

A labour market snapshot of South Asian, Chinese and Filipino Canadians during the pandemic

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Friday, May 21, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the varying labour market experiences and outcomes of diverse groups of Canadians.

To mark Asian Heritage Month, Statistics Canada is providing a profile of the employment characteristics of the three largest Asian populations in Canada: South Asian, Chinese and Filipino Canadians.

Results from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) show that South Asian men are much more likely to be employed than South Asian women, that Chinese Canadians have higher average hourly wages than other visible minority groups, and that Filipino women have among the highest employment rates of all groups, with many working on the front line in the health care sector during the pandemic.

Unless otherwise stated, all data in this article reflect the population aged 15 to 69 during the three months ending in April 2021, and are not seasonally adjusted.

Employment gap is largest between South Asian men and women

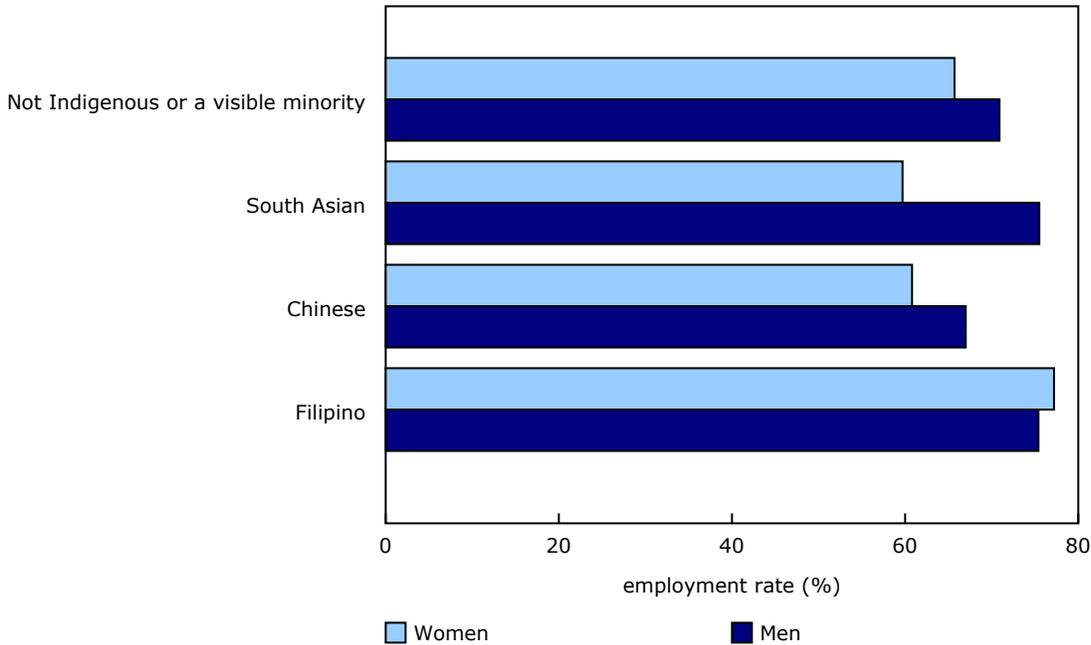
Of all groups designated as visible minorities, South Asians are Canada's largest, accounting for one-quarter of all working-age visible minorities. Three-fifths (1.1 million) of the 1.8 million South Asians in Canada live in Ontario.

For the three months ending in April, the employment rate among South Asian men (75.5%) was more than 15 percentage points higher than the rate for South Asian women (59.7%)—triple the gap between non-visible minority men (70.9%) and women (65.7%).



Chart 1

Employment rate gap between South Asian men and women is triple the gap for non-visible minority men and women



Source(s): Labour Force Survey Supplement (3701), April 2021.

Much of this gap can be attributed to the notably lower labour force participation rate of South Asian mothers with children under the age of six (70.4%) compared with non-visible minority mothers with children in the same age group (81.0%).

Many South Asian men are adapting to COVID-19 by working from home

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Canadians have transitioned to working from home in response to public health measures. During the three months ending in April, South Asian men were more likely to work from home (40.3%) than non-visible minority men (25.1%). In contrast, there was little difference in the share of South Asian women (33.4%) and non-visible minority women (33.7%) working from home.

High rates of working from home among South Asian men are partly due to employment patterns by industry. Approximately one in four employed South Asian men (26.9%) worked in either the professional, scientific and technical services industry, or the finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing industry in April, compared with 13.5% of non-visible minority men. Employment in both of these sectors has grown since the onset of the pandemic—from February 2020 to April 2021 (seasonally adjusted), employment was up 6.9% in professional, scientific and technical services and up 4.4% in finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing.

While many South Asian Canadians, particularly men, are employed in industries that have grown and adapted to remote work since the start of the pandemic, others have not had the same experience. South Asian Canadians were twice as likely to live in a household reporting difficulty meeting essential financial needs (29.6%), compared with non-visible minority Canadians (15.7%). Lower average hourly earnings for both South Asian men (\$30.69) and women (\$25.91), compared with non-visible minority men (\$32.78) and women (\$29.06), have likely been a contributing factor to these financial difficulties.

