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EAST INDIANS IN CANADA: ADJUSTMENT

**THE SECOND GENERATION:
CULTURE AND THE EAST
INDIAN COMMUNITY IN
NOVA SCOTIA**

Sukhdev Singh Sandhu

**Ethnic
Heritage
Series**

Volume II

Indian sub-continent. The gap widens to include different patterns and environments in which East Indians have lived of their lives.

find out how East Indians in Canada are conceptualizing and socio-cultural matters while interacting with their environment provides the subject matter of the study. East Indians may face difficulties in accepting social changes and be less likely to change in their children conforming to Canadian culture. Indians may be suffering from helplessness, as they incontinently try to hold their family together by common expectations of their children. It could affect their lives, self-image and lead to emotional and unhealthy social situations. The children's lack of conformity and adherence to Indian values and social customs may be perceived as stressful by their parents. The purpose of this study is to explore the adjustment problems East Indian parents are confronted with in the Halifax and Dartmouth area, resulting from the considerable profound effects of the host environment of their children.

Topics included are:

Marriage
Family relationships
Economic conditions

Background on Canadians of East Indian Origin

A basic introduction to the background of East Indians living in the Halifax and Dartmouth area is necessary to provide insight into the origin, family, social composition and moral and ethical values and the role they play in the adjustment to a new society.

India is a sub-continent and its populace represents three racial groups — Caucasian, Mongoloid and the ancient Dravidian. Their racial diversity within India is reflective of their distinct racial entity ranging from Nordic fairness to the Nubian blackness of the south. The oriental features of the east predominate. The Indian population also represents intermixtures of different racial groups with other variations also present. Further racial variation was derived from ancient Greek, Russian, recent English, French, Dutch and Portuguese. The Arab and Turkish invasions of the past have provided the Indian population with even more variation.

India is a secular state (multicultural society) and attempts to provide equal opportunities, satisfaction of needs, access to power and influence for those who are eligible and capable irrespective of age, sex, creed, caste, color or racial background. All major known religions of the world exist in India. The Indian population adheres predominantly to Hinduism (80% are Hindus), with significantly large minorities including Moslems, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and other small religious sects and primitive tribes.

There are numerous languages (approximately fifteen major languages) and dialects in India with their own script and grammatical form. Each province in India has its own language representing its own literature, philosophy, idioms and cultural heritage. English and Hindi are the two official languages of India and are used as a medium of instruction in some schools and Universities in the larger cities of the country. However, it would be misleading to suggest that the majority of Indians use either Hindi or English; rather there is a tendency for the local language to dominate.

Indians are also internally diversified including dietary habits, dress, entertainment, rituals, ceremonies and even personality traits. This is further elaborated upon by Subramaniam (1976)

All Indians are not vegetarians or wear Sarees or have a dot on their forehead or eat curry.

Indian Family

The family is the pivot around which the entire social structure rests. The family provides an individual with identity pertaining to name, social class, caste or clan. The family also maintains an individual's religious, historical and provincial identity. According to Subramaniam (1976);

In an Indian name one can usually tell the home town, province, religion and linguistic affiliation of the individual.

An individual is also provided by the family with social, psychological and emotional security associated with the imposition of duties and obligations upon the individual.

The large patriarchal system (extended family system) is the basis of the relationship which keeps grandparents, uncles, cousins, etc., increasingly intimate emotionally and in residence. In rural areas most live under the same roof and eat from the same kitchen. To a lesser extent this is true in urban areas as well. The average Indian child is exposed on an intimate and primary basis to all age groups and to both sexes. Indian society is adult-oriented with the elderly having a special place in the family.

Age, education, maturity and experience are the crucial factors influencing influence, power and rights in the family. This background has a profound effect on East Indian children and they tend to be docile, at least initially, after their immigration to Canada. Duty towards parents is supposed to be the primary responsibility dominating all other relationships including marriage (in contrast to the West). Conformity to familial obligations garner a high rating in Indian culture. Peer-group relationships are placed below family relationships.

Unlike Canada, there are arranged marriages in India (mostly pre-arranged) and as a consequence of this almost everybody is married. Girls enjoy lesser freedom than boys. In a freer society dating and intermingling with the opposite sex is quite frequent. Indian teenagers seem to be under psychological and emotional strain because of the repression imposed upon them by their families.

Another feature of Indian society, although not unique to East India but unfamiliar to North Americans, is the dowry system. This refers to the practice of a girl's parents providing money and property (gold, expensive clothing, furniture, etc.) to the parents of the newly acquired husband. This dowry is intended to assist the bride and her husband. The amount of dowry often is influenced

by the wealth of the girl's family. Acceptance of the dowry is not universal, but the custom tends to be widespread.

Certain values have a high level of significance in East Indian family life. Parents tend to induce or encourage their children to place great importance upon care for the aged, acquisition of education and adherence to strict standards of morality.

Care for the aged is the most important value in family relationships. The aged, parents, grandparents, etc., are not segregated from the rest of their family members, instead they enjoy considerable respect and are conscientiously looked after by their family members. They in return provide counselling and advice in family affairs. It is humiliating for a person to place his parents or grandparents in a retirement home. When the family provides children with economic and emotional security, they are expected to return to serve their parents and other older people in the family first and, only after this, themselves.

Education

Education has traditionally been highly desirable and regarded as the greatest investment and means of security. It is a popular saying in India that "education is a valuable possession which nobody can steal or take away". It is looked upon as the most effective way of preparing people for competition, for finding careers and for one's self-worth, and for reaching genuine independence associated with social status. It is reasonable to assume that children of educated families will receive higher education. Leaving school prematurely results in a loss of respect from the family as well as a loss in social status. It is presumably rare to see Indian children drop out of school. Children are expected to respond to the pressures exerted by their parents to meet the school systems' objectives. In contrast to Canada, where girls who become married while studying tend to complete their studies, withdrawal from University may occur among East Indian girls who have opportunities to marry during their education.

Morality

The East Indian conception of sexual morality and personal ethics is considered to be the most important asset an individual can possess to maintain individual identity, gain social status and preserve family prestige. Even greater pressure is exerted upon girls to live up to these ideals.

