

*Report on the*  
**INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE  
IN MANITOBA**

*for the*  
**Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**

*by the*  
**Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba**  
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## Executive Summary

This research paper is based on community consultation workshops with Indigenous women throughout the province of Manitoba. It examines self-government, social, economic, and cultural issues, youth, education and training and the special concerns of Northern women. We found that the issues are different for Non-Status, Status (on and off reserve) and Metis women.

As part of the self-government process, Indigenous women feel very strongly about the need for the healing of their communities and families.

The federal government played a major role in the development of the current low socio-economic position of Indigenous women in Canada. Therefore, they have a responsibility to provide fiscal support to Indigenous women for programs and services that would enable them to become self-sustaining, economically independent citizens.

A revival of cultural values and practises within Indigenous communities must occur in order to make our communities healthy again. Also, the history of Aboriginal culture must be acknowledged and must portray an accurate reflection of the historical facts.

Indigenous women are concerned with developing culturally appropriate schooling for their children and eliminating racism in the educational system. They view education and training as the means to provide women and their children with the opportunity to become active members in the workforce.

The residential school system has had long-lasting effects on Indigenous communities, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, loss of parenting skills and loss of language and cultural ways. These effects must be addressed through community-based initiatives.

Many Indigenous women felt that the current Canadian system is not sensitive to their needs. They identified racism, lack of cultural understanding, language barriers, and ineffective sentencing options as some of their concerns. With respect to the legal system, Indigenous women see a need for a legal resource centre, community-based sentencing programs and cross-cultural training programs for employees of the justice system.

Northern women face greater barriers in accessibility to services, programs, information, protection, and human rights issues.

Desperate economic and social realities facing youth of today lead to feelings of hopelessness and despair. Indigenous youth must have access to health care, housing, and education equal to that afforded to other Canadian youth. There must be programs aimed at healing their spirits.

Indigenous women have many concerns about their children, families and communities that must be addressed. They want the opportunity to build healthy, economically viable communities. Their role in current and future self-government initiatives must be central if Indigenous communities are to be successful in regaining their rightful place in Canadian society.

### Acknowledgements

This research is the outcome of the efforts of many Indigenous women in Manitoba. The work was made possible through the support of the Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba's (IWC) project on the Women's Perspective of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

I would like to thank the many people who continuously offered their support and guidance. In particular, I thank my Advisory Board, Mary Staniscia, Joyce Courchene, Evelyn Webster, Corliss Sinclair, Doris Young, Ester Sanderson, who all gave me invaluable guidance and support whenever it was necessary. In addition, Doris Young provided consultation in writing the report.

Thanks goes to Eunice Perez, for her collegial support and organized efforts to ensure that the community consultation workshops were well attended. Thanks also to my co-facilitator, Barb Nepinak who is an excellent team member with whom to work; the community workshop coordinators, Evelyn Ballantyne and Edith Young from the Pas, Tammy Ernest from Brandon, and Freda Albert from Thompson; Sid Frankel, of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba for his assistance with the data analysis and Deborah Gilman, of the Department of Psychology at the University of Manitoba for her assistance in the data analysis and editing.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Intervenor Participation Program made this project possible. We hope that the ideas, thoughts, and insights given by Indigenous women throughout Manitoba will be helpful to the Royal Commission. It is also our hope that the recommendations outlined will be implemented by the Canadian government, which will benefit Indigenous women, their children, families and communities, Canadian society as a whole and the Canadian government.

Finally, I would like to thank the many Indigenous women in Manitoba who took time and energy from their lives to participate in the workshops. I value their many voices and have made every effort to include as many individual and collective statements as possible within the limited scope of the report. I learned a great deal through their sharing of ideas and aspirations. It is my intent that their voices, hopes and dreams are heard throughout this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page:
Executive Summary.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	5
Process.....	5
Limitations of the Study.....	5
Results.....	6
Demography.....	6
Discussion and Summary of Findings.....	25
Self-Government.....	25
Social Issues .....	29
Economic Issues.....	31
Cultural Issues .....	32
Indigenous Youth.....	34
Education and Training.....	36
Justice.....	37
Northern Women's Concerns.....	38
Recommendations.....	40
Bibliography.....	46
Appendixes.....	

## Introduction

Before European contact, Indigenous women were highly valued and played an important roles in their communities. They held positions of authority and respect. However, the rights of Indigenous people, especially those of Indigenous women, have been severely curtailed in Canada through the colonization process.

According to oral traditions and literature, Indigenous women have always played an important role in addressing social and political issues.<sup>1</sup> In their governing processes, both males and females advised political leaders. The Elders councils were comprised of more women than men because they were respected for their wisdom, patience and special gift as caregivers.

However, the status of Indigenous women began to change after European contact.<sup>2</sup>

Europeans brought with them their own beliefs and attitudes about the status of women. In European society, women were viewed as property. They were expected to be submissive and obedient to men. This was in sharp contrast to the view that women were revered as the givers of life and that they were equal in status to the men in their societies. Beyond attitudes about the superiority of women, European fur traders also perceived

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<sup>1</sup> Wallace, Paul A.W., White Roots of Peace. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946. page 16

<sup>2</sup> Van Kirk, Sylvia, Many Tender Ties: Women in the Fur-Trade Society, 1670 - 1870. Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980.

themselves to be racially superior to Indigenous people. They viewed Indigenous people as an uncivilized people needing to be conquered, assimilated, and converted to Christianity. They believed that they had to save Indigenous people from their primitive traditional ways including their evil spiritual practices. Ultimately, the introduction of European culture and Christianity led to the devaluing of women, Indigenous people, and Indigenous women, in particular. Men were believed to be superior to women. White women were believed to be superior to Metis women who were superior to First Nations women. Unfortunately, these views of social stratification have remained entrenched today, to varying degrees, in non-Indigenous and contemporary Indigenous societies.

Initially, Indigenous women played a major role in the economic structures, including the fur trade.<sup>3</sup> However, as the significance of their role in the fur trade declined, their status came to represent a more marginal position. With the end of the fur trading era in the 1870's, Indigenous women no longer played a key role in the economic activities of their communities. Their status continued to deteriorate with the introduction of the Canadian government's settlement movement. First Nations people were relegated to reserves, often on unproductive land. Laws were passed outlawing their political, spiritual, cultural, and economic activities. Like the First Nations, the Metis were also stripped of their land. However,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid



they were often left without a place to go. They were handed "script," pieces of paper entitling them to land in other parts of the country. Unfortunately, much of this script proved impossible to redeem. This displacement and the decline of the buffalo herd represented major barriers and losses in the capacity of Indigenous communities to maintain traditional lifestyles and means of economic support.

