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Systemic Conflict in Federal Research Funding: Empirical Indication of Bias against Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian Citizens in Canadian Doctoral Scholarship Selection

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ABSTRACT

Canada is globally recognized as a multicultural and developed nation, yet its foundations lie in the colonial displacement of Indigenous peoples, a history that continues to shape contemporary institutional structures. This study investigates cultural conflict and systemic inequities within Canadian academic institutions, focusing on doctoral scholarship selection processes at national, provincial, university, and foundation levels. Using five years of publicly available NSERC-CGRSD data from four Canadian universities, the analysis identifies recurring patterns of underrepresentation affecting Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens. Evidence gathered in this research, along with student reports, indicates that this demographic, along with other racialized groups, consistently experiences as marginalized citizens in academic evaluation contexts. These patterns appear to manifest in scholarship and funding decisions where Canadian research contributions may be undervalued, while applicants perceived as white are viewed as receiving disproportionate advantages. Such disparities suggest that historical colonial power structures may continue to influence access to academic opportunities, raising concerns about fairness, transparency, and institutional accountability. Although Canada has recently expanded protections related to religious rights, questions remain regarding the extent to which these policies will be meaningfully implemented within academia and research organizations. Addressing these inequities is essential to ensuring that all qualified domestic scholars, including Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens, receive equitable access to doctoral scholarship opportunities and are not subjected to systematic conflict within academic evaluation systems.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Contemporary Canadian Hindu Experiences and Systemic Conflict

In recent years, Hindu communities across the world have increasingly voiced concern about targeted hostility, organized violence, and patterns of persecution that have been directed toward Hindus in multiple regions across the globe[1–5]. Many describe these events as evidence of a "Hindu genocide in the 21st century," arguing that the scale, repetition, and demographic spread of violence reflect a continuation of historical patterns rather than isolated incidents[6–10]. Reports from countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Fiji, the USA, the UK, Canada, and parts of Africa document forced displacement, destruction of temples, abductions, and attacks on Hindu civilians[11–15]. These events are interpreted by many Hindu scholars, activists, and diaspora communities as part of a long continuum of vulnerability that stretches back centuries, shaped by earlier periods of conquest, religious expansion, and colonial rule[16–19].

A complementary concern expressed by Hindu communities is the limited attention these events receive in Western media. Many argue that large-scale violence against Hindus is often minimized, framed as local conflict, or omitted entirely from mainstream reporting. This perceived silence is interpreted as part of a broader pattern in which issues affecting Hindu populations are not afforded the same visibility or urgency as those affecting other groups. For many Brown Hindu Canadian citizens, raising their concerns about this lack of coverage reinforces a sense of marginalization and signals that their concerns are not taken seriously within Western institutions. The perceived double standard of the media, academic institutions, and policy organizations contributes to a broader understanding that systemic biases extend beyond international events and into domestic structures, including universities, federal and provincial funding bodies, and public discourse[1,6,8,16].

These global concerns intersect with the lived experiences of Hindu Canadians, particularly those who identify as Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian men. Although Canada is widely recognized as a multicultural and secular nation, many Indigenous and Brown Hindu Canadian citizens report feeling treated as politically marginalized citizens within academic environments. Their accounts describe repeated encounters with systemic conflict, unequal representation, and heightened scrutiny of their academic capabilities. These concerns are especially pronounced in the context of major doctoral scholarship competitions, including NSERC-CGRSD, Vanier-CGSD, provincial doctoral awards, internal university funding, and the Trudeau Foundation doctoral scholarship[20–22].

According to these accounts, applicants from groups such as women, LGBTQ individuals, Black Canadians, refugees, Muslim Canadians, and Anglo-Franco communities are often perceived as facing fewer barriers in these competitions and NSERC's selected funding policy promotes only those groups under EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)[23]. However, Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian men are politico-strategically absent from the NSERC-EDI action plan, even though under UN law and Canadian human rights principles, men's empowerment is equally important as it is for other groups[23,24]. In contrast, many Indigenous and Hindu Canadian applicants, particularly men, describe facing repeated demands for additional proof of academic merit, even when they possess strong Canadian publication records, extensive research experience, and competitive academic profiles. These experiences raise important questions about how long such perceived discriminatory practices will continue within Canadian and broader Western academia, and whether these patterns reflect ongoing forms of colonial-era inequality directed toward two ancient cultures: Indigenous peoples and Hindu Canadians[9,25,26].

The sense of systemic conflict described by Hindu Canadian*s* is not limited to scholarship competitions. Many reports indicate that their cultural identities, historical experiences, and global concerns are often misunderstood or dismissed within academic settings. For example, discussions of Hindu genocide, temple destruction, or forced displace-

ment in South Asia are sometimes minimized or reframed through Western political lenses that obscure the lived experiences of Hindu communities [1–4]. This contributes to a broader perception that Hindu voices are marginalized within multicultural frameworks that prioritize certain narratives while overlooking others [24].

These concerns align with broader critiques of academic institutions as spaces where colonial hierarchies persist. Anti-colonial scholars argue that universities often reproduce Eurocentric norms, privileging certain identities and knowledge systems while marginalizing others. The experiences reported by Indigenous and Hindu Canadian applicants suggest that these hierarchies continue to shape access to academic opportunities, funding, and recognition. The persistence of these patterns raises questions about the extent to which Canadian academia has meaningfully addressed the legacies of colonialism, racial hierarchy, and cultural exclusion [23].