East Indian in Canada:

East Indians residing in Canada are not directly from India; they are descendants from East Indians who resettled some generations ago from East Africa and South Africa including Kenya, Tanzania, Malaysia, Fiji, Mauritius, Britain and the United States. Their exposure to other environments make them quite dissimilar in their behavioral characteristics to Indians who immigrated directly from India. Nevertheless, Indians share common characteristics, values, traditions and cultural traits and a historical experience, ecological, social, psychological and cultural adaptations over the centuries. Therefore, they share common difficulties of acceptance and their interaction with the host society is somewhat similar to that of other highly visible groups such as Orientals and Blacks. Many of the European immigrants are not easily distinguished from other Canadians and are totally assimilated. It has been noted that East Indians, as a minority, encounter different problems than other minority groups of foreign origin, who are not visibly different from white Canadians. "Their assimilation goes through the same phases as other ethnic groups; but Indians have homeland diversities which are not always understood by the host society" (Gosh, 1978). They bring with them a different culture, different religious beliefs and a different political philosophy, as well as different social values and attitudes. Besides their obvious physical differences, their different life style is not always appreciated by the host society.

The migration of East Indians is not as recent a development in Canada as many people would assume. The presence of their settlements in Canada has been known since 1870 (Subramaniam, 1976). They first migrated to British Columbia. These immigrants introduced new features and patterns into the settlement there. In 1905, 5,000 people of Indian origin came to British Columbia in a period of three years, from 1905-1908; almost all were Sikhs. There are about 150,000 people of East Indian origin dwelling in Canada at the present time. Nearly a century of interaction between immigrants of Indian origin and Canadians has taken place and very little is known about their adjustment to Canadian life, the expectations of the constraints under which they must labour" (Ghani, 1977, P.96). The literature available on them is sparse and scattered.

In the early 1960's the necessity of the expansion of Canadian universities and Universities made it necessary to import teachers and

professors. Some of them came from India. Immigrant professionals from India helped to meet the shortage of doctors, dentists, engineers, lawyers, etc., experienced by the rapidly growing Canadian population and its changing needs.

Before 1967 priority was given to immigrants from the U.S.A. and European countries. In 1967, new regulations were passed to establish equal access from all countries of the world. This increased the East Indian population in Canada; however, few settled in the Halifax and Dartmouth area. Some of the new arrivals to these cities were unskilled while others were well educated individuals who could not find jobs in their appropriate occupations. These people helped to form a large pool of manual labour in these cities.

Most East Indian immigration to the Halifax and Dartmouth area occurred between 1960-1969, taking advantage of the great demand for highly skilled technical and professional personnel that existed at that time. Between 1961 and 1966, there were about 100 families residing in the Halifax and Dartmouth area. Then, in 1967-1968, there was a substantial increase in the numbers from 100 to about 155 families with an average of one child. Since the early seventies, the rate of growth of the East Indian immigration has decreased sharply. Due to the relocation from other areas within Canada, the actual numbers however, have tended to increase. According to the "Directory — Year Book, 1979" there are 580 heads of households residing in the Halifax and Dartmouth area. Furthermore, the composition of these immigrants who continue to arrive has changed somewhat from the sixties.

At the present time, East Indians in the Halifax and Dartmouth area are extending an already active participation in religious activities. A new Sikh Temple was opened in 1978 which has been serving as a religious and community center and, moreover, a meeting place for various community activities. This serves as a unifying force and encourages solidarity.

East Indians in the Halifax and Dartmouth area have been involved in cultural and recreational activities through their membership in the "Indo-Canadian Association of Nova Scotia" which has enhanced feelings of solidarity and preservation of their culture. This activity has expanded to the national level through affiliation with the "National Association of Canadians of Origins in India" (NACOI).

It is with a consciousness of these social, economical and cultural realities that the study attempts to obtain a cross section of

allenges of career fulfillment and family life as a
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adian Association of Nova Scotia.

Method

The information upon which the findings, conclusions and impressions are based was obtained by means of a questionnaire. The study focuses on perceptions of East Indian parents with regard to adjustment of their children in Canadian society. Three areas considered particularly pertinent to adjustment were selected: Marriage, Family Relationships, and Economic Conditions.

The questionnaire was constructed so that items basically stated an opinion to which the respondents had a choice to indicate if they strongly agreed, agreed, considered unimportant, strongly disagreed or found not applicable.

Marriage was dealt with in the first section and twelve items were designed to elicit philosophical opinions on practices and customs. The second part dealt with Family Relationships. These were more personal in nature and asked people to indicate frankly their position in regard to the quality of their present life as a family as well as their expectations for future years. An attempt was made to use items that would gain opinions on the survival of those fundamental cultural values described in the introduction. Eleven items were used in this section.

It is believed that the presence or absence of feelings concerning economic success, both in the present and the future outlook of offspring, strongly affects an immigrant's sense of adjustment. With this in mind, the third section of the questionnaire contained five questions exploring the extent to which economic expectations have been fulfilled.

The sample group was chosen from a current directory (Indo-Canadian Association of Nova Scotia 1979) of East Indian residents in the Halifax and Dartmouth area. Of the five hundred and eighty heads of households listed in this directory, one hundred and fifty names were randomly selected. In the first week of May 1980, a questionnaire and covering letter (see Appendices A & B) as well as a stamped self-addressed envelope were mailed to each of these heads of households. From these questionnaires seventy usable responses were obtained.

In order to interpret better the responses an information page was attached (see Appendix D). Respondents were asked to indicate age range, length of Canadian residency, family size and ages, level of education and approximate family income.

The numbers responding to each choice of each particular item were tabulated and later expressed in percentages. These percentages (rounded to the nearest whole number) appear in Tables I, II, III (see Appendix C). The conclusions, discussions and impressions given in the article are based on the summary of these tables.

Conclusions and Discu

Marriage

The responses elicited from the data represent exhibit trends of both traditional and contemporary, relatively strong adherence towards marriage in India.

