



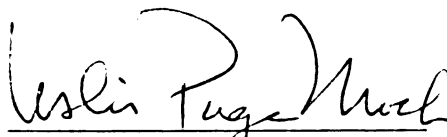
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**AMERICAN DREAMS
GENDERED MIGRATIONS FROM INDIA**

VOLUME I

By

Vibha Bhalla

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

AMERICAN DREAMS: GENDERED MIGRATIONS FROM INDIA

By

Vibha Bhalla

This dissertation is a study of Indian migration to metropolitan Detroit. It examines the migration and settlement patterns of men and women especially through the lens of gender, exploring their shared experiences as well as the sharp differences between their experiences. The study situates Indians' migrations within the context of a newly independent India and the changes occurring there since 1947. Moreover, it highlights the centrality of the United States' immigration policies in influencing and shaping the Indian community and its characteristics, especially their remarkable middle-class profile. Although Indians are contemporary migrants who migrated to America in the recent era following the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, this study historicizes their migration and shows that despite their recent arrival, and short duration of stay, Indian immigrants have a history. Questions about their immigration experience and adjustment are probed with special attention given to the Indian community in metropolitan Detroit over three decades. In doing so, the study also situates Indian migration within the changing political economy of metropolitan Detroit in the late twentieth century. The period under review covers the decades of the nineteen sixties to the nineteen nineties.

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To my parents
Jyotsna and Surinder

Acknowledgement

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of Indian migration to metropolitan Detroit.¹ It examines the migration and settlement patterns of men and women especially through the lens of gender, exploring their shared experiences as well as the sharp differences between their experiences. The study situates Indians' migrations within the context of a newly independent India and the changes occurring there since 1947. Moreover, it highlights the centrality of the United States' immigration policies in influencing and shaping the Indian community and its characteristics, especially their remarkable middle-class profile. Although Indians are contemporary migrants who migrated to America in the recent era following the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, this study historicizes their migration and shows that despite their recent arrival, and short duration of stay, Indian immigrants have a history. Questions about their immigration experience and adjustment are probed with special attention given to the Indian community in metropolitan Detroit over three decades. In doing so, the study also situates Indian migration within the changing political economy of metropolitan Detroit in the late twentieth century. The period under review covers the decades of the nineteen sixties to the nineteen nineties.

The roots of this study lie in the homes of my extended family, friends, and their circle of friends and acquaintances in the U.S., especially in metropolitan Detroit. The frequent weekend get-together or 'parties' that I attended provided snapshots of the lives of Indian families in the U.S. In their gendered spaces and gendered conversations, men

sitting in the living room talked about their work, investments, the rising Indian economy or berated India for its lack of basic amenities, the latter usually after their return from India. Women, usually in kitchen, over cooking activities, discussed recipes, dresses and jewelry. Often they complained about their extended family in the U.S. or India, their heavy workload and sometimes the lack of male participation in sharing work in their homes. Not only women who worked outside their homes but also women who were not employed, joined in this chorus. Highlighting their children's accomplishments was the only common denominator in these two separate sets of conversations. Not only were families showing off their children and their achievements, these gatherings themselves were a showcase of excessive consumerism, especially among the women who were attired in their fine clothing and the latest gold and silver jewelry brought from India. The cooking fare itself was another arena of display; the evenings were a source of great culinary delight usually prepared by the lady of the house, and a source of pride for her. Often I felt, that besides according the hostess a good reputation, this display also became a source of competition among other women; they needed to do better to become even better hostesses. Who cooked, what they cooked all carried hidden meanings; the traditional food fare, the number of dishes gave the hostess a higher reputation; and catered food assigned the highest class status. The area one resided in also spoke of one's class, and homes themselves were showpieces of consumerism. Among professional Indians, I discovered the existence of a class hierarchy that depended on one's annual income; physicians who came early were usually accorded the highest status.

These gatherings, despite the great food, were confusing in many respects. As F.O.B. or 'fresh off the boat,' a term frequently used in the Indian American parlance to

denote a newcomer from India, I carried many Indian notions which were the center of these confusions. The excessiveness of these gatherings, the show off culture was not something I expected Indian professionals to follow. Women's complaints about the division of household labor were also perplexing since men rarely participated in household chores in India; the few who did were usually laughed at. Cheap labor allowed middle-class Indians to employ household help. Moreover, women's complaints about men not working in the house were especially confusing since Indian women in the U.S. possessed better kitchens with all their mechanized gadgetry that women in India craved for; consequently such complaints seemed irrelevant. Despite these complaints, few women were willing to return to India. Men, however, frequently talked about returning, given the progress of the Indian economy in the decade of the nineties.

Further confusion emerged from my conversations with immigrant women. In my naiveté, I expected educated professional women to be more active in their migration, yet the women I was meeting rarely seemed to exemplify this independence. A family friend, a professional woman who had succeeded in her educational field, informed me that she had wanted to come to America and had told her parents of it, and they found a marriage match for her in the U.S. Initially I saw this as an isolated case. As I interacted more with these women, I found this trend to be widely prevalent. Few women, even professional women, migrated independently. While I was aware of the position women occupied in India, somehow I had the impression that working women possessed more power than these women exhibited. Moreover, I was also bewildered about hearing increasingly about domestic strife and a host of other problems besetting Indian families, ranging from problems between husbands and wives, among parents and children and with the

extended family. These problems rarely emerged on the surface, and were talked about in hushed tones. Clearly, Indian families to me were a bundle of contradictions. From what I was understanding, six days a week they lived in tensions; on the seventh day they presented a united front to their friends; six days a week they saved and on the seventh they splurged for the benefit of their friends and family. And amidst this confusion began the quest of an Indian student from India to understand the Indian community in the U.S.

My studies of immigrants while informing me that America, indeed immigrant America, were posing problems in connecting the new Indian immigrants to the immigrant literature. The studies of immigrants were divided between the old and the new immigrants yet the new immigrants were the ones who came around the turn of the twentieth century and immigration history ended with the coming of the First World War and the passage of the Acts of 1917 and 1924. Post-1965 immigrants were relegated to sociology. Disciplinary territorialism almost seemed to move this study away from ~~the~~ the field of history.

Furthermore, my feeble attempts at connecting the past and the contemporary immigrants seemed to be ending in failure too. The immigrant history I was studying was labor history, focusing particularly on the working class community formation and workers' struggles that straddled the work place as well as the immigrant neighborhoods. The educated, professional Indian immigrants did not seem to fit into the workers' mold of immigrants who had come earlier. Economically well to do Indian immigrants were neither related to Gutman's immigrants nor were they the huddled masses of Handlin. They were doctors and engineers and seemed to be well-to-do people who seemed to have achieved their American Dream; they were suburbanites, who owned or were in the

process of owning their own homes, did professional work and were staunch believers in American consumerism, dreams that majority of the past immigrants kept fighting for but rarely attained. Past and present immigrants did not seem to connect, at least in my mind. I also had problems with the immigrant literature. Immigrants seemed to be predominantly Europeans on the East coast and Asians, who settled primarily on the West coast were relegated to an addendum status. Men and women immigrants were seen as separate entities that rarely connected. Immigrant women's literature was really problematic; European women, especially the Irish women who had migrated independently were the active agents; Jewish women were the labor activists, and Asian women were just passive picture brides. Indian women were professionals, yet a majority of them came to America through arranged marriages. Should these professional women be categorized as the new picture brides or as the new women working in science-related fields where few American women worked? Confusions abounded!!! New works emerging in the decade of the nineties, particularly Virginia Yans Mclaughlin's Immigration Reconsidered and Donna Gabaccia's Seeking Common Ground however, helped bridge this gap, and shaped my research agenda.²

Along with the growing literature on immigration and its changing nature, were new works on Asian Indians which added immensely to my knowledge. Although the migration of Indians was of recent origin, a fair amount of literature on the community had emerged. Encompassing the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, demography, psychology and history, these studies succeeded in informing me on a variety of issues related to the community. Maxine Fisher, an anthropologist, conducted the first detailed study of the Indian community. Her study, The Indians of New York (1980) examined

multiple Indian identities— religious, ethno-linguistic and national—in the American context.³ By probing into various Indian ethnic and social organizations in New York City, Fisher concluded that multiple Indian identities continue to prevail in the U.S. and that these identities at times competed with Indians' national identity. Other anthropological accounts include Arthur and Usha Helweg's An Immigrant Success Story: East Indians in America (1990) and Johanna Lassinger's ethnographic study of immigrants in New York entitled From the Ganges to the Hudson: Indian Immigrants in New York City (1995).⁴ The Helwegs' work highlights the push factors that induced migrants to leave India as well as the centrality of family networks in the migration process.⁵ Lassinger's work views Indians in New York as economic immigrants and gave insights into ethnic and class differences within the Indian community. Her work also focuses on issues ranging from Indian families in New York to the formation of ethnic identity, especially among second generation Indians.⁶

In sociological works on Indians in America, issues of identity formation dominate. Parmatama Saran's, The Asian Indian Experience in the United States (1985) examine the process of adaptation, assimilation and the formation of an ethnic identity within the Indian community in New York.⁷ Sathi S. Dasgupta's On the Trail of An Uncertain Dream: Indian Immigrant Experience (1985), focuses on the construction of an Indian immigrant identity and the mechanism through which Indians survived as an ethnic group in Colorado.⁸ Jean Bacon's Life Lines: Community, Family and Assimilation Among Asian Indian Immigrants (1996) also highlighted issues of community formation and assimilation in Chicago's Indian community.⁹ Aparna Rayaprol's Negotiating Identities: Women in the Indian Diaspora (1997) focuses on

women, particularly South Indian women, and the significance of their volunteerism in running temple activities.¹⁰ Rayapol's work also drew attention to women's roles in the construction of religious identity, which, she argued, empowered Indian women in the U.S. Moreover, she found that since social networks formed in America were independent of family in India, Indian women in America actually gained additional power.

Historian Padma Rangaswamy's Namaste America: Indian Immigrants in an American Metropolis (2000) analyzes the Indian community in Chicago within the context of global migrations.¹¹ Using the concept of "oikumenene" or global household, she saw Indians in America as a group connected to India by family, culture, and professional ties. She further drew attention to differences in Indian settlements in the U.S. from those of Trinidad and Great Britain and situated the Indian immigrants in the U.S. in terms of the historical development of migrations from India and on local factors, which influenced their settlement patterns. Despite the migration, she also argues that immigrants' connections with India remained strong. Her work was situated in the city of Chicago and she provided a profile of the Indian community in the city and the changing nature of the Indian community that was shaped by U.S. immigration policies.

Along with these monographs, edited works on the Indian community also explore multiple issues about past and present migrations from India. Chief among these was S. Chandrasekhar's From East India To America: A Brief History of Immigration, Problems of Discrimination, Admission and Assimilation (1982) and Edwin Eames and Parmatama Saran's New Ethnics: Asian Indians in the United States (1988).¹² Additional works focusing on particular Indian ethnic and religious communities include Bruce La

Brack's Sikhs of Northern California, 1904-1975 (1988) which looks at the Sikh migration of Sikhs from the turn of the century, to the new migrants arriving after the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. In the process, La Brack's work highlights the continuity and changes in the migrations of the Sikh community from India. Usha R. Jain's The Gujaratis of San Francisco (1989) studies the settlement patterns of the first group of Gujaratis in the decades of the fifties and the sixties, highlighting the presence of the group before the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. Methodologically these works employ a variety of sources, from oral interviews to ethnographic techniques and participation observations.

These studies, however, did not analyze in depth the questions I was seeking answers to. Why were women, even professional women, migrating through marriages and not independently? Why were Indians clustered in medical or engineering professions? Why were men not helping with the housework? Why were Indians in the U.S., so involved in temples and carrying on Indian traditions that, growing up in India, I had rarely encountered? Some of these 'whys' became a center of inquiry for this dissertation, which ultimately was titled "American Dreams: Gendered Migrations from India;" 'American Dreams' since men and women had preconceived notions and dreams that were central to their migration. These dreams, however, differed for men and women: for men they included economic and professional advancement; for women they were more varied and ranged from better homes, and consumerism along with progress at work.

The present study, while drawing upon existing works, adds new dimensions to the growing literature. First, it analyses the migration of the Indian community especially

through the lens of gender and demonstrates how Indian cultural norms shaped the migration and settlement of Indian men and women in metropolitan Detroit.¹³ In doing so, it highlights the construction and transformation of social norms in modern India within Indian families. Specifically, it argues that the migrations of men and women were situated within their families and their expectations, thus questioning “independent migration” as a term of analysis. Second, this study locates the migration of Indians within the context of a newly independent India and the effects of new policies in shaping the lives of a new generation of Indians. New hopes born in India resulted in the migration of educated Indians outside India. In connecting these, the study shows the connection between social mobility and migration, and the differences between male and female notions of mobility. Social mobility for men was realized through education and professional development; for women however, mobility was achieved through marriage to upwardly mobile men. Third, this study historicizes the migration of Indians to America. Despite their short span of 30 years in America, there are distinct phases in the migration of Indians not only in terms of arrival but also in terms of settlement issues. This study provides perspectives on a group of contemporary migrants and their adjustment issues. In doing so the dissertation follows the call of migration historians, especially Donna Gabaccia and Roger Daniels, for the inclusion of contemporary immigrants in historical literature.¹⁴ Finally, this study situates the migration within a changing political economy, and emphasizes the processes by which new migrants came to adjust to an American metropolis. Migrants were not only coming to America, but also to a particular region and a metropolis whose economy acted as a pull factor, even as it transformed, losing jobs in the process. In the case of Indians, with the exception of

Padma Rangaswamy's Namaste America, and Madhulika Khandelwal's work on New York City, no work has explored this dimension in depth.¹⁵ In Detroit, the political economy assumes high importance, since Indian migration to the city coincided with a severe economic decline. Thus, the motivation of the migrants to settle in a metropolis ostensibly in decline assumes even more significance. It is the lure of jobs in a declining city that brought Indians to the metropolis. Detroit is not the primary center for Indian's population; according to the 1990 census, it is the seventh largest Indian community in the United States. My choice of Detroit, however, was based on selfish motivations; its proximity to East Lansing and the existence of networks in Detroit.

Detroit was founded three hundred years ago by Antoine Cadillac, who also gave the city the name 'd'etroit.' In these three hundred years, Detroit's political economy has shifted from fur trade to lumbering to the manufacturing and industrial economy of the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Detroit today has emerged as the center of large-scale auto manufacturing in the U.S., earning it the name of "Motor City." Detroit today is not considered an immigrant city, an irony given its attractions to the immigrants in the early part of this century and their role in the growth of the city. In 1990, Detroit's immigrant population consists only of 4.4 per cent in the inner city and 5.5 per cent in the metropolitan area. Among the new arrivals in the decade of the nineties, only one person among one hundred was a new arrival. The comparable figures for Los Angeles, New York and Miami were remarkably higher. In Los Angeles central city, immigrants formed 36 per cent of the population, in New York PMSA, 27 per cent, and in Miami, 46 per cent of its population was foreign born.¹⁶ New immigrants were definitely shunning Detroit.

Twentieth century works on Detroit center on race and the politics of race in the city and the reasons for its decline, making immigrants completely invisible. This divide has been the source of two recent works on Detroit. Thomas Sugrue's The Origins of The Urban Crisis (1996) and Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, Harry J. Holzer's Detroit Divided (2000) works focus on the origins of the racial divide of the city, one until 1970 and the other since then, and document its economic decline and the increase of urban poverty, especially in the central city.¹⁷ This white-black discourse, while highly relevant, has marginalized the old and the new immigrants. While the city's origins are immigrant in nature, rarely have works explored the full extent of Detroit's immigrant history. Detroit's areas—the Pole town, the Greek-town, the Mexican-town or the Middle Eastern market— remain a constant reminder of Detroit's rich immigrant past. The only work that has detailed its rich immigrant history is Olivier Zunz's The Changing Face of Inequality. (1982)¹⁸ Today, Detroit hosts the largest Arab community in the U.S.; however, it is only recently that works have begun exploring the lives of Arab immigrants.¹⁹ Works on other immigrants are only beginning to appear.²⁰ Not only does Detroit have an immigrant past but also a present which is entirely overlooked, and despite the decline in its economy, immigrants continue to settle in the city. In documenting the migration of immigrants to an area in decline, this dissertation highlights the fact that immigration is an all-pervasive metropolitan phenomenon, and is not exclusive to prosperous urban areas and global cities that have come to be characterized as migrant cities.²¹

Metropolitan Detroit, as it is defined in this study, consists of the three counties of Oakland, Macomb and Wayne, areas that have the largest share of the Indian population.

Figure I provides numerical figures of the Indian population in these three counties. It demonstrates that in 1990, Indians in metro Detroit were located primarily in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb County. In Oakland County, the areas of Bloomfield, West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills, Rochester Hills, Southfield and Troy had a substantial Indian population; in Wayne country, Canton; and in Macomb County, it was the city of Sterling Heights that had substantial Indian populations. During the decade of the nineties however, Canton in Wayne County had the largest population concentration of Indians in the metro Detroit area.²² Map 1 gives a visual picture of these areas within the three counties and the SMSA generally. This construction of Detroit is different from the Census Bureau's definition; its Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area comprises of seven counties of Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Monroe, and Livingston.

Most Indian immigrants in metropolitan Detroit are middle-class, educated, and professional migrants. The Indian population in metropolitan Detroit, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1990 was 15,001 people; adults made up 66.5 per cent of the population over 18 years of age and the median age was 29.5 years.²³ Among males, the median age was 30.2 years and among women 28.5 years. The sex ratio among the Indian population was 114 in favor of men.²⁴ The Indian community in Detroit was a highly educated group, with 86.9 per cent of the population above the age of 25 years having high school diplomas or higher, and 69.3 per cent of the population above the age of 25 possessing bachelor's degrees or higher. The Indian immigrants in Detroit had the highest income among all ethnic and immigrant groups, with a family median income of \$ 49,917, and a mean income of \$ 71,300. Despite the high income, 4.6 per cent of Indian families and 6.6 per cent of Indian individuals in Detroit lived below the poverty line in

1990.²⁵ Over 70 percent of the Indian population was foreign born and 20 percent of the population had entered America between 1985-1990. Of the Indian population in Detroit, only 35 percent were naturalized citizens.²⁶ These characteristics, with a little variation, were representative of the larger Indian population in the U.S.



FAPMS

Figure 1

Indian population in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties

MACOMB			
Population		2429	
Clinton	178	Roseville	137
East Detroit City	14	St. Clair Shore	40
Fraser City	25	Shelby Township	151
Harrison	30	Sterling Heights	1142
Mt. Clement	11	Warren	547
OAKLAND			
Population		7510	
Auburn Hills	126	Madison Hts.	232
Berkeley City	28	Novi	193
Beverly Hills	71	Oak Park	145
Birmingham City	24	Pontiac	127
Bloomfield	807	Rochester Hills	755
Clawson City	19	Royal Oak	153
Farmington City	30	Southfield	594
Farmington Hills	1104	Troy	1755
Ferndale	25	Waterford Twp	93
Hazel Park	23	W. Bloomfield	892
WAYNE			
Population		6096	
Allen Park	65	Livonia	429
Canton	1065	Melvindale	45
Dearborn City	167	Plymouth Twp	96
Dearborn Hts.	302	Redford	73
Detroit City	2076	River Rouge	0
Ecorse	9	Riverview	92
Garden City	19	Romulus	18
Grosse Point Farms	16	Southgate	90
Grosse Pointe Park	26	Taylor	360
Grosse Pointe Woods	62	Trenton	23
Hamtramack	126	Wayne	25
Harper Woods	27	Westland	213
Highland Park	0	Woodhaven	50
Inkster	80	Wyandotte	7
Lincoln Park	32		

Source: Census of Population and Housing 1990 Census Tracts and BNA Detroit Ann Arbor Mi, CMSA, Table 8 Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990, Pg. 245- 249

Methodology

This dissertation employs a variety of primary sources including U.S. Census data, records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, (the INS) the expatriate Indian newspaper India Abroad, a brief questionnaire, as well as detailed interviews with 65 Indian migrants who came to the U.S. The records of the U.S. Census Bureau, and the I.N.S. provide information on migrant characteristics, as well as on the numerical dimensions of the migration from India and in Detroit, and the policies that shaped it. Although rich in detail, these sources provide little information about the human dimensions of migration and fail to answer questions about migrants' motivations and their experiences—group or individual, male or female. The expatriate Indian newspaper, India Abroad as well as oral interviews of Indian immigrants, fill this lacuna.

Immigrant press contains a host of information about immigrant life, and has recently emerged as an important source among historians in documenting the lives of immigrants. Dirk Hoerder's compendium of immigrant press is evidence of this.²⁷ 'Bintel Brief', the letters from the Jewish Daily Forward emphasize the importance of the Letters to the editor column as rich sources in documenting immigrant social history.²⁸ This dissertation employs India Abroad, the first newspaper of the Indian community in America, as an important source that provides deeper insight into the migrant experiences in America and issues that were dominant in the minds of Indians.²⁹

India Abroad was first published as a monthly in 1970. It changed to a fortnightly and finally became a weekly in 1973. Although its primary purpose was to connect Indian immigrants to happenings in India, it changed its contents over time to incorporate issues pertinent to Indians in America. Along with political and economic news of India

and Indo-American relations, news about the expatriate Indian community in U.S. and Canada began to occupy a central place in the paper. This news content initially highlighted Indians' achievements in America— individual and collective— and especially emphasized the highly educated and professional character of the community. By the decade of the eighties, however, its focus shifted to the burgeoning problems of settlement, ranging from discrimination to issues of identity and assimilation, especially in relation to the second generation. Its opinion columns, especially “Reflections of Life Abroad,” and “Readers’ Opinion,” began to illustrate vignettes of everyday life in America. Meanwhile, its “Letters to the Editor” page became a forum engaging the immigrants in a plethora of issues confronting them. The letters emerge as a rich source of social history by providing insight into concerns salient to the migrants, concerns that were frequently different from the news content of the newspaper. By the eighties, India Abroad had transcended its initial role of connecting Indians to their homeland and had acquired multiple roles. The relationship between the newspaper and its readers became one of confidante and counselor where people opened their troubled hearts, shared their personal problems through anonymous letters, and turned for advice in times of need. The paper guided the bewildered Indian population in the early years of settlement on matters from personal investments to community issues in a new nation. It also became an arena for activism and a rallying force for the Indian community against immigration bills deemed unfavorable to Indian migration. Through the news and its letters, which at times were angry, petulant, cynical and facetious, the life of the Indian community and the new realities Indian immigrants confronted in America emerged.

While India Abroad offers insights into discourses within the Indian community, it rarely focused on particular communities, and on migrants' lives over time or provided gendered nuances, a gap that is filled by oral interviews. Oral history, especially life history, has emerged as central in documenting the lives of the migrants since they provide information on immigrants' motivation, networks, and the day-to-day lived experiences. Two works that employ oral interviews are Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's Gendered Transitions (1994) that highlighted the gendered aspects of Mexican migration and the factors that influenced men and women's migration and settlement, which rarely come across in the structural explanation of migration.³⁰ Evelyn Nakano Glenn's Issei, Nisei and War Bride (1986) is another instance where individual experiences of Japanese women domestic workers have added a new dimension to the larger immigrant experiences.³¹

This research is based on the oral interviews of 65 immigrants, 47 women and 18 men, selected through a snowball sample. This sample allowed a representation of a cross-section of the Indian population reflecting the cultural, religious, regional, occupational, and ethnic diversity of India given that a comprehensive directory of the Indian population did not exist, although the various ethnic, religious and professional organizations kept separate membership lists. The temples were the biggest single institutions and had the largest memberships, yet following this list meant representing only Hindus and did not seem appropriate since India is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic nation. India, the seventh largest nation in terms of area, has a population of approximately 850 million people comprising multiple ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural groups. Although Hindus are the largest religious group with 82 per cent of the

total population, not all Indians are Hindus; 4 per cent of Indians are Muslims, and Christians and Sikhs form about 2 per cent of the population each. India has 18 official languages, and this linguistic diversity is the basis of ethnic diversity.³² This ethnic diversity, as Map 2 shows, has defined independent India's political divisions, since a large majority of Indian states follow the historical origins of ethnic groups, and even names are an indication of their major ethnic grouping. For example Punjabis originate from the state of Punjab, Gujarati from Gujarat, Bengalis from Bengal, and so on. But it should be noted that while ethnic groups define states, population movements, historically as well as in modern India, brought about by issues connected with employment, education, and marriages, have resulted in the settlement of communities away from traditional areas. A snowball sample allowed a representation of a cross-section of Indian population reflecting the cultural, religious, regional, occupational and ethnic diversity of India. The first few participants were introduced to me by my contacts. On completion of interviews, I asked each person for a list of contacts among their friends and acquaintances. At times I asked the participants to furnish individuals who were pertinent to the dissertation at that time. I did not interview any of my friends or acquaintances.³³

The sample selected, as evident from table 1.1, represents these multiple dimensions of India. It incorporates different ethnic and religious groups particular to India, as well as accounts for the residential, and occupational aspects, and also delves into the different modes migrations employed by them to enter America. The earliest migrant in this study arrived in 1957 and the last one in 1992, spanning a thirty-four year time span. Three immigrants in the sample arrived in the decade of the fifties, 19 in the

Table 1.1

The Sample			
	Total	Men	Women
1950s	3	2	1
1960s	19	6	13
1970s	20	4	16
1980s	19	6	13
1990s	4	0	4
	65	18	47

Language Spoken at Home

Punjabi	19	Gujarati	11	Bengali	2
Hindi	14	Malayalam	4	Tamil	4
Sindhi	1	Marwadi	3	Telugu	2
Kashmiri	1	Konkani	2	Marathi	2

Religion

Hindus	51	Jains	3
Sikhs	4	Christians	4
Muslims	3		

Immigrants' Cities of Origin

Ajmer	Allahabad	Amritsar	Bombay	Baroda
Bangalore	Benaras	Bhopal	Calcutta	Chandigarh
Delhi	Hyderabad	Jamnagar	Jamshedpur	Kanpur
Lucknow	Ludhiana	Madras	Mangalore	Meerut
Nagpur	Patna	Pondicherry	Ranchi	Vellore
Tirchi	Trivandrum			

Immigrants' Residences in Detroit Metropolitan Area

Detroit City	Plymouth	Farmington Hills
Bloomfield Hills	Rochester Hills	Shelby Township
Grosse Pointe	Sterling Heights	Troy
West Bloomfield	Canton	Novi
Livonia	Southfield	Oak Park

In terms of language, a majority of the sample is constituted by Punjabis, Gujarati, and Hindi-speaking people. The predominance of Punjabis is based on the intersection of religion and language; three Sikhs and one Christian in the sample spoke Punjabi. Hindi speaking people in the sample were from a wide area, encompassing the northern and central states of Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The sample represents complexities of overlapping categories that are not only limited to language and religion. While a large majority of Indians in the sample identified themselves through their ethno-linguistic group, there were a few who identified themselves through their distinct ethnic group that was not based in language nor caste, but as a separate community, such as the Marwadis or the Jats.

The sample does not employ the variable of caste. To an outsider, Indian society is seen as stratified by the caste system, but in modern, urban and independent India, caste is not manifested in the daily lives of Indian men and women, although it retains its importance in many cultural and ceremonial aspects, especially in arranged marriages. However, caste privileges in modern India have translated into class privileges.³⁴ The absence of caste seems to be justified, because rarely did the respondents talk of caste and its effects, a fact that was corroborated by other studies, which rarely focus on caste. The few that retained questions on caste noted that these questions were either ignored by the majority of their respondents, or were found upsetting.³⁵ Parmatama Saran's Asian Indian Experience in the United States has used it to describe his respondents' marriages, although it is not a major factor in his analysis. This limited use also highlights the dilution of caste as a factor in the lives of urban Indians.³⁶

Migrations in India were common. Among this sample these migrations were of four kinds—family migration as children with parents, educational migration, employment migrations, and marriage migrations. In independent India, a large number of personnel who work for the central government and the armed forces have, what in India is termed as “transferable jobs.” These people are periodically relocated to different areas. Educational migration refers to migration undertaken for the purposes of higher education. A large majority of the migrants had relocated to a different city in India for their professional education, or employment purposes. Marriage migration refers primarily to women’s relocation to a different city to follow their husband. Indians were not only migrating within India but also across different continents. Two migrants had spent considerable time in an African nation, and one among them had also spent considerable time in the United Kingdom.

The sample does have some weaknesses. It disproportionately represents women. The initial plan was to interview 50 couples. As the interviews progressed, the intricacies of interviewing along with time and financial constraints allowed for only 65 interviews to be done. The lack of men was not planned. Many men, who wished to speak, were constrained by time. Long hours of work and immense socializing left them little time to converse with a stranger. The nature and scope of the dissertation also constrained men from talking. Public discourse was also affected by gendered norms. While a majority of the women spoke about their domestic lives and private spheres, few men were willing to speak about personal issues in depth. Mary Chamberlain’s argument of gendered lives and gendered voices came across clearly in these interviews.³⁷ Moreover, family dynamics resulted in the absence of men; men worked full-time jobs and some women

also did not want their men to speak since they were speaking to me against their husbands' wishes. In addition, the sample is more tilted towards professional migrants, and not the new group of working class migrants that are becoming part of the Indian community.

The study takes a few liberties. The term 'Indian' in this dissertation refers to middle and upper-class Indian families since Indians in the U.S. are situated in these classes in India; 'middle and upper-class' is construed in terms of income and education. It assumes commonness among urban Indian experiences despite linguistic, religious and ethnic divisions. Moreover, it frequently uses the term 'American' instead of the 'United States.' Indians in India as well as the United States use this term to refer to the United States and in oral interviews this term is used more often than the U.S., justifying its usage in the text.

This dissertation is organized into 7 chapters. Chapter I sets the theoretical dimension of women's migration through the lens of gender and its role in shaping the migration of women especially from Asian countries. It highlights the fact that focus on economic causation in determining migration aims is gender neutral, and hence excludes women's aims in migration, which could be economic or non-economic in nature. It argues for the inclusion of marriage migration in the theoretical framework, since marriages were viable economic options for women. The chapter asserts that along with families, state regulations and labor markets were gender segregated, limiting women's independent migrations.

Chapter II looks at post-independence contemporary India from which the migrants originated. It describes gender norms in post-independent India, and the

changes taking place in the lives of men and women. It argues that despite the expansion in women's spheres through education and paid work, rarely did women have the power to migrate independently. In doing so, it looks at the continuities and changes in the immigrants' lives, particularly of Indian women, and concludes that Indian families continued to see women primarily in terms of their domestic roles. Consequently, women's independent economic migrations were well nigh impossible and the most acceptable way for their migration was through marriages.

Chapter III situates Indian migrations within the context of US immigration policies. It highlights the centrality of these immigration policies in not only determining Indian migration, but also in forming the nature of Indian community in the U.S. It shows that highly educated and professional migrations were shaped crucially by the labor market policies through which Indians could migrate to the U.S. Highlighting the use of non-immigrant policies for immigration purposes, the chapter also documents the centrality of human agency in migration aims.

Chapter IV analyzes the work patterns of Indian men and women within Detroit's metropolitan economy. It looks especially at the relationship of women to work. Bearing in mind that a large majority of Indian women are professionals, it argues that professional Indian women continue to be primarily responsible for domestic and childcare responsibilities, resulting in their transient participation in the labor force. Clearly, Indians' immigration has resulted in a new focus on motherhood; and women's role as cultural reproducers has taken on new meaning in an alien culture.

Chapter V looks at family life—the life of men, women, and their family. It argues that marriages were transforming in America because of women's attempts at

renegotiating gender relations within their homes especially within the domestic division of work. These attempts however, were not entirely successful. Distance from America and circumstances exclusive to Indian families in America, were instrumental in changing Indian families. The context of transformation was in relation to Indian gendered and family norms. It also highlights increasing tensions and the eventual break-up of some Indian marriages in the U.S.

Chapter VI focuses on two parallel trends in the Indian community since the sixties. On the one hand it looks at the settlement of the Indian community and the formation of an Indian identity in the U.S. with its organizational infrastructure, and on the other, it looks at issues of adaptation and acculturation within the Indian community. The chapter shows that the Indian identity emerging in the U.S. is exclusive to Indians settled here and is distinct from that of an Indian in India.

The dissertation concludes that gender does determine the paths of migration of men and women and differences in the migration patterns were rooted in the traditional gender ideology, which ascribed different meanings of mobility to men and women. If for men, the means of social mobility were education and employment, for women, mobility came through marriages to upwardly mobile men. As such it argues that in the arranged marriage system prevalent in India, migrations were economic options for women. As such arranged marriages do not signify passivity. Second, the push factors were the political economy of India. But men and women had different push factors that were rooted in their own sphere and their understanding of their lifecycles as prescribed by Indian family traditions. India's independence and the social change occurring since then is central to an understanding the experiences of the Indian immigrants to the U.S. These

changes shaped men and women's lives, their identities and their worldviews, and also their education and their occupations. Third, the migration of Indians to the United States was a result of the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which allowed them to settle in the U.S. Indians utilized the multiple aspects of labor migration, and the nature of the Indian community was shaped by the changing labor U.S. needs. Fourth, the political economy of Detroit shaped the migration process as well as the nature of the Indian community in metropolitan Detroit. Finally, the dissertation shows that post-1965 immigrants have a history that needs to be incorporated in historical annals.

In the following pages, the story of the Indian immigrants in Detroit unfolds. It is a story that is synchronic and diachronic,³⁸ it locates changes in India within a time frame as well as over time; it also places the changes in the nature of Indians migration to the U.S. over time. It weaves a story of a new nation and its new egalitarian ideals, and of the intersection of political, and national trends with that of individual families. It is also a story of past and present, old and new, continuity and change, traditions and modernity, individuals and families, and contradictions and tensions inherent in them. It is a story of the making of the Indian community in an American metropolis and the ensuing problems that emerged. But ultimately, it is a story of men and women, their power and resources, their gender norms, their hopes and expectations and their American dreams; it is a story of attaining dreams, deferring dreams or giving up dreams. It is a story that is continuing, and rewriting itself.

ENDNOTES

¹ Indian migrants in America are categorized as Asian Indians, East Indian and Indian Americans. This dissertation will use the terms "Indian" or "Asian Indian."