Compounding these concerns is the growing global conversation about academic corruption. Corruption is widely recognized as a global issue, and universities in the Western world are frequently included in these discussions. Canadian universities are no exception. The World Bank defines corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gain," and whether this definition applies to academic settings depends on whether education is understood as a public good. If universities are considered public institutions responsible for equitable access to knowledge and opportunity, then practices that systematically disadvantage certain groups may fall within broader definitions of institutional corruption [6–8,10,12,14,27].

International frameworks highlight the importance of addressing corruption within educational institutions. Article 13 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption calls upon states to promote active participation from civil society and community organizations in preventing corruption and raising public awareness of its causes and consequences. Article 13(c) specifically emphasizes the need for public information activities and educational programs, including those within schools and universities, to strengthen non-tolerance of corruption [24,28–30]. These global standards underscore the responsibility of academic institutions to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in their policy-making processes.

For many Indigenous and Hindu Canadian applicants, these international principles resonate strongly with their experiences. They argue that scholarship competitions and academic evaluation processes should be transparent, merit-based, and free from colonial systemic bias. Yet their accounts suggest that current practices often fall short of these ideals. The perception that certain groups receive preferential treatment while others face heightened scrutiny contributes to a broader sense of institutional imbalance [28]. This imbalance is interpreted not merely as individual unfairness but as part of a larger pattern rooted in historical structures of colonialism, racial hierarchy, and cultural exclusion [23].

The concerns raised by Hindu Canadians, therefore, serve as an important entry point for examining the deeper historical and structural forces that shape contemporary academic institutions. Their experiences highlight the need to situate present-day inequities within a broader anti-colonial framework that recognizes the long-term impact of colonial conversion, racial classification, and institutionalized oppression. Understanding these connections requires examining not only contemporary experiences but also the historical systems that produced the hierarchies still visible in the 21st century [1–3,6,26,31].

Within this broader context, concerns I (pronoun: he/him/his, Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian) have been raised about the extent to which the University of Ottawa may serve as a role model of academic corruption across Canada. Other Indigenous and Hindu students reported that university policies, procedures, rules, and regulations can be manipulated by higher academic authorities, and that when conflicts arise involving Hindu Canadian doctoral students, institutional structures may appear to protect faculty members rather than address meritorious student concerns. Scholarship selection processes are also described as being influenced by internal governing bodies, including professors, departmental representatives, deans, EDI groups and provosts, in ways that some non-white Canadian (Brown Hindu South Asian and Asian) students perceive as systematically excluded. Qualified Brown Hindu Canadian and Indigenous doctoral applicants are exempt from policy-making bodies and award outcomes. These accounts reinforce broader concerns about entrenched institutional patterns that may disadvantage these groups and contribute to a wider sense of systematic conflict within Canadian academia [6,23,32].

1.2. Anti-Colonial Framework

The concerns raised by Hindu Canadians about systemic conflict, institutional exclusion, and unequal access to academic opportunities cannot be understood in isolation. They must be situated within a broader historical and theoretical context that explains how certain groups come to be marginalized within modern institutions. Anti-colonial theory provides this foundation. It offers a framework for understanding how colonial structures, once established, continue to shape the distribution of power, resources, and legitimacy long after formal colonial rule has ended [33].

Anti-colonial scholarship emphasizes that colonialism was not simply a political project of territorial expansion; it was also an epistemological project that sought to redefine knowledge, identity, and social order. Erica demonstrated in *Chattling the Indigenous and Others* how colonial systems classified and ranked human populations, assigning value to some while devaluing others. These classifications were not incidental; they were preplanned. They were central to the functioning of colonial societies, enabling the extraction of land, labour, and resources while justifying the subordination of Indigenous and non-European peoples [33].

A key insight of anti-colonial theory is that colonialism is not a historical event that ended with independence or constitutional reform. Rather, it is a structure that persists through institutions, laws, cultural narratives, and economic systems. This perspective is articulated clearly by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird, who argue that colonization operates through both formal and informal methods—racist behaviours, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economic systems that maintain the subjugation of Indigenous peoples. They emphasize that colonization remains an "all-encompassing presence," shaping contemporary struggles related to land, health, education, and cultural survival [34].

Dei similarly argues that anti-colonial analysis begins by questioning institutionalized power and privilege. It challenges the rationales used to justify dominance in social relations and exposes the ways in which colonial hierarchies are reproduced in modern institutions. Anti-colonial theory, therefore, serves not only as a critique but also as a tool for imagining alternative systems grounded in equity, cultural recognition, and self-determination [25,26,33].

One of the centralized mechanisms through which colonialism operated was the construction of racial and linguistic hierarchies. These hierarchies were embedded in law, religion, education, and economic systems. They positioned European identities as superior and cast Indigenous, Indians, African, and Asian peoples as inferior, uncivilized, or requiring guidance. These classifications justified the appropriation of land, the imposition of foreign governance structures, and the use of Indigenous, Hindus, Asian and African peoples as sources of slaves. They also shaped the development of institutions that continue to influence contemporary life, including universities, courts, and government agencies [6,33].