In item one, sixty four percent of the people agreed or agreed with the idea that marriage should be within one's own race. Twenty-six percent of the people did not agree with the statement to any particular race and their response was under the grouping of "liberalized ideas". Only one person indicated their strong disagreement with the statement. This indicates the East Indians' inclination and preference for marriage within their own race. A number of assumptions and interpretations have been made to explain the preference of East Indians in the Halifax and Dartmouth areas for marriage within their own culture. Marriage is one of the significant factors in their culture and a determining factor of their preferences for their own traditions. They still consider marriage as a basis for their familial relations while living in a new environment. They feel that it fits unobtrusively into their new environment. In a multicultural society. The fact that the members of the community prefer to marry persons from their own race or count on the likelihood that their own culture will be preserved by marrying within the same race tends to signify a strong identification with their own community and traditions. The ties associated with their community groups in the Dartmouth area seem to accept the traditions of getting married within their own race as being a well established and well known practice in India. It's transmission from one generation to another has led to a negligible occurrence of anxiety connected with marriage of success. It is also possible that their perception of marriage is based on the negative predisposition towards marriage practices in Canada. Marriage within their own race tends to facilitate and solidify relationships because of shared culture, language and life style.

Contrary to the general practices in India throughout the census, East India people living in this area (11%) strongly agreed in item two, with the idea that marriages should be arranged only with parental consent. One fourth (25%) of the sampled population strongly agreed with the continuation of this practice. A significant number (43%) showed no particular respect for this practice and only one percent did not accept at all the notion of parental choice in deciding and choosing life partners for their children. Combining item two we can say the majority (64%) found little value in parental interference with their children's choices with regard to marriage. Those people who were in favour may find the change in their status anxiety provoking. They seem to have unquestioningly accepted the limits and boundaries of parent-child relationships transmitted to them through generational transplantation of values. Agreement with item 2, provides them with some control to supervise and direct their children. Their responses indicating agreement seem to be based on a certain assumption that children's judgement and decision making are of little value compared to their parents abilities. The underlying idea is that adults tend to be more mature and can make wiser decisions on behalf of their children. East Indian parents who displayed liberal ideas and contemporary trends, seem to have all inclusive responsibility and power to their children. They seem to have resigned themselves to the idea that at the time of marriage children are assumed to be adults and mature enough to make decisions of their own volition.

One subject noted (some subjects commented on some items contained in the questionnaire):

Their children seem to be more mature and much freer in their behavior and way of talking and making important decisions in their lives. I prefer the Canadian way of behavior for this country; their children need it because they are to live here.

There seems to be a considerable change in the upbringing of children which is so incompatible with the East Indian immigrant's own experience as a child and/or as a parent in India.

As has been discussed in item 2 most of the respondents appeared reluctant to accept the custom of arranged marriage for their children. Nevertheless, in item 5, parental approval of a marriage was considered a crucial point (49% agree and 13% strongly agree). However twenty-three percent showed indifference towards parental approval and fifteen percent were totally in disagreement with parental approval. The underlying assumption here may be that parental approval will ensure security and determine whether or not the

decision taken by the children is carefully thought out. The intention behind approval may be to minimize the possibility of some adverse or harmful results that could occur in their future married life. This way, parental approval must be a feasible action by parents to serve as a double check to assure success of a marriage. One subject noted: "this approval can be a very pleasant affair between parents and children". On the other hand there is a minority (15%) for whom parental approval seems to be an unnecessary imposition in marriage affairs. Their complete acceptance of the freedom to allow children to decide their own marriage partners does not seem to be any different from those practices prevalent in Canada. This idea, however, can be generalized to include some Canadian parents who may wish to seek leeway to ensure and approve their children's marriages. The idea represented in their responses of voluntary mate selection is not in fact new. It may long have been realized as the ideal pattern. In both the ideal and practice, voluntary mate selection, subject to parental approval, is widespread in India.

Item 8 seems to reflect a feeling by people that they are helpless in influencing their children in marital affairs. A large number, fifty-seven percent, agreed and twenty-two percent strongly agreed, that there are some anticipated problems of having their decisions rejected by their children. They have difficulty in seeing this change in their children's attitudes as they are inconsistent with their own traditional standards. Agreement, negotiations and communications seem to take precedence over control exerting practices of the past. It may not be an uncommon incident for children being brought up in Canadian society to reject the possibility of a marriage initiated or imposed by their parents. It is also possible that a marriage without family backing will no longer be considered an empty one. It is likely that parents may have to find the traditional ideal modified as an alternative to conform to a new ideal. These findings imply that children of East Indian parents will be subject to lesser familial obligations than their counterparts in India. East Indian parents may no longer be able to maintain authority over their children. This fear seems to stem from East Indian children's daily interaction with Canadian children. There is a possibility that more individualized tendencies of the nuclear family will set in and if not understood appropriately will disrupt the parent-child relationships. Parents exaggerated fear and suspicion in respect to their children's behavior and attitude toward authority and freedom may aggravate difficulties for parents and retard the process of adjustment. However, ten percent of the respondents did not anticipate

giving difficulties. Eleven percent of the people did not seem to consider it an important factor in the course of adjustment to Canadian society. Since some people presumably had no children, would not report any concern about influences in the marriages of their children. Others had very young children and it was too early to speculate. The responses lead to the assumption that some may be unable to comprehend the changing needs of children and therefore did not perceive any problems.

The third item of this section was included in the questionnaire that girls experience greater pressure than boys, as has been indicated in the discussion of the Indian family background. The results seem to reinforce this belief as forty-one percent of the respondents are in agreement with the item, with thirteen percent in disagreement. Twenty-seven percent do not seem to anticipate extraordinary difficulties. Nineteen percent of the people strongly disagreed with the statement that girls who become involved with western boys should be discouraged by their families. The results suggest that for the majority of people living in this area, girls require different or better treatment living in Canada than their counterparts in India. One subject noted: "I agree if my boy is out of race, but in the case of a girl, no". Girls are traditionally considered to be submissive and docile. Conformity, devoid of the right to make decisions and accepting unquestioningly the traditional female role as an adjunct to the husband. There was a change in the minds of parents that girls will no longer adapt to traditional values (dependence and conformity). There may be a concern if a girl goes out with western boys, it would be a social status. It is interesting to note that East Indian parents do not approve of their children's involvement, when it comes to dating and intermingling, with the opposite sex at the age of 18. For an East Indian accepting the traditional cultural norms on interracial dating, the experience of having a daughter dating standards would be one of the hardest experiences to be faced. This also implies that East Indian parents tend to maintain traditional values in a completely different environment. However, 41 percent of the people strongly disagreed while twenty-seven percent found the item unimportant. Seemingly they feel they are pressuring their daughters in such a way as to make them more receptive to Canadian culture. Perhaps, they seek to limit exposure to the Indian culture. Some parents are committed to modifying their life-style which could be considered as possessing liberal ideals in order to adapt to the new situation.