With the erosion of the traditional lifestyle, Indigenous women lost the equal status they once enjoyed. Their lower status was sanctioned by the Canadian government through policies imposed by the Indian Act of 1867, in particular Section 12 (1)(b). Yet, despite these historic and systemic barriers, Indigenous women have persisted as significant contributors to the functioning of their communities. Although there has been great pressure exerted to eliminate the functioning of Indigenous governments since colonization, aspects of participation have persisted.

In the current self-government initiatives, the roles of women must be recognized and restored. The voices of Indigenous women represent a unique and essential contribution to the restoration process of Indigenous communities, societies and nations.

The purpose of this research was to identify the needs of Indigenous women in Manitoba, the current difficulties or special challenges that they face, and the goals that they believe will lead to positive, healthy changes in their lives, and those of

their children, as well as those of their community as a whole.

The information gathered has provided the basis for the recommendations to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that reflect the views of the Indigenous women's community in Manitoba. The recommendations will address the Federal government's involvement as seen by the Indigenous women to be the most beneficial in the following areas:

- 1) The relationship between Indigenous women, the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole.
- 2) Aboriginal self-government, its origin, its content as Indigenous women understand it, and the formulation of a process of implementation.
- 3) Social issues
- 4) Economic issues
- 5) Cultural issues
- 6) The needs of Indigenous youth
- 7) Educational and training issues
- 8) Justice
- 9) The special concerns of Northern Indigenous women

## Methodology

### The Process:

In March 1993, a planning workshop was held in Winnipeg with representation from four Indigenous Women's Collective regions: The Pas, Thompson, the Interlake, and South East. The purpose of the workshop was to plan the IWC's project on the Women's Perspective for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It was agreed that community consultation workshops would be held in Winnipeg, The Pas, Thompson and Portage la Prairie during the months of April and May 1993.

During the month of March, and in preparation for the April and May consultation workshops, a questionnaire was developed by the Project's Advisory Committee and Project Coordinator. (See Appendix A)

At the community consultation workshops, the participants were asked to complete the questionnaire. They were given the opportunity to work in small groups or to complete the questionnaire alone. Following this activity, in a large group, the women were asked to summarize the key concerns they had identified in the questionnaire. Facilitators for the workshops were trained by the Native Women's Association of Canada through their Animators Program.

### Limitations of the Study

Less than one % of Indigenous women in Manitoba were reached. This represents the major limitation of the study. Had there been more funds available over a longer period of time, IWC would have been able to reach a larger number of Indigenous women.

Results:

1. Demography

The Aboriginal Manitoba population is 116,200.<sup>4</sup> Aboriginal women represent 51% of this population (58,910).<sup>5</sup> Sixty-seven women participated in the workshops and 46 answered the questionnaires. When asked to identify their Aboriginal status the results were:

<u>Category</u>	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>	
Metis	13	28	
Non-Status	4	9	
Status	26	57	
Inuit	0	0	
Other	3	7	(2 non-Aboriginal) (1 no answer)

2. The women came from more than 20 communities across Manitoba. When asked which community they were from, the answers were:

Sandy Bay (2),	Fort Nelson Indian Band (1),
Winnipeg (12),	Moose Lake (1),
Birch River Reserve (1),	Badin (1),
Flin Flon (1),	Opaskwayak Cree Nation (1)*,
Cranberry Portage (1),	Pukatawagan (1),
Easterville (1),	Little Saskatchewan (1),
Roseau River (1),	Brandon/ St. Marks (1),
Selkirk (1),	Wabowden (2),
Split Lake (1),	Fisher River (1),
Grand Marais (1),	
Keesekowenin\Peepkeesis (1),	
Sioux Valley/Portage La Prairie (2),	
other/no answer (4).	

See Appendix B for map.

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<sup>4</sup> The term Aboriginal is interchangeable with the term Indigenous.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, 1984

3. The average age of the respondents was 39 years. The ages ranged from 19 years to 71. 60% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 to 49.

<u>AGE:</u>	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
19 - 29	7	15
30 - 39	14	30
40 - 49	14	30
50 - 59	6	13
60 - 69	2	4
70 - 79	1	2
No answer	2	4

- 4a). Participants were provided with the following definition about self-government for the consultation purposes:

"Aboriginal governments have been in existence for thousands of years in North America. They were here long before the Europeans arrived. Over the years, they have changed in many ways. Today self-government is the efforts of Aboriginal people to use their governments to restore their community goals. The social goals that Aboriginal people would like to restore include, for example, housing, child welfare, health services, shelters, and healing centres. The economic goals would include, for example, employment, training and education. The cultural goals would include, for example, recreation, traditions, health and medicines. The political goals would include such issues as governing membership, Bill C-31, decision-making at the Band level, elections and passing by-laws."

The women were asked whether they agreed with the definition. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Disagree	4	9
Disagree	5	11
Neither Disagree or Agree	8	17
Agree	8	17
Strongly Agree	15	33
No answer	6	13

4b). If they did not agree, or were undecided with the definition, the respondents were asked to provide a description of their own views. Some of these views were:

- Self-government should be a vehicle for women to be heard and respected as leaders and followers

- More information on self-government is needed through training and education

- Metis and band levels should be separate governments referred to decision-making bodies at the community level.

- Self-government must be at the community level. Currently, the power structure of Chief and Council leads to suffering of the grassroots people.

- Indigenous women's voices must be heard in all self-government initiatives; they must have equal participation at all decision-making levels.

- Self-determination and self-sufficiency are crucial for the well-being of Indigenous communities.

- The Metis and Non-Status models of self-government should be included.

- Many women do not want self-government at the provincial or federal level.

4c). Participants were asked whether or not women should be consulted in the formation of self-government. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	44	96
No	1	2
No answer	1	2

Some of the women's answers were:

- Women have traditionally been the caregivers and teachers in the family and community. Thus, they have a valuable contribution to make.
- Aboriginal women are the backbone of the community.
- Aboriginal women should be equal participants in all decision-making processes that affect our people.
- Currently, women are not being included in decision-making processes at the Band level. Women who speak out are penalized by the male leaders, especially "Bill C31" women.
- Indigenous women have the right to be consulted
- Consultation does not go far enough; There must be full and equal participation
- As the lifegivers, Indigenous women should have a central role in self-government initiatives.
- Indigenous women have been oppressed for too long.
- Indigenous women are strong leaders with whom male leaders consult with all the time when something goes wrong.

5. The women were asked whether or not they think it is important to retain their rights as outlined in the treaties. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	36	78
No	1	2
Depends	3	7
No answer	6	13

Some of the reasons given for retaining treaty rights were:

- "It is our right".
- All agreements made between Indigenous people and the Canadian government should be honoured.
- Indigenous people must hold the government to its agreements and promises for future generations.
- The rights outlined in the treaties are birth rights, as proclaimed by the Queen in 1867 in the Royal Proclamation.
- Treaties are forever; "as long as the river flows, the sun shines and the grass grows".
- Treaties are part of the historic and legal framework which defines the relationship between Treaty Indian people and the government. We must retain all components of this framework or our claim to Aboriginal rights may be seriously eroded and ultimately diminished; that is, lose our foundation.