Previous studies highlight the importance of understanding the diversity of slavery systems across time and place. It has been noted that slavery existed long before the transatlantic trade, but the systems imposed by European powers on Aboriginal, Hindus, African, and Indian peoples were distinct in their legal and economic structures. These systems were designed to extract maximum labour while minimizing the rights and humanity of enslaved people. A chattel slave in the Caribbean, for example, cannot be directly compared to a Roman slave or a medieval serf. The rights, obligations, and lived experiences varied widely, reflecting the specific economic and political needs of each society [18,33,35,36].

This diversity underscores the need for careful analysis when examining the legacy of slavery and colonialism. Anti-colonial theory provides the tools to make these distinctions while also identifying the common threads that link different systems of domination. One of these threads is the use of law to formalize inequality. In Canada and Australia, for example, colonial authorities issued ordinances that legalized the enslavement of Aboriginal peoples, granting colonists full ownership of enslaved individuals and imposing penalties on those who assisted escape. These laws were not merely administrative; they were instruments of social engineering that reshaped Indigenous societies and entrenched racial hierarchies [18,33,35,36].

Another thread is the use of education as a tool of colonial conversion. Few researchers argue that anti-colonial frameworks reveal how educational systems have historically marginalized certain voices while elevating others. Schools became sites where Indigenous knowledge systems were dismissed, and European worldviews were imposed as universal

truths [33,37–39]. This process spontaneously contributed to the erosion of Indigenous cultural practices and reinforced the idea that European knowledge was superior. The legacy of this system continues to shape contemporary debates about curriculum, representation, and academic legitimacy.

Similar study emphasizes that anti-colonial approaches value locally produced knowledge and lived experience. Few researchers argue that colonialism disrupted the development of Indigenous knowledge systems by imposing foreign values and suppressing local traditions. This disruption has long-term consequences, affecting not only cultural continuity but also political autonomy and economic development. Anti-colonial theory, therefore, calls for the recognition and revitalization of Indigenous knowledge as a central component of decolonization [33,34,40,41].

Smith (1999) further argues that the struggle to assert humanity has been central to anti-colonial discourse. This struggle must be understood within the broader context of imperialism, which shaped language, economics, social relations, and cultural life in colonial societies. Anti-colonial theory seeks to restore dignity, agency, and recognition to those who have been marginalized by colonial systems. It challenges the narratives that have been used to justify colonial domination and calls for the creation of new narratives that reflect the experiences and aspirations of Indigenous and non-European peoples [33,42–44].

Asgharzadeh represented that anti-colonial frameworks highlight and celebrate Indigenous cultures as acts of resistance. The author argues that Indigenous oral histories, spiritual practices, and cultural traditions serve as counter-narratives to colonial ideologies [43]. These traditions challenge the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge systems and provide alternative ways of understanding the world. By centering Indigenous worldviews, anti-colonial theory offers a path toward more inclusive and equitable institutions [26,42,44].

The relevance of anti-colonial theory to contemporary Hindu experiences becomes clear when examining the parallels between historical and modern forms of marginalization. Hindu Canadians who report systemic conflict within academic institutions are not simply describing individual experiences of unfairness. They are pointing to broader patterns of decades that reflect the persistence of colonial hierarchies. These patterns include the privileging of certain identities over others, the dismissal of non-Western knowledge systems, and the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources [1,2,13,23,45].

Anti-colonial theory, therefore, provides a crucial lens for understanding the concerns raised by Hindu Canadians. It situates their experiences within a larger historical context and highlights the structural forces that shape contemporary inequalities [23]. By examining the connections between past and present, anti-colonial analysis reveals how colonial conversion, racial/linguistic classification, and institutionalized oppression continue to influence modern institutions [23,24]. This perspective sets the stage for a deeper examination of the historical systems of enslavement that helped shape the foundations of the Canadian state.

Understanding this history is essential for analyzing contemporary systemic conflict. The racial hierarchies established during the colonial period continue to shape modern institutions, including universities, funding bodies, and public policy frameworks. The marginalization experienced by Indigenous and Hindu Canadians today cannot be separated from the historical systems that classified certain groups as inferior, exploitable, or unworthy of full recognition. These systems laid the groundwork for the institutional patterns that persist in the present.

Recognizing the role of Christianity in shaping colonial systems is therefore essential for understanding the broader landscape of systemic conflict in Canada. It highlights how religious ideology, economic ambition, and political authority were intertwined in the formation of the Canadian state. It also underscores the need for contemporary institutions including universities, federal research funding bodies, and public policy organizations—to critically examine the historical foundations of their practices and to address the lingering effects of colonial conversion and institutionalized oppression [33].

This historical analysis completes the foundation for the full introduction. Collaboratively, it demonstrated that contemporary inequities experienced by Indigenous and Hindu Canadians are not isolated or accidental. They are rooted in long-standing structures of colonial domination, racial hierarchy, and religious justification. Understanding these connections is essential for developing a comprehensive analysis of systemic conflict in Canada and for advancing meaningful pathways toward equity, recognition, and institutional transformation.