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⁶ Lessinger, From the Ganges to the Hudson: Indian Immigrants in New York City.

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¹⁶ U.S. Bureau of Census, "Socioeconomic Characteristics: Metropolitan Areas" (1990).

¹⁷ Thomas J. Sugrue The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, Harry J. Holzer, Detroit Divided (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

¹⁸ Olivier Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

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²⁰ Kenneth Waltzer, "East European Jewish Detroit in the Early Twentieth Century," Judaism Vol. XLIX, No. 3 (Summer 2000): 291-309.

²¹ Saskia Sassen, Cities in a World Economy (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Pine Forge Press, 1994).

²² Details from the 2000 Census were not available at the time of this writing.

²³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990, Census, Metropolitan Areas: Social Economic Characteristics, (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1993) table 5.

²⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Metropolitan Areas: Social Economic Characteristics, (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1993) table 16.

²⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Metropolitan Areas: Social Economic Characteristics (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1993) table 51.

²⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Metropolitan Areas: Social Economic Characteristics, (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1993) table-49.

²⁷ Dirk Hoerder's The Immigrant Labor Press in North America, 1840s-1970s: An Annotated Bibliography (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987) is one of the few books that looks at the immigrant press.

²⁸ Isaac Metzger, ed. A Bintel Brief: Sixty Years of Letters From the Lower East Side to the Jewish Daily Forward (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971).

²⁹ Besides India Abroad, other newspapers published at the present time include the India Tribune which is published in Chicago and India West, published in Los Angeles. Both provide regional flavor to the Indian community.

³⁰ Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) is one such work.

³¹ Evelyn Nakano Glenn's Issei, Nisei and War Brides: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Housework (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986) deals with oral histories of Japanese women.

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³³ See appendix 1 and 2 for more details on the participants and my reflections on the interviews.

³⁴ Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi, Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India (London: Zed; New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1986), 70-75.

³⁵ Manindra Kumar Mohapatra A Study of Affluent Overseas Indians in the United States (Hong Kong, Asian Research Group 1984), 18-19. The author comments that, when asked about caste and religion, many respondents wrote remarks such as "Stupid question," and "Do not ask this question in the twentieth century."

³⁶ Saran's The Asian Indian Experience in the United States mentions caste 5 times while describing the marriages of his respondents. Many of these marriages were outside the respondents' caste groups. However, caste is not a factor in his analysis.

³⁷ Mary Chamberlain, "Gender and the Narratives of Migration," History Journal Workshop Issue 43, (1997): 87-106.

³⁸ I want to thank Dr. Leslie Moch for introducing me to these words.

Chapter 1

GENDERED MIGRATIONS: A THEORATICAL PERSPECTIVE

Gender affects migration. The emergence of this simplistic truth as a new mantra in the decade of the nineties has clearly redefined the field of the social sciences. Joan Scott's hypothesis that "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power," brought to the fore the need to analyze societal differences between men and women within a given culture, and the effects of allocating power and resources to them.¹ Using Scott's variable of gender, this chapter argues that gender affected and continues to affect male and female paths of migration. Women's migrations as labor migrants, or as wives, are largely representative of social norms governing women's lives. The wide diversity in the modes of women's migration, from East Asian picture brides to Irish labor migrants, reflects cultural differences across the globe and the different conceptions attached to what is perceived to be women's roles. The chapter further argues that notions of men and women's roles affected state policies of the home country and the receiving nations, as well as labor markets. This usually hindered the migration of single women, resulting in their migration primarily as wives and dependents. Finally, following Suzanne Sinke's arguments, the chapter contends that marriages for women were economic options, and in many societies, the only available and acceptable ones, for women to migrate.²

Historians recognized the need for gender as a category of analysis in the decade of the eighties. New research in the eighties brought attention to the fact that women outnumbered men as migrants to the United States since the decade of the nineteen thirties.

Yet this significant revelation barely registered in writings on immigration.³ The prevalent economic discourse on migration then, assigned migration motivation solely to the primary migrant. Because of this, even though there was a considerable increase in the rate of migration among women, historians automatically positioned their narratives within the rubric of family migration, instead of the larger economic landscape. The fact that a large majority of these women migrants worked during some part of their lives was never taken into consideration. The arrival of a large segment of women as picture brides seemed more to affirm women's passivity and because of this, they were they were not deemed as active agents within the migration discourse.⁴ The only exception to this perceived passivity were Irish women who arrived in the U.S as labor migrants in the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵

Economic causation theory has come a long way in advancing knowledge of the migration process. Its focus on how regional economic transformations spurred local populations to migrate has helped situate migrations within one's home country and within families. At the same time, it has also taken away the notion of the "pull" of America and has raised notions of American exclusivity in the field of migration. Although the economic discourse argued that migrations were rooted within families, rarely did any research delve deeply into families and the relation of men and women to power and resources.⁶ The gender-neutral nature of the economic paradigm presupposed that men and women were given equal opportunities and that such prospects affected both groups in similar ways. Families were definitely the basic units where motivations to migrate were discussed, decisions made, and resources allocated. By now it is also amply clear from migration statistics that they remained units that continued to support male members for

migration, suggesting that little changes in women's lives. Men and women led different lives and had different access to power and resources. While this usually adversely affected women's movements, little was done to probe into the effects of these differences on women's migration. Different lifecycles and expectations of male and female lives necessitated deeper investigation to determine the effects of economic transformation on men and women, to assess the success this transformation had in bridging the gap between men and women and especially to see if this same advancement helped women overcome restrictive social norms.

New writings in the decade of the eighties, influenced by women's movement, began to look into women's migrations and to provide alternative ideas that looked at the differences between the male and female spheres, and the corresponding effects of these differences on both groups' migration. A special issue of the International Migration Review in 1984 highlighted some of the salient issues in the study of women's migration. One work that has presented these is historian Mirajna Morokvasic's writing that roots migrations of independent men and women to family strategies; thus women's (including independent women) migration as dependents was part of a household strategy. Morokvasic also assigned women within marriage migrations multiple motivations, motivations that she argued, often intersected with those of their men, especially those related to family economic goals. In such cases, the primary motivation of men in migration was a result of women's support. Furthermore, she postulated that women also held personal aims, which were non-economic in nature.⁷

Along with Morokvasic, demographers Micaheal Todaro and Veena Thadani drew attention to the relationship between socio-cultural norms and male and female

migrations.⁸ Societal modes, Todaro and Thadani hypothesized, assigned divergent lifecycles for men and women, which in turn affected their paths of migration. According to them, women migrated predominantly as wives and men as workers. Migrations, they stated, were rooted in a desire for mobility, and the meaning of mobility for men and women, given their different lifecycles, differed. For men, work, education and a good job translated into mobility; for women however, mobility came through marriages to upwardly mobile men. Todaro and Thadani thus attributed differences between the male and female migration to gender socialization.

These different trends, by the decade of the nineties, coalesced under Joan Scott's concept of gender. Scott argued that gender was not a constant. Any analysis necessitated investigation into multiple aspects: first the cultural representation of women and the symbols they evoked; and second, normative concepts that limited the possibilities of women's activities in relation to religion, education, legal and political representation. There was also a need to examine how these subjective identities were constructed and what ranges of activities were allowed women.

In the field of immigration, Donna Gabaccia and Silvia Pedraza-Bailey were among the first to use gender as an analytical tool.⁹ Gabaccia explored the differences in the male and female patterns of migrations, and how family norms and economic transformations affected their lives. She specifically sought answers to the relationship of capitalism to women's lives and to the roles within their families.¹⁰ Pedraza-Bailey, a sociologist, investigated the relationship of women's social positions to migration. She highlighted the fact that the private sphere mattered in migration. Consequently she examined the relationship between the private and the public sphere and the labor market

characteristics to see what the reasons for distinct characteristics of male and female migration were, and if gender acted affected women's migration.¹¹

Using the concept of gender, Suzanne Sinke added a new dimension into the theoretical perspective on migration by hypothesizing that marriages were economic transactions for women. And along with economic migration, an equally important international marriage market also existed in which women predominated. She asserts that in the nineteenth century definition of marriages, the search for spouses was connected with a search for economic providers. Bolstering her argument with her research on German and Dutch women, she showed that in letters written home, women rarely talked of romance in marriages; on the contrary the letters frequently alluded to the institution's economic benefits.¹² Women and men lived different lives, and marriages defined women's identities across the globe, irrespective of their paid work. Consequently, women's aspirations, economic or personal, were not inseparable from their final goals in life-- as wives and mothers. Women's migration through marriages accordingly should be seen as part of women's economic migration.¹³

By highlighting the connection between women's employment and marriages abroad, Sinke found that German and Dutch women's desires to migrate to the U.S. as independent labor migrants were not only seen through the lens of work, but also through their future lives as wives. Implicit in her logic was the argument that economic migrations of independent women were inseparable from visions of finding better marriage partners. Many times these economic migrations were spurred by the desire to marry men abroad, which she showed gave women status and other benefits in terms of better lives. Moreover, the uneven gender ratio in foreign lands and the resultant paucity of women, especially in

the U.S., allowed every woman to anticipate marriage "whether or not she had dowry and even in the face of obstacles like age, widowhood and poor health."¹⁴ Through letters, Sinke showed the notions prevailing among young German girls that they did not stay single for long in America.

Sinke also argued that the marriage market was not limited to women alone. Migrating men, migration and marriages were also linked. For many German men, going to America for economic advancement also increased the chances to marry. Both men and women experienced better marriage chances if they went abroad, although the differential was much greater for women.¹⁵ Sinke also showed that news about America came through letters, and that both men and women frequently wrote back home about prospects of marriages. For men too, going to America meant better chances of marriage since men prospered economically.¹⁶ These images were reinforced by the first generation of women migrants and by letters arriving from married women in nations abroad. Marriages were more equal and companionate, and husbands were more cooperative.

Sinke's hypothesis was also applicable in the works of Hasia Diner, whose Irish subjects came to America, not only in search of economic prosperity, but also in search of eligible marriage partners. Diner's work highlighted the different effects of economic transformations in the lives of men and women. Changing economic conditions in Ireland, she argued, had dire consequences on women's life cycles. On the one hand, these changes freed women to work outside their homes, and on the other, they resulted in a complex socio-economic transformation that resulted in increasing emphasis on dowries, diminishing in marriage opportunities for women. Diner showed that the decision to migrate among women was rooted as much in their economic roles, as it was in their

personal motivations and expectations of marriage. Moreover, she also showed that independent women's migration was not really independent, but rooted in family and its networks.¹⁷

The centrality of finding marriage partners was also noted among immigrants from Greece. The scarcity of Greek women in America resulted in an increase in the arrival of women from Greece for marriage purposes between 1880 and 1930. The 4:1 gender ratio by 1916 meant increased matrimonial opportunities. This scarcity also meant that women could marry without a dowry, which many Greek parents could not afford.¹⁸ As a result, in the decade of the twenties, more women migrated from Greece than men. Women came primarily to join husbands who preceded them or as single women in the hopes of getting married, and often these marriages were arranged by families of both men and women.¹⁹

The use of gender and the framework of marriage migrations as economic options not only gave women greater agency, but also helped situate Asian picture brides as active agents in the migration process as seen through the cultural and symbolic representations of women in their given societies. Picture brides were essentially part of the arranged marriage traditions prevalent in many societies, especially in many Asian nations. And in the West's worldview, these marriages were seen as the ultimate symbols of passivity. Marriages in East Asian nations were not individual affairs; the family, in fact, played a significant role in the overall process. Changes were occurring in these marriages in the nineteenth century. For instance, in Japan, the picture bride tradition grew out of the arranged marriage tradition of 'omiaikekkon' during the late Meiji and Taisho period, and young Japanese women were getting a say in their marriages.²⁰ Many were said to be self-selecting themselves as picture brides.²¹ This change was further evident in the story

of a woman narrated by Ronald Takaki. The woman stated: "When I told my parents about my desire to go to a foreign land, the story spread throughout the town. From here and there requests for marriage came pouring in just like rain."²² Evelyn Nakano Glenn too stated instances of women refusing to marry until their parents found them marriage matches in America, and stated that Japanese picture brides were "rebellious women."²³ Studies on East Asian women rarely highlighted women's economic lives before migration and how these affected women's migration.

However, what is amply clear is that China, Korea and Japan, the three countries that sent the biggest number of women migrants to America in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, were rapidly transforming; the economic transformations that took place were mired in the complexities of imperialism and the new religions. Economic transformation was not only accompanied by the breakdown of the old system, but also by the introduction and subsequent proliferation of Western thought that spread through education and Christianity. Changes in the old order were supplemented by notions of modernity, which were an amalgam of local and western ideologies. The new nationalism and political movements that emerged resulted in modernization movements that among other things resulted in the breakdown of old practices and of old barriers for women.

In China, anti-colonial sentiments and the resultant nationalistic political protests succeeded in bringing women out of their homes. They also brought about a nascent woman's movement. Included in the demands of the formation of a new nation and democracy were visions of women's rights that were seen as an essential prerequisite to the building of a modern nation.²⁴ The women's rights movement attacked patriarchal social practices resulting, with this thereby resulting in the breakdown of many old barriers,

foremost among these being the practice of foot binding.²⁵ Other issues that were raised were the elimination of “barbaric” practices of polygamy, slavery, and arranged marriages.²⁶ Along with national and social movements, the influence of Western based education and Christianity further eroded the old traditions against women, resulting in the emergence of “New Women” in China who were influenced by the new political, social and economic ideals. These women belonged predominantly to the upper classes, were urban based, educated and Christian.

In Korea similar transformations were noted among women. Participation in the anti-colonial movement against Japan brought women outside their homes. Education and Christianity then both contributed in producing a new genre of modern women who were educated. For many of these women, educational transformations resulted in the rise of new professions, mostly in the teaching and nursing fields. These educated women had a broader outlook on life and an awareness of the world beyond their country; these women it seems were not averse to traveling to new areas.²⁷

Japan, while not undergoing political turmoil to the extent witnessed by China and Korea, was also rapidly changing after opening its doors to the West in 1858. But in Japan, the breakdown of the old order and the emergence of new modern ideas were state-sponsored. In its desire to be on equal footing with the Western nations, the Meiji state on the one hand, initiated land reforms in order to hasten the pace of industrialization and on the other, made education an important part of the national agenda. The Meiji government saw education, into which Western ideals would be incorporated, as a necessary vehicle for advancement and enlightenment. Consequently, in 1872 Japan had

universal education.²⁸ In 1876, educational reforms made English a subject of learning in middle schools.²⁹

Works on Asian women emphasize the fact that majority of the changes in women's lives were occurring within women's spheres were not necessarily accompanied by women's participation in paid work. They also draw attention to the fact that changes among women were not uniform. These changes primarily affected a section of women who were predominantly urban and educated and who were becoming aware of faraway nations and people besides their own. Many of these "new women" migrated to America. Judy Yung found that the Chinese women coming to America after 1902 were representative of families in which old restricting norms were breaking down. Many of these women did not follow the foot binding norms. Yung's study found three unmarried women whose feet were unbound, living in San Francisco.³⁰

The Korean picture brides were also "new women" in their country and were influenced by new liberal ideas. Many were educated and had worked in Korea before their marriages.³¹ Although there was a change in women's lives in terms of loosening control and broadening their horizons, this took place within women's spheres, and did not necessarily change the kinds of gendered values assigned to male and female roles.

These few instances of women's migration demonstrated how women employed different ways to migrate across the globe; they also highlighted the fact that the effects of economic transformations varied across nations. Correspondingly, the cultural representation of women varied. Economic transformations in European nations allowed women paid work. In Ireland, Diner showed the peculiarities of the Irish economic and social conditions that on the one hand, loosened family controls on women, and on the

other, created conditions in which it became nearly impossible to find marriage partners in Ireland. These changing economic roles in Ireland also freed women from their traditional economic roles. Subsequently these created conditions that allowed women to depart to America. This then led to the formation of networks that were women centered and that facilitated women's migration to America.³²

Donna Gabaccia also found that economic transformations affected the lives of other European women. Changes in legal and marriage codes and the resultant loosening of societal controls resulted in women outnumbering men as migrants in Europe. However, their lack of resources and limited knowledge of the outside world, as well as the absence of social networks, limited women's migration outside Europe, and few ventured beyond short distances.³³

However, the extent of Asian women's new economic roles and wage earnings were not clear; neither were their implications in terms of the increase in women's power and resources and their independent migration within and outside their regions and country. Takaki discusses the proletarianization of women in Japan, but not its effects on the migration of women.³⁴ What is clear is that these women who possessed a new outlook and whose lives were transforming as a result of capitalism, were still migrating as picture brides. The only independent migrations that were occurring from these nations were the migrations of Chinese single women for education. However, new avenues were emerging in women's migration for higher education. Research on educational aspects of single women is in fact, still in its infancy. By the late nineteenth century, when urban, educated and Christian women were coming to the U.S. for higher education, they were made

exempt from immigration laws.³⁵ These female students were from wealthy families and were products of Christian missionary schools, with many having unbound feet.³⁶

Independent labor migrations were dependent on the demands of the labor market, and in gendered occupational structures, men and women rarely worked in the same areas. As a result, from the beginning, women's independent migrations were different from those of men. Independent women's migration was centered on domestic service, in the garment industry, and in the flesh trade. Gabaccia found that in 1896, 87 per cent of women coming to America declared their occupations to be in the domestic field. Other women mentioned that they were seamstresses, dressmakers, spinners, weavers and teachers.³⁷ In the case of Asian nations, few women came independently. The exceptions to this rule were the forced migration of women as prostitutes.³⁸ Women workers migrated to plantations in Hawaii with their families.

Gender norms prevalent within a society were reflected in the attitudes of the state, and these notions towards women's independent migrations varied. The Irish state encouraged single women's migration and even acted as an agent in aiding women's movement from Ireland, suggesting that single women's migration for wages was not an anathema in Irish society. According to Diner, in 1850, 2,847 poor women left Ireland for America courtesy of the Poor Law Guardians. Besides the state, immigrant societies also aided women in migration. The Irish Pioneer Immigration Fund, and the Women's Protective Immigration Society financed the migration of women to Canada and Australia. Meanwhile, the Female Middle-Class Immigration Society aided the migration of young educated women to Australia.³⁹ The Korean government, however, encouraged women to leave as wives, or as picture brides for Korean migrants in Hawaii. Alice Chai stated that at

the suggestion of a Korean minister, the government approved the emigration of young women “who would agree to marry after exchanging pictures with potential husbands.”⁴⁰ As a result almost 1000 women migrated as picture brides. These women included those escaping poverty and those who wanted better lives for themselves in Hawaii.⁴¹

For the Japanese government, the migration of its subjects became mired in the issue of national imagery abroad as well as in its diplomacy. Takaki states that because the government hoped to protect Chinese women from prostitution in America, it was consciously choosing who could go to America. In order to improve its image, the Japanese government only allowed men whose incomes were at a certain income level to have their wives with them in America. The migration of women, even as picture brides, was seen as part of their national prestige, and only women who were educated could migrate. The new diplomacy that emerged in the Gentleman’s Agreement prohibited the entry of laborers from Japan while permitting the entry of wives as members of the family.⁴² In the twentieth century, the Japanese government imposed new restrictions on the migration of its citizens. After 1908, those wishing to leave Japan were required to have government-issued exit documents. These documents or passports fell into two categories—the “imin” or the workers, and the “hi-min” which was comprised of the urban educated students from respectable backgrounds.⁴³ Women from Japan were rarely part of either stream. According to the new rules, women were allowed to migrate primarily as wives. The criticism of the picture brides’ tradition by the United States caused the Japanese government to stop this practice in 1920. Picture brides were then replaced by Kandodan brides, or brides who married migrants who returned to Japan for 30 days.⁴⁴

Not only did women have to deal with their nations' cultural norms towards women as a deciding factor in their migration; they also had to contend with the norms of the receiving nation. Since the Page Law restricted the entry of Chinese women, the creation of male-centered migrations from China was not so much a result of the local customs, but was really centered also in U.S. regulations towards the immigrants.⁴⁵ Chinese women were allowed to migrate as wives. Few Indian women on the other hand, could join their husbands in America. Between 1904 and 1917, approximately 17 Indian women entered the U.S.⁴⁶ If American laws were responsible for the absence of women from Asia, the repeal of these same laws was responsible for the increase in the number of women in America since the Second World War. The change in immigration policy and the passage of the War Bride Act in 1942 were the most important factors that gave rise to the increase in the numbers of women migrants to America.

Clearly, it can be seen that family and gender norms, state regulations and a gender-segmented labor market constrained independent women's migration from Asia. But it was these that allowed those from European countries to an extent. Moreover, these internalization of separate identities by men and women also affected their vision of America. The pre-migration mentality of women suggests that their visions were shaped within their own spheres. Women's expectations were primarily based in their desire for personal freedom from societal constraints, and expectations of companionate partnerships from marriages. These could be fulfilled in America, resulting in positive images of the U.S.

In his writing on European migrants' expectations from migrations, Dick Hoerder argues that expectations were dependent on the social conditions of the home country and

their effects on migrants lives. According to him, the collapse of the old order, created what he termed “a secularization of hope.”⁴⁷ The imagery of America was generated through letters, sojourners’ accounts, and reports in the press. The information received, Hoerder argued, was gleaned, and adapted through migrants’ personal contexts and social conditions. Many times, he argued, this information succeeded in creating a myth of America, a myth that transcended reality. America, as became a place for divergent groups of people with varying aims; it became a place where anything could be achieved.⁴⁸ Hoerder also asserted that class and gender affected images of migrant destinations. For some, migration resulted in economic and social mobility; for others it was rooted more on non-economic aims located within a consumerist ideology. Finally, it also involved other migrants’ desire to circumvent prevalent social norms.⁴⁹

For Chinese women, America became a place where women could redefine gender relations. According to Yung, the absence of mother in laws in America precluded a competition for the husband’s attention. America also became a place where husbands accorded wives more respect. Moreover, because being a wife in the San Francisco Chinese society was a rarity, wives were considered privileged.⁵⁰ Transformations, Yung seems to suggest, were occurring within women’s prescribed domain. The “new women” wanted to challenge prevalent gender hierarchies and old traditions that affected them within their prescribed sphere.⁵¹ The eagerness of some Korean picture brides to come to the United States or to Hawaii in particular also alludes to a positive image. The lore of the West was also handed down through generations. “My Grandmother really believed that America was a place where people had a chance,” wrote a Korean picture bride.⁵² The first wave of the picture brides from Korea found partnerships with their husbands and moved

away from their subordinate positions.⁵³ These women, Alice Chai contends, also wanted personal freedom from male domination.⁵⁴ During the time of Japanese political oppression, Hawaii appeared to be not only a land of economic opportunity, but also of political independence, religious freedom and personal autonomy.⁵⁵ The positive stories of life of in America by the returnees made America seem like a heavenly place. The males' Westernized mode of dressing made these men seem more cosmopolitan, stirring up, Gee states, a desire among Japanese women to migrate.⁵⁶ Takaki notes that people of Japan had the image of America as an advanced society.⁵⁷

Women's impressions of America also varied across time. From Asian countries, in the nineteenth century, many women considered to be on the margins (i.e. divorced, separated or unmarried) were migrating to America. Migration allowed these women who had few opportunities in their home country, prospects of advancement. From Korea there is mention of divorced women coming to America. From China too, there were instances of widows coming to the States. Yung states that for these women, migration was a liberating experience from the constraints Chinese society placed on widows.⁵⁸

Not only were East Asian women's vision of the U.S. focused on personal spheres. In a similar way, European labor migrants' economic aims were considered as a means to fulfill personal freedom. For Irish women, this involved finding partners in America. Quoting an Irish newspaper, the Cork Examiner, Takaki indicates, "Every maid thinks of [America as] the land of promise where husbands are thought more procurable than in Ireland."⁵⁹ An Irish woman from Philadelphia further confirmed this: "Over in Ireland people marry for riches, but here in America we marry for love and work for riches." Moreover, it was also mentioned that dowry was not necessary in America.⁶⁰

Gender differences between men and women were responsible for differences in the migration of men and women, and the use of multiple ways to migrate by women was an indication of these. Women's aims were different from those of men; for women, non-economic factors figured into the configuration. The constraints imposed upon women by different societies caused this group to view migration as a way to move away from these constraints or limitations of particular societies. Migrating women carried expectations of a different life which could not be attained in their country, expectations that ranged from marriages and family life, egalitarian relationships in marriages, freedom of movement, to simple desires to explore places beyond their home boundaries. These expectations, however, were still within women's specified spheres.

Thus, new works not only draw attention to the diversity in the nature and class dimension of migrant women; they also historicize the different migrant streams among women. Thus, if there were workers who were coming to America, there was also an urban educated population that came as well. The destinations of the two usually differed, however. From Japan, the educated elite went to New York; workers on the other hand, went to California and to Hawaii.⁶¹ These studies also found diversity in the migration streams of women. Women from China, for instance followed two distinct streams. The first wave (until 1902) was characterized primarily by the arrival of forced migrations --mostly of prostitutes; and the second phase from (1902-1929) constituted primarily by the wives of Chinese merchants and students.⁶² The diversity in Korean women's experiences emerges in the different strains of women coming to Hawaii. The first wave of Koreans was made up of urban wives and students; the succeeding wave was composed mainly of picture brides; the next stage included wives of US servicemen, and finally that

of professionals.⁶³ Each stream represented specific economic and regional backgrounds. There would have been a noticeable disparity between the status of picture brides and prostitutes.⁶⁴

Clearly, the meaning of migration for men and women were different. Men and their families largely thought of migration in economic terms and thus considered it a man's sphere. Like women, men too had internalized the roles ascribed by their respective societies. Men's economic migrations fell in accordance with social expectations. This is one area that still has not received adequate attention. One exception to this is a study by Michiko Sawada on educated Japanese migrations in Meiji Japan. Sawada's work highlighted migration aims rooted in Japanese class and these aims were non-economic in nature. Sawada found that urban, educated Japanese men the spread of Western ideals brought a different understanding of America. Popular literature in Meiji Japan reinforced the idea of America as a place of freedom. Positive stories by Japanese travelers, especially Nagai Kafu's "Amerika monogatari" or "Stories from America," she stated, were resulting in "tōbei netsu" or "crossing to America fever" among the urban population. A case in point was Kafu's impressions of America, especially the city of New York, which was taken to be a place that signified freedom marked by "a personal life unfettered by the restrictive and rigid social demands made on one by family, relatives, teachers, and other elders as in Japan."⁶⁵ Kafu's rendition of America was not in economic terms, but in terms of personal freedom. These images were different from that of working-class Japanese men and their economic expectations of America. A Japanese haiku illustrates this image of America in the minds of men who migrated because of work:

Huge dreams of fortune
Go with me to foreign land

Gendered norms, labor markets, and state policies (of the receiving nation) continue to define migrations in contemporary times. In present times too, majority of women migrants continue to enter the U.S. This is largely a result of different U.S. immigration policies (enforced since the forties), which encouraged the reunification of families originally from East Asia.⁶⁷ In addition, marriage migrations continue to be a major factor in women's migrations. For a majority of the women across the globe, restrictions on mobility and the denial of resources continue to result in women's migrations primarily as brides. The predominance of women in the migration stream is also the result of new dimensions in the marriage migrations. The international marriage market that Sinke talked about in discussing an earlier generation has reappeared in the form of marriages of American men to foreign women. The international policies and the Cold War movement of troops has resulted in marriages of US servicemen to foreign women, resulting in the arrival of non-American women to the United States. In fact, the tendency of many US servicemen to seek foreign brides has brought many Asian women to the United States.⁶⁸ The late twentieth century saw the emergence of a new version of picture brides, known more commonly as "mail order brides," whose alliances were arranged through marriage bureaus.⁶⁹

Besides immigration policies, another factor affecting the migration of women as dependents can be located in the cultural norms governing different societies, which allocate more resources to males. Hana Zlotnik found that women from areas where the social and cultural norms allowed women more freedom, tended to dominate the migration

population. In contrast, places where women were constrained produced relatively little independent migration.⁷⁰ This trend was especially evident in the case of women from Latin American countries, especially Mexico, which, while sending the largest number of migrants, sent few women independently.⁷¹ Works by Pierette-Hondagneu, Douglass Massey and Katherine Donato all corroborate the argument that gendered norms and family strategies resulted in the predominance of male migrations. It was the men who had access to productive resources. Family and social norms restricted women's spatial movement, and resulted in women migrating as dependents.⁷² Massey and Cerruti also documented that sons were introduced to migration by parents.⁷³ The intersection of these gender norms, with U.S. immigration policies also encouraged the migration of women as dependents. The bracero migration, and the IRCA migration allowed families to migrate. These studies also drew attention to the complexities of the migration process and highlighted the need to further document the effects of multiple variables that aided or hindered women's migrations. For example, Donato found that educated Mexican women carried more chances of migration than those who owned land.

From the Caribbean regions, which also sent a large number of migrants, multiple trends were evident. Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar's study of migrants from the Dominican Republic found that economic transformation in that country actually reinforced traditional domestic roles assigned to women, and in the process curtailing the possibility of economic advancement. Consequently, women's migrations could occur only through family migrations, which they stated were part of family strategies to attain families' economic goals.⁷⁴

Grasmuck and Pessar also found evidence of women who harbored non-economic goals and hopes of egalitarian relationships with their spouses. These goals determined their migration as much as their economic motivation.⁷⁵ Women's non-economic goals were also documented among Mexican migrants. Among these women, personal factors rated highly as motivators; however there were also class differences among Mexican women. Among documented workers economic motivation was 44 per cent and among undocumented workers it was 69 per cent.⁷⁶

Non-economic factors also influenced the migration of Puerto Rican women. A study done by Vilma Ortiz who found that single women migrated more from Puerto Rico because of a lack of eligible men in that country. Ortiz also found that this goal could only be realized by those who possessed labor market skills that allowed them to find employment opportunities in the U.S. Thus, women with high school certification and highly educated were more likely to migrate.⁷⁷ The migration of married women was part of a family strategy to deal with economic problems related to shrinking economic resources at home as it paved the way for better economic opportunities in the U.S. Migrations then were undertaken in stages, with men migrating first and women following them once the men found employment.⁷⁸

While gender norms and family strategies primarily determined the migration of women as dependents, these were further accentuated by the labor segmentation and market conditions. Labor markets continue to be gender segregated. Moreover, the need for labor certification from the Bureau of Labor also was limiting factor for women. Labor certification by the U.S. government has been given primarily in fields requiring highly skilled workers, which more often than not excluded women.

In recent years however, opportunities for women in the U.S. labor market have been more promising. Although the economic structure continues to be a major factor in migration, the current need of the service economy favors women-based professions. The increase in the migration of women from the Caribbean was a result of these new economic opportunities, especially in the fields of nursing and geriatric care. Women from Jamaica arrived as “skilled workers” as defined by the labor certification category. In 1970, among the 28 per cent of those who entered under the occupational preference category, 18 per cent were skilled workers.⁷⁹ A large majority of women who arrived from Jamaica between 1962 and 1972 were in the nursing profession, an occupation composed mostly of women.⁸⁰ More recently, Jamaican women also are coming to provide geriatric care in America. The predominance of these women was a result not only of U.S. labor needs, but also of Jamaican labor segmentation. Moreover, the need for private household workers, similar to the situation that existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century America, also positively influenced the migration of women. In addition, the increase in women’s migration was also due to the fact that women make up a large percentage of undocumented workers since they can find work as private household helps or as domestics. Nancy Foner pointed out that like in the past, the migration stream also included many women on the margins—that is, women who were single, divorced, separated or widowed-- who took up private household work which was easily available.⁸¹ Similar trends were also evident in the case of Salvadoran and Guatemalan women who found jobs because of a favorable labor market for women’s employment. Moreover, the dependence of some occupations on foreign and immigrant labor, particularly women, has aided women’s migration. Yen le Espiritu found a desire among employers, particularly in

highly technical industries, to employ Asian women, which eventually resulted in their high labor force participation rates.⁸²

The arrival of Dominican and Colombian women in the apparel industry (as documented by Waldinger) supports this trend which commenced with the reorganization of the apparel industry and the subsequent deskilling process.⁸³ Cultural norms at home also play a significant role in student migrations, which provides another component in the immigration landscape. This demonstrates clearly how men have better access to higher education, and that families are investing their resources on male education. The only exceptions in educational migration are women from the Philippines who dominate in large numbers over men.⁸⁴

This chapter has attempted to situate women's migration through the lens of gender, and to emphasize that notions of men and women carried by the family, the state, and labor markets determine the paths of male and female migrations. It has also tried to show the limitation of economic interpretations in explaining migration motivations by highlighting the barriers to women's independent migration. Moreover, it has argued that given the limitations on women's lives, marriages were economic options for women and this fact needs to be incorporated into the economic analysis. Finally, the chapter has linked migrations to the notions of development and progress that from the nineteenth century were linked to the developed world, the United States in particular.

Though national history and political events affected these gendered relationships, these changes were within acceptable traditions and thus, rarely overhauled existing norms. These gendered norms varied according to class, and women who were not marginalized could migrate only through marriages. And despite the increase in the

number of available opportunities for professional and economic advancement, marriages continue to define women's identity. Clearly, a great diversity of women's experiences and class, religion, labor market, and most importantly gendered norms affect the whole process.

In subsequent chapters, these themes will be discussed in relation to Indian men and women. Indian men migrate primarily as economic migrants whereas women, in spite of being educated and professional women, migrate as dependents. This work will show that in the late twentieth century, despite the many changes in women's lives in independent India, gendered lives, gendered socialization, and gendered expectations continue to rule Indian women's paths of migration. Through the study of the case studies of Indian men and women, this research will also justify the need and value of a gendered approach in the reconstruction of the migration narrative.

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- ⁷⁹ Andrea Tyree and Kathrine Donato, "Demographic Overview of the International Migration of Women," in Caroline Brettell and Rita Simon, International Migration: The Female Experience by Caroline Brettelle and Rita Simon, 21-41 (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1986).
- ⁸⁰ Nancy Foner, "Sex Roles and Sensibilities: Jamaican Women in New York and London," in International Migration by Brettell and Simon, 135.
- ⁸¹ Foner, "Sex Roles and Sensibilities," 138-39.
- ⁸² Yen Le Espiritu, Asian American Women and Men, 62-64.
- ⁸³ Marta Tienda, Leif Jensen and Robert Bach, "Immigration, Gender and the Process of Occupational Change in the United States, 1970-1980," International Migration Review Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (Winter 1984): 1021-1044.
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Chapter 2

LEAVING HOME: MEN AND WOMEN OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

. . . So I first thought of going to England to get a degree, then somebody suggested to me it is so easy to get admission in the United States so why don't you apply there. He actually gave me a list of universities. I got admission but you needed \$2,000 per year just to manage yourself. That was not easy. So I had to postpone it for one more year . . . We had some land we sold it and I had some money saved. Even then I brought only \$1,400. I came here on a leave of absence.