The responses to item 4 seem to confirm the traditional outlook expressed earlier and shakes the foundations of respect upon generational precedence (how young boys and girls should be brought together). The data showed trends both toward change and conformity. Thirty-seven percent agreed with the idea that love before marriage is not necessary, although only eleven percent strongly agreed with that. Thirty-one percent gave progressive or liberal responses indicating that love should exist before marriage. Twenty-one percent of the people did not indicate that they consider love a crucial factor in determining a marital choice. It seems to be a general belief held by 48% that love is not a prerequisite for marriage. This appears to generate some conflicts between young children and their parents. Some parents are unaffected by change in their life because of migratory consequences. Their lack of experience along these lines and an estimated depreciation because of their social and cultural pattern seem to persist in Canadian society where they still seem to find value in suppression of love affairs before marriage, where their children may feel "straight-jacketed". A number (31% strongly disagree and 21% unimportant) which is very close to the number not considering love as acceptable as a preparatory basis, believe that there should be a change in the custom allowing unmarried people to find out about their partners before the wedding. They do not seem to anticipate any difficulties. Disallowing love before marriage may create an atmosphere of suspicion both for children as well as parents.

A vast majority in item 7 (56% agree and 22% strongly agree) of the people seem to have perceived their children's attitude and personal and public behavior as potential risks of premarital activities. Only fifteen percent showed strong disagreement with this item. Seven percent of the people found this item unimportant which implies that they did not find the Canadian style of life a threat to their well being and prestige. Either they have already accepted the philosophy of premarital practices or may not have children to ponder on the matter at the present time. A heavy trend in favour of considering premarital relationship as a risk may be based on the fear that either children would not accept arranged marriages or walk out of arranged marriages before they are consummated. East Indian parents' fear seems to be legitimate in that their children would like to eat Canadian food, speak Canadian language, dress like Canadians and attend schools and Universities for education. They may also be worried because their children have more outlet for sociability with non-Indians and tend to get involved in social activities with their

Canadians. However, there is a likelihood that parents find lives inept and bewildered in their capacity to provide the mental input at homes compared to the outside surroundings where their children spend the majority of their time.

Of the people in item 11, (40% agree and 10% strongly agree) their children were dissatisfied with the way the East Indian maintain traditional marriage values. On the other hand 80 percent found it difficult to accept that Indian values pertaining marriage would be of any help in their children's adjustment to Canadian life. Thirty-nine percent strongly disagreed with the statement that Indian adolescents are generally unhappy and content with the maintaining of traditional Indian values by parents with reference to children's marriages. Eleven percent considered this item unimportant. East Indians are predominantly professional people in the Halifax and Dartmouth area and can provide better economic support for their children. They may suppose they protect their children from the corrupting influences of the changing environment.

Contrary to the findings discussed earlier about East Indian parents tending to value practices embodied in Indian culture pertaining to marriage practice, the results given in item 9, clearly indicate that East Indian parents have future oriented aspirations regarding the adjustment of their children. A substantial majority displayed a willingness, beyond their cultural orientations, to encourage their children by encouraging their children to invite their friends home. It is contradictory with what they have indicated in item 10, i.e. not allowing their daughters to intermingle with Canadian boys. Twenty percent showed no special concern for this issue and a negligible minority (8% including agree and strongly agree) found little value in it. Parents may want their children to be on a secondary level. They may find it useful for their children to discuss their work and other general concerns with Canadians. But, as has been indicated earlier, they are not prepared to involve Canadian children in establishing relationships thus beyond their primary level.

The results derived from item 12 indicate similar outcomes. A majority of the people (47% agree and 15% strongly agree) agreed with the idea that Indian adolescents should be permitted to mix with non-Indians without supervision. Fifteen percent considered this item unimportant and twenty-three percent strongly disagreed. The results shown in items 9 and 12 are inconsistent with the outcomes shown in some other items referred to above. East

Indian parents seem to have allegedly contradicted themselves. On the one hand they do not encourage their children to intermingle with Canadians but on the other hand they permit their children to intermingle with Canadians socially (quite surprisingly) without supervision. This information was partly due to some items eliciting similar information. Some respondents seem to have lost track of their ideas. However, it also reflects some mixed feelings, East Indian parents have about both cultures in special reference to adjustment in a new society.

The most apprehension expressed in response is towards the dowry system as seen in item 6. Eight percent strongly rejected the dowry as a prerequisite in choosing a life partner. The feelings expressed can be better understood if we remember that the dowry was initiated in primitive Indian society where the intention was to help the daughter financially or materially, or to give her a good start in case the help was needed. Later on it became a fashion that perpetuated without having any connection with the original purpose. East Indians seem to have found the dowry as an unnecessary burden being carried out by people through centuries. According to this study, they do not seem to be prepared to keep the practice of the dowry. This seems to be a considerable departure from what is in fact a well accepted system. Their attitude may be influenced by the Canadian society which frowns upon formal dowry. People are well educated and may be aware of the inherent weaknesses of this system.

East Indian parents have basically discarded the importance of the dowry system. In item 10, fifty-seven percent of the people would like to eliminate the practice of dowry if the East Indian community did not exert pressure on them. The results given in item 6 and 10 clearly indicated the dowry has become outdated and shares no relevance with the marriage system. However, ten percent of the people showed their concerns about societal disapproval. Their strong support for retention indicates that they scorn the dowry but they practice it because of the fear of being looked down upon by their society. Six percent agreed that the dowry is a socially imposed burden on them. Twenty-seven percent considered it of little importance. It should be noted that the parents' strong rejection of the dowry does not mean that East Indians do not practice it; their responses may just be based on assumptions and ideals which they think they ought to follow. It is interesting to note that in India nobody publicly supports the dowry but in actual practice most people practice it, thus it remains a big problem to be solved in India.