1.3. Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to examine reported discrepancies in national doctoral funding systems in Canada, where scholarship distribution is perceived as disproportionately disadvantaging Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian doctoral scholars, particularly men. For decades, students from this demographic have described being targeted, overlooked, or subjected to heightened scrutiny within Canadian academia, even when they possess strong research records. This study aims to document these reported patterns as they appear across federal, provincial, and foundational scholarship programs, including NSERC-CGRSD and related doctoral funding mechanisms in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine).

A second objective is to highlight the need for NSERC-EDI policy reform that directly addresses the concerns raised by Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens. Students argue that all Canadian universities should be required to follow clear, enforceable norms that ensure equitable space in scholarship evaluation and selection. According to these perspectives, institutions that fail to uphold such standards should face meaningful legal and regulatory consequences. Some students specifically cite the University of Ottawa (Department of Biology) as an example, arguing that if such discrepancies are identified at a federal level, then the university's federal funding should be frozen for the next eight years to enforce accountability and prevent further systematic conflict.

Overall, this study seeks to draw attention to these reported inequities and to support ongoing discussions on transparency, institutional responsibility, and structural change within Canadian doctoral funding systems. The goal is to encourage a more consistent, fair, and accountable framework that reduces systemic conflict and ensures equitable justice for all Canadian citizens.

2. Materials and Methods

Data on federal doctoral scholarship outcomes were collected over a five-year period from the publicly available NSERC Doctoral Funding Decision database maintained in Ottawa[20,23]. The database link is listed in the References section, although accessibility may vary over time due to website updates, archival changes, or digital restructuring. All information used in this study was obtained directly from publicly accessible records and compiled into a comparative dataset for cross-institutional analysis. The dataset was organized by institution, year, and award outcome to identify recurring patterns and potential systematic conflicts affecting specific demographic groups.

Descriptive comparisons were conducted across four universities, such as the University of Ottawa, Memorial University of Newfoundland, University of Guelph, and McGill University, to examine trends in representation among doctoral scholarship recipients. The analysis focused on identifying consistent patterns rather than evaluating individual applicants.

Publicly available raw data from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Canada Graduate Scholarships–Doctoral (CGRS-D) programs were used for analysis. Data corresponding to the most recent five consecutive award cycles available in the public dataset (2021–2025) were extracted from aggregated NSERC statistics compiled from online public records.

Group comparisons were performed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) implemented through the non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis test. When significant differences were detected, Dunn's multiple-comparison test was applied to evaluate pairwise differences between White Canadian and Hindu-Brown Canadian applicant groups. All analyses were conducted to document visible trends in publicly reported award outcomes and to identify areas that may warrant further investigation within the Canadian academic landscape.

3. Ethics Statement

All data analyzed in this study were obtained exclusively from publicly accessible sources. No personal, confidential, or non-public identifying information was collected or used at any stage. The analysis focuses solely on aggregate patterns and institutional trends, without reference to individual applicants, reviewers, or committee members. Because the study involved no human participation, interventions, or direct contact with individuals, formal institutional ethics approval was not required. All procedures were conducted with attention to privacy, academic integrity, and responsible research practices.

4. Result

4.1. Applicant Experiences and Reported Concerns

Several applicants have informally reported concerns regarding the transparency of internal university nomination processes for federal scholarships. Specifically, some applicants with Hindu-sounding names (Hindu Canadians) described receiving rejections at the university-level screening stage without detailed feedback. When they sought clarification from university authorities about why their applications were not forwarded to the federal agency, they reported being told only that "*the process is competitive*."

These applicants stated that this explanation felt insufficient, particularly because they perceived that peers with names commonly associated with white, Christian, or Muslim backgrounds did not appear to encounter similar patterns of rejection or limited feedback. These observations are self-reported, and they may reflect limited resources. However, indicate a need for greater transparency and clearer communication regarding institutional triage and nomination procedures. For example, **Table 1** provides a summary of NSERC doctoral funding outcomes across four consecutive years.

Table 1. Summary of Tri-Council Doctoral funding outcomes (CGRS-D/Alexander Graham Bell doctoral awards and Vanier doctoral Awards), 2021–2025.

Year	Total Applicants (CGRS-D)	CGRS-D Awarded	Vanier Awarded	Notes
2021	1,845	342	55	Applicants & awards from GitHub dataset (https://github.com/xijohnny/nserc_stats/blob/master/data.csv); Vanier public data
2022	1,721	330	56	Applicants & awards from GitHub dataset (https://github.com/xijohnny/nserc_stats/blob/master/data.csv); Vanier public data
2023	N/A	331	55	Only award counts available
2024	N/A	337	54	Only award counts available
2025	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	No public access

Note: N/A = not available.

4.2. Persistent Non-Secular NSERC-CGRSD Selection Patterns Systematically Sidelining Brown Hindu Canadian Citizens at the University of Ottawa

Figure 1 presents a five-year pattern of non-secular and exclusionary disparities in NSERC-CGRSD doctoral scholarship decisions at the University of Ottawa, where Brown Hindu Canadian citizens appear consistently denied the academic space routinely granted to their peers. Public NSERC-CGRSD data from the University of Ottawa show that across five consecutive years, not a single Brown Hindu Canadian citizen received the award, despite applicants in this group holding multiple first-author research publications. In contrast, several selected recipients across white, Muslim, refugee, LGBTQ, and Black categories often had fewer publications, sometimes none or only collaborative authorship, yet were still awarded the scholarship [23].