She [his wife] was a great help. She said yes you should go. If she would feel that she will not be able to manage herself, I could not go. We had children. She had to manage and educate them, live there and I had to come here¹

I decided to stay with my father for two years. He didn't charge me any rent and would also buy our groceries, but it was hard. We didn't have any money. When I had to come here we didn't have money for the tickets, and he said sell your gold jewelry and then I bought the ticket, put kids in the boarding school and came here.²

Ram Lal and Savitri Devi's story ostensibly is a story of a family where the head of the household temporarily left India for the U.S. to advance his educational credentials for better employment opportunities at home, while his family remained in India. Ram Lal's narrative accentuates his desire to advance his career by pursuing higher education in a technically advanced nation of the west, and describes his financial struggles to support his aims. However, his story also situates his migration within the context of his family. Ram Lal's ambitions, although not evident in this narrative, were not independent of his family; on the contrary his aims of securing higher education to avail better employment opportunities were directly linked to his desire to be a better provider for his family. Ram Lal's family did not merely consist of his nuclear family comprising of Savitri Devi and his children, but it also incorporated his widowed mother and his younger brother towards whom he had responsibilities as the eldest son; these responsibilities in the past had resulted in curtailment of his education in order to support them. Before migration he also

had to ensure that his brother completed his education and was gainfully employed in order to take care of his mother.

Savitri Devi, Ram Lal's wife, supported his aims since her and her children's advancement in life were dependent upon his economic progress. Savitri Devi was educated and possessed a bachelor's degree, a rarity in India for women in the decade of the fifties. Before marriage she even thought of becoming a doctor. However, the political events of India's partition in 1947 affected her family and ended her professional dreams. She subsequently married Ram Lal in a marriage arranged by her family. Ram Lal and Savitri Devi did not have a say in their marriage, and accepted their respective families' decision without question, since elders in the family made important life decisions for the younger family members, especially those related to education and marriage. After marriage, Savitri Devi's life revolved around taking care of her husband, his family and their children. Although educated, she never conceptualized working outside their home after marriage since middle-class married women in India rarely worked, rather they took care of domestic responsibilities, and their husbands, like Ram Lal economically provided for them. Savitri Devi and Ram Lal's lives were representative of the lives of middle-class Indian women and men and their gendered norms.

While Ram Lal and Savitri Devi's lives were rooted within their family and the social expectations of men and women, political turbulence of the decade of the forties were also intersecting their families' lives. India's independence movement, accompanied by the partition of India into two nations of India and Pakistan, shaped Ram Lal and Savitri Devi's lives. Ram Lal and Savitri Devi's families were settled in areas that were declared part of Pakistan forcing them to relocate to new India as displaced persons or as refugees.

Although this was forced migration, migration was not new to their families. At the time of partition Savitri Devi's brothers were working outside India as part of the British administration, and initially, with their encouragement, Ram Lal had thought of finding work in East Africa. The decline of the British Empire, however, made him rethink his options. His new options of attaining higher education in engineering were situated in the needs of new India. India was rapidly developing since independence and engineering emerged as the most sought after profession. In India, at that time, educational degrees from advanced western nations were highly sought after resulting in his desire to study abroad. Ram Lal initially planned to study in England; India's colonial linkages with Great Britain were resulting in the migration of upwardly mobile Indians for higher education and employment to that country. However, on the advice of a friend who suggested that America was better in technical education, Ram Lal came to the United States. His final decision to come to the United States instead of going to East Africa or to England is also the story of a newly independent nation and its people and their introduction to the U.S. through educational linkages. Ram Lal's narrative, with variations of time and space, was a narrative applicable to thousands of young educated Indians who left India for developed western nations for higher education and employment. His account also situates individual migrations within families and emphasizes the fact that in the migration of one individual lay the support of multiple family members and their individual and collective aims. It tells a story of man who migrated and his wife who stayed behind, and displays the fact that cultural identities of men and women shaped who migrated and who stayed, and subsequently followed.

This chapter looks at the migration of men and women from independent India to

the United States in the context of Indian families and their gendered norms. It argues that the Indian value system dictated independent migration of men and dependent migration for women in their roles as wives and particularly frowned upon autonomous migration of women. The chapter further argues that although women's roles in independent India were changing in relation to legal rights, receiving higher education, and paid work, these transformations were co-opted within the existing social structure and did not transform gender norms. Despite increase in outside work and higher education, women's outside roles remained secondary to their dominant roles as wives and caretakers of their homes, and it was in this role that most Indian women of the upper and middle-classes could migrate, or chose to migrate. The cultural and symbolic representation of Indian women remained tied to their lives as wives and mothers and consequently marriages remained the easiest, and for many women, the only way to migrate.

The paths of migration of the Detroit sample are evident from table 2.1. Indian men and women employed a wide variety of methods—education, employment or family category—to immigrate to the U.S. Among the 65 people in the sample who migrated from India in the three decades, the majority, 40 came through the family migration category, and 12 arrived for employment and 13 for higher education. In terms of gender division, majority of the women, 36 came through family migration while majority of men came as labor migrants or to attain higher education. Although five women came for educational purposes, only three came alone, the other two accompanied their spouses who were also coming to the U.S. for higher education. Many of the women who came through family migration category were educated and professional women—physicians, scientists, nurses, and engineers.

Table 2.1
Paths of Migration

	Education		Family		Labor	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1950s	1	0	0	1*	1	0
1960s	4	3	0	10*	2	0
1970s	0	0	1	15*	3	1
1980s	3	2	3	9	0	2
1990s	0	0	0	1	0	3
Subtotal	8	5	4	36	6	6
Total	13		40		12	

*denotes migration under the age of 18. One each in the decade of the 1950s, 1960s, & 1980s, 2 in 1970s.

The migration of women, even educated and professional women, primarily as family dependents is a reflection of Indian gendered norms. This fact becomes even more obvious when one hears of the adversity that the three single women in the Detroit sample faced in coming alone to the U.S. to pursue higher education.

1. We were a prominent business family. I was a good student and wanted to be a doctor. My parents tried to dissuade me from doing that since businessmen's wives--as was expected I would be--did not work outside the home, even if they were professionals. The fear of parents was that we would get overeducated so [they] wanted us to stop studying. In high school [they] kept encouraging us to study; once we got into college they kept discouraging us to study.

My father made the mistake of saying that if I did not go into Medicine then he would send me to America after bachelors to do graduate work. So I took that up, worked hard and asked him to keep his promise. He didn't know what to do since it was unusual for women to go abroad for higher studies by herself. There were hardly any Indians in America at that time. He didn't know how to go about. I went ahead and applied [to universities] and got professors at my college to come to talk to my father---they camped in our living room floor and somehow convinced him to foot the bill . . . did all that on my own TOEFL, GRE, USIS a long process. I was just determined to get away.

I had a cousin at MSU and I could only come to America if I got admission to MSU. My father thought that there was someone who could take care of me.³

2. We had a visiting professor from America in our university. The professor encouraged me to apply. He even paid the application fee. To take such a big step [applying for a university in the U.S.] I asked my father about it and he thought that I will never get [admission in] anything so why sound negative, so he said yes. And when I did get the scholarship . . . father was a man of his words. He could not begin

to say no. I think he definitely wanted to. And my mother, her role is important. She thought that I had been given such a wonderful opportunity why stop.

My grandfather had left us a big chunk of money as a legacy. For the boys it was for their education, for the girls for their marriages. My father let me buy my ticket and he let me know in no uncertain terms that he was using up my money for the wedding. And he asked me do you want me to and I said yes. To me it was not even a question of choice, and he said I may not be able to pay for your wedding and I said we will see when that happens.⁴

3. Throughout my bachelors and masters I had one goal, which was to come here. [U.S.] It was fascinating for me to have to leave home and just be on my own, and to get away from India, so that people don't want to get you married.

Jamshedpur [an industrial city] had a lack of transportation and I always felt restricted. For my college I came to Madras. Madras felt less restricting. I had seen my friends in Jamshedpur wither away. My cousins were getting married. I didn't want to be like them. I wanted new experiences before I settled down. . . .

My family always had encouraged me. Dad was very keen that his daughters get education and they would do anything for our education. Dad wanted me to do something professional, be a doctor or an engineer. I wasn't keen on medicine.

I got accepted [to a U.S. university] and then my dad had second thoughts. I was going to go alone. We didn't know anybody here. . . And even as I was packing my suitcases, there was a little attempt to see if I could get engaged to someone, because you know they [family] want everything cut and dried. . . If she wants to go abroad then maybe marry her off to someone who lived there. There are always these U.S returned people seeking brides. If we can hook her up with somebody then that avenue is taken care of.

I just wasn't ready for marriage. I had lot of men friends but never fell in love. Even if I went out with a friend, it was platonic thing. Couple of people expressed interest, but I wasn't ready. My future was somewhere else, it wasn't with them. I wanted to have experiences of my own before I decided on marriage. I felt absolute revulsion to being married.⁵

Rama, Veena and Madhu's stories respectively span two decades; Rama and Veena came in the decade of the sixties and Madhu in the eighties. Yet their narratives weave a common thread of relationship between higher education and marriage for women, emphasizing the fact that women's higher education adversely affected their marriage plans, and that education was secondary in women's lives to their marriages. These accounts also highlight the role of the family as a deciding factor in women's education, and that women's migration as students were not fully supported by their families.

Furthermore, they show that women's educational aspirations, especially for Rama and Veena, operated within their families and their expectations. Rama gave up the idea of becoming a physician and Veena took the permission of her parents before applying for her scholarship. If the lives of these women were representation of their times, they also show that changes were occurring in India; Madhu's control over her educational and professional decisions was definitely different from the other two. She even possessed the freedom to delay marriage and to find her own marriage partner. Despite, these changes, her story also draws attention to the tensions between the old ideology that saw women's identity through marriage and the new trend in India that encouraged women's higher education and professional ambitions. Madhu's family encouraged her ambitions, yet faced a dilemma when her decision to migrate became clear; they oscillated between supporting her educational endeavors and thinking in terms of parental responsibility of marrying daughters before sending them far away. Even in the decade of the eighties marriages continued to be the central component in women's lives and parents did not approve of anything that might detract from this.

In sharp contrast to these three women's stories were narratives of men like Ram Lal who migrated with clear aim of employment and education abroad. Families, even those who harbored negative assumptions of the west, supported their migration endeavors in spirit as well as financially. Ram Lal's wife and mother supported his educational endeavors. Srikant's father encouraged his efforts and financed his education. Sampath's father-in-law not only supported his son-in-law but provided financial support needed for migration as well as took care of his wife and their young child. Rajendra's family decided his educational future and informed him of their decision to send him to the U.S., even

though he did not want to leave home at 21 years of age. And Niraj, spoke of his father encouraging his migration and even providing him with the necessary information on educational and visa rules by constantly consulting a cousin who was already settled in the U.S. Jatin was aware that his parents expected him to come to the U.S., and he too wanted to see the world before settling down and came to the U.S. for education and of course adventure. These men however, came with a single mindedness for occupational mobility. Rama and Veena did not have well defined economic purpose and their desire to come to America was influenced more by a desire to go to the west, see the other side and more importantly was influenced by a desire for personal independence. Twenty some years later Madhu had professional aims, yet her narrative also highlighted the importance she assigned to personal freedom and her attempts to move away from the restrictions on women in India. While men from India were migrating with a clear sense of economic motivation, women's motivations were primarily non-economic in nature.

Similar trends were also seen among men who left India for employment purposes. Among women, however, leaving home for employment was a rarity. In the Detroit sample no woman came independently for employment in the decade of the sixties, one woman came in seventies, two in the eighties each, and three in the nineties. The majority of professional women, who migrated, arrived in the U.S. as wives along with their husbands who were migrating for educational or employment purposes. The different paths of migration of women and men, as well as their different aims in migration, highlight underlying differences in education and employment patterns among them. Indian parents' expectations from their daughters differed from those of sons, and these differences were rooted in the traditional gender ideology and ultimately affected their paths of migration.

These stories also draw attention to the fact that although women's lives were changing through education, these changes rarely allowed her independent movement away from home without the protection of men.

Education in independent India was an instrument of social change. The new government of India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, was encouraging education for all as a necessary tool for national advancement and supported the creation of new schools and universities. Nehru especially was committed to furthering women's education as was evident from his writings and speeches: "No country could prosper when its women remained backward. Apart from being educated in schools and colleges, women should develop courage and self-confidence."⁶ The rapid spread of education among new middle and upper class women indicated that old taboos towards women and education in new India were ebbing. Moreover, women were beginning to work outside their homes.

These changes began in pre-independent India. Formal education in upper-caste women's lives was introduced through the reform movement of the late nineteenth century. The nature of this education, however, was gendered and it linked women's education to making better mothers and wives; it was not intended to remove women from their homes to paid work, not surprising given that few women worked outside their homes and paid work reflected economic marginalization. Education for men, however, was linked to occupational advancement. Moreover, keeping with the social separation of men and women, schooling was segregated with separate schools for men and women and maintained the practice of *purdah* or segregation from men. Accompanying this formal education for women was another kind of education taking place at home in the affairs of

running a household, a training that was more apt to their future roles as wives. Knowledge and dexterity in household skills carried equal weight if not more in the prevalent social mores than the formal education. This education also included teaching of “appropriate” forms of behavior for women, behavior that emphasized chastity, obedience, selflessness, adaptability, modesty, nurturance, loving home—traits deemed suitable for family harmony, discouraged the pursuance of individual goals, and encouraged women to subsume their identity for the good of the family.⁷ Autonomous thinking, independent movement and actions on the part of women were totally frowned upon. As a result women followed the wishes of their elders.⁸ Men, however, were taught to be independent.

Further changes in women’s lives came during Indian’s independence movement. Influenced by the call of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the leaders of India’s independence movement, to join the Civil Disobedience movement against the British colonial rule, women of the upper-caste came out of their homes, and participated with their men folk in the freedom struggle. Nationalism and political participation succeeded in breaking women’s segregation from men, and it also heralded a parallel woman’s movement, which sought legal rights and equality for women as citizens in the new Indian republic.⁹ Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru supported women’s demand for gender equality. Their visions of providing women equal rights were not particular to Indian freedom movement but were part of the new political discourse common to emerging nations in the twentieth century. National development was increasingly becoming related to progress in women’s status; and an essential yardstick for development was related to the acquisition of political and civil rights, along with education.¹⁰ Gandhi’s revolutionary ideals included non-acceptance of ancient scriptures that had resulted in women’s

subservience in India; he also spoke of giving women and men equal property rights.¹¹ Nehru promoted women's equality in the new Indian society, "woman's place shall be equal to that of man: she was to have equal status, equal opportunities and equal respect. Women were not to be barred from any sphere of activity merely on ground of sex."¹²

In new India, the presence of new ideals towards women's education seemed to suggest that old barriers were breaking down. The government of Nehru put his egalitarian ideals in practice by giving women legal rights equal to men. The enactment of the Hindu Code in 1956 gave women the right to property, and the right to nullify marriages. This act also increased marriage age for women from 15 to 18 years. These policy changes suggested that in independent India men and women were soon to be equal with the eradication of traditional norms that had constrained women's lives.

The government under Nehru also actively encouraged the employment of women in government posts leading to increase in women's employment.¹³ Despite the increase in women's labor-force participation, it was never comparable to that of men. Under these directions a silent revolution began occurring in India through education. In 1950, fourteen per cent of Indian women were educated, and by 1990-91 Census, this figure had increased to forty nine per cent and slowly but surely, Indian women were getting educated. This slow increase was evident from a study which found that in 1966-67, 21.5 per cent, in 1970-71, 22 per cent and in 1985-86, 29 per cent of women were educated.¹⁴ These were all India figures and in urban India, the rate was much higher as is evident from the 1980 Census report, which showed that the urban literacy rate among women was 47.8 per cent and among rural Indians it was 17.96 per cent. The higher literacy rate was among the 15-19 year, the new generation of young Indian women.¹⁵ During the 1971-1981 census

period, women university degree holders in India grew at a faster rate than that of the men during this period; 8.1 per cent per annum for women as compared to 6.23 per cent for men.¹⁶ Women's higher education was outpacing even male education, especially in the decade of the seventies. Moreover, during the decade of the seventies, there was also an increase in females in engineering and technology education.¹⁷ According to a Planning Commission Report, cited in study, women's employment was also increasing. Between 1978- 1988, , the educated female workforce grew at a faster rate than that of men; 9.7 per cent per annum for women against 7.2 per cent for men. The report found that between 1978-1983, this rate was 8.1 per cent for women and 7.2 per cent for men, and between 1983-1987, educated women's labor force participation grew at the rate of 11.7 per cent against 7.5 per cent for men. ¹⁸

Along with women's increasing labor force participation in the public sector jobs, women's percentage in other professional, technical and related categories was also growing. In 1967-68 there were 12,000 women doctors out of 120,000 doctors, or ten per cent of the physician labor force, and by 1971 Census, there were 25 women doctors for every 100 doctors. Women predominated in obstetrics and gynecology and were also increasingly found in pediatrics, surgery, pathology and radiology, but few were found in orthopedics. New professions like advertising and marketing research; hotel management and cottage industries were also employing women in management cadres.¹⁹

These new educational trends were also evident among the families of Detroit immigrants. Women who were schooled in the decades of the fifties and the sixties highlighted the importance of high schooling, and some of professional education. Noted Shakuntala: " My parents moved from a small village to Madras so that we children could

get good education. My father had land in the village, and periodically he would go to the village to check up on things;" Pramila: "There were no good schools in my village, so I went to a boarding school;" and Vimla stated " I walked many miles daily to go to school in another village. I don't know why, but my father wanted us [her siblings] to have education."²⁰ There were only two persons in the sample who did not have high school certification. Stories from Detroit however highlight the fact that although high school education was acceptable for women in the sixties not all parents held similar attitudes towards higher education, and women followed different educational paths; one followed the traditional form of higher education by passing *Ratan*, a literary degree attained through correspondence courses and self-study without leaving home, others went on to professional degrees especially in the field of medicine and nursing.²¹ Generally, more women were attaining higher education in the western and southern parts of India, and as a result more women in the region participated in the paid labor force than in northern India.²² Not only was this generation of women receiving schooling, but many were also training for professional fields, and were the first generation of women from their families to do so. Women in the sample worked as doctors, university professors, teachers and nurses. By the decade of the seventies, along with the above professions, women were also emerging in banking, and science and technical fields especially engineering. Women of the eighties were in advertising.

Changes in the first generation of women's lives in India were significant enough for commentators to remark on. A sociologist, Promilla Kapur commented on the movement of women's "exclusive seclusion at home and into the activities of the world without."²³ Elaborating further, she stated: "one of the most fundamental and far-reaching

socio-politico-economic changes brought about since independence has been the emancipation of women from their tradition-bound ethos, by the way of being given various politico-legal and socio-economic rights and privileges and their having education in increasing numbers, and by way of the entering of women of the middle and upper classes into remunerative vocations that were legally the preserve of the men.”²⁴ A book published in 1975 was titled Indian Women: From Purdah to Modernity, heralding the arrival of the new India women. In 1974-75 at an academic symposium commemorating the International Women’s Year, a lecturer of a prominent college in Delhi commenting on the differences between her generation and the new college women noted, “From the days when we could not stir out of the house unescorted—our heads covered with a veil and our eyes glued to the road—to the present when girls move about freely, self assured and confident, women have come a long way.”²⁵ The National Commission on the Status of Women, established by the government of India confirmed in its 1974 report the improvement of conditions of middle and upper class women in sharp contrast to poor women.²⁶ Within a generation of India’s independence, it seemed that the aims of the architects of India to establish gender equality between men and women had succeeded especially among the middle and upper echelons of the Indian society.

These indeed were encouraging signs of transformation in women’s lives. However, they rarely resulted in women’s independent migration to the United States. In the pre-1975 period when educated and professional Indian men were migrating to the U.S. for higher education and professional advancement, women of middle and upper class were accompanying them as wives rather than migrating independently. In 1974, almost a quarter of a century after India’s independence women comprised only 9 per cent of Indian

student population in the U.S.²⁷ Not only outside India, but even within India, women's migrations were predominantly for non educational purposes and were predominantly part of family migrations.²⁸

Women's lack of migration seemed indicative that women did not have the power of independent movement and that little had changed in their lives. Numerous studies conducted from the sixties to the eighties probing changes in women's lives, especially the effects of education and employment, documented complexities and degrees of transformations. They found that although changes were occurring, these were within the realms of traditional Indian ideology. Change and the degree of change, however, depended on the attitude of families', and that education and employment did not remove women's identities as homemakers or made a difference in the dominant social attitudes which continued to view women solely in terms of their domestic spheres.

Rhoda Blumberg and Leela Dwaraki's study conducted in the southern Indian City of Bangalore in 1966 to discern college women's attitudes towards education, found some signs of change, but largely a continuation of traditional values. The increase in higher education was evident from their sample and the majority of their subjects were first generation of women attending colleges. In terms of attitudes, the authors found that women had internalized the dominant social ideology towards their gender roles, and higher education had little effect in changing their expectations. College degree was seen as an asset in the marriage market rather than in the employment market, and women believed that education taught skills for future marital adjustments and to be tolerant towards future spouses' families. Employment, when mentioned, was seen in relation to

the family economy and in helping their future husbands and their families. The authors found prevalence of these trends irrespective of women's religion or ethnicity.²⁹

Despite the continuation of traditional attitudes towards higher education, Blumberg and Dwaraki postulated that education indeed was changing women's lives although the changes were unintended and were thus going to be indirect, gradual and incremental. This generation of women was the "transitional women" whose lives were dictated by traditional norms, were different from those of their mothers. Although showing traditional tendencies at the time of interviews, the authors believed that these women were also the forerunners of a new generation in independent India. By experiencing higher education, they had more awareness of the outside world and were in the process of carving out different roles for themselves that bridged the past and the future generations. College life had provided women with freedoms that few were likely to experience again.³⁰

Promilla Kapur's work among 1,000 working men and women in Delhi, found a rapid rate of transformation occurring in the lives of women due to employment and education.³¹ Kapur discovered that more married women were working and that men did not object to women working outside their homes. Women's employment, however, was not linked to economic necessity but to other factors such as utilizing their talent, achieving a status of their own, economic independence and even personal ambitions.³² The biggest changes that Kapur noticed, however, were in women's personal lives. Women were moving away from the traditional notions of Hindu marriage as a "social duty towards the family and the community and there was little idea of individual interest," to the new views influenced by the western thought that marriage was a social contract essential to fulfilling

individual happiness. Attitudes towards marital relationships were becoming more 'equalitarian with emphasis on companionship' and the sharing of love interests, joys as well as problems." Kapur noted that these changes had begun before independence but were accelerated by the political legal changes since independence. Women in her sample disapproved both of arranged marriage as well as love marriage, and wanted a "modern type of arranged marriage," which was partly arranged but women made the final decision. These neo love marriages required the consent of the parents.³³ These changing expectations, however, were occurring within old traditional values. Women's marriage choices, she found, were calculated and rational and women continued to carry the economic notions of marriage. They wanted in their marriage partner a man who had economic potential or was economically well to do; other traits mentioned were education and good character, intelligence as well as 'broad-minded' person. They were of the opinion that women should be younger than men in marriages, and continued to look up to their men for advice. The suitable age of marriage, according to the sample in 1969, was between 18 and 20 years.³⁴

In the decade of the seventies, Kala Rani's work on workingwomen in Patna further confirmed the effects of education on women's employment. Women were finding a new meaning in work, even if their families guided them towards it. Women's interests in continuing outside work were not solely guided by a desire to raise their standards of living, but were also for "self-expression." Kala Rani also found that Indian society of the seventies accorded professional women high respect and this further encouraged women to continue working.³⁵ However, she also noted that these very women were not highly ambitious; a large majority continued to believe that their primary responsibility was to

take care of their families—husbands, children and their homes.³⁶ However, they also expected their husbands to share in the management of their home, and expressed a desire to have “equal importance and status with men.” They also expected to contribute their income to the family economy.³⁷

Kala Rani too argued that educated women’s roles were evolving, and this evolution was partly a result of changes in families’ attitudes; modern families were bringing up their sons and daughters with relative equality and were not training their daughters in the traditional roles. She however noticed that many women from such families did not have a clear conception of their roles. She noted that: “education has become a fashion in modern society. Girls continue their studies until they are married. By the time they are married some of them are highly educated. After marriage they want to make use of their higher education and try for jobs. When they develop an interest in the job they do not want to give up in spite of many difficulties.”³⁸

The rapid change in women’s thinking was evident even among women who a decade earlier were espousing traditional ideology. Bloomburg and Dwaraki, in a follow-up study of their original sample, in 1976 found many changes in the lives of their old sample, as they had postulated a decade earlier. If the women in 1966 viewed education in aiding marital adjustments, the same group of women a decade later, linked education to outside work. Many were working by 1976 as teachers, bankers and research scientists, even after their marriages, and some were working mothers. The biggest changes, however, were occurring in women’s personal lives. Women were deviating from their traditional expectations as daughters-in-law and spoke of their frustrations in adjusting to their married families, complained of accounting for their behavior to lesser-educated

members of their in-laws family, of restrictions on their lives, and of making compromises within their family.³⁹ Despite these new expectations, they continued to contribute their salaries to their families, continued to express faith in the arranged marriage system, and did not condone the practice of dating, which the authors discovered was occurring surreptitiously.⁴⁰

If women in Bangalore still favored arranged marriages, students in Hyderabad were disapproving the traditional system of arranged marriages. A survey investigating young students' attitude towards marriages carried out among 115 students of two city colleges found that more than half respondents wanted a definite say in the decision leading to their marriages. The authors related this to the acceptance of modern views among the students, but also postulated that men were more modern than women; women were more likely to leave their mate choice to their parents'.⁴¹

Metamorphosis among women was further noted in the cosmopolitan city of Bombay. Maria Mies' work in the decade of the late seventies found women showing a high degree of professional ambition; they were going in for late marriages, and did not want to marry before they finished their education. A small minority of women was at the top of their profession and their men were changing their jobs to relocate to their wives' place of work. Moreover, Mies also noted that, women were not reducing their relationship with their birth family and were even going against the traditional norms by financially supporting them. They were living in nuclear families and took initiative to separate from joint families because they were rejecting the authority of their mothers-in-law. Younger women, thus, were actively pushing for the dissolution of the joint family system.⁴²

Despite these changes in women's lives she found continuity in the old patriarchal structure; there were hardly any women who studied or worked without the consent of their husbands; husbands replaced the authority of parents in law. Despite increase in women's work, there was no corresponding change in ideology that took away some of their domestic responsibilities. Indian family structure, she noted, was full of contradictions, and there was "chasm between ideal and reality, between social norms and behaviors." At schools, education emphasized ideals of individual freedom while reinforcing notions of Indian womanhood. Newly won freedom and rights had not changed the structures of the society. The idea of equality of sexes had gained in the educational sector but within marriage and family system little change occurred.⁴³ Women, however, had gained more power although they maintained the semblance of the old authority structure. "Indian women characteristically do not solve their problem of role strain by making a frontal attack on the socio-cultural norms and ideals but by manipulating the practical situation in such a way that they can realize their own plans and goals which as in many cases led to a complete reversal of roles in practice while theory remains unchanged. The dominance of the husband remains preserved as theoretical fiction, for the satisfaction of men, but the actual power in the family is often in the hands of the women."⁴⁴

These works were pointing out that education had become part of women's lives within a generation of India's independence, but little had changed in terms of gendered expectations. In terms of employment, variations existed and women in metropolitan areas like Delhi and Bombay were expressing signs of alteration in attitudes and behavior first. By the decade of the seventies there existed a group of middle class women who were availing themselves of the new economic opportunities coming their way, especially in the

government and the public sector industry due to the constitutional guarantee against discrimination in employment. These employment opportunities gave women opportunities to break out of the old traditional mold.⁴⁵ Another work by G.N. Ramu also documented that education did not result in women's participation in paid work, and that economic need did not always drive women to the workforce. Ramu focused highlighted the complexities of the personal motivations as well as family considerations that went into women's employment.⁴⁶

By the decade of the eighties further changes were noted. Student surveys in women's Christian college in Lucknow, found women primarily making their own educational choices, and leading more liberated lives than their mothers. This study clearly marked the difference in the relationship between women and education. For this generation of college-going women, self-fulfillment came with education, and women placed personal goals and self-interest before family obligations. College education, among this generation of women, was linked to career goals, with 41 per cent of the sample stating that education was a means to find a better career, 38 per cent for self-fulfillment and family concerns ran a mere third. The study also found that the career options for women had expanded from teaching, medicine and administrative services to include banking and architecture as the new careers. However, even this study reflected the continuation of the old cultural traditions and a majority of women continued to think that arranged marriages were the best options.⁴⁷

During this decade changes in parental attitudes towards daughters' education were also noted in small towns; before this majority of the studies were conducted in big cities. An anthropologist's research in a small town in South India noted that children's higher

education, both male and female children, had become a symbol of prestige for parents, and boosted their image among their relatives, friends and neighbors.⁴⁸ Given the highly competitive nature of the entrance exams to engineering, medical and other professional institutions, children's placement in these institutions gave parents added status. While parents were proud of their daughters' educational achievements, they expected to monitor daughters in educational institutions, and arrange marriages for them.⁴⁹

While majority of these studies focused on women and transformation in their lives, few also focused on transformation in male attitudes. Promilla Kapur argued that men carried, what she termed a "double set of values," one for themselves and one for their women. Similar to women, they continued to have elements of both old and the new, making their attitudes inconsistent and contradictory. However, Kapur noted that educated women's attitude had changed at a much faster rate than that of men.⁵⁰ Although they wanted a modern and westernized wife, they also wanted a chaste wife, who could serve her husband faithfully. They wanted an employed wife, but at the same time did not want her to socialize with men; they wanted her income and also wanted her to cook for them.⁵¹ Men by and large remained traditional, pro-male and authoritarian with definite predominance of "male superior, female inferior" ethos.⁵² Maria Meis quoting a study by sociologist K. Kapadia reported similar trends; in order to look progressive they professed to hold opinions that were current rather than show their orthodox attitudes.⁵³

These studies across India and in different decades drew attention to the fact that Indian society was at a crossroads of traditional and modern cultures. Education and employment while increasing were largely representative of parental aims for daughters' lives. Women from upper classes of society where fathers were well educated, were

instrumental in encouraging their children's higher education as well as outside work.⁵⁴ Mies, and Liddle and Joshi particularly documented the role played by the mothers, who learning from their personal restrictive experiences wanted better lives for their daughters.⁵⁵ While the degree of changes varied in these studies, they collectively found that education and employment had not changed women's gendered identities and they remained identified primarily as wives and their new outside roles remained secondary to their domestic roles. Moreover, majority of the women internalized their domestic identities and sought changes within the female sphere. As a result, despite outside work, in many families' women continued to be considered as visitors in their own homes, training for life in their real homes after marriage, where their roles changed to accommodate to the expectations of their husbands' families, and remained at the bottom of the family hierarchy. An increase in their status depended upon the extent of melding their identity to suit the aims of their married families. Noted an author; "The greater her self effacement the higher is the acclaim accorded her in traditional view."⁵⁶ Furthermore, the dominant cultural values for middle and upper class women still emphasized the importance of family and motherhood. A prominent sociologist writing in 1975, the international year of the women, commented that "womanhood in India was inseparable from motherhood and all that it entails—the responsibilities and honor; everything else is secondary."⁵⁷

The ideology of higher education and employment clashed with traditional expectations. Not only were families exhibiting resistance to social change governing women's lives, but similar tensions also were evident in politics. The Hindu Code Bill, the very essence of ideological transformation concerning women, faced tough resistance in

the Parliament. First introduced in 1951, it did not pass legislature until 1956 and then in a much-diluted form. Social transformation faced tough resistance from all sides and was not easily accepted by families. Changes at the top in the form of legislation did not alter social structures; they just superimposed a new legal system that was co-opted by the traditional value system. While legal changes espoused equality between men and women, cultural and religious values continued to place men in a dominant position and encouraged women to be dependent on men. Any changes that were taking place were within particular families and were not without conflict.⁵⁸

Although families' co-opted new laws and the increasing education of women and any transformation that occurred in women's lives were within their spheres and in relation to domesticity. As a result, increases in women's higher education came about not out of a desire for parents in empowering their daughter, and sending them out to work, but with the aim of increasing their value in the marriage market. Laws changing women's marriage age from 15 years to 18 years definitely influenced parents' decision in providing college education for their daughters until they reached the age of 18 and could be married off. Parents' decisions to educate their daughters' were further influenced by an increasing awareness that educated professional men, the most sought after men in the marriage market, wanted educated wives. Providing higher education to daughters, thus, became primarily related to fulfilling parental responsibility towards settling daughters because it allowed parents to find better matrimonial matches for their daughters.⁵⁹ This sentiment was clearly expressed in the voice of an Indian woman in another work. The woman stated: "Although I went to college, it was not thought that I would work at a job or have a career.