Chinese Canadian youth have notably lower labour force participation and employment rates

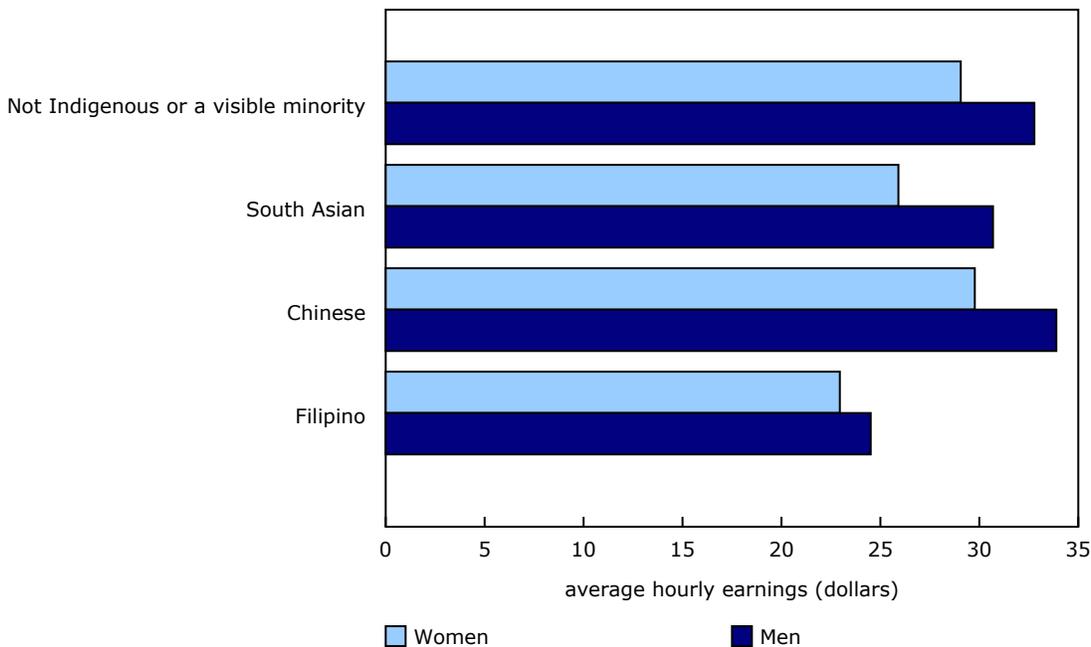
Chinese Canadians are the second largest visible minority group in Canada, accounting for one-fifth of all visible minorities aged 15 to 69. Over four-fifths of the 1.3 million Chinese Canadians live in either Ontario (632,000) or British Columbia (443,000).

Employment and participation rates among the Chinese Canadian population are comparable with those of non-visible minorities with one notable exception. Fewer than half of Chinese Canadian youth aged 15 to 24 were part of the labour force (47.2%) in April compared with more than three-fifths of non-visible minority youth (62.8%). Similarly, Chinese Canadian youth also had a lower employment rate (38.4%) than their non-visible minority counterparts (53.3%). These gaps in participation and employment rates can be attributed in part to the large share of Chinese Canadian youth who are full-time students and not part of the labour force (41.2%). By comparison, 25.4% of non-visible minority youth in that age group are full-time students and not part of the labour force.

Hourly earnings are higher for Chinese Canadians than for other population groups

Average hourly earnings for Chinese Canadian men (\$33.89) and women (\$29.77) were higher than for other visible minority groups and were similar to the earnings for non-visible minorities in the three months ending in April 2021. This is partly due to elevated levels of employment among both Chinese Canadian men and women in two industries with relatively high average wages—professional, scientific and technical services (\$36.68 per hour), and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (\$35.38 per hour). Chinese Canadians were more than twice as likely to work in these industries (31.7%) than non-visible minorities (14.2%).

Chart 2
Chinese Canadians earn higher average wages than South Asian and Filipino Canadians



Source(s): Labour Force Survey Supplement (3701), April 2021.

Filipino Canadians have among the highest employment rates nationally

While the majority of Filipino Canadians aged 15 to 69 live in Ontario (346,000) or British Columbia (175,000), more than one-third live in the Prairie provinces (301,000). In fact, one-quarter of all visible minorities living on the Prairies are Filipino.

Three-quarters of Filipino Canadians (76.4%) were employed in April, compared with two-thirds (68.3%) of non-visible minorities. The employment rate for Filipino women (77.2%) was among the highest for all visible minority groups and 11 percentage points higher than their non-visible minority counterparts (65.7%). Filipino Canadians also tend to be employed at older ages than non-visible minorities: 71.2% of Filipino Canadians aged 55 to 69 were employed in April compared with just under half of non-visible minorities (49.8%) in the same age group.

