woman been socio-economically deteriorated? Other sources insist that sexual violence can be best described by misogyny and sexism which is inherent and nurtured in patriarchy, and then have changed over the years in patriarchal system? Rape in any particular culture is considered warfare against a woman. Most research works have also expressed the sentiment that aboriginal women have a difficulty in addressing this issue.

The victimization of aboriginal women has also been manifested in how they are treated. Women suffer unsympathetic treatment from those who are primarily their protectors. One example came from the treatment of an aboriginal mother of 16 years who underwent rape, she told of how the police responded to her call after her daughter was raped, and gone through medical procedures. The police questioned the daughter and afterwards told the mother that the daughter was spreading falsehood. They even proposed that the daughter being mischievous could be charged in public of mischievous contempt. The police went ahead to ask “ Didn’t you want it when you were 16”. In the past, the law shunned abusers, now tables are turning; it is the complainant that is shunned. According to Manitoba Women’s Directorate, colonization has brought about “ many kinds and levels of abuse” to aboriginal women. Other sources had reported of cases of depriving an aboriginal woman her history, language and family, that in her adulthood, she looked intimidated, scared and not belonging, though she

was not physically abused, she suffers from lack of self-esteem, and does not believe that she is loveable.

## **Conclusion**

The different researchers have used different methods to bring out the plight of the aboriginal woman, particularly, the use of quotes of direct speeches from the ones who were interviewed in the studies was quite impressive, to get unaltered information from them. The researchers would have done some things differently though, for instance, they would have used the approach of trying to do away with this violence, that is, research not only on how to rehabilitate those who were hurt, but research on how to stop the newly born aboriginals from the discriminations that their parents have undergone over generations. Again, the previous research works did not concentrate on the root cause of this violence, apart from the historical transformations, current discrimination origins have not been clearly pointed out. If the violence is to be stopped, then efforts need to be taken at the grass root level, since it is these communities that directly interact with the aboriginal society. Research on governments or government organs like the police force, legal systems and constitutional law, has very little effects, and are only applicable at the higher levels. Thus, to begin this research, I would integrate the origin of the discrimination as has been well dealt with by most of the research works and the root societal effects that directly influence the community. I would ask of why the immediate society has taken a contrary opinion towards this lot, why the immediate aboriginal families have changed their thinking towards their fellow women, and how to restore the

state of sanity in this society, with regards to the local surrounding, neighborly understanding, and immediate communal integration.

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