Some of the reasons given for abolishing treaty rights were:

- Let's look to the Future and quit harping on the bad done. The past is just that, the past.
- Any by-product of the Indian Act is white; therefore, it is harmful.



6. Some women (12) were asked whether or not they believe that it would be harmful or beneficial to abolish the Indian Act and replace it with our own system. The results were:

	<u>N=12</u>	<u>%</u>
Harmful	6	50
Beneficial	3	25
No answer	3	25

Other women were asked to comment on the impact that the Indian Act has on Indian people today. Some of the comments were:

- The Indian Act does not allow Indigenous people enough say in high level decisions and excludes Metis people.
- Indigenous women need more information on the Indian Act.
- The Indian Act does not address the needs of off-reserve people.
- The process has destroyed Aboriginal people's right to self-sufficiency, self-determination by isolating with the intent to control.
- The Indian Act has caused Aboriginal men to start treating their own women like the Europeans have treated and continue to treat their women (like slaves/chattel)
- The Indian Act creates dependency, with the government treating Aboriginal people like children/ wards of the state.
- The Indian Act is an administrative tool put in place to meet the needs of a colonial system.

7. Some women were asked about how they believe the Indian Act should be changed, if at all. Other women were asked if they thought the Indian Act should be abolished, remain the same or changed. The results were:

	<u>N=32</u>	<u>%</u>
Abolished	4	11
Remain the Same	3	9
Changed	13	41
Did not Have Enough Information To Answer	5	15
No answer	7	24

Here are some of the reasons the women provided for their responses:

Reasons for Abolishing the Indian Act:

- Let's look to the future and quit harping on the bad done. The past is just that, the past.
- Any by-product of the Indian Act is white; therefore, it is harmful.

Reasons for Changes to the Indian Act:

- The Indian Act is like a provincial statute, it gives Aboriginal people a legal base from which to start. Many items in the Indian Act should be amended, deleted or repealed.
- The Indian Act gives us a base from which to start. It should be changed, not abolished. By abolishing the Indian Act, we are letting the government off the hook in regards to commitments made in the treaties.
- The Indian Act should be changed under the direction of Indian people to meet their needs.
- We need to make changes to the Indian Act to protect our culture, not to assimilate us as was the case of Bill C31.
- The Indian Act should be changed to insert decentralization of funding and planning of Band membership, agencies, boards and committees like other societies in Canada.

- Reform needs to occur. Currently, Chief and Council stifle and repress their own people. This type of system should be reformed so that accountability is ensured and so that the Chiefs hold less power.

- It should be changed to allow Aboriginal people to be self-determining.

8.a) The women were asked to provide information on what type of involvement Indigenous women have in many different areas. The results were:

Health: N=45

Through Committees:	8
In A Work Situation:	12
As A Volunteer:	12
At Workshops & Conferences:	13

Child Welfare: N=46

Through Committees:	11
In A Work Situations:	11
As a Volunteer:	10
At Workshops and Conferences:	14

Economic Development: N=35

Through Committees:	9
In A Work Situations:	9
As a Volunteer:	3
At Workshops and Conferences:	14

<u>Education and Training:</u>	<u>N=48</u>
Through Committees:	10
In A Work Situations:	12
As a Volunteer:	9
At Workshops and Conferences:	17
 <u>Justice:</u>	 <u>N=43</u>
Through Committees:	14
In A Work Situations:	10
As a Volunteer:	9
At Workshops and Conferences:	10
 <u>Housing:</u>	 <u>N=23</u>
Through Committees:	7
In A Work Situations:	6
As a Volunteer:	4
At Workshops and Conferences:	6
 <u>Youth:</u>	 <u>N=48</u>
Through Committees:	9
In A Work Situations:	12
As a Volunteer:	13
At Workshops and Conferences:	14

<u>Family Violence:</u>	<u>N=59</u>
Through Committees:	13
In A Work Situations:	14
As a Volunteer:	12
At Workshops and Conferences:	20

<u>Other:</u>	<u>N=28</u>
Through Committees:	8
In A Work Situations:	5
As a Volunteer:	7
At Workshops and Conferences:	8

Other activities included: working for the church, at wakes/funerals, working and cooking for the elders, helping community members through grief, fund-raising, and community activities.

8.b) The women were asked to describe the improvements they would like to see in those areas of concern. Some of the comments were:

- Child and Family Services need more experienced and native people to work for them. The justice system also needs more Aboriginal people working within it.
- Child welfare should be completely controlled and administered by Aboriginal women.
- More workshops are needed on violence, sexual abuse, and housing.
- More programs are needed for youth, such as recreational, life skills, self-esteem and communication skills.
- Healing programs are needed for our communities.
- More Chief and Council members need to attend workshops on drug/alcohol abuse and family violence.
- The diet plan for native people needs to be changed. Many native people are diabetic and have high blood pressure.

- Women and youth need to have a greater voice and women need to take control.
- Changes must be made at the provincial and federal level to the policies, regulations and agreements, such as the A.F.A. and the Indian Act.
- Committees should include Metis representation, such as Hydro, Resources, Tourism, and Justice committees.
- Education should be community-based and community-controlled.
- Racism needs to be dealt with.
- Networking between different agencies and organizations needs to be stronger.
- More education and training for Aboriginal women.

8.c) The women were asked to describe how these improvements could be made. Their comments included:

- Public forums, workshops and groups need to be formed where people can openly discuss their hurts and pains.
- Improvements can be made by ensuring that Aboriginal people administer, create and develop these services and programs on their own.
- Aboriginal people coming together to work together.
- Changes in Federal government policies and regulations, such as Alternate Funding Agreements so that Chief and Council does not have sole authority in the transferring of funds from one program to another. Decentralization is needed. Existing committees need to be reviewed.
- Issues surrounding housing could be addressed through consultation with membership by housing Selection Committee members.
- Regarding social programs, recommendations to Chief and Council to implement these programs should be made.
- Healing is required.
- Greater participation of Aboriginal women.
- Change the police system.

- Educate the men about respecting women and police about family violence and victimization

- Listening to elders and women.

9.a) Women were asked if they felt that the provincial leader of the Assembly of Manitoba should be accountable to the people or the chiefs.

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
The People	21	46
The Chiefs	5	11
Both	11	24
No answer	9	19

Some of the comments the women made for their reasons were:

- The people should be the voice.

- If the Chief is elected by a number of relatives, he may not represent grassroots issues.

- Both urban and on-reserve people should be included in the voting.

- The people should vote for the provincial leader because communities are not informed about events/issues that concern their own communities - it just stops at Chief and Council level.

- Both the Chiefs and the people should be voting. This way, the provincial leader may become more accessible to his people and more accountable to the grassroots level.