College was something I did in between [high] school and getting married. College was preparation to get married.”⁶⁰

The Detroit sample: 1960s

Immigrant women in Detroit were rooted in this changing culture, and their lives reveal a range of behavior. The majority had internalized the dominant norms and continued to identify themselves primarily within their sphere; those who wanted to break away from it rarely had the power to do so. Women and men operated within a social system, which defined male and female roles, and any deviations from it were seen in negative light. Families, the reproducer of gender norms, continued to be major player their and made important decisions for them. Higher education and employment of women who grew up in the decade of the sixties was rarely voluntary and largely at the behest of their families. According to Sheila “My mother always wanted me to be a doctor and since age 6, I was encouraged to be one. But the final decision to go into medicine was mine.”⁶¹ Uma followed her father’s wishes, which were contrary to her own: “My dad wanted me to be in medicine. I wanted to be in literature or in music, but my father said you can’t get a decent living out of them. Women were going to work and he wanted some professional degree in case need arise. I could not argue with my father.”⁶²

These women also show the effects of Indian government intervention to increase education. Vimla reported: “In high school I got good marks and got a scholarship to go to college.”⁶³ Vimla believed that without the scholarship that paid her a monthly allowance besides covering her educational fees, her education would have ended since there was no college nearby her village. There also were rare few who were making decisions independent of their family. Noted Soudamini: “ My mother was in [the] hospital a lot and

I wanted to be a nurse and help people. Father said no; [he said] only Christian people take this profession. But I applied. He did not object when I got admission, and I lived in a city away from home to do my nursing.”⁶⁴ Soudamini’s account also draws attention to the segregation of professions even among women; the most acceptable professions for women were medicine, teaching and social work. Nursing was predominantly the domain of Christian women, especially from the southern state of Kerala. Women of the sixties also drew attention to the fact that higher education took place under traditional rules of male-female segregation and discouraged daughters from attending co-educational institutions if women’s separate institutions were in existence. Recalling this Shelia stated: “My mother wanted me to go to Lady Harding, a woman’s medical college. I finally went there, because it was a good college, but at that time I was not too happy about it.”⁶⁵ In co-educational institutions strict care was taken to maintain separate living arrangements for male and female students, and women’s hostels were well guarded. These professional women also trained for household duties deemed necessary for women’s domestic lives. Rama, Sushma, and others pointed out this out. “Oh, I went to sewing classes, flower arrangement classes, all the things you need to know. Yes I knew everything.”⁶⁶ It is also interesting to note that many professional women in the sample, while deft in the above works did not know the art of cooking; as professional women, they were expected to have servants in their homes to take care of daily cooking needs.

These women’s stories also suggest that their higher education was not a common phenomenon even within their extended families resulting in tensions between nuclear and extended families. Noting this Uma stated: “Nobody in my [extended] family educated women so much. We were the oddballs. Relatives talked about it that my father gave

women too much freedom. They said, 'Why do you support them so much?' Many people criticized my parents.⁶⁷ Even families exhibiting new attitudes towards women's education rarely allowed their daughters freedom of movement, or suggested behavioral deviations. Women were still trained for household chores. Many women of the sixties, who received college education, were not clear on the purpose and meaning of education and the meaning of education in the minds of many were not clear. Commenting on her state of confusion about her education Veena stated:

I don't think that we had clear expectations. We talked about going to teach, being a lecturer but I don't think we had a clear-cut idea about going into the workforce. I didn't know what I was going to do with my education; I mean we didn't think in those terms. If you ask a woman in their 50s in India or the USA I don't think any of us had any clear paths. [The] idea was we would get an education, meet our prince charming and live happily ever after. It was a romanticized kind of thing. I don't think that I started thinking of [my] profession until I was in my thirties.⁶⁸

Moreover, women's decision to work before marriage was dependent upon the wishes of their fathers, and after their marriages upon the wishes of their husbands and their families. A large majority of women in Detroit who had worked before their marriages, left their paid work after marriages, either in accord with the wishes of their husband's family, or because of their relocation to new areas in order to join their spouses. Getting professional education did not imply working outside their homes and the society at large was still not ready for women's outside role. Uma who went to medical school in the sixties commented on this aspect: "There was debate in our college in the decade of the early sixties if women should be allowed to enter the medical profession since a large number of them did not practice their professions."⁶⁹ In the sample four women who grew up in the decade of the fifties and the sixties quit their jobs, one at the insistence of her spouse's family: "I left my job after marriage because my in-laws did not want me to

work.”⁷⁰ The rest quit their jobs to relocate to new areas after their marriages, resumed work to quit again, one to start her family and the other to relocate to the U.S. with her husband. These women’s life histories emphasize that despite higher education and outside work, women’s main purpose in life continued to be their marriages.

Although women’s education was related to matrimony, there was a fear among many parents, similar to that of Rama’s parents, of overeducating daughters. Parents accepted women’s education until bachelor’s degree. Further education was frowned upon for fear of locating a suitable marriage match since men were to be more educated than women.⁷¹ Higher education was encouraged only for women who were considered marginal in the marriage market.⁷² Sheila elaborated on this aspect:

In arranged marriages, a lot of attention on how beautiful you are, how light skinned you are. My mother’s side is very light skinned so she always said that you will never get married. I always heard that you are so dark that you will never get married. You had to be in a good profession that your market value will increase. I heard that, I heard it all the time---but I don’t think it affected me . . . She sowed the seeds I guess, but the decision to go into medicine was mine.⁷³

Not only were women’s lives being ruled by gender ideology, but men’s lives too were guided by prevalent gendered expectations. Indian families were heavily invested in the educational decisions for their sons since families’ expectations from them were much higher than those from their daughters. Parents invested much thought into choosing and guiding sons to a proper professions and any deviation from parental plans was frowned upon. Rajendra’s life highlighted this aspect. “I wanted to be an artist, but my mother did not want me to be one. I had to finish an engineering degree before I could go to [into] arts.”⁷⁴ In independent India, the most sought after occupations were science-based and within sciences, engineering was the most popular occupation among men. A survey conducted in 1970 in Bombay amongst fathers, regarding their occupational aspirations for

their sons, found that 53 per cent wanted their sons to be engineers. Other professions in high demand were doctors and lawyers.⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that this survey, reflecting the gender ideology, did not even mention fathers' aspiration towards their daughters.

In new India, thus education retained different meaning for men and women. The gendered nature of education was also evident from the fields that women and men chose. Men were in sciences and technical fields; women were in arts and humanities. While education remained a key element of mobility in independent India, the meaning of mobility remained different for men and women; for men key element of upward mobility was education in new India. Education for men was related to personal mobility in terms of attaining better jobs but also contacting good marriages, or commanding higher dowry prices.⁷⁶

Detroit women's narratives suggest that the biggest changes in their lives, like those documented in the above mentioned studies, were in their personal objectives in marriages, their higher expectations from spouses', as well as a move away from arranged marriages. Marriage customs in India followed the arranged marriage system whereby parents chose a woman's marriage partner rarely with any input from the woman in her mate selection. Educated women, who worked outside their homes, were beginning to find their own marriage partners instead of relying on their parents to arrange marriages for them. Co-education in many higher institutions, as well as outside work was encouraging increasing interactions with men resulting in what was termed in India as "love marriages." These marriages were even breaking caste, ethnic group and religious barriers, a rarity in arranged marriages, and were definitely gigantic steps for women and men at the time. Although such marriages were not the norms in the decade of the fifties and the sixties,

they were making a beginning in India. These attempts by women to make their own marriage choices were rarely looked upon favorably, although there were a rare few who encouraged their daughters to find their own life partners. Stories from two women illustrate the following trend.

Father was very strict—friends told me no problem take him home and talk to father. What if the father says no, should we run away? I wrote a letter to my father—I want to marry him and take his [father's] permission. Father [was] very excited but said that both are educated and later on if anything happens don't blame us. Ours was an inter-caste marriage, inter-religion marriage. His mother was very hesitant—his uncle's son didn't want him to marry me, said he will get a rich girl for him.⁷⁷

I dated my husband for 9 years. Started dating him while in high school about 15 years old, first meeting him behind the bushes, then went to same college, and same medical school. Everyone knew, people talked. Again we came from different groups [language and caste] His parents were very much against the marriage. His father said that he would disown him. But his brother who was in the U.S.A. got married to a German girl and people said at least she is Indian. We were going to have a court marriage but then when his father agreed . . . My father was very forward looking, always wanted his children to find their own mates.⁷⁸

While the first narrative suggests fear and apprehension at going against the prevailing marriage traditions, the second narrative displays by all accounts a liberal family setting where women were allowed great freedom to choose their marriage partners. However, in both cases, women were aware of societal expectations as a family *bahu* [daughter-in-law]. The first one left work after marriage at the insistence of her in-laws, the second continued to defer to the wishes of her mother-in-law as in traditional Indian families. They both also lived in the joint family system after their marriages.

While these cases were not the norm in the sixties, even within arranged marriages women were beginning to move against the traditional expectations and expressing their choices, as did Chitra:

I had the right to say no. I did say no. There was someone who used to come to my home. One day he said you are coming to my home [as his wife]. and I said who said that and he said *lalaji* [grandfather]. Then I said 'Marry Lalaji and bring him home.' Anyway my grandfather got me engaged to him. I was quiet but I avoided him. One day I told him, 'Meet me after school.' I was teaching at that time. I told him to tell his mother to write a letter saying you don't want to marry me, because I don't want to marry you. The he wrote to my mother. My father got mad, and I forgot to tell my mother that I met him. They talked...*badi badi baten karte the* [people talked a lot]. That was a big step; I was prepared not to be married. He was not educated, not even good looking.⁷⁹

Chitra's account displays agency. Her objections to her arranged marriage plans were rooted in having expectations of higher education and good looks in her intended marriage partner. Chitra, however, did not directly break off her engagement but surreptitiously worked the system. These expectations however were beyond the traditional ideology where women rarely questioned their marriage choices made by the elders. Chitra was the new Indian women, found in Promila Kapur's sample, who wanted more from her marriage. Her modernity however was within the notions of prevalent gender norms. Her conception of her role in marriage was within her prescribed sphere. All she wanted in a husband, in her own words, was "*Acha ladka, khushi ki life*" [A good boy, happy life]. She saw her role as a wife to consist of "*ghar mein baithe kam kare, bache paida kare* [take care of home and have children]. Her expectations from her husband were respect *kare, pyar kare, gharwalon ki izzat kare, aur hum uske gharwalon ki izzat kare*. [Respect her, love her and respect her family and she would respect his family.] After her marriage she became a housewife. Yet Chitra carried independent thought, expressed herself either clearly even within the confines of the traditional system, and claimed to be tomboyish, drove a scooter, traits that were not looked upon as womanly.

Other women saw modernity in relation to imbibing new fashions, wearing tighter or shorter dresses, and even western bell-bottoms although accompanied by an Indian

chunni [scarf], or having ‘bob-cut hair.’ They spoke of freedom in terms of seeing movies with their college friends without parents, skipping classes to roam around Connaught Place in Delhi during the daytime, but ensuring return in time for the evening hostel curfews. These women spoke of acquiring new social skills, reading *Femina* a modern women’s journal, and their ability to converse on a variety of issues, sometimes even in English.⁸⁰ Some of these social skills, especially speaking English, were highly sought after in the marriage market and could compensate for a lack of physical beauty. This was obvious in Veena’s accounts: “I am putting it very bluntly. I am not saying that I am ugly but I am not traditionally beautiful. You see I am dark. I am tall. My big advantage was that I spoke English.”⁸¹ These women were living proof the old and the new India that existed simultaneously in women’s lives.

1970s

The immigrants who arrived in the decade of the seventies continued to display a mixture of the old and the new ideas by women and their families, as apparent in Sushma’s narrative.

My dad wanted me to be an engineer, and I too remember always wanting to be an engineer. My mom did not think too much of it, but her objections were overruled. Mom did not want me to go to engineering because it was expensive and she wanted to save money for dowry. She also feared that I would be too educated and would not find a marriage partner. He [father] didn’t care. He said if they are educated someone will take care of them, they won’t need dowry. I was the only woman in my engineering college. There was no woman’s hostel and a staff quarter was given to me. I had a cook and a ‘*chowkidar*’ [guard] guarding my quarters.⁸²

Sushma’s story highlights the influence of her father in guiding her towards a non-traditional and male dominated career of engineering. Her story draws attention to the tensions between her parents on the effect of higher education; her mother’s concerns with

the difficulty in finding suitable marriage partner for her reflected the continuation of the old trends, her father's views represented the new ideas. Furthermore, her story also emphasized the role of educational institutions in reproducing cultural norms in their special attempts at keeping her segregated from male students. Sushma was a path breaker, and representative of women's new achievements; she was a woman in a traditionally male field, an only woman student in an all male institution, worked only with men, yet her acceptance of the dominant ideology was evident in her acceptance of arranged marriage system. She stated, "I didn't want to hear that I got married on my own," and asked her parents to find a marriage partner when she was ready for marriage. Moreover, despite her engineering degree also knew how to knit, stitch and was well versed in household chores.⁸³

Like Sushma, women who grew up in the seventies depicted varying degrees of transformation in their as well as their family's ideology. Women's higher education continued to be guided by their parents, and many families were continuing to have high expectations from their daughters.⁸⁴ But in this decade, Mala also spoke of making her own professional choices although she was encouraged in her endeavors by her parents. Schools and colleges emerged as new institutions that were beginning to prepare women for professions and training them for the rigors of entrance exams to professional colleges. During this decade for the first time, Laila spoke of not being trained for household work. She stated, "Mother tried to teach us how to sew but I was never interested. That way my house was different. My father gave so much importance to education that it almost took us away from household chores."⁸⁵

In terms of marriages, again old and new forms were seen. During this decade, a new form of arranging marriages through newspapers also emerged. Along with social networks, parents were also beginning to use matrimonial advertisements in the newspapers to find marriage partners for their children. Women like Sheila were corresponding with someone, introduced by the family, in another city with a view to matrimony, Mona was dating someone but broke away the relationship because of the disapproval of her father, and subsequently married someone in the U.S.; and there also existed women who had no say in their marriage decisions as was the case with Usha. “Got down from the train at 5 in the morning and was engaged at 5 in the evening. I had no say, nobody asked my opinion. I was only 15 or 16. I was studying in tenth grade at that time.”⁸⁶

1980s

By the decade of the eighties, however, clear breaks were noticeable in the lives of women from those of the earlier decades. Similar to the students of Lucknow Christian College, these women, like Madhu, mentioned earlier, were predominantly making their own educational choices and sometimes against the wishes of their family as did Radha.

I wanted to go to I.I.T. (Indian Institute of Technology). My mother wasn't keen. She wanted me to go for economics, she was fascinated with a bank job, it was a 'good job.' She specifically didn't want me to go to I.I.T. She was against it because of the atmosphere there. There were very few women there and there was a very, very open atmosphere. Girls' hostel has no restrictions. One can go in anytime. She knew a few girls who had found their own match there, and she was very very scared of that. The authorities wanted to put restrictions, but some of the girls objected. They made a ruckus about it as they were used to the freedom. He was my friend. It [their romantic relationship] wasn't a conscious decision. It is just that you get used to somebody that you cannot imagine life without them. I did think about marriage early on. And I used to tell him, you know we shouldn't spend so much time together because of my mother's attitude. I was determined that I wasn't going to find anyone for myself. I was going to prove her wrong. When I told my mother, she was very upset. She told us we should stay away from each other for a few years. I was in Delhi, he was in Bombay. We communicated

with each other, and I visited him in Bombay; I hadn't seen him for a long time. When she found out, she said you guys should get married."

Radha's account underlined her independence from her mother in relation to her occupational choice. Her mother's objections were related to her fears of Radha finding a marriage partner at school given that I.I.T's were male domains. Radha's account also showed her acceptance of arranged marriage and her inner resolve not to find her own marriage partner and her attempts at keeping her friendship with her male friend platonic and the tensions she faced in deciding to marry him. Elements of her narrative was also evident in other women's lives because women in this decade were living fuller lives, choosing their own profession, sometimes even against the wishes of their family and considered themselves as independent women. They formed friendships with men and were not hesitant in expressing their wishes to their families, and had much clearer ideas of what they wanted in life. Higher education for these women was a given, so much so that few in the sample talked of it with the same reverence as the women who came in the sixties and the seventies. Yet even these women, as seen in the life of Radha, were not averse to arranged marriages. Even Madhu, who came independently to the U.S., was not against the notion of arranged marriage, and although she found her own marriage partner, she consciously looked for men within her own ethnic, religious group.

Migration

In independent India, men were migrating to the western nations for education and employment, and these migrations were situated within the context of new India. A nation focusing on rapid technical and industrial advancement required scientific manpower. In addition, higher education was in the process of development and Indian universities lacked specialized studies in many scientific disciplines, encouraging many to come to the

West. Moreover, the Indian culture under the British colonial rule had created a high respect for “foreign” educational degrees and the educational hierarchy in new India continued to consider western education superior to Indian education.⁸⁷ Traditionally Indian men went to England for higher education, largely because of India’s colonial linkages with Great Britain. In new India a new trend of migration to the United States was emerging given the U.S. eminence in technical and scientific fields. According to many interviewees in Detroit, the system of the American universities to provide a stipend to its students as well as the availability of student jobs also played a big role in shifting the migration of many Indians from England towards the United States. These early educational migrations were temporary in nature. People like Ram Lal took leave of absence from their jobs; others also came to the U.S. with thoughts of returning home. By the decade of the seventies, however, a discernible change was noticed and more and more migrants were leaving home with the intent to stay permanently in the U.S.

The political economy of India in the decades of the sixties and the seventies underwent a series of problems. The rapid growth seen after independence, especially in the decade of the fifties gave way to stagnation in the sixties and the seventies. During these decades the annual rate of growth of GNP was 3.5 per cent; but given the annual population increase of 2 per cent, the annual increase in per capita income was between one to two per cent, a growth so low for so long that it was termed as the Hindu rate of growth by Prof. Raj Krishna, a noted Indian economist. Industrial growth rate decelerated and was accompanied by rising labor unrest. The centralized Indian economic structure also suffered from the populist programs that focused predominantly on the agriculture sector. The nationalization of certain sectors and the onset of what was termed as the

license Raj, further created stagnation in the Indian economy. The public sector undertakings, which dominated Indian industry, were beset with outdated technology; little was invested in research and development, excessive political interference, and bureaucratic management rather than professional management. These decades were also characterized by rapid urbanization without any accompanying increase in infrastructure, making for lower quality of life. By the decade of the seventies problems of underemployment and educated unemployment were endemic to the Indian system. Since 1951, enrollment in higher education had increased at the rate of 11 per cent per year.⁸⁸ Employment opportunities for the educated however did not grow at this rapid rate. During the decade of the fifties, jobs in government run public sector grew fast, but in the sixties this trend declined; the private sector grew, but not at a rate to absorb the growing educated population; there was supply but no demand. Consequently, real earnings for employed professionals did not rise.⁸⁹ In the prevailing conditions, those who could leave India for employment or education, left with the encouragement of their families. The few who returned, did not find comparable employment.⁹⁰

The economic and political unrest in India in the sixties and the seventies influenced migrants' decision to leave India.⁹¹ Increasing unemployment and underemployment, and working conditions that were not considered conducive to professional development, resulted in increasing frustrations among many young students and professionals, increasing their desire to go abroad.⁹² Frustrations at jobs in India were common, and these themes frequently emerged in letters and articles of Indians who were in the U.S. According to one such letter to India Abroad, the author pointed to four factors that influenced professionals' migrations. These were " . . . the lack of incentive for

research scientists to work in India, lack of proper planning in the turnout of technologies, the time needed for fresh graduates to find jobs in India and the need for influence in getting jobs and finally administrative structure that does not put scientists in administrative jobs.”⁹³ Similar sentiments were also shared in an article in India Abroad in 1976, which not only focused on the absence of research facilities, but also on the lack of a proper research environment. The author lamented “work is only a breadwinner for the people and not a creative exercise in perfection. People in Indian laboratories are not always motivated by a work ethos; often it is a political ethos that prevails.” The writer further wrote about the lack of credit given to the individual scientist (compared to the top management) for technical innovation a situation, which created working conditions that did not encourage young scholars, resulting in their passivity and frustration. “Promotions were time bound rather than merit bound; ‘bossism’ prevailed. People prevailed themselves to their bosses [sic] rather than their work.” Moreover, higher positions usually went to bureaucrats rather than to scientists in India.⁹⁴ Along with problems of work, other factors also motivated many to leave home. A National Science Foundation study revealed that a higher standard of living and an increased opportunity for children motivated many from India to migrate.⁹⁵ A study on immigrant engineers also found that salary differentials, better research environment, and better life style influenced migration.⁹⁶

Along with the lack of professional opportunities, salary differentials between India and America were important reasons for the migration of skilled workers.⁹⁷ According to one report, doctors in India earned \$63 to \$ 315 a month. In comparison, stories abounded of physicians who were earning \$ 25,000 a year in Great Britain, and approximately \$52,500 year in America. Even medical residents in America had a starting

salary of \$12,600 a year.⁹⁸ These salaries were phenomenal by Indian standards, especially when converted to the weaker Indian rupees, further inducing many to go abroad.

Medical education in India grew rapidly since independence. There were 12 medical colleges in 1947 and 115 by the decade of the eighties with an annual production of about 12,500 doctors.⁹⁹ Moreover, medical and educational standards in India were oriented towards the advanced nations of the West. Among new physicians, dissatisfaction with work was high, and a big gap existed between one's educational training, expectations and work conditions. Doctors were expected to work in rural areas where few facilities existed, and as a result few wanted to work in rural hospitals. Many physicians, coming from upper and middle class urban backgrounds, had social expectations rooted in their particular class.¹⁰⁰ They expected to move to the West for higher education than relocate to the villages, even temporarily. These physicians also had high expectations of American education.¹⁰¹

By the decade of the eighties, a social system existed that exalted those settled abroad for their economic success as well as their homes and consumerist goods. The phenomena became so prevalent that a noted sociologist, M.N. Srinivas commented upon the "foreign bug" prevalent in India and stated: "Excited parents are heard saying, "My son [daughter] does not want to come back. What is there to come back to?"¹⁰² He further noted that those educated in the elite institutions like the I.I.T.'s rarely stayed in India. This foreign fever, he found, was not only affecting young but even older generation. "Middle aged women love to talk to their relatives and friends about their stay abroad, the air conditioned houses and cars, the gadgetry and glories of the American supermarket, and

the conveniences and the wealth their offspring command.”¹⁰³ Srinivas linked the fascination to the west not only to its wealth but also to better lifestyle as represented by consumerism that was rapidly gaining ground in India.¹⁰⁴ With this drive to leave for better life abroad, family migrations became the norm.

While the nature of migrations was changing, the gender component of migrations from India remained male dominated. Given the place of women in Indian families and Indian society, given the nature of their education, and given the lack of independent movement allowed women, few Indian women could have migrated alone. The internalization of dominant norms by women, even educated women, did not allow any development of thought beyond their expected sphere. The only exception to this rule were the Christian women who were given more independence and many worked away from their homes in professions like nursing.¹⁰⁵

Independent women’s migration in India, as in other nations of South Asia, were rare and primarily occurred among economically marginalized families.¹⁰⁶ Women, however, outnumbered men as migrants, and women’s migration occurred primarily through family or marriage migrations. Autonomous movement of women were acceptable within short distances where family or social networks could take care of women, or for educational purposes but migration outside India was considered problematic. Male migrations in India, however, were for economic purposes.¹⁰⁷ Given that migrations from India in the decade of the sixties and the seventies were primarily for education and employment purposes, and given the evolving but still secondary role assigned to women’s outside role in relation to her primary role as wives, few women could have migrated independently.

Central to independent migration from India were first, a strong motivation for higher education; second, education primarily in science and technical fields; and finally moral and financial support from families. As evident earlier, the cultural identity of women rarely encouraged them to assign primacy to their education and outside work, and majority of the women accepted women's roles as defined by the dominant society. Secondly, majority of the women were found in fields of arts and humanities whereas men predominated in science fields. Third, even if the first two variables were positively correlated, women had to negotiate their migration intent through their families. The rare few among the first generation of college-educated women, whose visions and expectations had expanded beyond those conceptualized by their family, did not have the resources needed for migration; like Rama, Veena and Madhu had to negotiate delicately with their families and operate within the existing system. Families, while supporting their daughters' education, were against their independent migration since it detracted from their marriage. Moreover, the time needed to migrate, from planning to leaving home, also acted against women's plans. Given that the main aim of women, professional or non-professional, continued to be their marriages, any time spent abroad made women's marriage prospects bleaker. In times when age was a factor in a woman's marriage (the younger the more eligible), sending daughters to America not only affected the age factor making daughters older but also suggested making woman independent, a trait not looked upon favorably in the marriage market. The marriage age of Indian urban women was 17.8 years in 1961, 19 years in 1971 and 18.3 years in 1981. The Census statistics further showed that in 1961, 70 per cent of women married between the age 15-19, by 1971, 55.8 per cent, and by 1981, 43.5 per cent showing a rise in marriage age. But the statistics also

showed that the majority of Indian women were married by age 24. In 1981, in the age between 20-24 years, 88.4 per cent of women were married, a figure that had come down from 89 per cent in 1971 and 92 per cent in 1961.¹⁰⁸ In the marriage market when young women were in demand, sending daughters abroad delayed their marriages and created problems in finding suitable marriage partner given that Indian society accepted men to be more educated than women.

Moreover, sending women abroad alone went against the patriarchal norms of the Indian society where their men usually protected women. This issue was important for Rama's family. Even when her parents agreed to send her abroad, it was conditional upon coming to one university; "I could only come to M.S.U. (Michigan State University) since my cousin was studying at M.S.U."¹⁰⁹ Inherent in sending daughters abroad was the fear that it might allow women to gain power, which was against the prevailing norms.

Moreover, in a society where single women's independent movement was frowned upon, sending single women abroad was also filled with risks that could jeopardize her marriage prospects since it carried hidden implications of woman's independence and implied a behavior that was considered contrary to the characteristics required in a housewife. Not only could it affect the marriage of the migrant but it could also create problems for other members of her family. Families were operating in a society where women's freedom was frowned upon. According to Veena who came as a student in the decades of the sixties: "My parents faced a lot of criticism in letting me come as a single young woman and I am told that there was a lot of criticism of that after I left. It created problems for my sisters who were not married. It worked out; it is just that at that time it seemed a big thing."¹¹⁰

Gendered lives also created gendered visions; men were coming to enhance their economic potential, women for their freedom from the social norms and distance from the hierarchical family structure or to move away from the joint family system to form their nuclear family. Lack of well-developed economic aims also hindered women's migration plans. Sending daughters abroad for higher studies and even occupations required substantial financial investment and gendered norms shaped resource allocation within families. While education of men abroad was viewed as capital investment given the son's role as a caretaker of the family, investment in girls' education was without any apparent return since any future benefits of their education, or employment were to accrue to her married family. While the men in Detroit spoke of receiving emotional and financial support from their family and for those who were married, from their in-laws, women who desired to come to America as students spoke of continuous negotiations with their family regarding supporting their wishes. There were rare cases of unmarried women coming to America and those were usually a result of parental decision.¹¹¹

In addition, higher education abroad was not an easy task. From oral interviews it is clear that it usually took over a year for an Indian from the time of application to their arrival at a U.S. university. The long drawn process required taking exams like TOEFL, and GRE, and applying to universities abroad. The intended migrant had to negotiate with the state for documentation to leave India. In the sixties, passports were difficult to get in India. The Government of India did not issue passports until plans to leave were finalized. A report issued by the governmental investigation clearly documented these:

It may be mentioned that it is difficult to obtain a passport until their plans are fairly well advanced. The passport applications in such cases are required to be supported by various documents such as proof of having secured a fellowship/scholarship

from a foreign institution, employment voucher, entry certification or permit from the concerned foreign government, financial guarantee, tax certificate etc.¹¹²

Along with the long process of getting admission and employment abroad one had to also negotiate the multiple bureaucratic and time-consuming formalities required by the state ranging from police verification, Reserve Bank clearance, and getting loans, to foreign exchange. These were public activities, which few Indian women performed in India. In the absence of parental support these bureaucratic formalities emerged as further impediments to women's migration.

Moreover from time to time, in order to stop the brain drain, the government refused to allow certain categories of people to leave India. Until 1965 women could be found in few professions and medical field, especially becoming physician was one avenue for them to migrate, if their family would have permitted them. Similar family support was essential even for those seeking employment abroad, and those men and women who left India did so with the support of their family. After 1968 physicians needed to go to Sri Lanka or Philippines to take the E.C.F.M.G. (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates) exam and the high costs of travel and stay were usually borne by the family.

Leaving home for America required a clearer vision of objectives to be achieved in America. Detroit women displayed a wide variety of knowledge and understanding towards the United States; with the exception of Rama, these notions were within their spheres. Although a large majority were supporting their husbands' migration few had conceived of independent migration. Savitri Devi, although coming temporarily to the U.S. was aware that the standard of life was much better in the U.S. For Raksha, the news of the U.S. and its wonderful life came through letters of her spouse. Shyamala received

cards and news from her fiancée and thinking of her married life in a new nation to a romantic man. And Chitra was aware of the better standards of living and was instrumental in her husband's migration after receiving news from her cousin about the U.S. She found information about immigration process, and did the paper work done since her husband could not take time off from work. And there were women like Indira whose awareness of the west was limited to reading about it in geography textbooks. Many of these women's awareness of the U.S. was in terms of its effects on their lives through their husbands' professional mobility, which in turn promised better lives as wives. Some, though not all, also envisioned America in terms of personal freedom, freedom from hierarchical constraints. Other married women, like Indira, even if they did not want to leave India, supported their men's desire for better life. And many who did not have an independent vision of America, ended up in America as a result of their mothers' visions and intervention. These were attempts at not only at providing well for their daughters, but also attempts to move their daughters away from the constraints of the hierarchical family structure. According to Shyamala: "There was too much control in her [mother's] life. My mom is a very forward-looking woman, very independent, she has a lot of love of life and she felt stifled."¹¹³ Many of these women did not have any conception of the U.S. and their migration was a result of marriages arranged by their families to men abroad. These women thought more of their men and marriages than of the U.S. Stated Chandra "I knew I was getting married to someone in America but I didn't know anything about America. Someone asked me where was I going in America and I did not even know the name of the city."¹¹⁴

In India, arranged marriages were the norm and the elders selected a marriage partner for the younger members of their family. Arranged marriages had economic implications and the prime requisite in finding a prospective groom was to locate a “well-settled” man; and in essence it implied locating an economically secure man who could keep his future wife within the confines of his home. For middle class women with their limited forays into paid work, marriages remained economic options and for many the sole avenue for upwardly mobility.¹¹⁵ And in modern India, a large proportion of the “well-settled” and upwardly mobile men—educated professionals from good families—were migrating to the West in search of occupational mobility.

Arranged marriages in the eyes of Westerners are an anathema, and are pointers to the lack of agency in women. In Indian terms, however, few women saw arranged marriages in such a light and on the contrary, saw marriage migration in terms of personal and professional enhancement. Chandra, Shyamala, Sneha, Kamlesh and others were in their own right the new women who were public performers, teachers, and bankers before their marriages, yet they willingly quit their jobs and expected to be taken care of their husbands’. They saw marriage migration as progress for their life. Consequently, women’s migration through marriages, seen through the cultural fabric of Indian society, were positive signs in women’s lives and for some conscious decisions through which these women were changing their lives.

By the decade of the eighties, however, there was a discernible transformation in the nature of marriage migration; if the women of the sixties were coming to America for marriages, women of the eighties were marrying men from America with the aims of migration. The fact that Indian men from America were returning to find educated and now

professional wives, professional women were migrating through marriages. This becomes clear if one look at the matrimonial columns in the Indian press, which were emerging as the new medium of arranging marriages, especially for people returning from America.¹¹⁶

If the majority of women in the sixties and the seventies saw migration through the eyes of their spouses, subsequent generation of women, working or non-working, saw America as a panacea for the ills of Indian society, the new Utopia for women. Stories of returnees, the spread of American popular culture through movies and popular literature, emergence of consumerism and preference for things American, combined with the status of America as a developed nation created imagery, which was highly positive. America in the minds of these women was a multiple America, depicting the diversity of women's lives in India and their expectations from life; it was seen in professional and in personal terms. In personal terms it implied nuclear families, distance from the hierarchical structure, individual freedom. For single women it was becoming the place where modern Indian men—who were repudiating many traditional Indian practices, especially dowry—could be found. While the literature speaks of “America returned” men getting higher dowry prices, women from my sample talked of modern idealist men who were shunning dowries, and talked of supporting their wives in their personal endeavors.¹¹⁷ In educational and professional terms, it was also the place for them to acquire more knowledge and advance professionally. These expectations, however, were not mutually exclusive; educated professional women also had personal aims, and women coming through marriages had professional aims. In personal terms, America was seen as a place where they could have equal marriages, nuclear families, and distance from mothers- in-

law, enhanced personal freedom, bigger homes, better cars, and a better quality of life with “24 hours of running water.”¹¹⁸

For Detroit women of the latter period, economic options were not necessarily the driving force, but personal factors. Younger women desired nuclear families and companionate relationships with their men. Professional women in the sample, who came in the decades of the eighties, like their predecessors in the decade of the sixties, spoke of personal independence and forming nuclear families. According to Madhu: “I was in awe of this place. It had no red tape. I guess it is that I felt maybe women’s independence was more here, greater freedom of choice. My cousin had come here, and I had this feeling if he had done it so could I. And I thought that I would be earning money here.”¹¹⁹ Radha on the other hand, wanted to leave India for personal and non-economic reasons. She stated: “I stayed with his family [after marriage] for a couple of years. Those years weren’t nice for me. His family was a joint family I am not used to staying in a joint family. I come from a nuclear family . . . Part of it was when I came back from work, I didn’t get time to spend with him, talk to him . . . when he wanted to do Ph.D. here, I had no objection.”¹²⁰

By the eighties, women were definitely leading freer lives and making independent decisions. But even among these women there was awareness that freedom operated within traditional values, which despite loosening, were continuing to define women’s primary goal in life.¹²¹ And within India, marriage migrations continued to dominate the migration statistics, although there was an increase in the migration of single, educated women.¹²² Marriages remained the most important indicator in their life and arranged marriages still predominated, although young women were now allowed to voice their opinion, exercise choices, and meet their prospective grooms before marriages.¹²³ The internalization of

these norms can be seen by the fact that even educated and professional women did not see anything wrong with arranged marriages.¹²⁴ Although occupations were an important aspect of many urban women's lives, these women continued to leave their jobs after marriages, follow their spouses and find work in their new places of residence. Moreover, even for educated women, marriage migrations continued to be the easiest way of leaving India, especially given the context that women of the eighties accepted arranged marriages.