Family Relationships

The degree of change required in family relationships, cultural orientations, social relations and patterns, could be regarded as one of the most critical dimensions influencing the potential ease or difficulty of adjustment to immigrant circumstances. The degree of attachment East Indians feel to their society of origin as reflected in this study confirms that they do not want to become "instant Canadians". They seem to lack the support of social and geographical familiarity of long term relationships and values which were imbedded in them while growing up. They may have mixed feelings about their move. They may be excited with new stimuli and opportunities but are also fearful of the unknown.

The responses to item one (13 percent strongly agree and twenty-two percent agree) indicates that they do not sustain similar links with their children in Canada as they would have in India. This may be because East Indian children are in contact with the Indian environment at home, and their parents interaction with other community members seems to have some effect. Children may also internalize Indian culture through living situations while dealing with their parents. There are presumably many changes occurring back in India due to changing needs. People from modern India are constantly modifying their relationships with their children. East Indian parents attachment to India and the new Canadian culture makes it imperative for them to modify their behavioral patterns for immediate ideal living. Therefore, East Indians may not find it difficult to establish relations demanded by the time and new situation. Nevertheless, results given in Item one do not seem to be consistent with results given in the following items where parents have made it explicit, through their responses, that the direct influence of western culture, in which they live, has made it more difficult to discipline their children. In this item, another group representing 35 percent experienced inherent difficulties emerging out of their children's exposure to conflicting values which, according to them, are bound to have some effect on East Indians. They may also be forgetting the rapid changes that are underway in India which may have evolved into modified relationships or those somewhat different from their traditionally established values. They may still expect their children to be uncritical to parental authority and to conform to the values that form the basis of the extended family in

India. It could also be on account of their negative experience with the host culture. Their favourable responses seem also to be determined by the degree of maintenance or severance of ties to family and friends left behind.

Item Two unveils an underlying fear East Indian parents experience in socializing their children. Forty-five percent agreed and fifteen percent strongly agreed to the idea that East Indians find it difficult to discipline their children. Physical punishment which was frequently used in India, both at home and in schools, still seems an effective means of discipline for East Indians and they consider it necessary for rearing their children. There seems to be a considerable change in the upbringing of children which is so incompatible with the East Indians immigrants own experiences. East Indians may feel unable to convince their children to accept Indian culture as transplanted from India. Children's independent thinking and desire for more freedom than their parents can comfortably provide seems to be increasingly a problem for East Indian parents. Children are also exposed to television and other media, and may become aware of independence at an early age and start questioning their parents standards.

It could be expected that the degree of segregation between East Indians and their hosts will, at least partly, depend on the cultural differences between them. These cultural facts are bound to have effects on both newcomers and the hosts. In Item Three, the majority (61%) agreed and sixteen percent strongly agreed that Canadian culture encourages children to be more rebellious to parental authority than in India. In some instances when the civilization and culture of the receiving country does not resemble that of the native land from which the immigrants have come, they are less likely to mingle with its citizens and instead form small communities. In the case of East Indians, their country and culture differ decidedly from that of Canada and its people. There seems to be a strong tendency for Indians to cluster in little communities of their own nationality and to live more or less a separate existence from Canadians. It is reasonable to assume that East Indians may attribute some of the problems with regard to socialization of their children to Canadian culture thinking that Canadian culture encourages their children to be more "rebellious". Canadian culture presumably encourages people living in Canada to adopt household chores, ethical codes, behavioral pattern and belief systems which are different from Indian culture. East Indian parents may find it difficult to adjust to this change as they have different expectations, relations and role de-

mands from their Canadian counterparts. Children's independent habits of thinking and doing things may make it harder for their parents to accept. In this item "rebelliousness" has a negative connotation and is perceived as a threat to parental authority. Also, it must be remembered that what may be considered as rebellious by an East Indian may be considered as quite acceptable behavior to a Canadian parent.

A significant majority (49% agree and 13% strongly agree) in Item Four that their children will not realize the responsibility for their brothers and sisters after being brought up in Canada. Indian people living in rural settings commonly are familiar with the joint family where its members sleep under the same roof and eat from the same kitchen. There is a very close interdependence among family members as a result of the proximity and emotional intimacy of their living arrangements. Thus, emotional intimacy of their living arrangements results in the feeling of belonging to a group much larger than one's immediate family being ingrained in people with a rural background and they retain it even when they immigrate to another country. East Indian parents suspect that children living in a nuclear family in Canada may not find any value in continuing such a close relationship with brothers and sisters. Their children are most likely to live an independent life and may tend to be indifferent towards the collective social and cultural needs of their brothers and sisters. A considerable minority (37%) was of the opinion that their children living in Canada will be as responsible for their brothers and sisters as their counterparts in India. Their responses may also be based on a philosophical assumption that an intimacy among brothers and sisters is a universal phenomenon and the nature of their relations may not be at variance with their fellow beings in India. People who considered this item unimportant were negligible (1%).

The family, as the most important link between the individual and society, provides its members with ideological and actual support through the multiplicity of persons in or near the household in any one generation. A majority, as indicated in Item Five agreed (66%) and twelve percent strongly agreed with the idea that there will be a diminished relationship among members belonging to a joint family. It is interesting to note that urbanization and industrialization in India have started to affect the socio-economic unit and is beginning to divide families into nuclear fractions. In practice East Indians prefer small families to large ones (most families do not have more than two children as shown in background infor-

mation). Some seem to view the move to Canada as deteriorating their family solidarity. Their responses seem to reflect their ideals and assumptions and not the real practice. Another explanation may be in the fact that they are a minority in this community and also are experiencing some negative racial attitudes. They consequently may desire to be closer to their family members.