A second imbalance emerges in the analysis, where the overwhelming majority of recipients are women and LGBTQ groups. This raises concerns about whether men who are equally lawful citizens of Canada and entitled to equal rights and equal opportunity are being judged fairly. In a country that publicly claims to uphold secularism, gender equality, linguistic equality, religious equality and non-discrimination, such skewed outcomes demand keen investigation. If men are consistently under-selected despite strong academic records, this pattern warrants investigation alongside the racial and religious disparities documented in this study.

In our investigation, **Figure 1** highlights the University of Ottawa as a central site where these discrepancies are most visible. Similar patterns have been observed at other Canadian universities, suggesting that the issue is not isolated but part of a broader systemic dynamic within Canadian academia. Although only five years of data are shown here, the consistency of these trends indicates that the exclusion of Hindu Canadian citizens and the gender imbalance in selections may extend beyond this timeframe. These findings underscore the need for meaningful policy reform at both the university and federal levels to ensure transparent, accountable, and genuinely equitable scholarship selection processes.

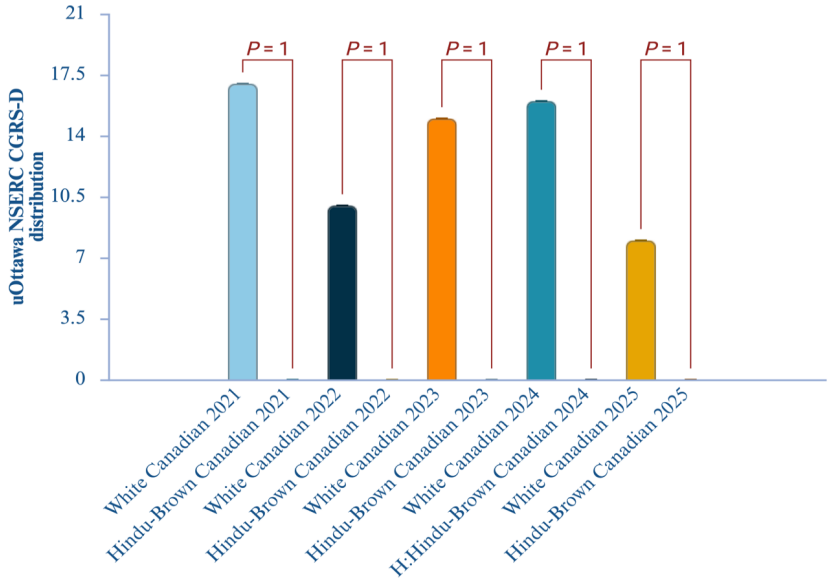

Figure 1. Discrepancies in NSERC-CGRS-D doctoral scholarship selections at the capital heart of Canada (University of Ottawa) over the past five years show continued underrepresentation of Brown Hindu Canadian citizens.

Note: A non-parametric one-way ANOVA (Kruskal–Wallis) with Dunn's multiple-comparison test found no significant differences between groups ($p \approx 0.43$).

4.3. Five-Year Pattern of Exclusionary NSERC-CGRSD Decisions at Memorial University of Newfoundland

In this study, **Figure 2** highlights the Memorial University of Newfoundland as a direct follower of the University of Ottawa's model, displaying similar discrepancies in NSERC-CGRSD scholarship distribution. Comparable patterns have been documented across several other Canadian universities, indicating that this issue is not an isolated anomaly but part of a broader systemic dynamic within Canadian academia. Although only five years of data are presented here, the consistency of these trends suggests that the exclusion of Hindu Canadian citizens and the biological gender imbalance in award recipients likely extends beyond this timeframe. Taken together, these findings point to the urgent need for meaningful policy reform at both the university and federal levels to ensure scholarship selection processes that are transparent, accountable, and genuinely equitable.

4.4. Five-Year Pattern of Discriminatory NSERC-CGRSD Decisions at the University of Guelph

In this speculation, **Figure 3** identifies the University of Guelph as yet another institution mirroring the University of Ottawa's approach, with comparable discrepancies appearing in its NSERC-CGRSD scholarship outcomes. Patterns consistent with those shown here have surfaced across multiple Canadian universities, indicating that these issues are not isolated incidents but part of a wider colonial structural trend within the secular national academic system in Canada. Although this analysis covers only a five-year window, the stability of these disparities suggests that the exclusion of Hindu Canadian citizens and the biological gender imbalance among award recipients (qualified men are marginalized) likely predates and extends beyond the period examined. Collectively, these results highlight the urgent need for substantive policy reform at both institutional and federal levels to ensure scholarship selection processes that are transparent, accountable, and genuinely equitable.