Although this generation of women in India were aware of migration terminology “green card,” “immigration,” and “permanent resident,” few had the independent option of migrating. Despite these expectations independent means to migrate—while more acceptable than earlier decades—were still not encouraged by families. Conditions that facilitated women's occupational migrations still were not comparable to those of men. Dominant cultural norms remained a barrier and even liberal parents who encouraged their daughter's educational endeavors and attempts at going abroad for higher education felt compelled by the burden of their social obligations. Furthermore, in the decade of the eighties, shifts in the nature of migration from India were also noticed that affected the migration of single women. Changes in American migration policies affected the migration of doctors, an important segment of the early migrant stream and a profession where women could have migrated independently. Women physicians continued to use marriages to men in America as a way to migrate. Rajan mentioned meeting prospective women regarding his marriage: “I did meet one or two [physicians] from A.I.I.M.S [a hospital] who I thought were only interested in coming to America.”¹²⁵ In addition, there was a shift in demand for high-tech workers, a field where women's presence was increasing but was rarely comparable to that of men.¹²⁶

By the decade of the eighties, the lure of coming to America was resulting in migration of men through marriages too. Families of second generation of women were returning to India to find Indian marriage partners for their daughters, and the search for marriage partners was conducted with an eye to find economically secure people whose skills were marketable in the America labor market. Interviews with Detroit immigrants suggest that a majority of families looked for physicians, since physicians' skills were in high demand in the U.S. The arranged marriage system allowed these marriages to occur without any stigma attached to it, and given that marriages in India were arranged, it made these marriages easy. The desire of many men to migrate made them seek this avenue, since it carried with it assumptions of an easier settlement process in the U.S. Three men in the sample arrived through marriage migrations. Rajan's story recounts that his desire to come to the United States was more important than his bride.

When I heard of the proposal, going to America, a bulb clicked in my mind. Only thing I wanted to do was come to America. I was hearing from friends that most of my classmates were coming here. I was thinking of coming here but I never applied. Manu got married and came here. Two Sikhs got married and came here. Marriage was the easy way to go.

I had nobody directly in the U.S.A. *Mami's* [maternal aunt] brother, dad's friend. I think I have a good life in America. I don't want to study TOEFL, GRE. I was risk averse. Others were well off, more supportive, and my dad doesn't have any money. It started in my head; I should go . . . My major thing was coming to the U.S.A.

My mom objected. I was the only son. I told my mom, Sidhu [another friend] went there too and he was an only son too. My father talked to people in his office and they said that women from America are not like Indian women. My parents did not want me to marry here. But I was *ziddi* [stubborn] and I said that I will marry here. There was like *matam* [mourning] in the house, and there was a wedding in the house. My sisters were happy, they said they could come to America too. And then my aunt came and talked to my parents. 'He will do better, he will send you money. He will call you all there.'¹²⁷

Rajan's story while highlighting his desire to go to the U.S. also shows the tensions between his parents' and his thinking, and his sisters were supporting his marriage with

hopes of migrating to the U.S. The increasing desire among men and women to migrate resulted in increasing family migrations with Indians in the U.S. sponsoring their relatives to the U.S. In the sample the majority supported the migration of someone. Brothers supported the migration of unmarried sisters. Green cards took the form of new dowry in India and women with a green card could get better or more economically mobile men as marriage partners due to their desire to migrate.

The lives of Detroit women migrants highlight that in modern, independent India, women's lives continued to operate within the context of their families. New laws espousing women's equality did not affect women's lives at home. Higher education and professional life continued to be defined in relation to women's domestic work as well as in relation to the attitudes of their spouses and their families. Although by the decade of the eighties women had gained considerable control over their educational and professional lives, few had control over resources or thought of moving independently without the support of their families. Control over financial resources remained a daunting task, and few were willing to take the risks or initiatives to move to a different place alone. Even by the decade of the eighties, women's primary identity was in terms of their married life. Given the lack of financial resources, half-hearted family support, and an internalization of the dominant norms ensured women's migration through marriages. During these years, however, women's outside work began emerging as part of their identity, and their expectations of their lives transformed considerably. Women were seeking companionate marriages, equality in marriages as well as a desire to have a nuclear family, and a better lifestyle than in India also translated into a consumerist life style, and a notion of the West, especially the U.S., in positive light. Women thus had no hesitation in migrating through

marriages to men abroad. Detroit women's lives draw attention to the fact that gendered norms, gendered traditions and gendered expectations continued to shape women and men's migrations.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Ram Lal, interview by author, 15 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ² Savitri Devi, interview by author, 28 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ³ Rama, interview by author, 8 August 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁴ Veena, interview by author, 14 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁵ Madhu, interview by author, 9 August, 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁶ This quote from Nehru, spoken at the All Indian Women's Conference in 1954 was taken from Changing Status of Women in India by Kiran Devendra, xiv (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1994).
- ⁷ Mukhopadhyaya, Women Education and Family Structure in India.
- ⁸ Karuna Chanana, "Social Change and Social Reform: Women, Education and Family in Pre-Independence India," in Women Education and Family Structure in India, by Mukhopadhyaya and Seymour, 37-58.
- ⁹ Bimla Luthra "Nehru and the Place of Women in Indian Society," in Indian Women: From Purdah to Modernity by B. R. Nanda, 1-15 (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1976).
- ¹⁰ Carol Chapnick Mukhopadhyaya and Susan Seymour, Women Education and Family Structure in India (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 1-33.
- ¹¹ Vina Mazumdar, "The Social Reform Movement in India—From Ranade to Nehru" in Indian Women by Nanda, 41- 66.
- ¹² Luthra "Nehru and the Place of Women in Indian Society." 1-13
- ¹³ Joshi and Liddle, Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India (London: Zed Books, 1986), 124-128.
- ¹⁴ Kiran Devendra, Changing Status of Women in India (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1994), 194.
- ¹⁵ H.K. Varshney, "Education and Employment Planning for Young Women," in Women and Work: Changing Scenario in India, ed. by Alakh Sharma and Seema Singh, 279-296 (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation for Indian Society of Labour Economics, 1993).
- ¹⁶ Baldev Singh and Navdeep Kaur, "Sex and the Probability of Graduate Employment: An All India Experience, 1971-1981," in Women and Work, by Sharma and Singh, 297-304.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Baldev Singh and Navdeep Kaur, "Sex and the Probability of Graduate Employment," 303.
- ¹⁹ Devendra, Changing Status of Women in India (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 53-54,
- ²⁰ Shakuntala, Pramila and Vimla, interview by author, 9 September, 1999, 2 June 1999, and 8 March 1999 respectively, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ²¹ These educational degrees were called "Ratan," "Prabhakar," and "Visharad." Women studied for these exams at home. I do not have any more details on this.
- ²² Madan, Indian Women From Purdah to Modernity, 110.
- ²³ Promilla Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1974), 5.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Luthra, "Nehru and the Place of Women in Indian Society," 1-15.
- ²⁶ Government of India, National Commission on the Status of Women (Government of India Press: New Delhi, 1984), 74-76.
- ²⁷ Keshav Dev Sharma, "The Profile of Indian Students in the United States," The Indian Journal of Sociology Vol. III, Nos. 1 & 2 (March & September, 1972) 97.
- ²⁸ Pushpa Pathak, "Dynamics of Single Female Migration to Cities in India," in Migration and Gender: Place, Time and People Specific ed. by U.J. Fairhurst, I. Booyesen & P.S. Hattingh, 363-389 (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1997).
- ²⁹ Rhoda Lois Blumberg and Leela Dwaraki, India's Educated Women: Options and Constraints, (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1980), 85-112.
- ³⁰ Blumberg and Dwaraki, India's Educated Women, 133, 143.

- ³¹ Promilla Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India, (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1974).
- ³² Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India, 20.
- ³³ Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India, 12-16.
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- ³⁶ Kala Rani, Role Conflict In Working Women, 174 – 181; 110-135.
- ³⁷ Kala Rani, Role Conflict in Working Women, 46-61.
- ³⁸ K. Rani, Role Conflict In Working Women, quote from page 67; 62-79.
- ³⁹ Blumberg and Dwaraki India's Educated Women, 57-84.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ V. V. Prakasha Rao and Nandini Rao, Marriage, The Family and Women in India, (New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1982), 14-42.
- ⁴² Maria Mies, Indian Women and Patriarchy: Conflicts and Dilemmas of Students and Working Women (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1980) 20, 168, 289.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Meis, Indian Women And Patriarchy, 289-94
- ⁴⁵ Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi, Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India (London: Zed Books, 1986), 72-73.
- ⁴⁶ G.N Ramu, Women, Work, and Marriage in Urban India: A Study of Dual-and Single- Earner Couples (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989) 52-96
- ⁴⁷ Elizabeth Bumiller's May You be the Mother of A Hundred Sons: A Journey Among Women of India (New York: Random House, 1990) talks of this phenomena among her acquaintances on pages 34-35.
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- ⁴⁹ Helen Ulrich, "Asset and Liability: The Role of Female Education in Changing Marriage Patterns Among Havik Brahmins" in Women Education and Family Structure in India, by Mukhopadhyaya, 187-212.
- ⁵⁰ Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India 32-34.
- ⁵¹ Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India 34-35.
- ⁵² Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India 35-36.
- ⁵³ Meis Indian Women and Patriarchy, 20-21
- ⁵⁴ Anand Arora, in his work The Women Elite in India, (New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1990) came to this conclusion after interviewing educated women professionals who were part of the Indian Administrative Services, Physicians and Education.
- ⁵⁵ Liddle and Rama Daughters of Independence, 97-99; and Meis Indian Women and Patriarchy, 20-21
- ⁵⁶ Rani, Role Conflict in Working Women, 55.
- ⁵⁷ Madan, "Indian Women," 98-118.
- ⁵⁸ Lotika Sarkar, "Jawaharlal Nehru and the Hindu Code Bill," in Indian Women, by B.R. Nanda, 87-98.
- ⁵⁹ Blumberg and Dwaraki, India's Educated Women, 37-56.
- ⁶⁰ Amarpal K. Dhaliwal, "Gender at Work: The Renegotiation of Middle-Class Womanhood in a South Asian-Owned Business," in Reviewing Asian America: Locating Diversity ed. by Wendy L. Ng, Soo-Young Chin, James S. Moy, Gary Y. Okihiro, 75-85 (Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press, 1995).
- ⁶¹ Sheila, interview by author, 8 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁶² Shiela and Uma, interview by author, 8 July 1999, and 6 June 1999 respectively, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁶³ Vimla, interview by author.
- ⁶⁴ Soudamini, interview by author, 6 April 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁶⁵ Sheila, interview by author.
- ⁶⁶ Rama, interview by author.
- ⁶⁷ Uma, interview by author.
- ⁶⁸ Veena, interview by author.

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- ⁶⁹ Uma, interview by author.
- ⁷⁰ Soudamini, interview by author.
- ⁷¹ This fact emerges from Rani's Role Conflict In Working Women, 67.
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- ⁷³ Sheila, interview by author.
- ⁷⁴ Rajendra, interview by author, 12 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁷⁵ K.D. Sharma, "Occupational Aspirations," Indian Journal of Sociology Vol. I, No. 2 (September 1970), 153-172.
- ⁷⁶ Srinivas, "Changing Values in India Today," 936.
- ⁷⁷ Soudamini, interview by author.
- ⁷⁸ Uma, interview by author.
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- ⁸⁰ Elisabeth Bumiller, May You be the Mother of a Hundred Sons: A Journey Among Women of India (New York: Random House, 1990) 230-234; Radha Sarma Hegde, "Recipes for Change: Weekly Help for Indian Women," in Women's Studies in Communication Vol 18, No 2 (Fall 1995) 177-188
- ⁸¹ Veena, interview by author.
- ⁸² Sushma, interview by author, 19 February 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁸³ Sushma, interview by author.
- ⁸⁴ Liddle and Liddle, Daughters of Independence, 72-73.
- ⁸⁵ Laila, interview by author, 17 June 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁸⁶ Usha, interview by author, 10 September 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
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- ⁹² Bill Ong Hing, Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 101-2.
- ⁹³ Kanubhai S. Patel's "Brain Drain" gave 4 reasons for the brain drain in his article in India Abroad (June 11, 1976, page 10); another similar report was one entitled "Scientist from India Finds that the Grass is Greener Across Ocean." (July 9, 1976, page 3).
- ⁹⁴ Anil Jain, "Scientists: An Asset That India Squanders" India Abroad (September 17, 1976): 2.
- ⁹⁵ National Science Foundation, Immigrant Scientists and Engineers in the United States: A Study of Characteristics and Attitudes, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Print. Off., 1973): 73-302, 1.
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- ¹⁰⁹ Rama, interview by author.
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- ¹¹¹ Parmatama Saran, The Asian Indian Experience in the United States (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1985), 50. One of the women respondents talks of this.
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- ¹¹³ Shaymala, interview by author, 11 November 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹¹⁴ Chandra, interview by author, 10 September 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹¹⁵ Michael Todaro and Veena Thadani, "Female Migration: A Conceptual Framework" in Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaptations ed. by James T. Fawcett, Siew Ean Khoo and Peter Smith, 18-33 (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984).
- ¹¹⁶ Matrimonial advertisements in Indian newspapers were becoming popular way in arranging marriages, but literature on this aspect is rare. The only work that I came across on this issue was Rashmi Luthra's "Matchmaking in the Classifieds of the Immigrant Indian Press" in Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings by and About Asian American Women, edited by the Asian Women United of California (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 337-344.
- ¹¹⁷ Keshav Dev Sharma, "Indian Students in the United States: A Portrait," The Indian Journal of Sociology Vol. II, No. 1 (March 1971): 102.
- ¹¹⁸ Helweg and Helweg's An Immigrant Success Story: East Indians in America (page 36) documents this statement coming from a man. But this statement is equally if not more applicable to women who were doing most of the household chores.
- ¹¹⁹ Madhu, Interview by author.
- ¹²⁰ Radha, interview by author, 5 August 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹²¹ For insights into the lives of modern Indian women read Liddle and Joshi's Daughters of Independence; Radha Sarma Hegde, "Recipes for Change: Weekly Help For Indian Women" Women's Studies in Communication Vol XVIII, No. 2 (Fall 1995): 177-188; Bumiller's May You be the Mother of a Hundred Sons; and Sara Mitter's Dharma's Daughters : Contemporary Indian Women and Hindu Culture (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991).
- ¹²² Pathak, "Dynamics of Single Female Migration to Cities in India," 363-389.
- ¹²³ For an insight into the making of arranged marriages among contemporary women, read Anu Murgai's "A Marriage Proposal" in Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian Diaspora, edited by the Women of South Asian Descent Collective (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1993), 330-338; and Bumiller's May you be the Mother of A Hundred Sons, 34-38.
- ¹²⁴ Susan Seymour, "College Women's Aspirations: A Challenge to Patrifocal Family System?" in Mukhopadhyay's Women, Education and Family Structure in India, 187-212.
- ¹²⁵ Rajan, interview by author, 23 April 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹²⁶ John Liu, "The Contours of Asian Professional, Technical and Kindered Work Immigration, 1965-1988," Sociological Perspectives (1992), 690-91. Here, Liu points out this reversal in immigration ratio between health professionals and high technology professionals. The restrictions on doctors were a result of the Health Professions Educational Assistance of 1976, which declared that physicians were no longer needed in America.
- ¹²⁷ Rajan, interview by author.

Chapter 3

COMING TO AMERICA

1. My friends told me to apply for immigration; they told me to write to immigration to get practical training . . . I applied with the help of the Foreign Students Office, and after some difficulty got a job.

... One day the person in charge of that office asked me do you want to immigrate? I said yes, my friend [another Indian] said no. He [the employer] sent a letter to the immigration. In 1962 I got it.¹

2. I had no inkling that I would be landing in this country except that I passed my ECFMG (Educational Commission on Foreign Medical Graduate exam), and that was also strange. I did not want to take the exam but a friend gave me a form to fill out and that is how I gave the exam. All my friends were taking this exam. I used to keep in touch with my friends here, and with their help I got a job.

I did not have money to come here and the hospital sent me the ticket. Six hundred dollars was a lot of money. My father did not have that kind of money. The hospital deducted the money from my paychecks for a year.²

3. We wanted to come here. So we knew all about American laws. It was common, large number of my classmates, they have brothers, they have friends and we all knew, we knew exactly what was happening. Along with our studies we used to read some books that were guided towards the ECFMG. When we went for ECFMG exam to Kuala Lumpur, I think there were 20 of us; we were all in one flight.

I paid the government Rs. 5,000. Rs. 5,000 is really nothing. I paid the fine.

I went to Madras Consulate and discovered that I could go and I had about two week to go before the deadline

I reached London and there were probably 50 more doctors there [from India]. We came to know that the British Airways went on strike that day and we had less than one day to reach the United States, and British Airways was on strike. So you know, we almost cried. And then I was put on a waiting list³

These three accounts of Ram Lal, Prasad and Niraj, span the decades of the sixties and seventies respectively and reflect the effects of American immigration policies on migration from India. Ram Lal came as a student on a non-immigrant visa; he came on a leave of absence from a job in India and did not have any intention of settling in the U.S. His story highlights the role of 'post –completion training' or practical training, a legal

requirement that allowed foreign students to gather work experience for a year in the U.S. in their field of study. The onus of finding employment, however, rested with the students. Ram Lal's employer during that year, pleased with his work, offered to sponsor his immigration, and he became a resident in 1962, before the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. Despite his immigration, Ram Lal did not intend to settle permanently in the United States and this decision was gradual and influenced by the new economic opportunities that kept coming his way. Prasad's story highlights the role of labor recruiters and hospital administrators who were willing to sponsor a physician from India, even paying his fare, a central feature in his migration since he and his family could not afford its high cost. Prasad too came temporarily to learn about the advanced techniques as well as to make some money. Niraj's narrative details that within a decade there was a sea change in thinking of medical students and they intended to migrate to the U.S. while studying in India. There existed a network of friends and family who informed him and his friends of U.S. visa rules and regulations. Along with preparing for his medical degree in India, he also studied for the ECFMG exam that allowed him to find residency in the U.S. Although, the above narrative does not say so, Niraj had also applied for direct migration to the U.S. through the U.S. consulate in Madras. The last part of his conversation refers to his hasty departure from India to reach the U.S. before new legislation signed by President Ford ending the migration of physicians, took effect. The urgency of his conversation refers to the deadline, which he barely made, and his fears of not being able to do so. These three stories emphasize the existence of legislation that allowed non-immigrants to adjust their status to that of an immigrant, the role of the labor recruiters in the migration of physicians, and the spread of information about American

migration rules and regulations resulting in chain migrations of physicians and engineers, and other technical students from India. Moreover, all three also draw attention to the centrality of social networks in the migration process.

This chapter highlights the role of American immigration policies in the migration and creation of an Indian community in America. It draws attention to the significance of labor migration policies of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 on the migration of Indians to the U.S. Moreover, the chapter contends that although direct migration from India was a consequence of the 1965 legislation, it was only one among multiple ways utilized by Indians to migrate to the U.S. Consequently, it emphasizes the existence of other policies that allowed people to enter America as non-migrants, and eventually permitted adjustment of status to that of migrants. These non-migrant migrations increased immensely in the latter half of the twentieth century, with people pursuing business, employment, tourism and higher education. Many of these temporary migrants eventually became immigrants to America.

At the outset, it should be mentioned that although large-scale migration of Indians to the United States began with the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, the migration of Indians outside their national borders was not a new phenomenon. Large-scale movements of Indians across the globe began in the nineteenth century and were predominantly shaped by British imperial policies, which encouraged the migration of Indians to other parts of the empire. The existence of the vast Indian Diaspora today in the Caribbean, East Africa and Southeast Asia is a reminder of this fact.⁴ In the early decades of the twentieth century, a small group of Indians also tried to migrate to America.⁵ Table 3.1 shows that approximately 7,000 Indian immigrants eventually settled

in the United States during the first two decades within the same century. However, anti-Asian sentiment prevailing in the West Coast affected U.S. immigration policies, and eventually resulted in restrictions on the migration of Asians, including Indians. In fact, the Immigration Act of 1917 stopped migrations almost entirely from Asia.⁶

Table 3.1
Immigration from India to the U.S. until 1920

Decade	No. Of migrants	Decade	No. Of migrants
1820-1830	9	1871-1880	163
1831-1840	39	1881-1890	269
1841-1850	36	1891-1900	68
1851-1860	43	1901-1910	4,713
1861-1870	69	1911-1920	2,082

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington D.C. 1984, Table 1.2, p 2-4

The near-absence of Indians in the U.S., thus, was a result of American immigration policies, and shifts in these policies continued to shape the immigration of Indians throughout the twentieth century. The Act of 1917, which banned migrations of Indians along with other Asians, was an outcome of the increasing role of the federal government in determining who could, or more specifically, who could not enter American soil. This new role began with the Page Law of 1875 that barred the entry of Chinese women, it was followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that limited the entry of Chinese laborers. These early laws reflected the influence of public perceptions of race, gender and nationality on national immigration policies. Applied first to the Chinese in the nineteenth century, these policies gradually encompassed national, regional and continental scope with the passage of the Act of 1917. This law created an Asiatic barred zone that extended from China and Japan in East Asia to the Middle East. It was followed by the Oriental Exclusion Act in 1924 that ended altogether the legal migration of people

from Asian nations. By establishing a numerical quota system for different nations, U.S. immigration laws also began shaping the nationality and proportion of migrants from a given nation.⁷ At the turn of the century, the federal government also employed foreign policy, along with legislation, to restrict immigration. The Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 with Japan was one such agreement, which saw Japanese government restricting the migration of Japanese workers.⁸ Such agreements, however, did not exist within the Indian governmental system, since India, as part of British colonial Empire, did not have a right to negotiate independent agreements.⁹

If American immigration policies at the turn of the century restricted the entry of Indians to America, new legislation enacted in the 1940s allowed them to immigrate to the U.S. again. The second phase of Indian migration to the United States began with the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1946. This act, which was the first piece of legislation specific to the migration of Indians, assigned India and the Philippines a quota of 100 migrants per year.¹⁰ Rooted in the modest liberalizing trends of American immigration policy of the forties, the act was also a reflection of the interaction of foreign relations with immigration. During the Second World War, India came to the attention of Americans since an estimated 100,000 American troops either passing through or were stationed in India.¹¹ The Tydings-McDuffie Act as such, was a reward to India for its support in the war on the Asian front. Further liberalizing trends of the U.S. government were seen in the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952. This law, however, retained the national origin quota system established by the 1924 Act, and as such the slant in American immigration policy towards the Western Hemisphere continued.

Changes in American policy, however, did not affect the established paths of Indians' migration, and even after attaining their independence, Indians continued to follow the established migration linkages with England and the former empire. As members of the newly established British Commonwealth, Indians could move around the old British Empire without visas. As a result, as table 3.2 shows, even this miniscule quota of 100 was not filled in some years.

Table 3.2
Indian Migration from 1951-1965

Year	No. Of Migrations	Year	No. of Migrants
1951	69	1952	70
1953	64	1954	120*
1955	116*	1956	105*
1957	139*	1958	109*
1959	111*	1960	99
1961	92	1962	111*
1963	108*	1964	100
1965	99		

Source: Data tabulated / compiled from U.S. Department of Justices Annual Reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, Washington D.C. 1955-1965 from table on "Annual Quotas and Quota Immigrants Admitted Year Ended June 30.

These figures show the number of primary immigrants and do not include their dependents.

* The quota for Indian immigrants was 100 per year. The increasing numbers represent adjustments to claims for immigrant status through suspension of deportation, by private law or as displaced persons. For example in 1954, 38 Indians adjusted to immigrant status. Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington D.C., 34n

A complete overhauling of the immigration policies came with the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 and it completely redefined immigration legislated in the first quarter of the twentieth century.¹² This act divided the world into two hemispheres and established hemispheric numerical immigration quotas for each. Reversing the earlier tilt towards immigration of people from Europe, it allocated a quota of 120,000 persons per year to the Western Hemisphere and 150,000 persons to the Eastern

Hemisphere. To avoid excessive migration from one country, the act also set a maximum limit of 20,000 immigrants per year from any single nation. The mainstay of this act was its commitment to family reunification, and four of its seven categories, termed as preferences, facilitated family migration. These 'Preferences' were as follows: Preference 1 permitted the migration of unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens; Preference 2 facilitated the immigration of spouses, and children; Preference 4, married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens; and Preference 5, the migration of brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens. In addition, this act also created two categories, the third and the sixth, which created provisions for the migration of skilled professionals whose skills were needed in the U.S. labor market.¹³ The third preference included "members of the profession and scientists and artists of exceptional ability"; and the sixth preference allowed "skilled and unskilled workers in occupations for which labor is in short supply" to migrate to America.¹⁴ If the total of the above six categories did not reach 20,000, persons who did not have any family members in the U.S. or could not avail of the labor certification clause, could apply for immigration through a 7th preference.¹⁵

Although the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 aimed to unify families and has come to be known as the family reunification law, family reunification categories initially had little effect on the migration of Indians to the U.S. In the relative absence of large-scale Indian population in the U.S. prior to 1965, few Indians could avail of the family migration category to immigrate. For Indians, however, the two labor certification categories of this law, namely the third preference and the sixth preference, caused an increase in migration. Seeking to fulfill labor shortages in American industry, predominantly skilled professionals, these two categories not only allowed Indians to

immigrate to the United States, but also shaped the formation of an educated and highly professional community in the U.S. According to one estimate, 53 per cent of all Indian migrants who entered the United States in 1967 were in professional, technical or kindred occupations, and the remainder, their dependents.¹⁶ These skilled professional migrants, the first group of Indian migrants, then used the different family categories of the Act of 1965 over time to relocate their families and extended families to the U.S. By the decade of the eighties more than eighty percent of Indian immigrants were using the family category to enter the United States.¹⁷

The centrality of the American immigration policies in the migration of Indians to the United States is clearly evident from table 3.3. In 1965, 582 Indians migrated to the United States; in 1966 this figure went up to 2,458. Within five years of the passage of Act, the Indian population had jumped to 10,114. During these years, Indians immigration to the United States was one of the highest among all immigrant groups. While the increase was a result of U.S immigration policies, this development also coincided with changes in the immigration policies of Great Britain, which had previously been the primary migration destination of Indians. In 1965, new immigration regulations by Great Britain curtailed the migration from Commonwealth countries.¹⁸

Table 3.3
Annual Migration of Indians to the USA since 1965

Year	Migrants	Year	Migrants	Year	Migrants	Year	Migrants
1965	582	1975	15,785	1985	26,026	1995	34,748
1966	2458	1976	22,070	1986	26,227	1996	44,854
1967	4642	1977	18,636	1987	27,803	1997	38,071
1968	4,682	1978	20,772	1988	26,268	1998	36,482
1969	5963	1979	19,717	1989	31,175	1999	30,237
1970	10,114	1980	22,607	1990	30,667	2000	42,046
1971	14,317	1981	21,522	1991	45,064		
1972	16,929	1982	21,738	1992	36,755		
1973	13,128	1983	25,451	1993	40,121		
1974	12,795	1984	24,964	1994	34,921		

Source: Data compiled from the U.S Department of Justice, Annual Reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, Washington D.C. 1965-2000

In Detroit too, the Indian population surged after the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act. According to Table 3.4 between 1960 and 1964, the Census data documented 272 people of Indian arriving in Detroit; between 1965-70, 864 more Indians settled in Detroit.¹⁹ In a short span of 15 years, the Indian population had surged to 6,115 persons.²⁰

Table 3.4
Increase in Indian Population in Detroit

Year	Population
Before 1950	78
1950-59	101
1960-64	272
1965-69	864
1970-74	2,065
1975-80	2,735
Total 1980	6,115

Source: 1980 Census of Population, Detailed Population Characteristics, Michigan, table 195,
24-11

The use of federal regulations to encourage labor migrations was not a new phenomenon that emerged with the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. The inclusion of the labor certification clause, in fact, was a culmination of policies that began in the decade of the forties when the federal government assumed a new role in helping American agriculture and industry procure immigrant labor to fulfill its manpower needs. This labor procurement process, through immigration, however, was of two kinds: the unskilled labor of the Bracero program, and the procurement of skilled professionals in what came to be characterized as “brain drain” migration.²¹ Brain drain migrations increased rapidly in the postwar period and reflected the increasing economic and educational integration of the globe.²² Although brain drain migrations were not specific to the U.S. but to developed nations like Canada, Great Britain and Australia, the U.S. gained the maximum benefit of such migration.

The decade of the forties not only established liberalizing trends in immigration policies, but also saw new initiatives, which later emerged as crucial components of migration in subsequent decades. Foremost amongst these was the emergence of foreign relations as a factor influencing immigration policy. The revocation of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the passage of Tydings-McDuffie Act represented this new trend. Humanitarian concerns also emerged for the first time as a factor in U.S. foreign policy, resulting in Displaced Persons Acts of 1948 and 1952. Third, cultural and education exchange became increasingly a central component of foreign relations with the passage of the Fulbright-Hayes Act in 1948. This act established educational and cultural exchanges with other nations as part of American foreign policy. It resulted in the establishment of the United States Information Services that further facilitated the migration of students and

professionals for higher education and training to the United States. These non-immigrant categories, especially students and temporary workers, became an important source of migration to the United States. They also succeeded in creating immigrant communities consisting of skilled professionals. The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 thus coalesced labor and family migration into one act while at the same time attempting to numerically limit migrations to the U.S.

Labor Migrations

The rapid growth of the American economy in the postwar years created new manpower demands, which could not be fulfilled by the existing skilled and professional pool in America. This speedy expansion of the American industry increased jobs in high-tech industry and created an especially high demand for engineers. The beginning of the Cold War, the increasing U.S. role as a global military power, and the subsequent race for development of space technology further augmented the need for persons in high-tech science based fields, since the government sponsored research in high tech and defense related areas.²³ Between 1957 and 1966, the research and development expenditure in the U.S. increased approximately 10 per cent annually, from \$ 7 billion to \$14 billion.

Heightened demand for skilled professionals was fulfilled through the immigration of professionals in technical professions. Moreover, the rapid postwar expansion created a corresponding increase in demand for educated people to serve as university teachers (at the undergraduate and graduate levels) that was satisfied to a significant extent by international migration.²⁴ In addition, the increasing role of the Johnson administration in the promulgation of social welfare programs of the Great Society, especially Medicaid and Medicare, resulted in an increasing need for people working in the health professions in

inner cities areas and with the under-served populations. Importing specialized labor from abroad fulfilled a large proportion of these labor power needs. In 1949, 383 natural scientists, 886 engineers and 1148 physicians entered the US. By 1960, these numbers had risen to 1043 natural scientists, 3354 engineers, and 5574 physicians respectively.²⁵ The demand of skilled professionals was so high that Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act in 1962, which allowed foreign scientists and engineers to achieve immigrant status within a relatively short time.²⁶

Within the skilled professional migration, or “brain drain” migration as it came to be called, a few groups of professionals predominated. While the brain drain component of the total immigrants between 1964 and 1967 rose from 9.1 per cent to 11.5 per cent; the proportion of engineers in this migration increased at a rate of two and a half times that of the overall brain drain group. In the period between 1958 and 1966, the number of scientists and engineers in U.S. industry increased by 47 per cent, from 243,800 to 358,900.²⁷ As a result, in 1967, engineers were the most identifiable group among the professional or brain drain migrations and 1 in every 5 skilled immigrants belonged to this profession. Other groups besides engineers were professionals in other technical fields (13 per cent), non-college teachers (12.7 per cent), nurses (11.9 per cent), physicians, surgeons, dentists (8.5 per cent), natural scientists (7.1 per cent), other medical fields (4.7 per cent), religious (4.2 per cent), and social scientists (1.7 per cent).²⁸

The labor certification clause of the 1965 Act not only augmented the trend of skilled people to migrate, but it also created an institutional infrastructure in some fields that identified the manpower needs of America. The U.S. Department of Labor began maintaining Schedule “ A” listing the occupations for which skilled labor was needed in

America. This list changed with the labor needs of the economy and society. Until 1976 professionals whose occupations were listed in Schedule 'A' received immigrant visas without any American sponsorship.²⁹ The increasing migration of skilled professionals as a result of the labor migration clause of the Act of 1965 is evident from the fact that between 1966 and 1978, 175,000 scientists and engineers from abroad entered the American labor force.³⁰

Labor migrations also sharply influenced the migration of Indians. As noted in chapter 2, educated Indians were already on the move in India and were migrating primarily to Great Britain and the U.S. for purposes of training and higher education, and many were already in the U.S. Changes in U.S. law coincided with the aspirations of this group of educated Indians, many of them already temporary migrants in the U.S., to become permanent residents. Some like Ram Lal and Sampath were already permanent residents by 1965, using the quota of 100 residents from the Tydings McDuffie Act. Others like Rajendra, Srikanth, and Vipin, who were already in the U.S. as students, changed their visa status to that of permanent resident. Niraj and Kishan, in India, heard through family members of the change in U.S. immigration regulations and applied for migration through the U.S. Embassy. These men were engineers and physicians who could avail the third and sixth preferences to immigrate to the U.S.

The high rate of emigration of educated persons from India resulted in increasing brain drain, enough to concern the Indian government, which in 1967 sought to know its extent. The "Brain Drain Report" traced professionals' migrations from India by analyzing passport applications. The report documented that engineers, physicians and scientists were the largest groups of professionals leaving India until 1967.³¹ The continuation of this

brain-drain migration was further evident from the fact that between 1972 and 1985, more than 50,000 professionals emigrated from India to America. These included 15,753 engineers, 15,172 physicians, 6,858 nurses, 4,077 natural scientists, 4,783 professionals in health diagnostic and treating professionals, 2,201 post-secondary teachers and 1,200 math and computer scientists.³²

Engineers were the largest group of professional migrants leaving India. Between 1960 and 1967, according to the Brain Drain report, 44.2 per cent of the total passports were issued to engineers.³³ The migration of engineers, which began in the sixties, continued until the decade of the nineties. A new study conducted by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India in 1994 to determine the extent of brain drain of engineers found that during the decade of the eighties, approximately 7.3 per cent of engineers left India. They came predominantly from five campuses of the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technologies (I.I.T.), which were established, with the collaboration of U.S., Great Britain, German and Russian Universities.³⁴ The study estimated that from an average class of 640 students from I.I.T., Bombay campus, 137 students, or 21 per cent were likely to settle abroad. Of these, 114 were likely to be engineers and the rest, natural scientists. The data from I.I.T., Madras was even more phenomenal. Since its inception in 1959, roughly one quarter of its graduates had migrated. The migration rate between 1968 and 1972 was 20 per cent, increasing to 35 per cent between 1983 and 1987. The study also discovered that with the newly created computer science specialization, the brain drain was 58.7 per cent in the educational years of 1986 and 1987.³⁵

Along with engineers and scientists, physicians predominated immigrated from India and a large majority immigrated to the United States. The shortage of physicians in

American hospital resulted in an increasing dependence on medical residents from abroad to provide medical care. In 1963, medical colleges in the U.S. provided half of the total need for 8,000 physicians; foreign medical graduates, who from 1963, averaged about 4,000 per year, met the rest of the demand. In 1965 the US Department of Labor declared that there was a need for more physicians, further facilitating the arrival of foreign physicians. From 1963 to 1970, the absolute number of foreign-trained physicians in America increased by 85 per cent. Physicians from the Philippines and India, two nations whose medical education was geared towards western nations, migrated in large numbers.³⁶

The increasing dependency of the American medical system on foreign medical graduates is also evident from the establishment of an institutional infrastructure, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). The ECFMG became the sole sponsoring agency for foreign medical graduates, and also began controlling their numbers.³⁷ To ensure that foreign medical graduates met the requirements of the American medical system, from 1958 it began conducting voluntary medical exams in several countries. The lure of coming to the U.S. was so great that from 1961, the number of physicians taking the ECFMG exam abroad was greater than the number of those taking the exam in the U.S. Until the decade of the eighties, the only way for a foreign physician to train in an American hospital was through the residency program.