The responses to Item Seven show the majority (57% agree and 14% strongly agree) of the people reflected feelings of the considerable loss with regard to maintaining traditional values. The necessities of life, i.e. securing a job and working long hours to maintain economic position, etc., become difficult for Indians to bear. Separation of family members working different shifts may bring important changes in their life style. The nuclear family may have contributed to the emergence of adjustment difficulties for East Indians. The social weakness of a nuclear family in a strange environment may have enhanced the severity of the problems now being experienced individually. The problems were ameliorated collectively by family members, cliques and friendships. Moreover they may find the nuclear family as an insufficient social prop to support the individual in a strange situation and to provide him with psychological balance. Housing may be another major problem inhibiting joint family cohabitation. Canadian housing deters extended families living together. East Indian parents also find it difficult in Canada to create solidarity within the community. Under such conditions their environmental bubble may often resemble a hollow shell more than a warm cocoon. Sixteen percent found the extended family an unimportant unit of society in Canada. To them, family size is not a priority. Eleven percent did not experience any difficulty in maintaining their joint family system. The new life may also be strengthening their relations. By living in new situations of relative isolation, they have been forced to look at themselves in a new light and have emerged with strengths and satisfactions that otherwise would not have been realized.

The Indian family tends to be demanding on the individual. Children are supposed to be dutiful in their responsibility and should act in harmony with all other family relationships including marriage decisions. In Item Six, sixty-seven percent (60% agree and 7% strongly agree) of the sampled respondents found it hard to accept that children make decisions without due consideration of their parents' feelings. Parents find it harder to socialize their children according to their style of upbringing. Parents seem to fear that their children will be unable to recognize the terms of respect, direc-

tion in family affairs and ritual expressions that they experienced in India. Parents seem unable to impose familial values, especially those of obligation, obedience and respect. These findings are consistent with the findings discussed in the previously referred to category, Marriage. Only a small minority did not express any apprehension. Their ideas can be termed as contemporary or liberal. It allows children to make their own decisions about themselves. It bears no traumatic experiences on the normal life of the family.

The traditional joint family in India has been idealistically under the tutelage of the oldest member in the family (most often male) usually the father or grandfather. Age is a significant asset by virtue of which older members within the family wield more power than younger ones. The majority of Indians in Item Eight (52% agree and 20% strongly agree) felt that there is less respect for age in Canada than in India. East Indians may experience an unhappiness because they came from a country where younger family members have the utmost respect for their elders. It seems that Indians still consider age as a "mark of wisdom" and youth a "mark of inexperience". There seems to be a directional difference between the attitude of older people and younger people of Canada. It may be that older members while living in Canada cannot gain higher status, power and responsibility within the family as a result of their relatively old age. East Indians may find it difficult reconciling their concept of respect by age and an achieved status without giving due importance to age. At least the first two generations of East Indians may still consider age as being more important ideally than in actuality. Thirteen percent did not find any difference and seem to be contented with the changes occurring in their families. They may not be too concerned to gain status without achieving it. Fifteen percent of the population totally disagreed with the idea that children raised in Canada show less respect for age than their counterparts in India. (The emphasis may have changed in favour of abilities rather than age.) This emphasis would be compatible with Canadian values where children are not expected to pay respect to their parents merely because of their age.

Over forty percent (33% agree and 11% strongly agree) felt that they would be lacking security provided by their children in later years. Elderly people in India have been given a very important place in the family. As can be noted from responses to Item Nine, East Indians in this area may not expect this to happen while living in Canada. They seem to find their higher status in the family diminishing. Their presence may not be felt even in important matters

of the family as has already been discussed in the category of Marriage. They may find they were unable to relinquish family traditions prevalent in India where the presence of elderly people is felt even in the tiny matters of the family. This group of people seem to have recognized that this is clearly not the case in Canada. They see insecurity and lack of family support in old age. Thirty-three percent did not consider this item as an important one. They may consider insecurity in old age as the concomitant if individual parents' fault who may be unable to teach the family responsibility to children. They may feel they can provide better facilities of life to their children to be happy. Twelve percent strongly disagreed with the item in regard to their future and old age in Canada. They seem to accept changes in their parental role displaying a willingness to give more power to their children. They did not feel less secure in old age. They do not seem to be obligated to obtain help from their children. They will not be dependent on their children for their financial needs. Generally they give control of their property to their children in actual practice, even though they may be legal owners. Old people tend to receive less as they earn less. Eleven percent gave no opinion.

Even though the forty-four percent of the people in Item Nine expect security in old age, the results in Item Ten indicate that the majority (38% agree and 15% strongly agree) anticipated loneliness and distress. There is a hidden fear of an impending isolation in old age. Their fear may be based on their liking of Indian family traditions, where old people and their children enjoy both proximity and intimacy. They do not seem to approve of senior citizens housing. It is considered shameful and degrading for an individual to consider placing his parents or grandparents in a retirement home. It seems to stem in part from a diminished family life with decreased control in child rearing practices and a fear of diminished status for the elderly. Retirement and old age can be more traumatic for an immigrant, particularly because he or she lacks the support of the family in Canada. Eighteen percent strongly disagreed. To them, changes occurring in lifestyle, both in parents and in children, would not bring significant changes in their relationship with children thinking that they would not be neglected in old age. It may be because some people immigrated to Canada at a young age and have brought about changes in order to live adequately as social beings. Eleven percent did not answer, perhaps because they had no children.

Most people living in the Halifax and Dartmouth area have been in Canada an average of ten years and have adopted Canadian citizenship. Their status is not that of transients; rather they have made Canada their home country. However, they still have feelings and thoughts of returning home to India. Forty-nine percent (39% agree and 10% strongly agree) regretted that their children would not be able to go and live in India after their socialization in Canada, as can be seen in Item Eleven. This seems to be a natural reaction as they have shown allegiance to the traditional values. They seem to be conscientiously retaining their own cultural identity so that they would have the option of going back to India and would find no problem. They may feel insecure because of social and racial attitudes prevalent in Canada in spite of its multicultural status. They may also worry about whether they would have any roots left in India. Seventeen percent showed indifference in the item. They did not see any strong attraction for their children living in India, even though they like to preserve Indian culture. Twenty-seven percent strongly disagreed with the idea that children cannot go back to India after their relocation in Canada. This reflects East Indian parents' confidence in successfully resocializing their children according to Indian values. Seven percent did not answer this item.