9.b) Women were asked if they felt that the federal leader of the Assembly of First Nations should be accountable to the people or the chiefs. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
The People	21	46
The Chiefs	4	9
Both	11	24
No answer	10	22

Some of the comments made for their reasons were:

- The people should be the voice
- Accountability keeps us honest. Thus, the people should vote for the national leader.

10.a) Women were asked whether they think that they can make a difference in Aboriginal government as an individual. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	24	52
No	5	11
No answer	17	37

10.b) Women were asked whether they think that they can make a difference in Aboriginal government as a group. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	32	70
No	4	9
No answer	10	21



10.c) Women were asked whether they think that they can make a difference in Aboriginal government at a provincial level. The results were:

	<u>N=46</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	28	61
No	5	11
No answer	13	28

Comments About Making a Difference:

As An Individual:

- speaking out on political, social, spiritual issues
- educating oneself and others
- by being involved in all aspects of decision-making
- as advisers to Chief and Council
- working with women to help them express their concerns and viewpoints and to help them learn about self-government
- by helping youth get adequate, culturally relevant services

As A Group:

- discussion groups - planning, organizing and lobbying for change
- being an active member of an Indigenous women's organization
- by exposing, relating and publicly announcing the hardships, trials and issues that face Aboriginal people on a daily basis.
- getting women elected to decision-making positions, such as Chief and Council
- bonding together with other women, supporting and helping one another

At the Provincial Level:

- by being involved with elections and by voting
- encouraging women to run for leadership positions
- holding provincial leaders accountable to us

11. This question asked women to provide a rank order of their most important concerns for their community. Consistently, the women ranked these issues highly amongst their concerns:

- nepotism,
- family violence,
- the need for courses on parenting skills,
- housing,
- child welfare issues,
- alcohol and drug programs,
- education,
- employment,
- cultural awareness and promotion.

Family violence was the number one concern.

Most Important Concerns for The Communities:

Winnipeg:

- education (5x)<sup>6</sup>
- family violence (4x)
- child welfare (4x)
- employment (3x)
- alcohol/drug prevention (3x)
- health (3x)
- poverty (3x)
- training (3x)
- Bill C31
- economy
- education/training of youth
- everyday existence
- empowering women
- health care
- healing circles
- housing
- lack of interest in issues outside the home
- leadership

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<sup>6</sup> The number in the brackets indicate the number of times an issue was listed.

- male dominance
- mystical impression of Aboriginal people
- nepotism, services and programs only provided for the families, not the community
- negative image of Aboriginal in media
- necessity of a land base
- poor visibility of female role models
- physical/emotional/sexual abuse
- racism/prejudice
- single mothers & children
- Aboriginal women must be allowed to vote for their national leaders
- welfare rights/cutbacks
- youth

The Pas Region:

- family violence (8x)
- alcohol and drug abuse (7x)
- housing (6x)
- culture (promotion/awareness of) (5x)
- child abuse (4x)
- parenting skills (4x)
- sexual/physical/mental abuse (3x)
- getting youth involved (3x)
- vandalism (3x)
- clean water (2x)
- language (2x)
- equal rights (2x)
- workshops on what's happening at a political level (2x)
- elder abuse
- health
- accountability of victims
- judicial system
- more information on government
- elderly care
- workshops on healing circles
- women's programs
- women not being included at the decision-making level
- help women understand self-government

The Interlake Region:

- abuse
- anger management
- child care
- child welfare
- community jealousy of jobs, therefore need more jobs (2x)
- crisis centres
- education (3x)
- family-oriented values

- health and welfare
- homeless
- justice (2x)
- legal statutes
- neglect of children because men/women are thinking of themselves
- sharing and trust
- social issues (2x)

The Thompson Region:

- recreation - to prevent some of our social problems(2x)
- mental health workshops involving everyone(2x)
- chief and council have too much power
- decentralization of all the financial programs
- information should be given to local residents
- local hiring
- present Charter of Rights and Freedoms apply to band membership to re-instate our rights and freedoms
- The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples hold individual hearings with Aboriginal women at the local level
- no feedback from chief and council when they go to conferences
- too many conferences, they should only send one person
- more women on the Band council

12. & 13. Question Twelve asked the women what they wanted changed, while Question Thirteen asks the women how they would like to see these changes accomplished. Some of the answers given are as follows:

- The Child Welfare System needs to be changed to reflect the needs of Indigenous women and their children. These changes should include having a native mandated office for off-reserve people, having elders involved and having Indigenous women as the administrators and decision-makers, as was traditionally the way.
- Better housing conditions for the disabled, for the elderly specifically and generally for on reserve people as well as in Metis and non-Status communities. Chief and Council need to be directed on this issue by community members.
- Self-government should be put in place by Aboriginal people working together.

- The provincial Indigenous women's group should be the leaders in changes affecting Indigenous women and their communities.
- The high levels of family violence in the communities must be addressed through holistic healing centres that are culturally appropriate and through community education. Women should be at the forefront of any family violence initiatives.
- The education system should be designed and delivered by Indigenous people for Indigenous communities. Indigenous languages, cultures and traditions need to be an integral part of this system for the benefit of our children.
- Changes and amendments to the Indian Act are needed because it is the root source of the oppression of Indigenous people. The poverty in Indigenous communities cannot continue.
- More education and training programs are needed for Indigenous women so that women can break free from the cycle of poverty and become self-sufficient members of society.
- The high levels of nepotism and corruption of Chief and Councils needs to be remedied. Democracy and a return to traditional decision-making processes is necessary.
- The problems of isolation for Northern women who have no way of protecting themselves and their children from violence needs to be addressed through providing the necessary, culturally appropriate resources to remote communities.
- The jurisdictional argument between the provincial and federal governments regarding day care services must be resolved to ensure that day care facilities can be operated on reserve.
- Youth concerns and needs must be addressed. Recreational programs, social, spiritual and education programs are needed to stop the high rates of suicide, school drop out, alcohol/drug/solvent abuse and teenage pregnancy.

14. The respondents were asked what the special concerns of Metis women are.<sup>7</sup> Some of the comments are as follows:

- poverty
- lack of opportunities for education and training
- access to programs and services
- lack of political representation
- more knowledge about Metis history is needed

15. This question gave the women the opportunity to make any additional comments. Some of them are as follows:

- I'm glad that there is an organization that is willing to let the women speak out.
- Very well organized
- We really needed more time as all these (areas) are thought provoking and difficult to deal with in time provided.
- These questionnaires ask many excellent questions. I found these were geared towards reserves and treaty Indians. Maybe questions could be adjusted to Metis answers could be easily incorporated and also off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.
- Women should have the right and opportunity to have a stronger input into the decision-making through Chief and Council, school systems, child care and systems.
- Women need to be part of all decision making - only then can we support self-government in any form.
- Women could take the lead in getting all aboriginal people to join together (regardless of "Indian Act" categories), to fight forces restricting our growth/struggle/health/future.