Changes in immigration laws, as well as the expansion of residency positions in American hospitals, augmented the migration of physicians from India. In 1970, 3,957 physicians from India were in the U.S., second only to the Philippines.³⁸ The extent of the increase in physicians from India is evident from the fact that between 1970 and 1974, the

number of Foreign Medical Graduates (FMG) in the U.S.A, increased by 34 per cent.

During this period, however, the increase of physicians from India was 116 per cent; from 3957 FMGs in 1970, to 6303 FMGs in 1972 and 8559 FMGs in 1974.³⁹ In these 4 years India had the largest increase among foreign physicians in America.⁴⁰

This sharp increase in the number of physicians highlights the effects of the labor certification system on the migration of Indian physicians. This increase occurred despite attempts of the Indian government to discourage physicians' migration. Until 1965, the government did not easily issue passports to physicians who desired to emigrate.⁴¹

Moreover, in 1967, at the behest of the Indian government, ECFMG exams, essential for Indians to apply for residency positions or fellowships in American hospitals, were discontinued in India.⁴² Indians wishing to take this exam had to go to Colombo, Sri Lanka, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Manila, Philippines, or one of the centers in Europe or America.⁴³ However, as the above figures show, these impediments did not seem to have affected the flow of Indian physicians to the U.S.⁴⁴ In fact, from 1969-1981, Indian nationals formed the largest group of physicians getting ECFMG certificates.⁴⁵

Physicians were the second largest group of professionals leaving India, next to engineers. According to the Brain Drain report of 1967, between 1960 and 1967, 23 per cent of Indian passports were issued to medical doctors.⁴⁶ The majority of these left for temporary purposes, 54.7 percent left for the purpose of studying, 30.2 per cent for employment, 13.4 percent for training and only 1.4 per cent for settling permanently to other countries.⁴⁷ This fact was further corroborated by the Brain Drain Report, which stated that the increase in passports issued to doctors in 1961 was mainly for the purpose of higher studies, then in 1964 because of a sudden increase in doctors intending to go abroad

for work. The study also noted a substantial increase (17 per cent) in the number of doctors going abroad for employment in this period.⁴⁸

Table 3. 5
Migration of Physicians from A.I.I.M.S., New Delhi

Year	Student Migrations
1956-60	53 per cent
1961-65	75 per cent
1966-70	85 per cent
1971-75	44 per cent
1976-80	28 per cent

Source: The study conducted by Dr. Veena Kalra, was reported in Binod Khadria, The Migration of Knowledge Workers, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999, 110-111.

This trend of physicians' migration that began in the sixties, continued well throughout the eighties. Another study conducted by India's Department of Science and Technology in 1992 found an alarming rate of emigration of medical graduates. This study, which focused on the migration of medical graduates from one institution, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, found that 56 per cent of its students had left India since the institution's inception in 1956. Table 3.5 shows that the highest rate of emigration occurred until 1970, corresponding with the years when the demand for medical residents in American hospital was greatest.⁴⁹ News items in the expatriate newspaper, India Abroad, also corroborated these reports; an article written in 1974, mentioned that a large majority of physicians from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences went abroad after completion of their studies.⁵⁰

The need for residents in American hospitals was so high leading many to seek physicians from India. While little information documents the role of middlemen and hospital administrators in locating Indian medical graduates, oral accounts from Detroit frequently pointed to their centrality in immigration. These recruiters found employment

and facilitated the requisite paper work essential for immigration and most important loaned ticket money, later deducted from their salaries, to facilitate migration. For many physicians, this promise of ticket to travel emerged as a central factor in their migration in the absence of financial support from their families. Time and again people who arrived in the sixties spoke of getting tickets that cost around \$600-\$640 which they repaid within a year through monthly deductions from their paychecks. Along with Prasad, Uma and Sheila came because of hospital's sponsorship of their migration. Prasad and Sheila had taken their ECFMG exams in India and Sri Lanka respectively; Uma took it in the U.S. after her arrival. Her husband, a physician, was already in the U.S.⁵¹ Although these three migrated, their main aim in coming to the U.S., aside from increasing knowledge in their fields, were also economic in nature. Stated Uma: "We wanted to open our own practice in India. It required a few *lakhs* [one lakh is equal to one hundred thousand] and we did not have the money. So we thought we would stay here five years and then return."⁵² Uma and her husband's intentions were the norm among young graduating physicians.⁵³

Labor migrations, however, were dependent on the needs of the labor market and these needs varied within industries in time and space. If legislation encouraged migration of skilled workers to fulfill the manpower needs in a given industry, legislative measures also curtailed migration once the manpower needs were filled. This is clearly evident from the legislation in the medical profession. The decline in the number of graduates of A.I.I.M.S. between the years 1971 and 1980, as seen from table 4.4 above, was not so much an indication of change of intent to emigrate among Indian physicians, but was a reflection of the demand of American hospitals and subsequent changes in the American immigration policies that began to discourage the migration of physicians. In 1974, the American

Medical Association declared that American medical schools fulfilled the physicians' requirement of American hospitals. As such, hospitals did not need foreign physicians. Consequently new legislation ended the labor certification program for a majority of physician categories.⁵⁴ The Elberg Act of 1976 stiffened entry qualifications for people entering under the third preference, a category of the Act of 1965 by which skilled professionals could enter the United States. This act now required physicians to have firm job offers in order to receive visas from U.S. embassies. The Elberg Act also made employers, and not the Department of Labor, responsible for proving that skilled labor was not available in America. Moreover, the employers also had the onus of proving that employing a foreign worker would not adversely affect American workers, and that the wages of foreign workers were equal to those offered to Americans. Furthermore, in 1976 Congress passed the Health Professions Education Act (HPEAA) that declared that the shortage of physicians and surgeons in the United States was over. Subsequently, these occupations were removed from Schedule 'A' of the Department of Labor.⁵⁵ As a result all medical professions, except dietetics, were removed from the list of occupations needed in America. In addition, the foreign medical graduates had the additional burden of passing the National Board of Medical Examiners Examination or its equivalent, as well as the Visa Qualifying Examination to prove their competency in written and oral English before obtaining a visa.⁵⁶ These laws reduced the number of physicians coming from India, from 2,048 in 1977 to 684 in 1978 where it stayed at until 1985.⁵⁷ These laws also explain the steep fall between 1971 and 1975 in the emigration of physicians from A.I.I.M.S., New Delhi to 44 per cent, as evident from table 4.4, and a mere 28 per cent between 1976 and 1980.

The fluctuations in labor demand and their effects on legislation that inevitably affected physicians' migrations were further evident in the 1980s. Between 1988 and 1996, there was once again an increase in the migration of International Medical Graduates (IMG) (formerly called Foreign Medical Graduates) in the residency programs of American hospitals. A large percentage of international residents were from South Asia. In 1996, 27 per cent of the IMGs had attended schools in South Asia, either in India or Pakistan.⁵⁸ Between 1989 and 1996, there was also an increase in the number of physicians from India taking the ECFMG exam and 21.2 per cent (2,570) of ECFMG certificates were issued to Indian nationals.⁵⁹ In 1994 alone, 2,283 Indians were issued the ECFMG certificate out of a total of 8,722 certificates that were issued.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the largest number of exchange visitors sponsored by ECFMG continued to be from India. In 1996, they accounted for 9 per cent of the total exchange visitors.⁶¹ This increase in the number of foreign physicians in American hospitals once again reflects how American policy changed to accommodate the needs of a given profession. In the 1990s, not only did immigration policy change, but there were also changes in the visa category by which medical professionals could enter America. Until 1990 the only way for a foreign physician to train in an American hospital was through residency in an American hospital. These residents were allowed to enter on a J-1 visa classification which stipulated that after finishing their work, the recipient had to leave the United States and could not reapply for a new visa for the next two years. This visa requirement was waived only under special circumstances.⁶² Since 1990, however, there have been changes in this policy. Physicians could now enter under the third preference category.⁶³ Under this new ruling, physicians could enter on H-1 B visa, a visa category that allowed temporary workers to adjust their

status to that of an immigrant without returning to their home country for two years. Moreover, there were also changes in the sponsorship procedures of physicians. Initially, only the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduate could sponsor a Foreign Medical Graduate. But in the 1990s, the monopoly of ECFMG in sponsoring physicians ended once the federal government allowed other federal and state agencies to sponsor physicians. The Veterans Administration can now sponsor doctors working in Veteran's Administration or affiliated hospitals, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, for doctors working in rural areas. The Department of Housing and Development, and the Department of Health and Human Services were some other government agencies that were given permission to sponsor physicians. With the passage of the Technical Corrections Act of 1994, another waiver route emerged for doctors.⁶⁴ The Public Health Department of states could request 20 waivers each year for physicians to serve in Medically Underserved Areas (MUA).⁶⁵

The U.S. immigration policies, especially those involving labor certification categories of the Act of 1965, resulted in the predominance of engineers and physicians among the Indian community in America. Labor needs continue to shape the nature of migration from India. By the decade of the eighties, while trends in scientific and engineering manpower demand were ebbing, new demand for computer engineers and other computer related professionals was emerging.⁶⁶ The high demand for professionals in the information technology field resulted in the Immigration Act of 1990, which while increasing the entry of non-immigrant temporary workers also put a numerical limitation of 65,000 workers. This limit was achieved in 1997, but the demand continued to grow in the technology sector, resulting in Public Law 105-277, Division C also known as the

American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act which temporary increased the H-1B visas cap to 115,000 for 1999, 2000, and to 107,500 for 2001.⁶⁷ Nearly 43 per cent of these visas were granted to Indians. The next country was China with 9.9 per cent.⁶⁸ Along with computer professionals, in the late eighties and early nineties, physical and occupational therapists also immigrated in large numbers.⁶⁹

Along with professionals in information technology, physiotherapists from India also came in large numbers in the decade of the nineties and employers in U.S. recruited a large majority from India. According to Manju,

I was a member of the Physiotherapy Society. I was married and had not worked and one day we get this letter from someone in America saying if we wanted to work in the U.S. I did not want to come here. I was happy at home. But my husband said we should give it a try. I went to another friend's home who had also received such letter, and we decided to come here. We went to Bombay, met with this person and who offered us jobs in Detroit. The company did our visa paper work, paid for our ticket, and made arrangements for our stay here.⁷⁰

Manju's story draws attention to the fact that a desire to migrate changed family dynamics. After marriage, she was housewife and a mother who was not working and did not have any intention to work. New job opportunities in the U.S. and pressure by her husband influenced her to migrate. Although Manju came alone, her migration was rooted in her husband's desire to migrate and she left India with the support of her husband.

Majority of the professionals migrating from India, however, were in the fields of engineering and science, areas where few women received higher education. The medical field in India, however, was one of the occupations, which were deemed suitable for women, and women were joining this field in large numbers. This was evident even in the U.S, where by 1970, women constituted 20.7 per cent of Indian medical graduates in the U.S.⁷¹ In absolute numbers, in 1970, there were 818 female physicians in the US.⁷² This

small percentage of Indian women physicians was still larger than the total percentage of women medical graduates in the U.S. Among foreign medical graduates, women constituted 12.7 per cent of the total in 1963, 14.2 per cent in 1967, and 15.5 per cent in 1970. Medical schools of India, the Philippines and West Germany contributed to 43 per cent of the total Female Foreign Medical Graduates.⁷³ Indian women physicians were predominantly graduates, found largely in internship and residencies, and were second only to physicians from the Philippines, who numbered 2,517.⁷⁴ This study also documented that majority of Indian women physicians were married women, who followed their husbands to the United States.⁷⁵ In Detroit, this trend holds true. Out of 6 women physicians in the sample, one arrived independently; the rest followed their spouses. Even the two women engineers immigrated as wives of men already in the United States.

The migration of Indian engineers and physicians is an indicator of the pivotal role played by U.S. immigration policies in creating the migration and settlement of the Indian community in America. Table 3.6 below shows that within a short span of 25 years, American policies succeeded in breaking centuries of migration linkages with Great Britain. In 1965, 17,100 Indians migrated to the United Kingdom and only 582 to the United States. By 1990, however, 30,667 Indians immigrated to the U.S. and only 5,040 to the U.K. This shift also coincided with Great Britain initiating new laws that constrained the migration of Indians beginning in 1965.⁷⁶

Table 3.6
Migrations from India

Year	U.K.	Canada	U.S.A.
1965	17,100	2,241	582
1970	7,200	5,670	10,114
1975	9,890	5,112	20,753
1980	7,930	8,491	22,607
1985	5,500	4,038	26,026
1990	5,040	10,662	30,667

Source: Binod Khadria, The Migration of Knowledge Workers: Second Generation Effects of India's Brain Drain, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999, 62

It should be noted that this increase in migrations from India occurred during a time when the political relationship between India and America was in steep decline. The India-Pakistan War of 1971, the arrival of the U.S. seventh Fleet in the Indian Ocean, and the tilt of the Nixon administration towards Pakistan were all factors in this deteriorating relationship in the decade of the seventies. India's growing relationship with the U.S.S.R. further created tensions between the two nations. However, this acrimonious relationship did not affect immigration from India. The high demand for skilled labor in America, coupled with the desire of Indians to leave home, succeeded in overcoming political tensions. Large-scale migrations seemed to be oblivious to political relations between the two nations.

Family Migrations:

Family migrations from India emerged as one of the largest category through which the Indians migrated to the U.S. in the decade of the eighties. In the Detroit sample, 40 people came through family migrations. Family migrations in the Detroit sample consisted of marriage migrations, sister-brother migration, and child migration. Although immigration laws have shaped family formations, family immigrations were essentially

rooted in Indian gendered responsibility. In India, as noted in chapter 2, the most sought after and well-settled men were in the West considered highly eligible in the marriage market. Nalini, Kuldeep, Mona, Sneha, Preeti, Uttara and Chandra migrated after marrying men who were working or studying in the U.S. This development, however, was not particular to Indians but was widely prevalent. Suzanne Sinke has documented this trend among German and Dutch women and men and a recent work by Guillermina Jasso, Douglas Massy and others, found that U.S. residents are considered highly desirable as potential mates.⁷⁷ The authors found clear evidence that family formations in America were linked to migration. They hypothesized that men and women with U.S. immigration could get better spouses in the marriage market than otherwise.⁷⁸ Moreover, men and women already in the U.S. began sponsoring family members, parents, brothers and sisters. Families encouraged the migration of single women, even those who were not highly educated, since women with green cards had highly marketable potential in the marriage market. In Detroit, a large majority of immigrants had sponsored other family members, justifying it being termed as the “brothers and sisters act”.⁷⁹ Sujata, John, and Farida were sponsored by their family members already in the U.S. The rapid increase in the number of Indians in the U.S. today is a result of the family reunification policies.⁸⁰

The extent of this increase is evident from Table 3.7, which shows that migrations of Indians through family preference categories overtook migrations through occupational categories. Until 1980, occupational preference categories dominated Indian migrations; in the decade of the eighties, however, family migrations overtook occupational migrations. Even within family migrations, the brother- sister migration of the 5th preference overtook the immediate family migration of children, spouses and parents under the 2nd preference.

In the eighties, 58 per cent of family migrants incorporated brother-sister migrations, a trend that was continued in the 1990s.

Since family migrations were not exclusively based on professional factors, the recent immigrants characteristics show an occupational diversity. Although the Indian immigrants in the U.S. and Detroit continue to be predominantly professionals, the immigrants who are migrating through family are not necessarily as skilled as the earlier ones. Many are employed in blue-collar workforce or in the service industry. and many Indians were situated in blue-collar jobs or in small businesses. In Detroit Kulwant and John, who migrated through family networks, worked in factories. Reports in India Abroad indicate that Indians in New York and other metropolitan areas were emerging in the taxicab business, in the newspaper stands business and in the hotel and motel industry.

Table 3.7.A
Migration of Indians in Family and Occupational Categories

Period	Total Immi-grants	Total Family Pref-erence	1 st Pref-erence	2 nd Pref-erence	4 th Pref-erence	5 th Pref-erence
1970-74	63,961	16,224	15	12,617	88	3,504
Yearly	12,792	3,245	3	2,523	18	701
Average	(100.0)	(25.4)	(0.02)	(19.7)	(0.1)	(5.5)
1975-79	89,841	53,055	51	23,765	305	28,934
Yearly	17,968	10,611	10	4,753	61	5,787
Average	(100.0)	(59.1)	(0.06)	(26.5)	(0.3)	(32.2)
1980-84	92,460	75,685	97	26,654	912	48,022
Yearly	18,492	15,137	19	5,331	182	9,604
Average	(100.0)	(81.9)	(0.1)	(28.8)	(1.0)	(51.9)
1985-89	94,286	77,160	132	34,671	2,752	39,705
Yearly	18,857	15,432	26	6,934	550	7,941
Average	(100.0)	(81.8)	(0.1)	(36.8)	(2.9)	(42.1)
1990-91	39,594	31,499	104	13,587	1,846	15,962
Yearly	19,797	15,750	52	6,794	923	7,981
Average	(100.0)	(79.6)	(0.3)	(34.3)	(4.7)	(40.3)
1992-93	46,759	26,712	132	6,982	1,902	17,753
Yearly	23,380	13,356	66	3,491	951	8,877
Average	(100.0)	(57.1)	(0.3)	(14.9)	(4.1)	(38.0)
1994-96	75,794	50,227	501	16,512	4,516	28,698
Yearly	25,265	16,742	167	5,504	1,505	9,566
Average	(100.0)	(66.3)	(0.7)	(21.7)	(5.9)	(37.8)

Table 3.7.B
Migration of Indians in Family and Occupational Categories

Period	Total Occu-pational Preference	3 rd Preference Principals	3 rd Preference Depen-dents	6 th Preference Principals	6 th Preference Depen-dents	Non-Preference
1970-74	16,789	7,066	5,385	2,505	1,833	30,939
Yearly	3,358	1,413	1,077	501	367	6,188
Average	(26.3)	(11.0)	(8.4)	(3.9)	(2.9)	(48.4)
1975-79	21,815	8,190	7,352	3,914	2,359	14,946
Yearly	4,363	1,638	1,470	783	472	2,989
Average	(24.3)	(9.1)	(8.2)	(4.4)	(2.6)	(16.6)
1980-84	16,752	7,248	6,898	1,416	1,190	22
Yearly	3,350	1,450	1,380	283	238	4
Average	(18.1)	(7.8)	(7.5)	(1.5)	(1.3)	(Negligible)
1985-89	16,967	8,434	7,121	647	764	Negligible
Yearly	3,393	1,687	1,424	129	153	
Average	(18.0)	(8.9)	(7.6)	(0.7)	(0.8)	
1990-91	8,063	3,662	3,355	433	631	
Yearly	4,032	1,831	1,678	217	316	
Average	(20.4)	(9.2)	(8.5)	(1.1)	(1.6)	

(Table 3.7.B continued)

Period	Total Occupational Preference (‘Employment-based’)*	‘3 rd ’*(‘1 st ’ & ‘2 nd ’: P & D w.e.f. 1992)+	‘6 th ’*(‘3 rd ’: P & D w.e.f. 1992)+	‘4 th ’*(new w.e.f. 1992 Sp)+	‘5 th ’*(new w.e.f. 1992: In)+
1992-93*	20,047	13,033	6,498	418	23
Yearly Average	10,024 (42.9)	6,517 (27.9)	3,249 (13.9)	209 (0.9)	12 (0.1)
1994-96*	25,567	13,648	10,810	1,087	22
Yearly Average	8,522 (33.7)	4,459 (18.0)	3,603 (14.3)	362 (1.4)	7 (0.02)

* The 1990 Amendments to the U.S. Immigration Act became effective from 1992. Its ‘Family-based preferences’ 3rd and 4th are equivalent to 4th and 5th preferences of the 1965 Act respectively. Employment-based 1st and 2nd preferences are equivalent to 3rd preference (principals and dependents) of 1965 Amendments; similarly, 3rd preference is equivalent to 6th preference (principals and dependents) of 1965 Amendments. Employment-based 4th (Special immigrants) and 5th in (‘Investors’ for employment creation in the U.S.) together account for barely 1 per cent of overall immigrants. For consistency of comparison, post-1992 categories are merged in 1965 preference category descriptions. + P & D stands for ‘Principals and Dependents’; Sp for ‘Special Immigrants’; In for ‘Investors’—all under Employment-based preferences of the 1990 Amendments.

Source: Binod Khadria, *The Migration of Knowledge Workers: Second Generation Effects of India’s Brain Drain*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999, 72-73.

From Temporary Migrants to Immigrants

Direct migration through the use of one of the seven categories of the Act of 1965, however, was one of the many ways to migrate to the U.S. Ram Lal’s narrative at the beginning of this chapter highlights that immigration provisions allowed non-immigrant students to adjust their visa status to that of a permanent resident and this method was used by many Indians to immigrate to the U.S. Direct migrations were limited to 20,000 immigrants per nation per year; non-migrant visa categories, however, were exempt from numerical limitations. Along with students, the non-immigrant category included foreign officials, businessmen, tourists, transit aliens, treaty traders and investors, students, international representatives, temporary workers and trainees, exchange visitors, foreign media personnel, and their spouses and children.

Table 3.8
Indians admitted as non-immigrants¹

	1970-79	Adjusted	1982-89	Adjusted	1992-96	Adjusted
Exchange visitors	15,523	5,747	16,807	1,958	21,712	2,299
Family of Exchange visitors	7,404	3,868	6,714	428	5,888	
Foreign government officials	5769		9416		6716	
International representatives	12,516		16,363		13,088	
Students	38,511	19,669	71,503	7,944	105,838	9,380
Temporary visitors-pleasure	270,582	8,049	563,060	15,250	630,719	20,255
Temporary visitors-business	64,397	647	178,380	1,093	234,404	1,725
Treaty traders and investors	1676		292		368	
Temporary workers, trainees	2,987	637	12,812	6,349	104,135	29,790
Family of TWT	862		3,838		37,205	

Source: This table was compiled from data taken from Binod Khadria, The Migration of Knowledge Workers, p 84

Table 3.8 shows that along with students, temporary workers and trainees were the largest group of non-immigrants who adjusted their status to that of an immigrant or a permanent resident. In the decade of the seventies, students were the largest group adjusting their status, and by the decade of the nineties, it was workers who were coming to the U.S. on temporary work permits who were adjusting their status in large numbers.

Students' adjustments of status from student visa to resident visa were through a complex process of visa adjustment. After completion of their education, students were allowed to stay for a limited period for purposes for acquiring practical training in their fields what was termed as "post-completion training." It provided students with valuable work experience, gave them time to search for employment, and gave employers opportunities to acquire skilled labor without much investment in resources. These employers informed foreign students of immigration regulations, as well as their intention to sponsor these students for U.S. immigration, if they so wished. Many of these employers recruited their trainees and foreign workers and sponsored their migration, as was the case

with Ram Lal and Sampath. After a few years on H-1 temporary workers applied for permanent residency or green card. Among engineering and computer science students, it remained a way to migration even in the eighties.⁸²

Student migration to the U.S. was not a new phenomenon, but during the post-war period, this phenomenon took a new dimension.⁸³ The increase in student population in the post-war period can be ascertained from figures in Table 3.9. In 1954-55, 34, 232 foreign students were studying in American universities. In 1995, 452,635 foreign students were enrolled in American universities.⁸⁴ Indian students formed one of the largest groups of students, and at an average formed roughly between 8 to 10 per cent of the student population. In 1954-55, there were 1,673 Indian students in America. By 1999-2000, as table 3.8 shows, the number of Indian students had risen to 33,540. During this period, India remained one of the top ten nations sending students to the United States.⁸⁵

The increase in student migration to the U.S. for higher education was a result of the United States' supremacy in the industrial and economic spheres, which translated into its emergence as a bastion of higher education and training, especially in science-based fields. From 1954 until 1994, engineering remained the single largest field of study, followed by Business and Management, Natural and Life Sciences, and Social Sciences.⁸⁶ The increase in student population was a result of personal and family motivation. Families or individuals who could amass resources independently left India. Moreover, the desire of newly emerging nations to develop economically resulted in the migration of state-sponsored students and trainees. Since independence a new stream of students was migrating to advanced industrial nations. As noted in chapter two, the fascination of Indians with Western education was not a new phenomenon, but a continuation of attitudes

acquired during British colonial rule, when senior members of the administrative services were sent for training to Great Britain creating a mindset among Indians that foreign education was better than Indian education. Moreover, the economic and political uncertainties of the sixties and seventies, the stagnation of the Indian economy, and increasing labor unrest contributed to the migration of many students from India.⁸⁷

Furthermore, from the decade of the forties, education, training and cultural exchange emerged as an essential component of US foreign relations. The establishment of the U.S. Information Service on the one hand, and programs like the Fulbright-Hayes fellowships, on the other, facilitated cultural and educational exchanges. These educational exchanges created a community of scholars, who upon return to their country, encouraged their students to study in the United States.⁸⁸ Moreover, many Indian universities were being established with the help of American Universities as appears in Upendra's story:

I was educated in a school that was half American. Kanpur I.I.T. was started under an Indo-American Program signed by Nehru and Kennedy and ended in 1970. Half of my professors were from American universities. We knew a lot about America, knew about Cornell, M.I.T., Berkeley. We used to go to our professors homes and talk. We knew about America and American life, and American universities.⁸⁹

The establishment of the Peace Corps in the Kennedy administration further created informal exchanges between people of the nations, creating a desire among many to train abroad.

Table 3.9
Foreign and Indian Students in the U.S.

Year	Total Foreign Students	Indian Students
1954-55	34,232	1,673
1959-60	48,486	3,772
1964-65	82,045	6,813
1969-70	134,959	11,327
1974-75	154,580	9,660
1984-85	342,111	14,610
1989-90	386,851	26,240
1994-95	452,635	33,540

Source: Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange New York, NY, Institute of International Education. This data was compiled using the annual reports from 1954 to 1995.

Although students were temporary migrants, they exhibited a desire to follow job opportunities either in America or any other economically advanced nation. Open Doors, the annual foreign student survey carried out by the Institute of International Education, reported in 1957 that 44.2 per cent of all Indian students in America were interested in employment with the overseas branch of an American corporation.⁹⁰ The 1958 survey found that foreign students expressed a keen interest in employment in the U.S. Unlike the previous survey, this one did not report nationality groups of students who wished to stay in America, although the survey did report that engineering students showed the greatest amount of interest in staying on. Given the fact that the majority of Indian students in the U.S. were in the field of engineering, there was a high probability that many of these students wished to work in the United States.⁹¹ Moreover, along with a desire to work, studies on foreign students also suggested that the longer the duration of stay in America, the greater was the desire among foreign students to stay in the U.S.⁹² Many students, exposed to a different and more open lifestyle, wished to stay in America. Specific studies on Indian students also suggested that many were not averse to staying on in the U.S.

Better standards of living and chances of bettering themselves professionally were contributing factors in the students' desire to stay in the U.S.⁹³ This factor emerged in the conversation with Vipin. He stated: "After 2 or 3 years, I think I made up my mind that I was not going to go back. I told my brother that until they [Americans] decide to throw me back, I was not going to go back."⁹⁴

The effects of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act on the student population that was already displaying a desire to settle in America for personal and professional reasons, were dramatic indeed. The annual survey of the Institute on International Education in 1966 found that an increasing number of foreign students in the U.S. were choosing to stay on, forcing the Institute to change its definition of foreign students. Until 1966 if the foreign students in its survey expressed intent to stay in the United States, they were not included in the sample. In 1966, however, it began incorporating this group of foreign students. The foreword of Open Doors in 1966 reads; "... last year (1965) this changed with more than 6,000 students stating that they intended to stay in the U.S.A. This year it is 11,000. One reason for the great increase may be the new immigration law, which makes it considerably easier for persons who have studied in the United States to remain here"⁹⁵ The 1969 edition of Open Doors further confirmed the fact that a large number of students did intend to stay in America. Its editorial stated that 34 per cent of students in the survey did not answer the question that asked whether they intended to stay in the U.S. Among those who did answer the question, 23 per cent wished to stay in America, leading the editor to conclude that "these figures, coupled with the findings on length of stay, suggests that, if these intentions are carried out, student exchange is a fairly significant avenue of immigration."⁹⁶

The editorial comments of Open Door drew attention to the fact that the first immigrants from many nations, including India, who utilized the provisions of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 to settle in the U.S., were already in the U.S. on a temporary basis and became the first large group of immigrants. A large percentage of students and trainees already in the U.S. became a significant source of new migrations, and informed and encouraged their network of friends and family about these changes. Student migration to the U.S. continued to be a substantial part of Indian migration, until the decade of the seventies. In the early years, the majority of Indians who were adjusting their status to permanent residents were students. Table 3.10 shows that in 1966, 67 per cent of those who adjusted their status to a permanent resident were students and their dependents. In 1970, this figure reached an astounding 77 per cent, but declined in 1975 when only 55 per cent of the students and their dependents adjusted their status to that of permanent resident. These figures are comparable to estimates of other foreign students becoming new immigrants. According to one estimate, between 1975 and 1979, 64 per cent of students adjusted their status.⁹⁷

Table 3.10
Indians' Adjustment to Permanent Student Status in U.S., 1966, 1970 & 1975

Year	1966	1970	1975
Total Adjusted	1,789	3,886	4,188
Foreign Govt. Officials	13	41	42
Temporary Visitors-Business	17	42	84
Temporary Visitors- Pleasure	157	432	915
Treaty Traders & Investors	1	11	5
Students	1,015	2,242	1,901
Spouse/children of students	184	752	497
International Representatives	4	20	31
Temporary Workers, Trainees	27	50	50
Exchange Visitors	47	143	266
Spouse/children of exchange visitors	11	63	181

Source: Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, U.S. Department of Justice, 1966, 1970 and 1975; p 37, 63 and 63 respectively

Along with students, temporary workers also adjusted their status in large numbers to become permanent settlers in the U.S. Although the policy that allowed temporary workers to settle predated the passage of the Act of 1965, Indians used it in large numbers in the decade of the 1990s. This increase was again rooted in the needs of the U.S. industries to look abroad for their immediate labor needs. The needs in the 1990s were for computer professionals and for physiotherapists and occupational therapists to take care of the older generation of Americans. The Act of 1990 increased the number of skilled professionals entering the U.S., and allowed them to convert their H-1 B non-immigrant visas to immigrant visas. In 1998, Indians used 42 per cent of the H-1 B visas, and 80 per cent of Indians who used H-1 B visas were computer professionals.⁹⁸ These policies are continuing to shape the immigration of Indians to the U.S. even today. Manju, Kulwant were on H-1 visas at the time of interview and in the process of getting green cards. These acts substantiate the inability of the 1965 quota-based acts to take care of the economic needs, resulting in the establishment of new acts. The 1965 Act allows a maximum cap for each nation of 20,000—a number that incorporates both labor and family immigrations.

The needs of the changing economy were great enough to demand another act within a single decade to compensate for the rapid need of new labor, and majority of the time it was from a single source.

Clearly the U.S. immigration policies influenced the migration and settlement of Indians to the United States. Oral accounts however, suggest that becoming U.S. residents, or acquiring a green card was in no way an expression of migrants' intent to stay permanently in the U.S., especially for early migrants. It only them to accumulate capital for their families and future plans that were based in India. Uma, Prasad, Ram Lal wanted capital accumulation for economic goals in India. Sampath indeed returned to India, but recounted his inability to find jobs suited to his needs and returned to the U.S. His story details his problems:

We went to India and I went to different places in India, explored different possibilities. That time India was not doing well, so after disappointment I came back in '67. I wanted to start consulting there but many people did not encourage me there. See, the economic opportunities were not there. I wanted instant benefits at that time. See, I had immigrant visa at that time I could come back. Another friend did not take immigrant visa. His company was willing to sponsor him, but he said if he takes immigrant visa, the temptation to come back is there. He did not want to come back. I came back with the intention of staying permanently.⁹⁹

However, single women, like Rama, whose aims in migration were non-economic in nature, expressed a desire to stay on the U.S.

Although immigration policies shaped the immigration of Indians, social networks aided this migration. By the late sixties and seventies, news of life in America and economic rewards in America were coming through family and friends, encouraging many Indians migrate. These social networks facilitated migrations by providing information, giving financial help and also aiding new immigrants in locating jobs.¹⁰⁰ The impetus for Kishan's migration came from information from family about changes in immigration

regulations as well as news from friends about economic prosperity in the U.S. He stated: “My wife’s cousin wrote to us about coming to the U.S. . . . Based on some other friends who had come here, after a little struggle they were making almost 20 times what I was making. We could see that they were progressing fast. We could see that they had opportunities, freedom to jump jobs. In India there was no scope. You are stuck on your jobs . . . there was lot of supply, no demand. We came for money, for opportunity for kids, for everything.”¹⁰¹ For Upendra, also the momentum to migrate came from his brother. “I applied for an immigrant visa in 1969 and got it within 3 or 4 months, but I did not think of migrating. My brother came here in 1974 to study and said you have a visa why don’t you come? Engineers make \$1,000 a month or more. I inquired at the Embassy and they said it [his immigrant] was still good.”¹⁰²

Even students chose universities based on the fact that their friends and family were there. According to Ram Lal, “I selected the University because one of my classmates was already here . . . he came here one year ahead of me . . . Three students from my institute were already here, and they had already talked to the department about getting few courses exempt. My friend had already made arrangements for my stay.”¹⁰³ Vipin’s migration was a result of his brother. “My brother had a scholarship here and I was writing to him and saying that I want to do my PhD here too. Actually he was instrumental in my coming here. He talked to the chairman of the department; I fly here and get my assistantship.”¹⁰⁴ And these networks provided crucial financial help given that Indian government policy, to preserve foreign exchange, allowed migrants to leave with only \$8. According to Niraj: “The total money I had before I left was \$6.00 because of the Indian government rules. I was supposed to get money from my cousin and hoped to get a job soon.”¹⁰⁵ And finally

these networks also provided emotional support in an otherwise alien and lonely place.