Economic Conditions

The findings of this category seem to confirm that material considerations are the most significant forces motivating East Indian people in the Halifax and Dartmouth area to immigrate to Canada. This supports the contention of Yelaja (1977) that:

Economic incentives in terms of better employment opportunities and consequently a higher standard of living continue to be one of the significant 'pull' factors in migration patterns of people from less developed to more developed countries of the world.

The study suggests that, in spite of East Indians adherence to the values of and allegiance to their native country, their economic absorption seems to some extent inevitable.

The vast majority of the people in Item One (52% agree and 27% strongly agree) were satisfied with the level of economic wealth that Canada is providing them. Also the majority of the people under study were professionals and holding well paid jobs. The average family's income put them at least in the middle class strata of Canadian society. Porter (1965) assumes that economic circumstances are important factors which influence ethnic groups. Minorities, in order to compete with other powerful economic groups like the British, tend to perceive ethnicity as barring them from attaining status and desire to compete economically. East Indian parents may also be pleased that they can invest money in such a way that they would be able to live independently in their own homes and also earn through the acquisition of real estate. In most cases, both husband and wife are working to enlarge their total family income. They make money which enables them to travel to India and other countries of the world. They enjoy a higher standard of living in Canada. Economic wealth may also have enabled East Indians to buy their own cars and luxuries for the home, such as dishwashers, washing machines, etc. Seventeen percent considered this item unimportant. There may be people who would enjoy the same wealth in India and would have come to Canada for some other "push" and "pull" factors. It implies that either they are satisfied with the economic wealth both India and Canada provide or they do not enjoy either. Four percent strongly disagreed. It may be that they had more wealth and economic facilities in India than in Canada. Another explanation could be that one cannot hire as many servants in Canada to be at the "beck and call" as in India. Rich people in India

have their servants to do the housework for them. This could also be due to the fact that to be wealthy is even more prestigious in India than in Canada. Rich people exercise more control and have more to say in governmental affairs. Some people were not satisfied because of philosophical reasons. One subject noted: "people are never happy".

East Indians in the Halifax and Dartmouth area (52% agree and 18% strongly agree) seem to be very happy with the economic gains they have made in Canada as the result of Item Two points out. It seems to promote their children's well being and economic life. With such a solid economic background, their children will not have to face many sacrifices. In most cases, their children would be able to acquire higher education without incurring debts. The children of ability have good access to as much higher education as they wish to pursue, even to extent of studying abroad. Their children are afforded the opportunity to be members of different organizations pertaining to health and sports and recreation. East Indian parents better economic conditions are bound to have some effect on their children's future. Some parents can give one house to each child which is a common practice in England and the United States and other countries where they can afford to do so. Nineteen percent showed indifference to this item. This group may have mixed feelings. On the one hand there is the opportunity to earn and save money to help their children, while on the other hand some people may be disillusioned by the failure to earn enough to have savings and provide for their families. Six percent of the people strongly disagreed. For people with lower or moderate incomes, the fact that Canada has a high level of inflation and consequent low purchasing power, there would certainly be a struggle to succeed financially. Thus some of these people would feel they were gaining very little economically. Five percent considered this item unapplicable.

East Indians migrating to Canada have come not only for economic reasons, but also to obtain greater job satisfaction, greater career choices and better educational opportunities for their children. The economic success helps to re-attain the standing that immigrants enjoyed in their country of origin or gives them a status concept derived from the class structure of that country. Thus immigrant employment and career mobility become one of the most effective weapons of economic absorption. East Indian parents seem very optimistic about their children's chances for career enhancement in Canada. A large majority (57% agree and 21% strongly agree) of the people's responses in Item Three reflected optimism

about greater possibilities for career suitability, employment mobility and a gain in status for their children. Their children are being educated here in Canada and will have similar skills and receive similar education as their Canadian counterparts. They are learning the same language and will not experience some of the disadvantages that their parents experienced. The children of East Indian parents will have fewer problems finding jobs compared with immigrants who came from India after they had reached adulthood. They understand the Canadian culture better and do not have to overcome the same cultural shock that their parents did. East Indian parents may think their children will be better integrated economically and residentially compared with them, which would change their image in society. Freedom to work in an occupation of their own choice and the right to occupational mobility are both extremely important. In the urban milieu, children when grown up, may be employed in a wide variety of fields and have frequent and easy exposure to other Canadians. Ten percent of the respondents showed indifference and twelve percent did not agree with the item at all. They may feel that the opportunities for their children are not going to materialize because of Canada's continuing high rate of unemployment.

In Item Four, the majority (41% agree and 18% strongly agree) of the people held a positive view toward Canada and saw it as having a favourable environment for their children. This positivism can be attributed to many aspects of the Canadian system. Parents may think that Canada is full of opportunities and all the necessary things in life available. Their children may secure good jobs with good salaries and there is dignity in labour. There may be more chances to own their own houses in Canada. Also, the social environment of honesty and less hypocrisy in the Canadian economic, social and political system may be conducive to their development and organizational abilities. Business dealings with banks and organizations could be considered excellent, including the opportunity to obtain loans. The business community in Canada, in particular loan companies, seem to be more liberal in their standards compared to India; thus East Indian children can greatly benefit from this plan. Canada is a free society and any person who is either native born, landed immigrant or Canadian citizen has the right to acquire property and East Indian children will have equal access to these rights and same as other Canadians. Parents may also be encouraged by the fact that Canada is a relatively new country and has an immense potential. Twenty percent displayed indifference in this

item. They did not seem to find any substantial difference in the possibilities dealing with the purchasing of property or establishing businesses. Eleven percent strongly disagreed with the item. This suggests that this group of people had little appreciation for the Canadian environment. One can speculate that they find too much competition to survive in a small business or that they have had other economic failures along the way. Another problem may be the lack of capital to invest in business which they had hoped to establish. Their opinion could also be based on their lack of acceptance in the new social structure. They may still be subjected to implicit or explicit discrimination. One subject noted: "There is generally favourable environment but some racial feelings are there". Ten percent of the respondents did not answer this item.