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<sup>7</sup> This question was added to the questionnaire as a result of workshop participants feedback that specific Metis concerns needed to be addressed.

## Discussion and Summary of Findings

The following discussion and summary of findings is based on the results from the questionnaire as well as from the community consultation workshops' group discussions.

### Self-Government

Many different ideas emerged about what self-government means to the women from the different communities. The current legal and constitutional concerns of Aboriginal women must be examined as a prerequisite to Aboriginal self-government initiatives. However, Status women living on reserves have particular areas of concerns, such as child welfare, family violence, and nepotism. For Metis and Non-Status First Nations women, and First Nations women living off-reserve, the issue of self-government is more complex in terms of jurisdictional debates (for example, child welfare issues, and mobility of rights) than it is for First Nations women living on-reserve. As a group, Indigenous women in Manitoba have many concerns about their constitutional and legal rights. For Status women, these generally relate to the concerns of all Status Indians, such as taxation, transferability of rights, and land and treaty claims. As a group, Indigenous women in Manitoba are concerned about Bill C-31, individual versus collective rights, and taxation laws.

Taxation laws are currently being instituted that will adversely affect Status Indians in Canada. For instance, the proposed law that would extinguish Treaty/ Status Indians rights

are seen by Indigenous women as yet another attempt to assimilate Indigenous people and eliminate responsibility from the government. This is similar to Bill C-31, an amendment made to the Indian Act which was supposed to allow for the regaining of Status for all women and their children who had previously lost their status through marriage. Unfortunately, there is a clause in Bill C-31 that basically repeats the discriminatory nature of Section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act. It does so by drawing a line at the point in which people can retain their status. By the second generation, the right to regain status will be once again lost. Indigenous women insist that this repetition of discrimination must be addressed. Indigenous women must be given a central role in the second report that is to be made to Parliament regarding Bill C-31. Their legal rights must be protected for themselves and for their children.

Women want to be involved in all legal affairs that affect their lives and the lives of their children. Women want to have workshops on the law and the legal system as it affects them. These workshops should be conducted by Indigenous community resource people.

Of the 46 women who participated in the questionnaire, 23 women agreed with the definition that was provided for them (see page 8 of the results section). There were also other ideas put forth by the women such as local control with federal and provincial involvement.

Also, women voiced their concern about protecting their



individual rights when communities become self-sufficient or self-governing. Thus, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is essential for the well-being and protection of Indigenous women and their children. Some Indigenous women had a vision of developing an Aboriginal Charter of Rights and Freedoms if self-government initiatives are implemented. However, these women were very clear that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms must be retained until such time as the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms is developed and implemented.

On-reserve women are concerned about their rights to services and quality of life for themselves and their children at the level equal to that of other Canadians. For example, the right to licensed child care was commonly mentioned. Currently, child care facilities are not licensed on reserve due to the jurisdictional issue of day care as a provincial matter.

The current Band Council system is an extension of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to which Chief and Council is responsible. It was seen by the women that as long as this system is in place, women's legal rights would continue to be in jeopardy. Control needs to rest with the community, where the chief is accountable to the people if self-government is to be successful in protecting the rights of Indigenous women and their children.

Aboriginal women voiced the opinion that if self-government is to be a continuation of the current system, without federal and provincial involvement, they were afraid of self-government.

Currently, issues of nepotism and corruption of Chief and Council government systems was articulated as a critical concern to Indigenous women throughout the province.

Off-reserve women are concerned about transferability of rights, and what urban self-government means to them. Also, the loss of jurisdiction when moving to the city for health care leaves some women without adequate service.

The women voiced the importance of their involvement in the development of self-government. Some women voiced the opinion that, to them, self-government simply meant taking control of their own community. Further, some argued that self-government currently exists, and does not require new legislation. Still others held the opinion that self-government, if to be formed, should be at the local level, with involvement only in funding at the federal and provincial governments.

The form that self-government would take for off-reserve, non-Status and Metis women was less clear. For example, the question of a land base was raised. The need for workshops and information on self-government was mentioned several times. Also, the need for unity amongst Indigenous women in the communities was stressed if healthy, strong communities are to develop.

Many women voiced the concern that women needed more information, more workshops on self-government, so that this topic could be explored in greater depth, leading to a better understanding for women. The lack of access to information

Indigenous women had on self-government was frustrating and left Indigenous women at a disadvantaged position. In the north, many women felt totally isolated from the process.

Indigenous women stated that self-government would only be beneficial and effective if Indigenous women had equal participation in the process at the decision-making level. Many times Indigenous women stated that Indigenous women are the backbone of their families and societies, as such their input is fundamental to the success of self-government initiatives.

#### Social Issues

Presently, Indigenous women are concerned about many social problems in their communities. These include: high rates of family violence including child abuse, wife abuse, elder abuse, child welfare concerns, suicide, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, alcohol/drug/substance abuse, loss of traditions, racism and prejudice, grief and loss issues, the homeless and poor housing and health conditions. Family violence was the issue listed most often as an important community concern, especially to northern women. Frequently, the residential school system was seen as having a great influence on the cycles of sexual, emotional and physical abuse that exists in our communities. Women are very concerned about the healing that needs to take place in order for their communities to become healthy again. One women spoke of being abused by her husband, a community leader. At one point, she had phoned the RCMP for help and her

husband held enough power in the community that the police did not rescue her for several days. The abuse must stop in our communities if self-sufficiency and self-government is to be effective. The male leaders, in particular, need to heal so that the cycle of violence can be stopped in our communities. This must occur if self-government initiatives are to represent the best interests of women and children. Women view healing circles and traditional ceremonies such as sweatlodges as essential in helping their community members heal.

Indigenous women throughout Manitoba have many important concerns around child welfare issues. These include: political interference by Chief and Council members which put children and women at risk of abuse, the need for more culturally appropriate and sensitive Child and Family Services, and the need for Indigenous women's involvement at the administrative level.

In the north, women have scarce resources or services to access for themselves or their families. Therefore, their oppression is often unnoticed by others. This leaves the women and their children in an extremely vulnerable situation.

Solutions were seen as being derived from community action, in terms of spiritual healing circles and in terms of culturally appropriate, holistic treatment initiatives. Indigenous women should be at the forefront in this area. These type of community initiatives should be supported by government. This type of social development, along with economic development, in which people's basic needs of food, clothing, water, and housing were

met, was seen as the answer in addressing social concerns. Empowering women through workshops and public education and political groups was seen as important.

Social programs to address the needs of youth and children were seen as an important step in building healthier, stronger communities. Recreational and leadership programs using positive role models as staff is seen as important in this area.

### Economic Issues

Currently, many Indigenous women and their children who live on reserve are living on land that is not economically sustainable. The fact that Indigenous people were sent to pieces of land that were often the most unsustainable over a hundred years ago, leaves the Canadian government responsible for the current deplorable economic situation in which the majority of Indigenous people live. Indigenous women, who relocate to urban centres, often find themselves in a disadvantaged situation similar to that of Indigenous women living in rural and reserve land. Without training and education, employment in the city is hard to find. Racism and prejudice adds to this problem, making it harder for Indigenous women to find employment.