According to Satish: "I came to Detroit and I was lost, I had very little money left. I missed my family. I thought that I had made a mistake in coming here and I just wanted to cry. I was standing with my suitcase near the Greyhound bus station and someone came and said Satish, what are you doing here? He was my junior at work in India. I didn't know him well, but he took me home and there were already 2 or 3 people there. Soon I took an apartment in that building."¹⁰⁶ Niraj had similar story. "I had a friend in New York who was doing residency. He was not a close friend of mine but was in my class. He told me to come over and I stayed at his home for months. He was living with another doctor who was doing his residency and he had a friend staying with them, and then I joined them. We of course did not have any money but we decided that later on when we get the job we will pay back the money. I stayed with them for months."¹⁰⁷

Social networks were also important in locating jobs, considered the most important and most difficult aspect of immigration. Prasad, Ram Lal and countless others found jobs through the help and guidance of their networks. The centrality of networks in locating jobs was particularly noted among physicians, as was the case with Prasad at the beginning of the chapter, and has been documented by medical establishment. Works on physicians found that Foreign Medical Graduates selected hospitals through their personal networks, far more than the American medical graduates in finding residency positions.¹⁰⁸ General information about the United States and the scope of a given profession existed among those intending to migrate; the Green Book of American Medical Association provided information about residency positions and internships.¹⁰⁹ Yet living in India, it was the networks of friends that provided specific information that was essential in finding

jobs.¹¹⁰ According to Sheila, who used the information from the Green Book to write to various hospitals without knowing anything about the area or the nature of the hospitals. In the end she found employment through a friend. “My friend talked to her chief resident who said, ‘if she is as good as you we will take her.’ Soon Sheila was offered a job.”¹¹¹ The networks of Indian physicians can also be ascertained from the fact that few medical colleges and university sent a majority of the medical graduates.¹¹²

Along with family and social network, India Abroad, the expatriate Indian newspaper played a pivotal role in providing information to future migrants and settlers in the Indian community. The paper informed its readers in America of frequent changes in immigration laws, familiarized them with the intricacies and nuances of laws, and kept them up to date about the impending immigration legislations and their effects on immigration from India.

The newspaper carried a regular column on immigration laws, which provided details of laws to its readers. In the seventies this column was titled ‘Immigration and You,’ and later renamed “Immigration.” Immigration attorney Howard Rosengarten and Allen E. Kaye, who wrote these columns, gave readers a weekly synopsis of certain laws, different visa categories of the Act of 1965, as well as impending legislation. Issues that were of topical interest ranging from information on Students Status, who could work in America, how to transfer to schools, or change status from students to worker, were discussed in detail.¹¹³ They also focused on the list of professions located in Schedule A of the Department of Labor.¹¹⁴ Frequently, they answered readers’ questions on immigration, giving us detailed insight into the mindset of Indian students and workers, as they began considering extending their stay in the U.S.

Information acquired from the newspaper was passed on to relatives and friends in India. Even ethnic newspapers in India carried these news items in their local and regional newspapers. The following examples show that this information was not only about migration but also about deterring people from migrating in times of economic crisis. Two such examples that came across India Abroad were as follows:

To the Editor

I found the article to be very informative. I am from a small town in Gujarat and I have had many inquiries about the rules and regulations governing students' activities here. May I have your permission to reproduce the article in our local newspaper as I think it would answer most of their questions and help them to understand the general situation? It would be translated into Gujarati.

Kirti Doshi,
Richmond, Va.¹¹⁵

To the Editor,

In one of your issues you have published a fine article about the plight of Indians coming to this country on unemployment. May I have your permission to render the article in Marathi for a newspaper in India?

Vasant D. Rao

(The editor while giving permission to print this article pointed out that the article had already been reprinted in Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil papers—Ed.)¹¹⁶

Not only did the newspaper inform readers of legislation and immigration laws, but it also took an activist stand in galvanizing the Indian community on bills that it thought were unfavorable to Indian migration. A case in point was the Simpson- Mazzoli Bill, which the newspaper thought would adversely affect Indian family reunification. In a series of articles, it highlighted the ill effects of this impending legislation on students and their ability to adjust their visa. It also organized forums to oppose this bill and wrote a special first page editorial on the bill.¹¹⁷ In a two pronged attack, the paper, in a front-page editorial, exhorted legislators to rethink the bill; at the same time, it also rallied the Indian

community to show their displeasure of the bill by writing letters to their representatives and even called for meetings to be held within the Indian community.

The paper also informed readers of the requirements of the Immigration and Naturalization Services. A case in point was the its constant reminder to readers about the impending deadlines for alien registration. It contained information about which form to fill (I-53), who should file, and where to send it.¹¹⁸ One such reminder was as follows:

All non-United States citizens are reminded that they must file their addresses with the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service during January 1971. Forms for reporting addresses are available at every federal post office and at the offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Services.¹¹⁹

If the Indian migrants in the early decades of the fifties and the sixties were coming to America temporarily, by the decade of the seventies, a discernible shift was noted and increasingly Indians were leaving home with the intention of staying longer in the United States. If the first generation of Indians was here temporarily to pursue higher education and training to better their lives in India, for the following generation, like those of Niraj and his classmates, America was emerging as the new Promised Land. Stories from friends and family, in America regarding economic prosperity furthered the desire of many in India to migrate and thus began chain migrations from India. If the decision to settle in America for the first generation of students and migrants from India was irresolute, the decision of those migrating by the decade of the seventies was more long term and was formed even before the actual migration. Noted Raghav: "I came from I.I.T. and everyone was coming here. So it was partly peer pressure. From a class of 35, about 32 are here right now."¹²⁰ Kishan and Upendra had similar stories, and spoke of peer pressure to migrate. By the eighties, migration to the United States was the expected route for many in engineering colleges. During the final years at these professional institutions, students were taking

exams like GRE, GMAT, or ECFMG in order to leave India right after graduation. Along with peer pressure and the new respect accorded to people settling in America caused many parents' to expect their children's' eventual settlement in the U.S. Coming to America was becoming a status symbol and parents developed great ambitions for their sons. The social order was encouraging migrations and was according not only migrants, but also their families in India, a new status. Noted Jatin: "Actually the only reason I came here was because of peer pressure. Everybody at the University wanted to go abroad and pursue higher studies. Since everybody was going it and since I was doing reasonable well in school, I said why not apply, you would get assistantship too."¹²¹ Arun stated:

Third, fourth and fifth year I was aware of people going to America. When you are graduating from Kanpur (I.I.T. Kanpur) there is a lot of information there and there are a lot of students who are leaving and you know who's gone and how they fare. You get feedback. I remember this guy who actually wrote a letter back to his professor about his experience in the U.S. and this professor put it outside his door on the notice board. So you see it immediately and you get a feel of how does this university compare . . .¹²²

Immigrant interviews also allude to the growth of a well-established industry in India by the decade of the seventies to aid in the bureaucratic intricacies of U.S. immigration requirements. Niraj's narrative pointed to this trend in the travel industry. He stated:

I had very little time to do all this. She [the travel agent] had a guy in motorcycle take me all around, get all my paper work done. The biggest paper was that my birth certificate was in Hindi and Urdu and we had to find some reputable person who knew these languages . . . and then we found a professor in the University and he translated it. We also had to get the police clearance, RBI (Reserve Bank of India) clearance . . . all this was achieved in the 3 or 4 days. [a very fast job in a bureaucratic India with the help of the travel agency.]¹²³

Immigration lawyers, touting their services through the pages of India Abroad were further evidence of this trend.

The U.S. centers in India, U.S. Embassy and Consulates in India with offices in Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, the United States Educational Foundation, and the United States Information Services also provided crucial help about employment possibilities and the requirements about various exams, needed to get admission, or employment in the U.S. John reported seeking help from the U.S. consulate. “About the exam [nursing exam], I checked the consulate. They said [to] go take English classes.”¹²⁴ Niraj also spoke of this. “We used to go to Madras consulate to check on the immigration list to see when our turn was coming.”¹²⁵

By the seventies, the lure of U.S. migration was so great that many Indians living in other parts of the world were immigrating through a third country. Canada, because of its proximity to the U.S. and its easy access for Indians (due to their Commonwealth heritage), emerged as a place through which Indians immigrated to the U.S. Three people from India in the Detroit sample migrated from Canada. Narain, who worked in Windsor, a Canadian border town across from Detroit, had friends in the U.S. and through them he found news of better opportunities in the U.S. Divya arrived in similar way a decade later. Divya’s story adds to the migration complexities. She came to Canada through marriage migration, but became the primary migrant in her family’s migration to the United States. While taking classes at Wayne State University, she found employment opportunities in Detroit. The fairly open borders and the social networks that extended across the two nations among the Indian community, caused migrants to be more aware of the needs of the American labor market. Canada’s role as a migrating way station however, was not particular to Indians. A study conducted in the late sixties stated: “It is evident that many professional men from Europe who migrate to Canada are really en route to the United

States.”¹²⁶ It noted that in 1962 and 1963 the United States received 2,316 scientists and engineers who recorded Canada as their country of last permanent residence; and that approximately half the population who migrated from Canada was a foreign born Canadian.¹²⁷

This chapter has highlighted the role of U.S. immigration policies not only in the immigration of Indians to the U.S., but also in shaping the highly educated and professional nature of the Indian community in the U.S. A migration trend that began in the after India’s independence in the form of temporary student and trainee became a full fledged migration stream by the decades of the seventies and the eighties and made the U.S. the destination of choice among all Indians. The U.S. policies and labor needs were the central feature in making this transformation and they coincided with the needs of highly motivated educated Indians who were willing to leave India for greener pastures abroad. The predominance of physicians and engineers in the Indian migration is a reflection of the manpower needs of the U.S. economy; as is the migration of physiotherapists and computer programmers. Moreover, the chapter has also emphasized the importance of non-immigrant visas as an important means of migration, especially for those who did not have family in the U.S. to aid their migration endeavors, and that student migrations were also labor migrations, since the onus of getting a job in the American labor market was dependent upon these individuals.

The INS Act of 1965, although largely known as family reunification act, in actuality was convergence of family reunification and the needs of the American labor market. It streamlined the two trends beginning in the decade of the forties into one act. However, along with this act, it is the decade of the forties that was central in the

emergence of this act. During this decade the rollbacks of the old 1924 law began appearing and new initiatives such as labor migrations, refugee migrations and notions of higher education as a form of foreign policy initiative began emerging, policies that continue to exist today. Although the two trends coalesced in the INS Act of 1965, since then however, the two trends have been diverging. While the family reunification act succeeded in reunifying families both from the earlier decades and since 1965, the numerical limitations of 20,000 emerged as constraining to the labor demands and in the decade of the nineties, attempts were made to overcome these limits. The special acts of Congress—the Acts of 1990 and 1996—were trying to overcome the numerical constraints. While on the one end of the spectrum there is a clamoring to curtail family immigration, the migration of Indians under H1-B is evidence of the fact that the labor market and manpower needs continue to influence U.S. immigration policies as they did in the past. However, what is clear is that immigration policies, and changes therein are continuing to shape the immigration of professionals and non-professionals. And along with these policies, Indian migrants continue to show human agency and chose to migrate in the category most suitable to them. Consequently, the migration from India that began in 1960s continues unabated.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Ram Lal, interview by author, 15 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ² Prasad, interview by author, 6 April 2000, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ³ Niraj, interview by author, 11 March 2000, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁴ Lydia Potts, The World Labour Market: A History of Migration, translated by Terry Bond (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1990); Binod Khadria, The Migration of Knowledge Workers: Second-Generation Effects of India's Brain Drain (New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1999); Jagat K. Motwani, Mahin Gosine, and Jyoti Barot-Motwani eds., Global Indian Diaspora: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (New York : Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, 1993); Sociological Bulletin: Journal of the Indian Sociological Society Vol. 38, No. 1 (Mar. 1989), a special number on Indians abroad, focus on Indian Diaspora. Arthur and Usha Helweg's An Immigrant Success Story: East Indians in America (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) also provides details of Indian immigrants in different countries. See Appendix A, 236-240.
- ⁵ Bruce La Brack, The Sikhs of Northern California, 1904-1975 (New York: AMS Press, 1988); Joan Jensen, Passage From India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Karen Leonard, Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); and S. Chandrashekar, From East India To America: A Brief History of Immigration: Problems of Discrimination, Admission and Assimilation (La Jolla, California: Population Review Publication, 1982); deals with this early group of migrants.
- ⁶ Debra DeLaet, U.S. Immigration Policy in An Age of Rights (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000); David M. Reimers, Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1-10; Bill Ong Hing, Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 19-26
- ⁷ DeLaet, U.S. Immigration Policy in An Age of Rights; David Reimers, Still the Golden Door: the Third World Comes to America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 1-10; Hing, Making and Remaking Asian America through Immigration Policy,
- ⁸ Robert W. Tucker, Charles B. Keely, and Linda Wrigley, Immigration and the U.S. Foreign Policy (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990), 38, 43.
- ⁹ Sucheng Chan, "European and Asian Immigration into the United States in Comparative Perspective, 1820s to 1920s," in Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics ed. by Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, 37-75 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- ¹⁰ Hing, Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 110.
- ¹¹ Maureen L.P. Patterson, "Institutional Base for the Study of South Asia in the United States and the Role of American Institute of Indian Studies," in India's World and US Scholars, 1947-1997, ed. by Joseph W. Elder, Edward C. Dimock Jr., and Ainslee T. Embree (New Delhi: Manohar American Institute of Indian Studies, 1998), 27.
- ¹² Reimers, Still the Golden Door, 63-90.
- ¹³ Reimers, Still the Golden Door, 63-90.
- ¹⁴ Reimers, Still the Golden Door, 82.
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ John R. Niland, The Asian Engineering Brain Drain: A Study of International Relocation into the United States from India, China, Korea, Thailand and Japan, (Lexington, Mass.: Heath Lexington Books, 1970), 3
- ¹⁷ Hing, Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 69-78, 101-102
- ¹⁸ Robert J. Domrese, "The Migration of Talent from India," in International Migration of High Level Manpower: Its Impact on the Process of Development (New York: Praeger, 1970), 219.
- ¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Detailed Population Characteristics, Michigan," (1980) (24-11), Table 195.
- ²⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census, "General Population Characteristics, Michigan" (1990), table 5.

- ²¹ According to DeLaet, (U.S. Immigration Policy in an Age of Rights) 25 contract labor laws were first instituted in 1864, for workers in mining and agriculture, and these laws were repealed in 1868.
- ²² Enrique Oteiza, "A Differential Pull-Push Approach," in Brain Drain ed. by Walter Adams (New York, Macmillan Company, 1968), 120-134.
- ²³ Brinley Thomas, "'Modern' Migrations," in Brain Drain, ed. by Adams, 29-49.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Reimers, Still the Golden Door, 28.
- ²⁶ Vernon Briggs Immigration Policy and the American Labor Force (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 96-120
- ²⁷ Syed Javed Burki and Subramanian Swamy, "South Asian Migration to the United States: Demand and Supply Factor," Economic and Political Weekly Vol. XXII, No. 12 (March 21, 1987) quoting from Thomas L Bernard, Migration and Economic Growth (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 21.
- ²⁸ These figures were taken from John Niland, The Asian Engineering Brain Drain, 6.
- ²⁹ Liu, "The Contours of Asian Professional, Technical and Kindred Work Immigration, 1965-1988," Sociological Perspectives (1992): 685.
- ³⁰ Betty M. Vetter, The Technological Marketplace: Supply and Demand For Scientists and Engineers, (Washington D.C. Scientific Manpower Commission, 1985), 23.
- ³¹ Institute of Applied Manpower Research, The Brain Drain Study, Phase 1: Analysis of Ordinary Passports Issued During 1960-1967 (New Delhi: Institute of Applied Manpower Research, 1970), 7.
- ³² Paul M. Ong, Lucie Cheng, and Leslie Evans, "Migration of Highly Educated Asians and Global Dynamics," Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, Vol 1, no 3-4, 1992., 543-567
- ³³ Brain Drain Study, 7.
- ³⁴ Domrese, "The Migration of Talent from India," 228-31.
- ³⁵ Khadria, The Migration of Knowledge Workers, 110-111.
- ³⁶ J.N.Huang, and B.C. Martin, Foreign Medical Graduates in the United States, 1970 (Chicago: Center for Health Services Research and Development, American Medical Association, 1971), 1-3.
- ³⁷ Sophia Cox, "Immigration Legislation: An Overview," in International Medical Graduates: Immigration Law and Policy and the U.S. Physician Workforce, Council on Graduate Medical Education Resource Paper (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services, 1998), 28-31.
- ³⁸ Huang and Martin, Foreign Medical Graduates in the United States, 1970, 5.
- ³⁹ Alfonso Mejia, Helena Pizurki, Erica Royston, Division of Health Manpower Development, WHO, Pb for Sandoz Institute for Health and Socio-Economic Studies by Lexington Books, 1980, 5
- ⁴⁰ Alfonso Mejia, Helena Pizurki, and Erica Royston, Foreign Medical Graduates: the case of the United States (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1980), 7-9.
- ⁴¹ Brain Drain Study, 22
- ⁴² Huang and Martin, Foreign Medical Graduates in the United States, 1970, 2.
- ⁴³ According to one of my respondents, even Sri Lanka stopped issuing visas to Indians intending to take this exam. I have not been able to verify it independently.
- ⁴⁴ Huang and Martin, Foreign Medical Graduates in the United States, 1970, 2.
- ⁴⁵ Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates 1996 Annual Report (Philadelphia: Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates), 11.
- ⁴⁶ Brain Drain Study, 8.
- ⁴⁷ Brain Drain Study, 23.
- ⁴⁸ Brain Drain Study, 24.
- ⁴⁹ The study by Veena Kalra, was reported in Binod Khadria, The Migration of Knowledge Workers, 110-111.
- ⁵⁰ "Brain Drain of Indian Professionals," India Abroad (May 31, 1974): 6.
- ⁵¹ Stories from physicians in India Abroad also confirm this trend. Dr. Narasimhan and A Sikri, "Thousands of FMG's in the US Can't Work in their Fields," (Jan 10, 1986) refers to an Indian doctor who stated that his hospital paid his travel expenses.
- ⁵² Uma, Interview by author, 6 June 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁵³ This trend was also documented by Domrese, "The Migration of Talent from India," 234.

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- ⁵⁴ John Liu, "The Contours of Asian Professional, Technical and Kindered Work Immigration, 1965-1988," Sociological Perspectives (1992), 690-91, and Sucheng Chan, Asian Americans: An Interpretative History (Boston: Twayne, 1991), 148-149.
- ⁵⁵ Liu, "The Contours of Asian Professional, Technical and Kindered Work Immigration," 690-91.
- ⁵⁶ Liu, "The Contours of Asian Professional, Technical and Kindered Work Immigration," 692.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME), International Medical Graduates, the Physician Workforce and GME Payment Reform: Council on Graduate Medical Education Eleventh Report (Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, 1998), 5-6 .
- ⁵⁹ Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, 1996 Annual Report, 11.
- ⁶⁰ Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, 1994 Annual Report, 12.
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⁹¹ IIE, Open Doors: A Report on International Exchange, 1958, 11.

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⁹³ George Cohelo's study of Indian student conducted in 1958-59 further pointed to this desire among Indian students to stay in America.

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¹⁰³ Ram Lal, interview by author, 15 July, 2000, Metropolitan Detroit.

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¹⁰⁵ Niraj, interview by author, 11 March, 2000, Metropolitan Detroit

¹⁰⁶ Satish, interview by author, 1 October 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.

¹⁰⁷ Niraj, interview by author.

¹⁰⁸ Roesmary Stevens, Louis Wolf Goodman, Stephen Mick, The Alien Doctor: Foreign Medical Graduates in American Hospitals (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), 93 stated that FMG's relied far more on personal connections than USMG.

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- ¹²⁰ Raghubir, interview by author, 12 April 2000, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹²¹ Jatin, interview by author, 11 April 2000, Metropolitan Detroit.
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Chapter 4

WORK

1. I got a job in Henry Ford Hospital and I came here.¹
2. I got laid off in 1971, which was one of the worst years in U.S. history. I did odd jobs...and was able to make enough money to survive. Then I realized that I must have local education, so joined masters degree.²
3. I did not want to work outside the home, because I didn't have a degree, and I was never raised to believe that women work outside. Women stay at home, take care of the family and house and clean up. I was looking for things to do at home.³
4. For women, income doesn't matter; other factors come into consideration too. My company doesn't pay as well as other companies. But there are a lot of benefits, the flexibility; you can go when you want, come back when you want. The hours are flexible. Your child is sick, no problem you can stay at home. They allow you to become part-time.⁴

The first two of the above narratives are by men and the latter two by women.

Prasad, a physician came to Detroit in the seventies to take a job in a Detroit area hospital after serving at hospitals in Ohio and the East Coast. Satish, an engineer came to Detroit in search of employment. He was informed by his friends that Detroit, the motor city, was a hub for engineers and this was proven right since within a few weeks he found a job, based on his work experience in India. However, soon after he lost his job, worked odd jobs not related to his field, and finally went to the university to retrain, in order to better his educational credentials. By the time he returned to the labor market, the economic environment had improved. What his narrative does not recount here is a similar event occurring in the decade of the nineties when reorganization affected the motor industry again, especially the defense production units where he worked. When his company offered an early retirement plan for employees, he took that offer and now works for

another company on yearly contracts. His story brings out the relationship between the economic climate of the nation, the reorganization of industry, and the labor market. These two narratives also highlight the different employment demands in different industries; when physicians like Prasad were being recruited by Detroit hospitals, engineers like Satish were losing jobs.

Usha and Radha's stories, however, emphasize different themes. Usha arrived in the U.S. in the early years of seventies. As a woman growing up in India, she did not expect to work after marriage either in India or in the U.S. and her husband, an engineer, took care of the family's economic needs. The rising demands of the family budget, given her husband's desire to educate their children in a better university, live in a bigger house in a new neighborhood, however, could not be met with one income and resulted in her entrance into the labor force. She briefly worked outside the home but could not reconcile her paid work with her perceived neglect of her children, and subsequently quit her job in a factory. Usha's belief that women stayed at home and took care of their domestic responsibilities and the children forced her to find economic opportunities from home. Over the years, she found work at home, made shoes for toddlers managed a household business opened by her husband, and finally found her niche as a childcare provider. She also operated a small catering business out of her home. Radha, who migrated to the U.S. in the eighties, was an engineer and had since moved to the new field of computers. She worked for a nationally known company in a Detroit suburb, was highly motivated to work, but was forced to rethink her professional options because of her young children. After her education in the U.S. she did not look for employment until her son was a year old and she found good childcare. After the birth of her second child she worked part-

time until her second child was of school age. Her work priorities changed; she chose to work for her present company because of company policies—flexible time and becoming part time worker—that were crucial to her childcare responsibilities despite her awareness that she could get higher salary in the job market. At the time of our interview, she had returned to full-time work, but demands of children, sickness, their activities continue to follow her. Her professional ambitions had taken a back seat to her domestic responsibilities and she was juggling the two to the best of her ability.

Usha and Radha's narrative differs radically from that of Prasad and Satish's. The men never talked of or alluded to their domestic responsibilities or the pressures of juggling the home, and their work. These distinct accounts draw attention to different responsibilities of men and women at home and their effects on their employment choices and also emphasize that for women, even professional women, domestic concerns continue to affect their employment trends.

This chapter focuses on the labor force participation of Indian women and men in the U.S. It describes their occupational patterns within the political economy of metropolitan Detroit, and explores issues of mobility and discrimination involving Indians. These issues are examined with special attention to the professional workforce since a large number of Indian immigrants are clustered in professional occupational categories. The chapter argues that the manpower needs of metro Detroit were responsible for the recruitment of a largely professional Indian workforce. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes women's relationship to work, and argues that despite women's increasing participation in work, professional or non-professional, their relationship to work remained secondary to their domestic and especially their childrearing

responsibilities. The primary data used for this chapter is from the labor force and occupational characteristics reported in the 1980 and 1990 Censuses.

Before delving into these issues, it is essential to explain the problems of sources. The 1990 data on Asian Indian labor force participation is available in the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, The Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States, the Social and Economic Characteristics: Metropolitan Areas, United States, along with General Population and Housing Characteristics. The use of this data from 1990 census, however, raises a few problems. The data for Indian immigrants is found under the category “Asian Indian,” a term that is self-defined. This category, however, is a compilation of three groups: American born population that claims Indian heritage; the population that migrated from India and as such are of Indian origins; and the population of the vast Indian Diaspora that migrated from across the globe. These distinctions are not evident in the Census data, and thus pose problems for this chapter since the population relevant to this chapter is those born in India or those who had spent a considerable time in India. The alternative was to use data from the Foreign-Born Population from India. This data, however, provides ample information on Asian Indians at the national level but not for cities. To avoid the problems of disaggregate data, this chapter primarily uses data from the Asian Indian category. This problem does not exist for 1980 census particulars on Asian Indians

Indians in Detroit display a high labor force participation rate. In 1990, 69.3 per cent of the 10,563 Asian Indians over the age of 16 were active in the workforce; among men, the labor force participation rate was 85.8 per cent, and among women 51.1 per cent.⁵ The high labor force participation is also apparent in the large number of workers

within a family. In Detroit 32.2 per cent of all Indian families were single worker families, 52.4 per cent included two workers, and 13.4 per cent included three workers. Only 1.97 per cent of Asian Indian families had no workers.⁶

The occupational profile of Asian Indians in Detroit, as seen from table 4.1, portrays a highly professional workforce, with 57 per cent of the working population situated in managerial and professional occupations. Among the remaining labor force participants, 25 per cent were in the technical, sales and administrative services. 8.4 per cent worked as operators and laborers, 5.9 per cent were in the service occupations, and 3 per cent in precision production and craft industries. The skilled and professional nature of the labor force is also evident from the high degree of educational attainment as well the income of the population; 69.3 per cent of the Asian Indian population in Detroit has a bachelor's degree or higher.⁷ The median and mean income of the Asian Indians in Detroit was \$54,308 and \$78,046 respectively.⁸

These figures on occupational attainment, as Table 4.1 shows, follow the national trend of the Asian Indian community. In 1990, the labor force participation of Asian Indian community in America was 72.3 per cent; 84 per cent of the men and 58.8 per cent of the women above the age of 16 were in the workforce.⁹ Among Asian Indian families, 27.7 per cent were single worker families, 51.8 per cent consisted of two workers, and 17.8 per cent included three workers. Only 2.8 per cent of families did not have any workers. Nationally, 43.6 per cent of the population of Indian origin was in the professional and specialty occupations, 33.2 per cent in the technical and administrative workforce, 14.6 per cent situated in the blue-collar workforce and 8.1 per cent in the

service industry. The median and mean family income nationally for the Asian Indian community was slightly below that in Detroit and \$ 49,301 and \$ 65,381 respectively.¹⁰

The data shows that Asian Indian men in Detroit were highly professional as compared to the national figures; 64 per cent were employed in managerial and professional workforce whereas nationally only 49 per cent were in such professions. The technical labor force in Detroit among men was 18 per cent, and 28 per cent nationally. Indian women in Detroit however, were less occupationally motivated than Asian Indian women nationally; 51 per cent were employed as opposed to approximately 57 per cent nationally. However, 44 per cent of women in Detroit were in the managerial and professional force as compared to 35 per cent nationally. Other occupational variations were basically similar.

In 1990, the Asian Indian population in Detroit as well as in the United States was primarily clustered in white-collar occupations, in sharp contrast to the population of Detroit and America. Table 4.1 shows that while 57 per cent of the Indian population in Detroit was in professional and managerial occupations, the corresponding percentage for Detroit's population was 26.1 per cent. Technical, sales and administrative occupational categories employed 32.6 per cent of Detroit's population, 15.6 per cent of Detroit's working population consisted of operators and fabricators, and 11.9 per cent were in precision productions and crafts. Nationally, the occupational differences between the U.S. working population and Asian Indians were equally profound. While 44 per cent of the Indians in America were in the professional labor force, only 26 per cent of the American labor force was working in occupations in the professional categories.

Table 4.1**Labor Force Characteristics of Asian Indians, Detroit and U.S.A., 1990**

	Detroit		U.S.A	
	Asian Indian	Detroit. PMSA	Asian Indian	U.S Population
Managerial and Professional	57	26.1	43.6	26.4
Technical, Sales, Administrative	25	32.6	33.2	31.7
Service Occupations	6	12.9	8.1	13.2
Farming, Forestry, and Fisheries	0	.8	.6	2.5
Precision production, craft	3	11.9	5.2	11.3
Operators, Fabricators	8	15.5	9.4	14.9
	10,563	4,382,299	391,949	248,709,873
Median Family Income	54,308	\$40,962	49,301	35,225
Mean Family Income	78,046	\$48,362	65,381	43,803
MEN				
Managerial and Professional	64.0	25.7	49.1	25.2
Technical, Sales, Administrative	18.6	21.1	28.1	21.7
Service Occupations	3.9	9.8	5.9	10.2
Farming, Forestry, and Fisheries	0	1.1	.7	3.8
Precision production, craft	3.9	20.2	6.5	18.9
Operators, Fabricators	9.6	22.1	9.7	20.3
WOMEN				
Employed women, 16 +	51.1	55.2	58.6	56.8
Managerial and Professional	44.1	26.6	35.2	27.8
Technical, Sales, Administrative	38.8	46.5	41.5	43.6
Service Occupations	9.8	16.7	11.4	16.9
Farming, Forestry, and Fisheries	0	.4	.3	.8
Precision production, craft	1.2	2	2.7	2.3
Operators, Fabricators	6.1	7.8	8.9	8.5

Source: Census of Population, 1990 Asian Indian Population and the information on Detroit was compiled from Metropolitan Areas, "Social and Economic Characteristics," table 23, table, 33, table 34, Source: U.S Census. Bureau, Labor Force Characteristics

The concentration of Indians in professional specialty occupations was even higher if looked solely through male labor force participation. In the U.S., Asian Indian men had the highest labor force participation rate of all ethnic groups. Some 85.8 per cent in Detroit and 84 per cent of Indian in America above the age of 16 were in the labor

force.¹¹ Table 4.1 compares the occupational location of Asian Indian men and women with the American population and highlights the vast differences between the two groups. In the Detroit sample, Indian immigrants were predominantly physicians, engineers and computer specialists.

Indian women in Detroit were also highly concentrated in professional occupations. Table 4.1 shows that 44 per cent of Indian women were in the professional and managerial occupations, and 38 per cent were in the technical, sales and administrative occupations. In comparison, 26 per cent of Detroit's women work force was in managerial occupations and 46 per cent were in the technical and sales occupations. The Detroit sample exhibited more diversity. Although there were physicians, engineers and computer specialists, women also worked as physiotherapists, medical technologists and in other areas of service economy.

The employment patterns of Indian men and women reflect the needs of the employment market in metro Detroit. Detroit, commonly known as the Motor City, had been a mainstay of the U.S. manufacturing economy in the twentieth century, especially the automobile and ancillary industries. By the 1970s however, Detroit's economy, was transforming from a manufacturing to a service economy. The shift accelerated during the decade of the eighties. In 1980, 31.5 per cent of its industries were classified in the manufacturing sector, 27.7 per cent in the service sector and 16.6 per cent in the retail sector. By 1990, the service economy had become the largest sector representing 32.7 per cent of the city's economic base, and its manufacturing base comprised merely 17.7 per cent of the city's economic base. Retail trade was a close third with 6.8 per cent of

occupational base. Within a decade, then, the manufacturing sector sharply declined from 31 per cent to 17.7 per cent of the labor force.¹²

This decline in manufacturing economy and resultant shift towards services was not particular to the motor city, but was part of the larger transformation in American economic structure and was evident also in the kinds of new jobs created. Since 1965, approximately 30 million jobs were created in the United States, but during this period manufacturing dropped to 20 per cent of total employment. Manufacturing itself also was shifting in composition and only half the manufacturing workforce was actually involved in production; the other half included white-collar workers—managers, accountants, sales persons, attorneys and computer technicians. In Detroit the decline in manufacturing was accentuated by the problems in the auto-industry. The oil crisis of the seventies drastically affected the auto-manufacturing workforce in Detroit.¹³ For the auto industry, however, this problem was compounded by increasing competition from Japanese auto-industry, which exposed motor industry's lower worker productivity ratio. Responses to the Japanese challenge included massive reorganization within the auto industry; the worker-productivity ratios were increased by heavily retrenching the workforce and by increasing the use of technology.