4.5. Five-Year Evidence of Structural Bias in NSERC-CGRSD Awards at McGill University

In our speculative analysis, **Figure 4** represents McGill University as yet another institution reflecting the same pattern first seen at the University of Ottawa. Although McGill publicly promotes itself as culturally diverse, the data tell a different story, showing similar gaps in NSERC-CGRSD scholarship outcomes. Comparable trends appear across sev-

eral Canadian universities, indicating that this is not a one-off problem but part of a wider colonial pattern within the secular academic system. While this study covers only five years, the consistency of the results suggests that the exclusion of Hindu Canadian citizens and the noticeable biological gender imbalance among recipients likely stretches beyond the period examined. These observations point to the need for serious policy changes at both institutional and federal levels to ensure scholarship decisions that are fair, transparent, and genuinely accessible to all qualified citizens.

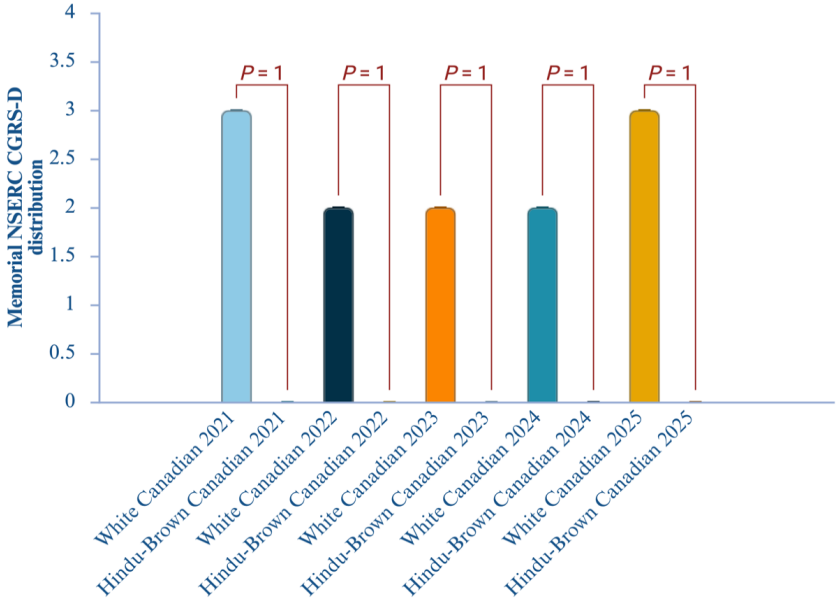

Figure 2. Discrepancies in NSERC-CGRS-D doctoral scholarship selections at the Atlantic heartbeat of Canada (Memorial University of Newfoundland) over the past five years show continued underrepresentation of Brown Hindu Canadian citizens.

Note: A non-parametric one-way ANOVA (Kruskal–Wallis) with Dunn's multiple-comparison test found no significant differences between groups ($p \approx 0.43$).

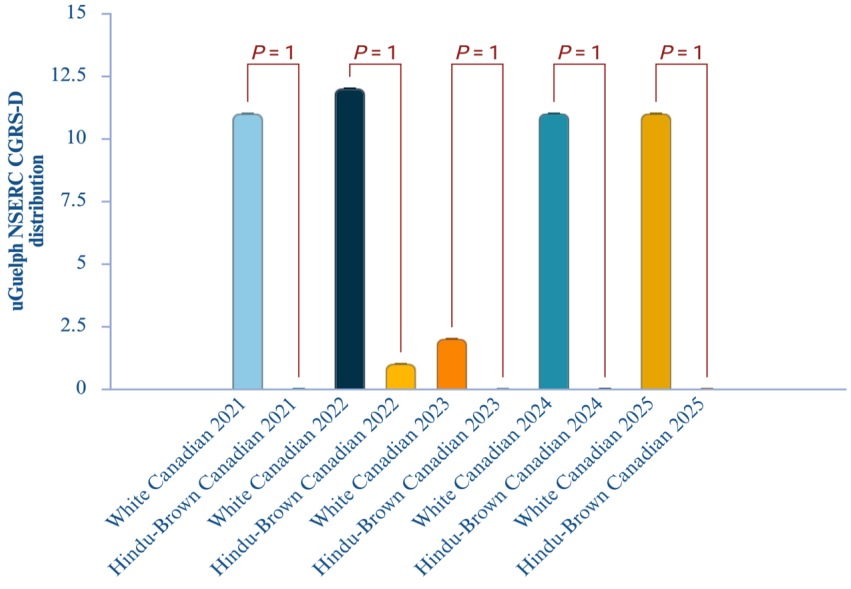

Figure 3. Discrepancies in NSERC-CGRS-D doctoral scholarship selections at the University of Guelph, Ontario's garden heart, over the past five years show continued underrepresentation of Brown Hindu Canadian citizens.

Note: A non-parametric one-way ANOVA (Kruskal–Wallis) with Dunn's multiple-comparison test found no significant differences between groups ($p \approx 0.43$).