Productivity leading to a sense of accomplishment and usefulness must be available in order for Indigenous women and their families to live healthy lives. Presently, Indigenous women are at the bottom of the Canadian economic scale. A viable land base for on-reserve Indigenous women is a central concern.

In urban centres, Indigenous women are still in the lowest category of income. Women who were presently relying on social assistance wanted to become educated and trained. All women repeatedly voiced their needs for increased education and training for themselves and their children. Indigenous women want to make an economic contribution to society. Frustration over the many barriers that exist in achieving these goals was often expressed.

Solutions are seen as lying in the development of more training programs and funding for post-secondary education, along with the necessary support services, such as tutoring, child care, and counselling services. Training and education programs that have proven to be successful should be sustained and increased. Indigenous women also want to have a business training resource centre for Indigenous women that would aid them in establishing successful business ventures.

### Cultural Issues

A fundamental cultural difference between Indigenous peoples and European-Canadians can be seen in their respective world view.<sup>9</sup> European-Canadians view their relationship with the universe as one in which they are the most important beings, whereas in Indigenous cultures, Indigenous people view Man as the least significant of the world, with a greater respect for Mother

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<sup>9</sup> Hamilton, A.C. and Sinclair, C.M., Report on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba: Volume 1: The Justice System and Aboriginal People. Winnipeg: Province of Manitoba, 1991. page 21

Earth and other living creatures.

Many of the traditional Indigenous spiritual practices were banned by the Canadian government, in attempts to destroy and change the culture and world view of Indigenous people. For example, the government prohibited the practice of the sun dance in the early 1900's. The restoration of this practice is a demonstration of the movement by Indigenous people to reclaim what was once theirs. This cultural revival promotes a sense of community pride. Many women highlighted the importance of cultural preservation. They believed that their children and youth must be taught about their cultural ways and values (through school and community programs) as a way of strengthening their sense of pride and self-esteem.

This embracing of old ways and traditions will lead to a return of holding Indigenous women Elders in high regard. The young need to have Indigenous women Elders who can act as positive role models and can teach them basic values and customs. Specifically, women mentioned the need to have Indigenous women elders involved in the school system as elders. Also, Elders should be guides and resource people when we are looking for guidance, support, wisdom and healing.

Some women expressed the need for fostering understanding between non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people. They cited many examples of institutional racism where either the women or their children were subjected to demeaning, hurtful comments or actions. The women felt that education might address the problem

of racism. However, they acknowledged that non-Indigenous people must be receptive in order for public education on cultural awareness to be effective. Further, these education programs for professionals need to be developed and administered by Indigenous peoples.

School curricula for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children that teach them about Indigenous culture and history must be developed and implemented by Indigenous people. This can prevent some of the racist attitudes that develop as a result of ignorance of the true Canadian history.

#### Indigenous Youth

Indigenous youth have the highest incidence of suicide, teenage pregnancy and solvent abuse in Canada. These are as a result of feelings of hopelessness and despair due to their disadvantaged social and economic environment. It is hard for their parents to deal with an adolescent's developmental needs when they are worried about meeting the needs of shelter, food, clothing, and water.

As a result of the sexual, emotional, and physical abuse that occurred in the residential schools, as well as the effects of a colonized, oppressed people, many youth grow up in dysfunctional homes. Parents lack skills in parental guidance as a result of being taken away at an early age from their own family, and therefore are not equipped to respond appropriately to the needs of their children. There is a need for parenting



skills courses to address this problem.

Many of our youth start their adult life with a sense that society does not value them and with an inability to value themselves or their own societies. This leads to "dysfunctional" behaviour such as drug abuse, suicide, abuse of others, and criminal activity to compensate for this loss of self-esteem. Another issue raised pertained to the high representation of Indigenous youth in the Manitoba Youth Centre.

It is essential to have self-esteem programs and alternatives to negative coping choices in the communities. For example, currently, there are some sports and recreational activities in Indigenous communities. These are positive, however, there are not enough alternative recreational programs for other interests. For instance many of the program initiatives started by Chief and Council are hockey programs for Indigenous boys and young men. Once again, there is even less available for Indigenous girls and young women. Indigenous girls' and young women's needs must be considered as equally important to those of Indigenous boys and young men.

The women believe that community healing must take place in order to give children a stable foundation from which to grow and develop into healthy adults. The development of culturally appropriate treatment and services for youth involved in criminal activities is needed to solve the difficulties facing these youth. Along with this is the need for economic development initiatives at the community level, which would provide the youth

with a sense of hope and purpose.

### Education and Training

The continued racial discrimination that exists in today's educational system must be addressed.<sup>9</sup> The women cited many examples of school teachers who demonstrated racist attitudes towards their children. They also cited examples of racism between students. The women advocated for mandatory cross-cultural courses for educators and students alike that must be developed and implemented by Indigenous peoples themselves.

Education was raised several times as an issue. Women frequently mentioned the need for adequate training and education programs for Indigenous women as critical to addressing their low socio-economic position in society. There are many bright, articulate women who long for the chance to contribute to their communities and society as a whole. They see education and training as the means to achieve this goal.

The women were also concerned with teachers who were not qualified, schools that were too small, and the unavailability of courses offered in mainstream society to Indigenous children. Throughout the province, women mentioned the need for culturally-appropriate schooling in which children could learn about their history, traditions and culture.

The women voiced a strong belief in the need for quality

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<sup>9</sup> McDiarmid, Garnet, Teaching Prejudice; A Content Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks Authorized for Use in Ontario. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971.

Community-based schooling. Indigenous and local control of education was seen as a way to ensure that the community receives education in a culturally appropriate manner.

### Justice

Recently, attempts have been made to change the Manitoban justice system to become more culturally-sensitive. For example, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which was chaired by one Indigenous judge and one non-Indigenous judge, has made recommendations to the Justice Department regarding all areas of the justice system affecting Indigenous people. Unfortunately, most of these recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Women were most concerned about justice issues relating to child welfare issues and family violence. They feel that their roles as mothers are not respected by the current child welfare system. Women from all over the province voiced their opinion that child welfare agencies should be the responsibility of Indigenous women, whose traditional role is that of caregiver, teacher, and guardian of children. Thus, their involvement in contemporary child welfare matters is central to quality care of Indigenous children in Manitoba.