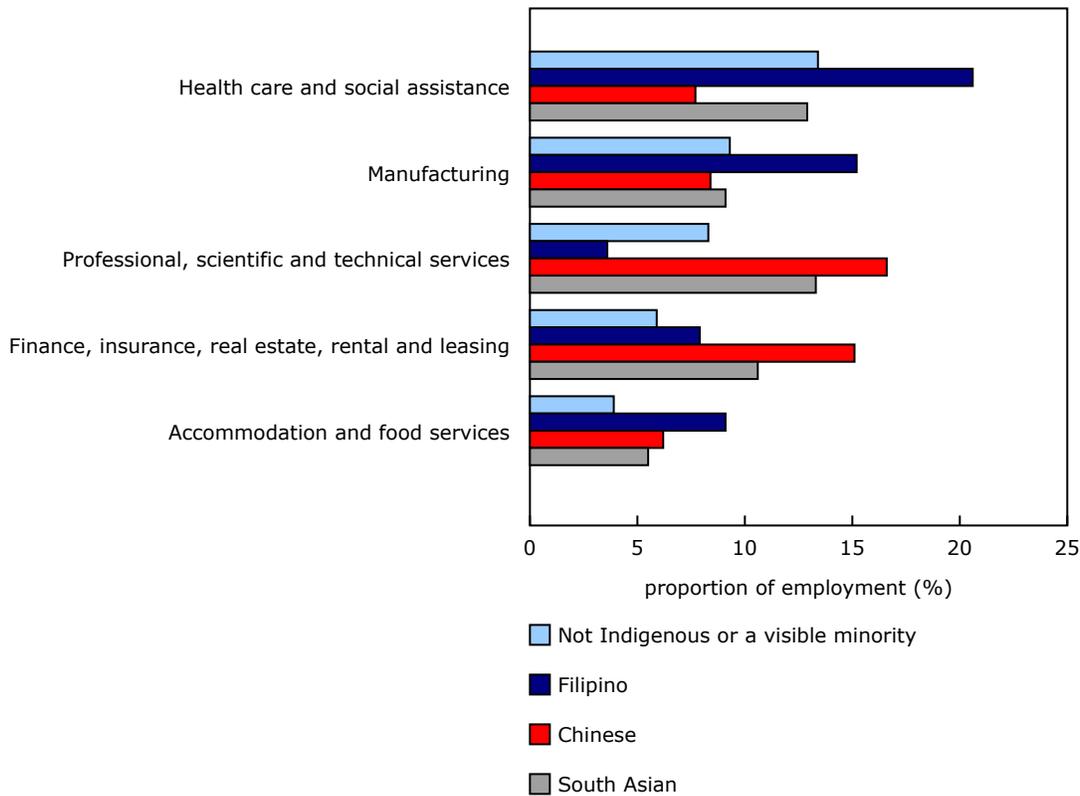
Along with their high employment rate, the unemployment rate for Filipino Canadians (5.5%) was 2 percentage points lower than the rate for non-visible minority Canadians (7.7%) for the three months ending in April.

Almost one-third of Filipino women work in the health care and social assistance industry

There are approximately 100,000 more working-aged Filipino women than men in Canada, partly because many Filipino women immigrate specifically to work in the health care and social assistance industry. These women have played a key role during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 3 in 10 (30.5%) holding jobs in health care and social assistance, compared with 23.1% of non-visible minority women.

Filipino Canadians were also more likely than non-visible minorities to work in accommodation and food services (9.1% versus 3.9%). Among Filipino men, nearly one-quarter (23.2%) worked in manufacturing, compared with 13.4% of non-visible minority men. Because of their considerable presence in these front-line industries, the share of Filipino Canadians working from home in April (15.5%) was the lowest among all visible minority groups and non-visible minorities (29.2%).

Chart 3
Filipino Canadians most likely to work in the health care and social assistance industry



Source(s): Labour Force Survey Supplement (3701), April 2021.

On average, Filipino Canadians earned \$23.63 per hour, compared with \$30.95 for non-visible minorities. In other words, Filipino workers earned on average \$0.76 for every dollar earned by non-visible minority workers. At the same time, two-fifths (40.3%) of Filipino Canadians lived in a household reporting financial difficulties in April, compared with one-sixth (15.7%) of non-visible minority Canadians.

Note to readers

The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal Peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

Information on population groups

In July 2020, a new question was added to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) to better understand the labour market impacts of COVID-19 on diverse groups of Canadians, particularly population groups designated as visible minorities. Possible responses, which are the same as in the 2016 Census of Population, include:

- White
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Chinese
- Black
- Filipino
- Arab
- Latin American
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
- Korean
- Japanese
- Other

In accordance with employment equity definitions, respondents are coded as South Asian, Chinese, or Filipino if they select that population group response category alone, or that category in combination with the White response category.

In this release, **non-visible minority Canadians** include all Canadians who are not Indigenous and do not belong to a population group designated as a visible minority. In addition, the term **Canadians** is used to describe all people living in Canada, regardless of immigration status or citizenship.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3701.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).