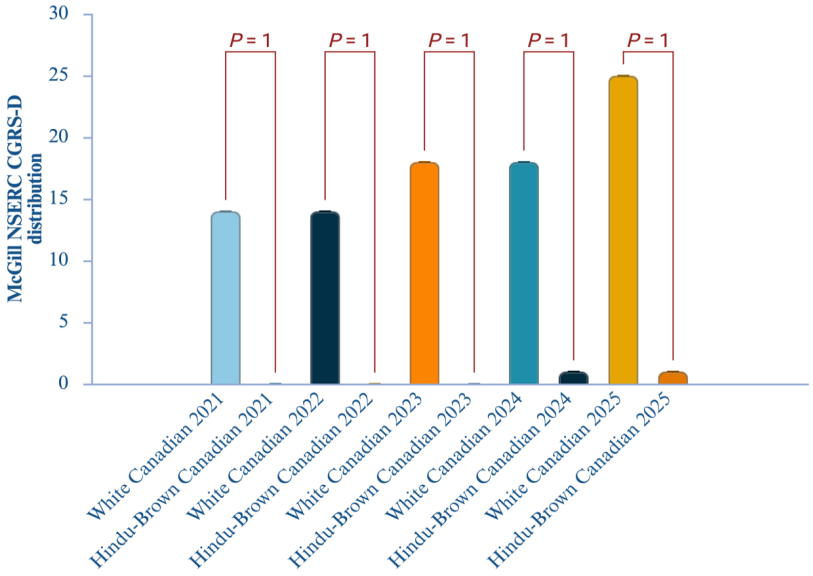

Figure 4. Discrepancies in NSERC-CGRS-D doctoral scholarship selections at McGill University, Quebec's cultural heart, over the past five years show continued underrepresentation of Brown Hindu Canadian citizens.

Note: A non-parametric one-way ANOVA (Kruskal–Wallis) with Dunn's multiple-comparison test found no significant differences between groups ($p \approx 0.43$).

4.6. Colonial Impact Assessment and Proposed Solutions for Canadian Academia

Figure 5 represents a proposed model to address colonial corruption operating against Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens in the NSERC-CGRSD selection process within Canadian academia. The model highlights that Hindu Canadian citizens contribute substantially to the Canadian economy through industries, labor, politics, immigration, academia, and international student participation. Therefore, Brown Hindu Canadian citizens with demonstrated leadership skills and Canadian research experience such as a mandatory minimum of two first-author journal publications in Canada must be properly screened before scholarship decisions are made. The same process must be implemented for other Canadian groups.

Figure 5. Overview of the proposed model for NSERC-CGRSD scholarship award distribution aimed at reducing systemic disparities linked to colonial corruption oppressing Hindu Canadian doctoral applicants.

The model further emphasizes that biological gender criteria must be applied through mandatory qualification-based evaluation, ensuring that men's rights are not marginalized in any Canadian university. As an illustrative proportional-representation scenario, if NSERC-CGRSD offers 100 seats, the model proposes that 30% could be allocated to qualified Hindu Canadian citizens to counter systemic exclusion linked to colonial-era corruption. NSERC-CGRSD-EDI should include in their action plan to promote Brown South Asian Hindu Canadians and maintain men's equal rights.

This framework could help maintain balanced scholarship distribution among Indigenous groups, Anglo-Franco Canadian groups, Chinese Canadian groups, and others. The same model may be applied in provincial scholarship programs, internal university-based awards and foundation-based scholarships (e.g., Trudeau Foundation). The model may also be adapted for NSERC Discovery Grants, where journal publication or patent records would serve as required indicators of research merit.

5. Discussion

Figures 1–4 illustrate consistent discrepancies in federal NSERC-CGRSD doctoral scholarship selections across four Canadian institutions over a five-year period. **Figure 1** (University of Ottawa), **Figure 2** (Memorial University of Newfoundland), **Figure 3** (University of Guelph), and **Figure 4** (McGill University) each show persistent patterns of underrepresentation affecting Brown Hindu Canadian citizens. A similar pattern has been observed at several other Canadian universities, including Université Laval, the University of Toronto, Western University, the University of British Columbia, Université de Montréal, and the Université du Québec network[20,23]. Although these institutions operate within distinct regional and administrative contexts, the emergence of comparable trends across geographically distant universities indicates that the issue extends beyond isolated cases and may reflect broader systemic factors within Canadian academia.

These observed patterns align with reports from students who state that individuals raising concerns about scholarship-related irregularities may experience academic pressure during their PhD coursework. Many ambitious Hindu men who are Canadian citizens describe encountering similar forms of systematic conflict, suggesting a perceived link between speaking out and subsequent academic challenges[23]. The University of Ottawa is frequently viewed as a political hub, and some students argue that comparable dynamics occur across other Canadian universities, where networks of influential academics are perceived to shape scholarship outcomes in ways they view as inequitable.

Additional concerns focus on how scholarship distribution is perceived to disproportionately prioritize certain applicant categories, including women, refugees, designated equity groups, and various international or white applicants. In contrast, Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens report feeling marginalized within these processes. Major national programs such as the Trudeau doctoral scholarship[22], NSERC-CGRSD[20], provincial funding mechanisms, STEMM-related awards, and internal university scholarships are described by some students as reflecting similar patterns of limited access for this demographic group. Similar studies have shown that STEMM fields need culturally diverse talent without prioritizing any specific community[6,46–48].

Regional dynamics appear to further influence outcomes. In Ottawa, students describe institutional networks that may not consistently align scholarship decisions with research experience or proposal quality. In Quebec, linguistic preference is frequently cited as a dominant factor, despite Canada's bilingual framework. Brown Hindu Canadian citizens typically speak English, and some report that differences in mother tongue or visible minorities may contribute to their exclusion from scholarship consideration[23].