Examples where women and their children were being abused by their husbands were discussed. Some women talked about the lack of sensitivity the R.C.M.P. showed towards their needs. The police were often ineffective in providing safety for these women and their children. This has been documented in the AJI report as

well.11

Also, the need for alternatives to the incarceration of Indigenous people is seen as a critical justice issue by Indigenous women. Community-based sentencing programs, where community members would be part of the sentencing of the offender is viewed as a more culturally appropriate approach. Rather than punishment, the goal of community-based sentencing is to reintegrate the offender into society as an active, healthy member of society.<sup>12</sup>

The women noted a lack of awareness about their legal rights in criminal proceedings. They cited limited access to information and language barriers preventing them from protecting their human rights. They noted a need for more court interpreters and a legal resource centre.

#### Northern Women's Concerns

Northern women frequently cited the following issues: drug, alcohol and substance abuse, family violence (abuse of women and children), nepotism and corrupt leadership within their communities. Women are also concerned with inadequate housing conditions. Women in the Pas Region also stated their protest of the new taxation of houses on reserve land. Vandalism in communities was also mentioned as a concern.

Although many of the issues are similar for northern and

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<sup>11</sup> Hamilton, A.C. and Sinclair, C.M., Report on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry: Volume 1: The Justice System and Aboriginal People. Winnipeg: Province of Manitoba, 1991. page 483

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, page 493

southern Indigenous women, an additional, critical factor in the north is isolation. This magnifies their problems. For example, women dealing with issues such as abuse or nepotism had less access to help.

With respect to isolation, networking and communicating with other Indigenous women in the province is valued by many Northern women. Women who attended the conference in the Pas stated that they enjoyed the workshop and expressed a need for greater exposure to women's groups.

Women in the Thompson region expressed the view that the needs of Metis women must be acknowledged. Serious concerns about self-government and exploitation of power were brought forth. These women advocated for the de-centralization of power, so that the local Aboriginal government did not have complete control of distribution of funding, an arrangement they said led to the corruption that exists in today's system of Chief and Council.

## Recommendations

1) The Indian Act restricts self-determining and self-governing initiatives and acts as a tool to control the lives of First Nations people. It is a racist document. Thus,

### **WE RECOMMEND:**

That the Indian Act be amended:

- a) to reflect the cultural diversity of our people
- b) to protect the collective and individual rights
- c) to allow Indigenous people to exercise the inherent right to self-government

2) Presently, Indigenous women are not equal participants in decision-making matters. Thus,

### **WE RECOMMEND:**

Equal participation of women and men in Indigenous leadership and in the development and implementation of all self-determining initiatives.

For example, we want equal participation in Indigenous government infrastructures, Indigenous justice systems, Indigenous social services and programs and economic development initiatives.

3) Traditionally, Indigenous women were the primary caregivers and decision-makers within the family and community. This system worked very well in providing care for children in the community. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That Indigenous women should be in the forefront in the development and implementation of self-governing institutions, including all child welfare services and agencies.

4) In order for us to become a self-determining people, we must be healed from the effects of the colonization process. We need to begin to develop our own programs and services recognizing Aboriginal expertise can come from only Indigenous people. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That programs and services that are developed and implemented by Indigenous peoples be financially supported by the federal government, as part of the preparation for self-government.

5) An accurate historical description of Indigenous peoples needs to be acknowledged in all schools, to conquer destructive attitudes within the Aboriginal community as well as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies. For example, the racist attitudes that exists between nations, and sexist attitudes that prevails in the Aboriginal community need to be eliminated. Indigenous people in general and Indigenous women in particular must retain their rightful place in society, through the regaining of pride in culture and valuing of women. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That the provincial governments developed appropriate curricula by using Indigenous resource people. All curricula developed should ensure that an accurate history of Indigenous people in Canada is taught.

6) Indigenous women want community control of their children's education and demand that the education system become culturally relevant. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That Indigenous people be given the authority to control their own schools, where Indigenous languages and cultural and traditional practices are an integral part of the curriculum.



7) Resource centres for Indigenous women that will teach them their legal rights in employment, housing, child welfare matters, family violence and other justice matters are important in order for Indigenous Women to become self-sufficient. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That these resource centres should be established in each of the four regions of the I.W.C. to provide Indigenous women with the services they need.

8) Furthermore, in reaching economic self-sufficiency an economic development resource centre is necessary. In order for all Indigenous women to have accessibility to this service, there must be one in the southern region and one in the northern region of Manitoba. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

An economic development resource centre be funded that specifically services Indigenous women to provide them with assistance and information in coordinating community and business development initiatives in both the north and south.

9) Many positive solutions to difficulties facing Indigenous people with respect to the justice system are outlined in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Report of 1991. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That the recommendations that are outlined in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry be implemented and

Further, that the Indigenous Women's Collective be given financial resources to participate in the implementation of the AJI report.

For example, the I.W.C.'s project on Cross-Cultural Restorative Resolutions should be funded.

10) Indigenous women throughout Manitoba continually voiced the need for more training and education. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That funding be allocated to Nongom Ikkwe's proposal that would establish an Aboriginal women's management institute.

Further, that educational programs for Indigenous women with proven success rates should not be subject to further budget cuts by the federal government.

The Aboriginal women's management institute will provide training for women in the northern and southern regions.

11) Indigenous women want adequate funding when attending post-secondary institutions. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That funding for post-secondary education be increased so that it is accessible to more Indigenous women.

12) Indigenous women from all regions voiced their experiences of the volatile corruption and nepotism that exists in the present Chief and Council system. This situation must be changed. Thus,

**WE RECOMMEND:**

That the federal government support local control initiatives, where equal participation of men and women is assured.

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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE  
FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

This survey is being used to find out about your experiences as Aboriginal women in Canada. The results of the questionnaire will be used to form recommendations for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. This commission was established by the Canadian government in August, 1992 with the mandate to investigate the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples (Indian, Inuit, and Metis), the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole. It should address the concerns of Aboriginal peoples and make recommendations about how to address these concerns. The areas of interest include models for self-government and solutions to social, economic, political and cultural concerns. We would like to find out the solutions that Aboriginal women have for these areas and the role that Aboriginal women play in these areas, particularly in the area of self-government.

Would you like to help us by answering some questions? It should take about 20 minutes of your time. We would like to receive as many responses from as many women as possible, because we know that each woman may have a unique answer. We'd like to ensure that our presentation to the Royal Commission will represent as many of your voices as possible. Also, all the questionnaires are confidential, your identity will not be made known. All questions are optional, you may choose not to answer a question if you feel it would reveal too much information.

1. What is your Aboriginal status? (Please circle)

- Metis
- Non-Status
- Status
- Inuit
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the name of your community?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

4. a) Do you agree with the following definition of Aboriginal self-government? (Please circle appropriate answer)

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Disagree or Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Aboriginal governments have been in existence for thousands of years in North America. They were here long before the Europeans arrived. Over the years, they have changed in many ways. Today

Self-government is the efforts of the Aboriginal people to use their governments to restore their community goals. The social goals that Aboriginal people would like to restore include, for example, housing, child welfare, health services, shelters, and healing centers. The economic goals would include, for example, employment, training and education. The cultural goals would include, for example, recreation, traditions, health and medicines. The political goals would include such issues as governing membership, Bill C31, decision-making at the Band level, elections and passing by-laws.

b) If you strongly disagree, disagree, or are undecided about the above definition of self-government, please describe your own views of Aboriginal self-government.

