

# Title: Investigating the Sense of Belonging among religious minorities immigrants to Canada; A case of Iranian-Zoroastrian and Indian-Zoroastrian Immigrants

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## Executive Summary

This executive summary provides an overview of a research paper that explores the sense of belonging among Zoroastrian immigrants from India and Iran in Canada. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, conducting semi-structured interviews with ten first-generation immigrants in Toronto and Calgary. The research aimed to examine their experiences as members of minority religious communities and shed light on their integration into Canadian society.

The findings of the study revealed several key themes related to the participants' sense of belonging. Zoroastrian organizations played a significant role in fostering a sense of belonging to Canada, facilitating social connections and community engagement. Factors such as the amount of time spent in Canada, familial ties, economic opportunities, and belonging to a minority religious group influenced participants' sense of belonging. The study also highlighted the differences in the sense of belonging between Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians.

Discrimination against Zoroastrians was explored in the participants' home countries. In Iran, discrimination based on religion was observed, with discriminatory laws impacting aspects of their lives, such as employment and inheritance. In contrast, Parsis in India enjoyed a good reputation within society and rarely experienced religious discrimination. However, in Canada, participants reported minimal personal discrimination due to the secular and cosmopolitan nature of the country.

The study also examined the presence of ethnic enclaves among Zoroastrian immigrants. Toronto had a larger Zoroastrian population, with Iranian-Zoroastrians predominantly residing in Iranian-dominant neighbourhoods, fostering a familiar atmosphere and facilitating their adjustment to Canadian society. In Calgary, Zoroastrians were more dispersed throughout the city, making it challenging to identify a clear relationship between their willingness to live in Zoroastrian areas and their current place of residence.

The role of Zoroastrian organizations in facilitating integration was emphasized. However, challenges were identified, including the need for fundraising, expensive membership fees, and limited resources to maintain organizational functions. The study also examined the participants' perceptions of governmental services and support, as well as their suggestions for enhancing recognition, awareness, and assistance in immigration processes.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the fields of immigration studies and religion by providing unique insights into the experiences of Zoroastrian immigrants and their integration into Canadian society. It highlights the significance of Zoroastrian organizations in fostering a sense of belonging and sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by Zoroastrians in Canada. The study's findings have implications for policymakers in understanding the needs and experiences of minority religious groups and can inform efforts to support their integration. However, limitations of the study, such as the sample size and geographical scope, suggest the need for further research to solidify and expand upon these findings.