Similar concerns have been raised at the University of Guelph and Memorial University, where students perceive consistent preference for certain demographic, linguistic, or religious groups. As a result, many Brown Hindu Canadian men report limited opportunities to secure federal doctoral scholarships despite strong research backgrounds. They attribute these barriers to perceived prioritization based on language (Anglo and Franco), gender, designated equity categories, or religious identity.

Some Hindu Canadian citizens also describe a comparative disparity in the evaluation process. According to these accounts, Hindu men must repeatedly prove their expertise to be considered for scholarships, while applicants

from other demographic groups are perceived to face fewer verification requirements. These perceptions contribute to a broader sense of systematic conflict and unequal treatment within the doctoral funding landscape.

Advocates argue that Hindu Canadian citizens should be included as equal participants in academic and national opportunities, rather than being viewed primarily through political or demographic lenses. They emphasize that equitable access and equal rights for men are essential components of a fair academic system. Scholarship distribution, they contend, should be based on research experience, publication record, and the quality of the research proposal, rather than demographic, linguistic, or religious characteristics. Such an approach is viewed as necessary for fostering a more inclusive, transparent, and genuinely secular academic environment. Similar studies in New Zealand show that Pasifika people are underrepresented in university teaching roles, especially in senior positions. Their low numbers are directly linked to systemic barriers, limited support, and fewer opportunities. Strong and fair policies are needed to address this gap and promote employment equity in academia [49].

Figure 5 builds on these findings by presenting a proposed model that responds directly to the patterns shown in **Figures 1–4**. The model suggests that a structured, proportional-representation approach illustrated through a 30% allocation for qualified Hindu Canadian citizens could help counter the repeated exclusion observed across multiple universities. It emphasizes fair screening based on leadership, Canadian research experience, and publication record as a way to reduce systemic conflict and address long-standing colonial-linked barriers.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of NSERC CGRSD doctoral scholarship outcomes across four Canadian universities reveals a consistent pattern of underrepresentation affecting Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens over a five-year period. This trend appears at the University of Ottawa, Memorial University of Newfoundland, the University of Guelph, and McGill University, indicating that the issue is not isolated to a single institution but may reflect broader systemic challenges in national scholarship evaluation and policy-making.

In parallel, several applicants have informally raised concerns about the transparency of internal university nomination processes for federal scholarships. Some applicants with Hindu-sounding names reported being wiped out at the institutional stage without receiving meaningful feedback. When they sought clarification, they were told only that "*the process is competitive*," an explanation they felt was insufficient—particularly because they perceived that peers with names commonly associated with white, Christian, or Muslim backgrounds did not appear to encounter similar patterns of rejection or limited communication.

While these applicants are self-reported and may partly reflect resource constraints within institutions, they align with the statistical patterns observed in award outcomes. Together, they underscore the need for greater transparency, clearer communication, and more consistent guidance in institutional triage and nomination procedures. They also highlight the importance of strengthening fairness, accountability, and equity in both university-level and national-level scholarship processes.

The continued absence of Brown South Asian Hindu Canadian citizens from scholarship results, even when they have strong research backgrounds, raises questions about how evaluation rules are applied. Students point to the influence of networks, language preferences, and demographic priorities. These observations align with broader critiques that colonial racial hierarchies, though historically rooted, may continue to shape institutional structures and decision-making processes in the 21st century. These patterns may unintentionally exclude certain groups, including Hindu

Canadian men, and contribute to a wider sense of conflict within Canadian academia.

Advocates argue that men's empowerment, particularly for those who feel structurally excluded, is an essential component of a fair academic system. They emphasize that Hindu Canadian men should be recognized as equal participants in academic and national opportunities, rather than being viewed primarily through political or demographic categories. Ensuring equitable access for all applicants is critical for maintaining trust in federal funding systems and upholding principles of fairness.

Canada has laws that protect the religious rights of Hindu Canadian citizens, but an important question remains: will these protections be applied consistently across universities to address differences in scholarship results and academic

hiring? Turning legal rights into real, everyday practice is essential for reducing inequality and strengthening confidence in academic institutions[23,24].

Figure 5 offers a model that responds to these findings. It proposes a proportional-representation approach shown through a 30% allocation for qualified Hindu Canadian citizens and calls for proper screening based on leadership, Canadian research experience, and Canadian publication record. The model is presented as a practical way to reduce long-standing barriers, limit systemic conflict, and create a more balanced and transparent scholarship system.

A scholarship process that focuses on merit, research experience, publications, and proposal quality rather than identity-based factors is seen as necessary for building a more inclusive, open, and secular academic environment. Continued review of selection practices, clearer evaluation rules, and stronger accountability will be important for ensuring that all Canadian citizens have fair access to doctoral scholarship opportunities.

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Informed Consent Statement

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Data Availability Statement

All data supporting the findings of this study are available in NSERC-CGRSD (Alexander Graham Bell) Federal Funding Database of Canada (https://nserc-crsng.canada.ca/en/awards-database).

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Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest associated with this study.

AI Use Statement

AI was solely used for language editing.

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