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c) Do you feel that Aboriginal women should be consulted in the formation of self-government? (Please circle)

Yes  
No

If yes, explain:

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If no, explain:

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5 a) Canadian treaties were signed between the Aboriginal people and the invading Europeans. They are legal documents that give us rights to education, land, and special status. Do you think it is important that we retain our rights as outlined in the treaties?  
(Please circle)

Yes  
No

b) If yes, why?

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c) If no, why not?

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6. The Indian Act was formulated by the Canadian government with the intent to regulate and assimilate Aboriginal people. The present Chief and Council system is a by-product of the Indian Act. What impact do you feel the Indian Act has on Indian people today?

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7. Do you think the Indian Act should be:  
abolished  
remain the same  
changed

If you think it should be abolished, why? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you think it should remain the same, why? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you think it should be changed, why and in what way? \_\_\_\_\_

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Q. a) Have you participated in any of the following programs or services in your community? (Circle all appropriate answers)

AREA:

Health	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Child Welfare	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Economic Development	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Education and Training	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Justice	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Housing	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Youth	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
Family Violence	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences
*Other	Through Committees	In a Work Situation	As a Volunteer	At Workshops &Conferences

\* For example, willing workers, cooking for elders or at funerals, church activities, etc. Please list: \_\_\_\_\_

b) What improvements would you like to see in these areas. Please list:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



c) How could these improvements be made?

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9. a) Who do you feel the provincial leader of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs should be accountable to: (Please circle)

- the people
- the chiefs

Comments:

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b) Who do you think the federal leader of the Assembly of First Nations should be accountable to: (Please circle)

- the people
- the chiefs

Comments:

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10. Do you think you can make a difference in your Aboriginal government: (Please circle)

- a) As an individual (for example, by running your own business)
- Yes
  - No

If yes, in what way? \_\_\_\_\_

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Working in a group (for example, being active in a woman's organization)

No  
Yes

If yes, in what way? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c) Working at a provincial level (for example, by voting at an election or supporting a leader during his/her campaign)

Yes  
No

If yes, in what way? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What do you see as the most important concerns in your community? (Please list in order of importance)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What do you want changed?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How would you like to see these things changed?

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

14. Are there any special concerns of Metis women that need to be addressed? If so, please describe:

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15. Please make any additional comments:

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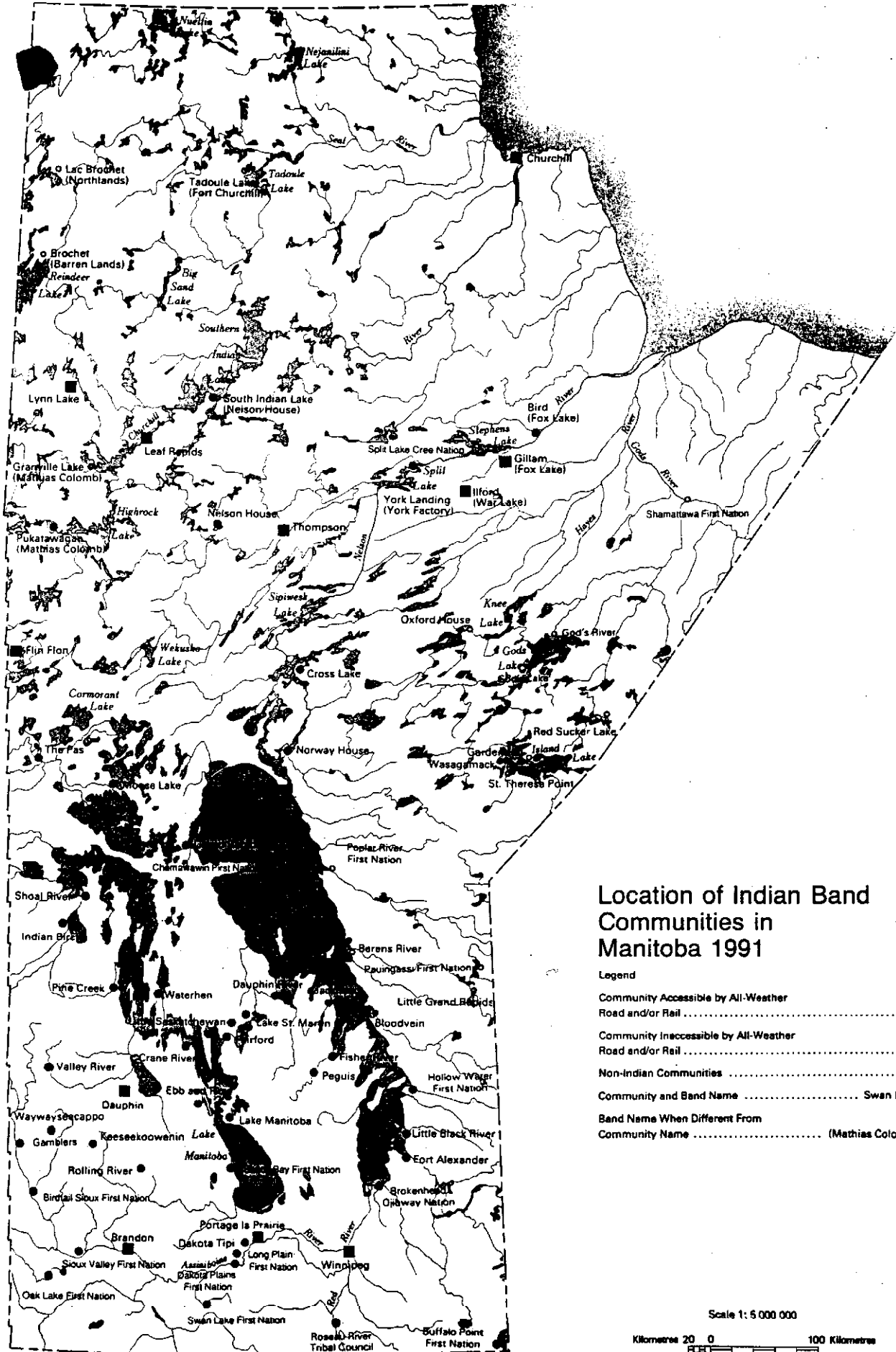
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Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire!



### Location of Indian Band Communities in Manitoba 1991

- Legend**
- Community Accessible by All-Weather Road and/or Rail ..... ●
  - Community Inaccessible by All-Weather Road and/or Rail ..... ○
  - Non-Indian Communities ..... ■
  - Community and Band Name ..... Swam Lake
  - Band Name When Different From Community Name ..... (Mathias Colomb)

Scale 1: 5 000 000