The majority of the people (46% agree and 19% strongly agree) agreed with the idea that the economic system in Canada makes it possible to have more leisure time available for their children. It is reasonable to assume that people living in underdeveloped (third world) countries, presumably work longer hours than people in developed countries in order to make "ends meet". East Indian children will not be liable to work over eight hours a day. This will allow them to have more leisure time to indulge themselves in cultural, recreational and sports activities, etc. The modern transportation facilities would also serve to give them more free time to enjoy their environment. The multiplicity of services and conveniences are no doubt helpful in making available leisure time. Fourteen percent considered the Item Five unimportant. Twenty percent strongly disagreed with the item. Those people who feel that the economic system here does not give them more leisure time may feel this way for several reasons. First, their job, for example, doctors and taxidrivers have to work long, irregular hours. Second, business pressures may require participation in many activities outside of the normal work hours and these people are thus deprived of much leisure time. A third explanation may be low wages which lead to working overtime or doing double shifts on their jobs in order to increase their incomes.

Summary and Impressions

It has been the purpose of this study to investigate some of the factors (Marriage, Family Relationships and Economic Conditions) with regard to the adjustment of East Indian parents in the Halifax and Dartmouth area. These factors have a strong bearing on how the East Indians in this area interpret their situation.

The study indicates that East Indians in the Halifax and Dartmouth area strongly adhere to socio-cultural values pertaining to their joint family, kinship and clan ties and they frequently identify with India as their homeland. They strive to preserve their distinctive practices regarding marriage and family relationships. They seem to encourage their children to marry within their own race. By restricting pre-marital contacts of their children, they attempt to enrich their moral standard and promote responsible behaviour amongst their children. On the other hand, they are attempting to formulate new channels of communication and social participation beyond their primary group. They emphasized the importance of love before marriage and expressed liberalism by expressing disapproval of the practice of the dowry.

The situation in regard to family relationship is viewed with greater apprehension and ambivalence. The youthful rebelliousness against the parental authority, the plight of the aged and the alleged instability of the joint family system are deplored. However, their perception of their family relations is less stable. Concern was expressed about a weakening of family relationships in Canada. These instances concerning marriage and family relationships suggest areas where change has taken place and will continue to do so. These perceived changes suggest "never hurry in the process of assimilation". East Indians want to cherish those values pertaining to family and friends and maintain the strong relationship with the aged.

East Indians' satisfaction with economic conditions to a greater degree implies that material considerations act as a major force in motivating them to immigrate to Canada along with increasing the diversity of their professions. East Indians exhibit future oriented aspirations for their children with occupational choices, mobility, business outlets and favourable environments to develop perpetual communication with Canadians, as well as providing ample opportunities for leisure.

This study suggests that economic absorption will proceed rapidly compared to cultural integration because of fewer changes in roles and institutions are involved in the former than in the latter.

The problems of adjustment with regard to their children are penetrating the consciousness of East Indians in this area and has become its most characteristic aspect. The replacement of the familiar environment and learning process. East Indian parents are practicing those child rearing methods which they are accustomed to and are bewildered when they no longer work. Some feel children may discard the standards of their parents entirely and will have nothing to replace them. It becomes apparent that assimilation will require more than one generations' conscientious efforts.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Please indicate after each statement your feelings about the following issues of adjustment to North America life style.

Marriage:

1. Unmarried East Indians should marry within their own race.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable
2. Parents should arrange marriages rather than leave the choice of partner up to their children.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable
3. Girls who become involved in relationships with western boys should be discouraged by their families.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable
4. Young people are mistaken if they feel that love for their prospective partner must exist before marriage.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable
5. Parents must approve of the marriage partner of their child if the marriage is later to be happy and successful.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable
6. The ability of a girl's father to provide a substantial dowry should be an important consideration in choosing a bride.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable
7. The way I see Indian children reacting to Canadian life style makes me believe that there is more risk of premarital sexual activity.
___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ unimportant
___ strongly disagree ___ not applicable

a check mark. Place a check mark in the space which corresponds with your opinion of the importance of the statement. Please send your reply to the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Your prompt action in returning this questionnaire will be appreciated. Thanking you in anticipation of your cooperation.

Sukhdev Singh Sandhu

Appendix C

Table I Marriage: Responses Expressed in Percentages

ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unimportant	Strongly Disagree	Unapplicable
1	32	32	26	10	0
2	11	25	43	21	0
3	13	41	27	19	0
4	11	37	21	31	0
5	13	49	23	15	0
6	6	1	13	80	0
7	22	56	7	15	0
8	22	57	11	10	0
9	1	7	20	72	0
10	10	6	27	57	0
11	10	40	11	39	0
12	15	47	15	23	0

Table II Family Relationships: Responses Expressed in Percentages

ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unimportant	Strongly Disagree	Unapplicable
1	13	22	11	37	17
2	15	45	10	24	6
3	16	61	13	10	0
4	13	49	1	37	0
5	12	66	10	11	1
6	7	60	12	13	8
7	14	57	16	11	2
8	20	52	13	15	0
9	11	33	33	12	11
10	15	38	18	18	11
11	10	39	17	27	7

Table III Economic conditions: Responses Expressed in Percentages

ITEM	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unimportant	Strongly Disagree	Unapplicable
1	27	52	17	4	0
2	18	52	19	6	5
3	21	57	10	12	0
4	18	41	20	11	10
5	19	46	14	20	1

Appendix D

Profile of Respondents

Total Number	70	
Sex	Male 42	Female 28
Age	18-25	13
	26-30	11
Average:	31-40	19
	41-50	15
	51-65	8
	Over 65	4

Average number of family members in Canada:
7.1 including parents, children and other family members in Canada.

Length of stay in Canada:		
	1-5 years	12
	6-10 years	37
	Over 10 years	21

Total number of children: 106

Ages of children:		
	(a) 1-5	40
	(b) 6-10	10
	(c) 11-20 & over	56

Sex of children 51 male and 55 female

Education:		
	Up to Matriculation	11
	4 years beyond Matriculation	22
	6 years beyond Matriculation	20
	8 years beyond Matriculation	13
	Over 8 years beyond Matriculation	4

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