Layoffs in the auto industry in Michigan in the decade of the 1980s were high. In 1979, the auto industry employed 409,600 people; by 1988 the manufacturing workforce had declined to 288,000 jobs, a decline of roughly 30 per cent within a single decade.¹⁴ Layoffs not only affected the blue-collar workforce in Detroit, but also the white-collar workers. Within a span of three years from 1978 to 1980, the Ford Motor Company cut its white-collar workforce from 85,300 to 72,000. By 1984, this workforce had further

reduced to 68,400. The company further projected to eliminate 10,000 more jobs by 1990.¹⁵ Between 1983 and 1987, Chrysler Corporation cut its workforce in half. The retrenched workers were more or less equally divided between managerial and salaried employees, and blue-collar workers. Along with reorganization in the auto-industry, the high cost of union labor further resulted in the movement of auto industry outside Detroit to the southern states in search of cheaper non-union labor, further reducing auto jobs.¹⁶ In 1956, Michigan employed 52 per cent of the workforce in auto industry; by 1988 this share had shrunk to 33 per cent.¹⁷

In the decade of eighties, metro Detroit was an area in economic decline. Its population was declining and its economic base was crumbling. Yet amazingly during this period of decline, the Indian immigrant population in Detroit was increasing significantly. In 1990, the Indian foreign born-born population in Detroit was 10,535, up from 7306 in 1980, showing a 30 per cent increase. Although it is hard to monitor the actual number of foreign immigrants from India to Detroit given simultaneous internal migration within the U.S., there was a net gain of Indians settling in the city. According to the Census data, during this decade 2,806 Asian Indians arrived in Detroit from another country and 1,483 Asian Indians moved to Detroit from another city.¹⁸

The settlement of Indians in a rapidly declining metropolitan area reveals a complex relationship between migration and economic opportunities. The net increase of Indian population in Detroit suggests that despite declining jobs in manufacturing, economic opportunities for new immigrants continued to flourish. The general reorganization of the American economy from manufacturing to services was also at the same time creating new jobs in Detroit. Although between 1970 and 1980, Michigan lost

90,000 manufacturing jobs, during this period it also gained 456,000 service jobs.¹⁹ Notwithstanding the loss of 115,000 Big Three auto jobs since 1979, by the end of 1987 Michigan had gained 535,00 additional jobs, a large proportion of them in metro Detroit and its surrounding areas. Diversification in metro Detroit's economy had resulted in creation of new jobs outside manufacturing. New areas of job growth were business services, health care, and industrial automation; more than 100,000 jobs were created in engineering, finance and health care. The new high-tech sectors of industrial automation and biotechnology alone showed substantial growth with more than 33,000 jobs emerging in small industrial automation companies with 40 per cent of their sales outside the auto industry. There was also an increase in technological advancement in industries including automobile and major auto suppliers, integrated steel makers, and machine toolmakers.²⁰ Further evidence of this trend emerged from Michigan Employment Services Commission (M.E.S.C.), which noted growth in service sectors such as retail stores, restaurants, banks, savings and loan companies, hotels, auto repair firms and the government.²¹ Increased state revenues from service-oriented businesses, especially in construction, wholesale trade and non-auto durable goods manufacturing, further documented this trend.²²

Even in the auto industry, new jobs were created for the highly skilled workers. The reorganization of the auto industry in the face of Japanese competition had not only resulted in major restructuring by increasing productivity ratio from fewer workers, but it also became a catalyst in commencing a new technological and industrial revolution. This change was characterized by a new focus on automation, computer-aided technology and robotics. General Motors's acquisition of Electronic Data System in 1985 as well as its

expectations to increase its programmable devices reflected this trend.²³ Advances in automation resulted in an increasing demand for technically specialized workforce. Although the Big Three Motor industries were cutting jobs, new areas of growth were creating new jobs. As a result in a time of major retrenchment, Detroit also faced shortages of engineer and financial managers.²⁴ According to the Michigan Employment Service Commission, new jobs, especially white-collar jobs, increased significantly in the Detroit area. In 1950 auto producers employed 26 white-collar workers for every 100 blue-collar workers. By 1990, this number had increased to 63 white-collar workers for every 100 blue-collar workers. The upswing in the economy was also seen in an increase in the hiring of new graduates. During early 1980s GM usually hired 1,200 to 1,500 new graduates a year, a number that fell to 500 by 1987. By 1988 this level had increased to 800 graduates. About 80 to 85 per cent of the new graduates hired by GM were in technical and engineering fields.²⁵ While jobs in manufacturing were declining then, jobs in computer and information technology were increasing.²⁶ This increase in the hiring of new graduates was significant to the Indian immigrants since many came here as students, and followed employment opportunities.

Along with this shift in the nature of new jobs, there was also a regional shift in the location of these new jobs. While the central city, rooted in the older manufacturing economy had lost significant numbers of jobs, the suburban areas flourished. Oakland County grew at a phenomenal rate, ranking third in national growth among all counties.²⁷ Areas of job growth in Oakland country were in retail trade, administrative and high tech jobs, notably in the cities of Southfield and Auburn Hills.

The high concentration of the Asian Indian population in professional occupations is a result of American immigration policies and patterns of migration selectivity. Indian professionals in the Detroit sample were clustered in medicine, engineering and computer related fields, and this occupational clustering was definitely shaped by the political economy and the manpower needs of Detroit. In the decade of the sixties, majority of the Indians who settled in Detroit came as a result of jobs, and they consisted primarily of engineers and physicians. The engineers went to area universities and after completion of education were employed either with the Big Three auto manufacturers or ancillary engineering firms in the area. Detroit, during the sixties and the seventies also was a big recruiting place for physicians who were either recruited or easily found employment either in downtown hospitals or in the small towns surrounding Detroit. Universities, and chemical companies in the area also hired people. During the decade of the seventies, the demand for physicians started ebbing but employment opportunities for engineers, except for cyclical declines, continued. During this decade, along with the motor industry, new opportunities for engineers emerged in the City of Detroit. In the decade of the eighties, engineers continued to migrate and the Big Three auto companies recruited most of the engineers in the sample from universities, and their specialization was in electrical or computer aided technology, a new area of growth. In the decade of the nineties, physiotherapists were in demand and migrated from India. Along with economic needs of the metropolitan areas, increasing family migration in the decade of the eighties brought Indians who were not well educated or professionals but migrated to be with their family and social networks. Kulwant and John found work in the factories. The Detroit sample showed two streams; migrations of Indians influenced by the political economy of the

area, and the migration to Detroit as a result of family networks. Among marriage migrants, a high degree of professionals prevailed, especially in late seventies and eighties; however, there were also women who worked in the administrative services or in sales.

Oral interviews point out that many among the sample were recruited by area hospitals, similar to men like Prasad, and point to the growth in the medical industry and its need for doctors. However, by the mid-seventies, this demand ebbed; new demands in medical field arose again with geriatric care and resulted in the recruitment and migration of physiotherapists from India. Recruitment among engineers, the other field of specialization that brought Indians to Detroit, continued unabated, although there were changes of specialization within it. The early engineers were civil and mechanical engineers, those in the decade of the eighties predominantly in the electrical field and were moving in computer-aided technology. Along with recruitment by concerned companies, people also found employment through social networks. These networks assume importance, especially in the decade of the seventies when job opportunities hit a plateau but the labor supply, especially of physicians, continued through marriage migration. During these times, these networks were the crucial factor between getting a job or not. Niraj looked roughly for six months for employment. He stated: "Basically the way we were getting residency was if you know somebody and then you can get an interview. Otherwise there were so many applicants it was not even possible to get an interview."²⁸ This was especially true for Indian women, whose husbands and friends predominantly introduced them to work opportunities. According to Kuldeep: "I was thinking of going back to school. Then my husband one day met someone who had the

same degree as I did. She told him that I did not need to study, all I needed was to pass an exam.”²⁹

These networks resulted in the creation of immigrant niches in certain areas, especially in Detroit hospitals and in the city of Detroit. Roger Waldinger, citing the employment of professionals in the New York City administration found that the changing economy created new opportunity structures, facilitating the incorporation of new immigrants.³⁰ Oral accounts, point to this trend among Indians employed in city of Detroit. During the decade of the seventies, the racial tensions and the resultant departure of white ethnic population from Detroit area left vacuum in many city departments, which was filled by new Indian immigrants. Along with racial tensions besetting the city, new requirement of city domicile for city jobs further resulted in the limitation of hiring of whites who were increasingly moving to the suburbs. Indian engineers filled these new opportunities, according to Kuldeep whose husband, an engineer, found employment there. Later she herself found employment and claimed that roughly 40 per cent of her department consisted of Indian women; the others were Indian men, Filipino and Chinese women. No person of white ethnicity worked in her department.³¹

Along with the changing needs of Detroit's economy, family migration from India also shaped the work profile of the Indian community. Although the professional character of the Indian community remains, the coming of family immigrants who were not highly professional has diluted the professional character of the Indian community. John and Kulwant worked in factory jobs, and Usha as a sales clerk. Many of the women who were not professionals were in technical jobs, and others worked from home. Women in the Detroit sample thus show a wide variety of employment patterns. Along

with physicians, engineers, and computer professionals, women also worked in technical fields as medical and bio technologists, as nurses, chemists, school teachers real estate and travel agents, and also ran small-scale food based businesses from home. Those in technical services trained in Detroit for these jobs and were cognizant of the needs of the Detroit labor market.

Although the Indian population in Detroit area remained predominantly in the professional workforce, there was a definite decline in the percentage of Indians in their location in the managerial and professional occupations from 1980 to 1990. This decline was more evident nationally than in Detroit, and further point to the role of Detroit's political economy influencing immigrants' arrival to the city. In 1980, 63 per cent of the Asian Indian population was located in management and professional specialty occupations, which by 1990, declined to 57 per cent. Across the U.S.A., 51 per cent of the Indian population in 1980 was situated in professional workforce, which fell to 44 per cent by 1990. During this decade there was a corresponding increase of Indians in technical service occupations. In metropolitan Detroit their percentage rose from 20 per cent to 25 per cent, and in the United States from 27 per cent to 33 per cent. In Detroit, among men there was not much difference (69.4 per cent to 64 per cent), among women, however, there was a sharp decline from professional occupations towards technical occupations. (from 52 per cent to 44 per cent).³²

This decline in occupational clustering of Indian immigrants can be attributed to the increasing immigration through family migrants in the decade of the eighties, who were not selected to the labor market. This decline seems to be in accordance with the hypothesis of sociologists Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, who argued that family

migrations resulted in lower educational attainments and a declining skill level of immigrants.³³ The location of Asian Indians in professional occupations in 1980 was not surprising given their migrations took place primarily under occupational categories of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. The fact that family migrations were less suited to the labor market can be discerned by educational attainment of the newer immigrants, and the fact that immigrants coming through family migrations were older at time of arrival. Newer immigrants in the decade of the eighties were less educated is borne out by census data. The number of Indians who were professional school graduates declined from 17 per cent of the pre –1980 cohort to just 9 per cent among those arriving from 1987 to 1990. There was however, an increase in number of people possessing bachelor's degree (from 37 per cent to 46 per cent), as well as masters' degree (from 33 per cent to 37 per cent).³⁴ A large majority of these family members were unable to find employment in fields they were trained for and ended up being underemployed.

Moreover, the entry of women in the work force, women who were not highly educated also diluted the professional characteristic of the labor force. The new areas where men and women were finding employment were predominantly in the service industry. Detroit does not have an Indian enclave economy either in terms of population concentration in particular neighborhood, or within the context of a segmented labor market. There however, are spatial concentrations in strip malls on Ford Road which housed stores selling merchandise particular to the needs of the community from the Indian subcontinent. New stores catering to the needs of the Indian population were following the Indian population to the northern and western suburbs and were located on Orchard Lake Road and Dequindre Road bordering Troy and Sterling Heights. These

strip malls consist primarily of grocery stores catering to the needs of Indian households, restaurants catering Indian food, sari and fabric stores, jewelry, and Indian music and video rental stores. A significant segment of this economy caters to the needs of the Indian population in India. Expatriates returning to India carry consumer goods, especially electronic goods. The predominance of electronic goods using 220 Volt as used in India, as opposed to electrical goods using 110 Volts is an indication of this. Associated primarily with those returning to India, it reflects Indian family needs and constitutes a considerable part of the Indian service economy. Indian community, if oral accounts are any indication, however is following work in services that are particular to the Indian community. They found work as real estate agents, sold insurance, and operated travel services that cater to the needs of the Indian and other immigrant communities. Interviewees also talked of other Indians operating motels, franchises especially of Dunkin Donuts and Subways and other small businesses.

Women and Work

The high labor force participation rate of Indian women and men is surprising. While for men it can be attributed to their gendered roles as economic providers, and their economic motivation for migration; women's participation in the paid labor force, however, is amazing. Table 4.1, earlier in the chapter showed that 51 per cent of Indian women in 1990 in Detroit were part of the labor force. This data, however, only reflects conditions in the year 1989 and does not depict the transience or the complexities in Indian women's work lives. In the Detroit sample all women had worked at some point of time in their lives, even if for a day. This labor force participation rate was in sharp

contrast to middle class women's employment rates in India, which although increasing, had never reached such high proportions as in Detroit.

From oral interviews it emerges that the high labor force participation rate of Detroit women was a result of three factors. First, the presence of large number of professional women who were highly motivated to work; second, to take care of the economic needs of the family; and third, the emergence of a new culture among Indian women in the United States where paid work became associated with women's identities.

The high presence of professional women either through self-selection or through marriage migrations has already been documented in the earlier chapters. Uma, Rama and Veena all expected to work in their life either in India or in the United States and their labor force participation does not elicit any surprise. This group of professional women continued arriving in Detroit, predominantly through marriage migration.

However, it is the presence of women like Usha in the labor force that is surprising. Her narrative appears at the beginning of the chapter. She did not work in India, believed in women's domestic roles, yet ended up working in the U.S. Traditionally, women's forays into the workforce denote economic marginalization, and Indian families in Detroit, although largely viewed as successful professional community with high family income, did face economic uncertainty. Interviews from Detroit point to three kinds of economic hardships faced by this group; women centered, related to problems of early settlement, and the growing economic needs that did not allow family subsistence on one income.

The female dimension to poverty in Detroit was related to death, desertion or sickness of spouse, forcing women into the labor force. For Kulwant a combination of

factors resulted in her outside work: “My husband was not doing too well economically. It was essential that I work. I had no choice. Then he fell sick and was in and out of the workforce and I was forced to continue working.”³⁵ For Uma however it was desertion of her spouse. “When he left me, I had no choice but to continue working. I had a child to take care of now.”³⁶ In these scenarios, women’s work became essential to the well-being of the family economy; and women, who did not expect to work in America, were forced to by the needs of their family.

Economic marginalization was also found among immigrant families in the early years of settlement, resulting in women’s labor force participation. Poverty was especially common among student families, or early immigrants who had few resources, and social networks to fall back upon in America. These economic needs catapulted women into the labor force, and their participation in paid work was usually at the behest of their husbands. Savitri Devi worked in the university to make some extra money, and Kamlesh cooked food for single men while her husband was a student: “Another lady and I cooked food for other Indian students and they paid us for it. It wasn’t much but it did help us buy toys for the children and the household stuff.”³⁷ While these two conversations focus on the decade of the sixties, Chandra did similar kind of work in the decade of the seventies. “I sold Avon cosmetics to other women for two and a half years while my husband was a student.”³⁸

Periodic downturns of the economy and the resultant job loss even among professionals also resulted in women taking on new economic roles to support their families, as was the case with Chitra. “ I did baby sitting when he got laid off. I did Avon. I did babysitting for an Indian doctor. She used to give me \$5 a day. It was a lot of

money, minimum was \$1.25. Then an American lady sent her 3 children after school . . . I used to go around the building telling people I will babysit for you. I did not waste any money, used to save. He was unemployed for 9 months. Then somebody told me about Avon. If you sell for \$100, you get 40 per cent, if you sell for \$75 you get 25 per cent. I filled up everybody's house in India with Avon."³⁹ And then there were people like Usha's husband, although a professional, who could not support his family on one income. According to her: "It was a big tension . . . we lived from paycheck to paycheck. We had no savings. I worked in a factory for 6 months. There was a factory; they used to make surgical needles . . . He didn't ask me to work. I wanted to do it myself. You see I used to handle the finances."⁴⁰ Usha's financial needs increased because during these years she also called her parents and brother to the United States and supported them.

Economic needs among Indian families were not unique to the early years of immigration but also reemerged in latter years, even in families where men were gainfully employed. The high costs associated with suburban living, responsibility towards family, especially elderly parents in India, helping family members settle in America along with periodic visits home required financial resources that could not be met by single incomes. Moreover, the intentions of many immigrants to return home required higher degree of capital accumulation, so families were better served with two incomes than one. Furthermore, the community whose origins in India were rooted in middle class where professional work was central to mobility; these families also had higher educational goals for their children. Similar to their families in India, they were pooling their resources to invest in their children's education, which in the U.S. were substantial. The importance of children's schooling was so high that many families

changed their residence to allow better educational opportunities for their children. These additional costs necessitated two incomes resulting in many women leaving their homes for outside work. Soudamini stated: "His [son's] counselor in school said that we should send him to Troy high school. We were living in Madison Heights at that time. We had to buy a house in Troy. Then he [her husband] said why don't you start working."⁴¹ And Usha: "He [her husband] wanted children to go to Oakland University. So we bought a house in Rochester Hills when we couldn't afford it."⁴²

Oral interviews point out that outside work began to transform Indian women in the U.S. and began to emerge as essential aspect of Indian immigrant women's life. The increasing participation of women in the workforce influenced their networks of friends and family to join the labor force, even those women whose families did not have any economic compulsions. In addition, for new immigrant women, lack of social networks resulted in their seeking outside work as alternative to boredom. Outside work began to be seen among women as a source of empowerment and provided women with new self-esteem. These women's actions in locating work are representative of a break away from the Indian gendered ideology. Some amongst these furthered their skills by rejoining schools in America. Many among these women joined work for non-economic reasons. Kuldeep who arrived in the U.S. in mid seventies and in Detroit in 1979 stated: "When everybody around me was working, I went crazy that I should start work. Here, in Detroit it was so severe that I almost got sick that I must do something."⁴³ The fact that women could leave homes and work without assigning stigma to the family also emboldened women to seek work for motives that were non-economic in nature. For Pramila, "He was supporting all his family, settling them here. We had a new house and I wanted good

furniture. But he would not give me money. So one day I found Oakland Community paper and went for an interview and got the job. I worked as a cook for a restaurant. I just wanted a new sofa.”⁴⁴ The idea that women worked also influenced Raksha whose husband was doing very well. She stated: “I went one day and found work. Next day I made breakfast and then I said that I am going to get ready. He said where are you going and I said that I have a job. He kept quiet that day but next day he told me. Sit down, and listen. He told me you may make some money but your children will suffer. I will give you whatever you make there. So I only worked for a day. Everybody was working, and I wanted to work too. But my family was important to me.” (Translated from Punjabi)⁴⁵ For many in this early cohort, outside work became associated with expressing their new identity as Indian women in America, who were making conscious choices, although these choices were not independent of their identities as housewives and mothers. It should be noted that both men and women supported women’s occupational endeavors as long as they did not clash with their domestic responsibilities.

Women’s decision to participate in the labor force was rarely independent of their family’s interests and was usually at the behest or in concurrence with their spouses. As a result many women who entered the workforce due to economic exigencies, returned home after their men were able to support their family. The growing participation of women in the labor force, even temporarily, however, represented changes in women and men’s attitudes towards paid work, a break away from the traditional Indian division of labor sanctioned by the dominant thought, and a change that happened in the United States. According to Detroit subjects, the presence of large number of professional women in the Asian Indian community mediated this transformation in male and female

ideology. By 1980, according to the U.S. Census 35 per cent of Indian immigrant women in the labor force were in professional specialty occupations, and were paving the way for other women in the Indian community to work.⁴⁶ The respectable nature of outside work along with high earnings resulted in their emerging as the new role models in the community. The absence of elder family members in the U.S. to act as enforcers of traditional norms, also facilitated women's entrance into paid work.

The nature of women's employment depended upon multiple factors. Women in the Detroit sample chose jobs which were suited to the labor needs of the city economy, the time needed to train for it, as well as their English language skills. Many of the women in the decade of the seventies and the early eighties became part of the technical fields. Indira stated: "Those days it was very easy to get job in medical technology. All they needed was one year internship." Her attempts at finding work in her field, however, were unsuccessful. "They said you have to graduate from another college here. Why don't you take the same courses here?"⁴⁷ She joined a university to take classes but on the suggestion of a friend, changed her field to computer, a new field that was emerging. Chitra wanted to work from home in order to take care of her young children. She chose to baby sit. "I used to go around the building telling people I will baby sit for you."⁴⁸ Soudamini, who had quit working in India as a nurse, returned to work at the suggestion of her husband. Others, who had not worked in India, were slowly thinking of earning money. By the decade of the eighties, more professionals were coming from India through marriages, physicians, engineers, and computer professionals. During this decade non-professionals were also arriving from India; Sujata, an administrative assistant, Gita, who did technical writing, Farida, who began working as cashier in a bank, Priti, trained

to become a programmer. And during this decade, Shymala and Chandra began teaching Indian culture and dance at the temple and privately at people's homes and through the temple. Among those who had arrived in the early period, some returned to work in the restaurant industry, or in real estate.

Domestic responsibilities also shaped women nature of work. Women chose work that allowed them to take care of their domestic responsibilities, and found work, which could be conducted from home. This was especially true of women who did not possess any specialized educational and professional requirements needed for the labor market. New work opportunities emerged in Detroit that were an extension of women's household responsibilities and provided them avenues of income generation while working from home. These were primarily related to food production and restaurant and catering business, childcare services, and in new services connected to the propagation of Indian culture.

The emergence of catering and food related industry had its origins in two factors; the increasing number of working women within the Indian community, and the rising demand for Indian food amongst the dominant population. The increasing number of working women and their ability to afford services resulted in a new demand for home cooked food services. The presence of a group of women who either were not suited to the needs of the labor market or were hesitant to leave their homes and their eagerness to explore new ventures related to cooking resulted in new economic opportunities for these women in catering. Moreover, the increasing social interaction among Indians and the increasing celebration of social events in the community, and the relative affluence of a section of the population to afford these services were factors in the proliferation of

catering and food related services. According to Usha: “ I like to cook, so I started catering. It started accidentally. I didn’t want to open a restaurant and stay out of home.”⁴⁹ For Mona too, being a good cook resulted in her opening a catering business and then investing in a restaurant.

New economic opportunities for women also emerged in the childcare industry. With an increasing number of working mothers in the Indian community in Detroit, a high demand for childcare service providers emerged, allowing many women, who did not have any skills for the labor market, new avenues of income generation. It did not require any specialized skills, and allowed women to take care of their domestic responsibilities. Women’s involvement in the daycare industry was not particular to women in Detroit but was part of a larger emerging trend among Indian women in America. According to a report in India Abroad, this was a common occurrence among women with young children who quit their regular jobs.⁵⁰ Women however considered this trend as temporary measure, until their children were grown up. It allowed women to operate from their home and take care of their young children. Moreover, it did not require substantial financial inputs.

One of the new industries to offer new opportunities exclusively to women was related to the propagation of Indian culture. The desire of the community to perpetuate Indian cultural heritage among the second generation of Indians in America created new avenues for women. The knowledge of Indian traditions and its different aspects related to religion, language, music and dance emerged as new skills that were in high demand. Initially mediated through religious institutions and ethnic associations, heritage classes succeeded in creating a demand for such services permitting women to operate informal

schools and cultural centers. These new opportunities were embedded in women's traditional roles as cultural agents. Moreover, the presence in the Indian community of women who sought to extend Indian dances and heritages further created a demand among the community to use their resources. According to Chandra, who was associated with such activities, it gave not only new avenues of income but also provided women with a new status within the community. "I was always involved with the Bhartiya temple. I taught dance, I taught heritage classes. I taught Hindi to kids. Come to think of it I have a career and I didn't even go to school."⁵¹

These employment opportunities were part time and allowed women to take care of their childcare needs. Childcare needs affected the timing of women's work as well as the nature of their work. A large majority of these women were transient in the labor force. Women's paid work remained dependent on the demands of her family and its economic needs. Women in the Detroit sample entered the labor force late, after their children were in middle or high school and usually worked as unskilled workers. Women had entered the labor force but it was rarely at the expense of their domestic and especially child rearing responsibilities.

This pressure of childcare on women, even professional women, is borne out by women immigrants from Detroit. The majority of the women, irrespective of their professional level of work, or their time of arrival, became part-time workers or took time off from work to take care of their children. The work patterns of Indian women in Detroit largely follow the trends pointed out by sociologist Haya Steir.⁵² Steir hypothesized that women's decision to enter, stay, or leave the labor force was dependent upon multiple factors ranging from the pressures generated by the needs of the family

economy, and the trade off between the home and labor market. Individual endowments in terms of educational and professional skills, English proficiency and the length of residence and household arrangements also played a big role in women's decision to participate in the labor force. Highlighting the relationship between economic motivation and family economy and demands, Steir argued that high salaries of men lowered women's need to join the labor force. Steir's contention partially holds true for Indian immigrant women in Detroit. Further evidence of this emerges through Census details of women's labor force participation in the three counties of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne. Macomb County had the highest participation rate among women with 59 per cent; it also had the lowest income among the three counties with an annual family income of \$55,624. The average income of an Asian Indian family in Oakland County was \$93,803 and the women's participation rate at 46.2 per cent was the lowest. Asian Indian in Wayne County had an annual income of \$65,725 and the women's labor force participation rate was 54.6 per cent.⁵³ Women who stayed away from work could subsist on a single income, although their standards of living came down. Steir, however, postulated that highly motivated professional women would continue working. In the Detroit sample, however, even physicians, engineers and computer experts stayed away from work to take care of their children, women whose economic remuneration from work could well have afforded childcare. These women, who claimed to be highly motivated once upon time, in the trade off between home and work, chose home even though it implied a drastic cut in their family income. There were only two professional women who hired full time nannies to take care of their children in order to continue working.

Thus professional work did not take women away from their childcare responsibility. Although the relationship between professional work and women's domestic responsibilities is still in its infancy, the few studies out suggest that professional work has not alleviated women from their domestic responsibilities. A study on women physicians showed that these women devoted less time than male physicians to professional work.⁵⁴ The study found that there were different normative expectations of men and women to work. Traditional gender norms allowed men to intrude on their family roles, whereas women's family roles were permitted to intrude on their work. The study argued that despite outside work, gender differences and different gender-role expectations for men and women continued to prevail. As a result, women physicians reduced professional work hours to devote more effort to home responsibilities. These differences resulted in women working fewer hours when they were involved with household and childcare responsibilities, especially when their husbands earned incomes that were at least equal to or greater than their income. This contention holds true for Indian professional women. There was a definite co-relation between spousal income and women's taking time off from work. Individual families made their own choices. Women's decision to leave work, however, was contingent upon the needs of the family economy. Those who left work in Detroit were primarily from families where the family could comfortably live on single income of their spouse. Women, who remained in the labor force, were either single parents or those women whose income was essential to their family economy.

While increasingly women were joining the work force, this pattern was by no means uniform. Women like Usha continued to hold the thought that women's primary

responsibilities were at home, and despite the increasing need of two incomes, were not eager to work outside their home, especially when their kids were young. Women's work options operated in conjunction with their domestic responsibilities. Indira too alluded to similar sentiments, and started work well after her children were in school. She stated:

You see I didn't want to work. We chose to be poor. I wanted to stay at home with my child. I didn't know anybody here and I didn't know the baby-sitting arrangements. I couldn't think of giving this child to somebody and going off to work so we decided that I would stay at home and not work. We both agreed. So we chose to be poor but it paid off and we had two beautiful well-balanced kids. It was worth it.⁵⁵

Her options were rooted in her unfamiliarity with the childcare system prevalent in the U.S., as well as her reluctance to leave her child with a stranger.

The absence of proper day care arrangements, as well as high cost of childcare was a factor in the absence of women from the labor force. In recent years, however, the attempts of corporate America to retain their women workforce by offering them flexible time and part-time work is allowing many Indian women to continue working. Some young women in the Detroit sample have taken advantage of these new policies and return home at times coinciding with their children's return from school. In Troy, after school programs like "Latchkey" are also allowing women to work longer hours, although some remain dissatisfied with it. However, the interviewers point that in America, the great importance of childcare for Indian families is tampering the employment motivation of professional women. Moreover, from the Detroit interviews it emerges that Indian women have also acquired a new responsibility of cultural reproducers in the U.S., which also weighed in heavily in their decision to stay at home. The problems perceived by the Indian family of the dominant American culture and the resultant negative impression among many women further a family's desire to be with

their children, especially in their formative years. Thus, the absence of professional women of the decade of the eighties was particular to American conditions and majority of these women would not have quit their jobs in India. Indian women in Detroit, thus were following the 'M cycle of work' i.e they were in and out of the labor force; their family commitments and economic needs fluctuated.⁵⁶

Not only did childcare determine women's work patterns, but in some cases it also dictated women's choices of work. The high demands of professional work, and the input of personal time in work, definitely intruded upon family life. Women like Madhu, who was highly motivated to work in her unmarried years, were faced with new realities once they had a family and young children and were forced to make choices. Professional work, demanded long hours of work and affected not only domestic responsibilities but also family life. Facing this dilemma, Madhu left her field of work and became a schoolteacher in the light of new priorities. This decision however was not without struggle. According to her:

I finally left the field because I felt that I wasn't cut out for the long hours and perseverance and after a while you see that the women in the field of academia are mainly single or divorced, they don't seem to have a family life . . . and you really have to be dedicated to your career and I wasn't that. Work was way more than the returns. Post-doc pay was low, maybe if it was more I would have felt less inclined to leave.

It was a very hard decision for me to leave. I had won all those awards, got the sigma . . . award where all the Nobel laureates belong and everybody who has got that award has become a young investigator and a faculty somewhere. You know I was the first person in the university to receive this award. But I felt very isolated as a researcher and you work in a lab all by yourself, you report to a boss, and I am not cut out for isolation. I love people...

Now my priorities have changed. Since I have a child now, full summer and spring break times have become important now. I am a part time teacher now.

Regrets!!! you know not any more. That initial thing of loss, and not being in the field, the challenges and accolades have gone.⁵⁷

Although work became part of women's life, women's priorities remain different than those of men as noted earlier by Radha in the beginning of the chapter. Work in the U.S. has become part of Indian women's identity and they are very proud of their achievements. Work has become part of their lives, especially the younger women. Noted Madhu "Work gives you a personal sense of achievement, accomplishment that is important which I will not get at staying at home. Financial independence if I lost, it would make me feel very insecure."⁵⁸ This change is not only noted among professional women, but also among women who did not expect to work outside their homes.⁵⁹ This identity with work is so strong that those who were choosing to stay at home were being criticized by their peers. Gita who quit full time work to take care of her children stated:

I quit work, and my friends would call left and right. I knew that I had made the right decision, my husband was comfortable with it, and unfortunately my friends were not, my Indian friends. American friends would never say that since it is a luxury to stay at home, but my Indian friends . . . 'Why would you want to quit your job like that, it is a waste of time [staying at home].' A lot of time I would cry myself to sleep. Did I make the right decision? It is a thing in the U.S.A. that as soon as the wife comes to the U.S.A. they start work. I don't know somehow women feel that if you are working here somehow you are worth something. Somehow they do not give enough importance to family life, or taking care of children. I don't know why?⁶⁰

A large majority of Detroit women, despite their professional skills, exhibited a lack of ambition that Kala Rani noted among Indian women was much apparent in the Detroit sample; as was the observation by Promilla Kapur that women did not want to rise above their men at job.⁶¹ This was very much evident among two women in Detroit who worked in the same field as their husbands', consciously chose to curtail their ambitions, since they did not want to achieve higher positions than their spouses, and couched their lack of ambition in terms of family harmony and happiness.⁶² For women, professional achievement needed to be accompanied with personal happiness, and not the

other way around. Noted Sheila: "Also there was something else. I was seeing that my husband is quite an ambitious man and that he was heading towards it and I just felt that, you know . . . I didn't sacrifice, I don't feel it that way. You may say that this is a defeatist role but I can say that if both of U.S. were in the same position, our personal life would be hell, would be very chaotic. And personal life is very important." ⁶³ Outside work has not changed gender relations among Detroit families. Even women like Radha, who at that time of interviews was the primary earner of her family, since her husband had started a new enterprise, were waiting for him to become the primary caretaker again.

Discrimination:

The few professional women who were highly motivated to work however, confronted challenges that were not only based on their foreign origins but also on the basis of their sex. In the decade of the sixties and the seventies, highly motivated professional women were not a norm in the U.S. Although occupations were gender-segregated both in India and in the U.S., there were differences between the two cultures, in what was considered a woman's profession. Consequently, few Indian women worked with other women, as was the case in India. Rama was one of three women working in a pool of 120 scientists; Chitra was the only women computer programmer in her unit.

Commenting on this trend Sheila stated:

In India, going to a medical school you don't feel you are unique. My friend's mothers were physicians. Here, yeah it was different. There were so few women physicians. I was shocked to see only 10 per cent of the class in medical school were women. There [in India] 50 per cent of any class is women. Since then it has become better here. Women in America become nurses, women become secretaries, but they don't become doctors. That way America was behind. ⁶⁴

Women working in field of sciences commented on their workplace environs, which sometimes became problematic due to the attitude of the others. ⁶⁵ As a result they

had to deal with male attitudes that resented women's presence in the office, or their higher ambitions. Noted Rama, "I had a guy assigned to me who didn't want to work with me, but he didn't know how to say that and he kept saying that she does not treat me right."⁶⁶ Indira too faced similar conditions. She stated: "My supervisor was very old fashioned. He believed that men bring the money and women do the housework; take care of the children, that kind of person. He was like a male chauvinist. He did not like working with a woman, especially a foreign woman. So he had a problem with me. But when he was going to be out of the office, you have to stand for him, and I knew he wasn't going to come to the office and give me the charge when the other guy was there."⁶⁷

Rama, a highly ambitious woman in the decade of the seventies wanted to advance in corporate America, but her ambitions were thwarted. "I told them that my goal was to work at bench for five years developing new products and then I wanted to go into financial planning . . . They were shocked. They couldn't figure me out. Here is a woman wanting such a high position and especially in business because women work at the bench, work at the lab."⁶⁸ Throughout her work life Rama was plagued with two different attitudes; highly sought after in times of affirmative action by corporate America, yet time and again, she found barriers to her rise.

Kuldeep too talked of problems of discrimination related to departmental promotions. She stated: "Mostly I faced men and women discrimination. Mostly they promote the men before any women. If a man comes, in 3 or 4 years he gets promotion, women it takes too much time to get promotion. We had two opening and 17 people

applied, 8 were women. They did not hire any woman. If they had hired one, I would have been ok. So I with two other people am thinking of filing a case against the city.”⁶⁹

While women like Rama and Indira complained of gendered dimension of work and mobility in the decade of the seventies and the eighties, in the nineties, Indian men were also pointing towards the commitment of companies to hiring women and minorities as an impediment to their occupational mobility. Rajan, employed by Ford Motor Company pointed to the company’s initiative called “Ford 2000” gave preference to women and minorities and Asian Indian men were not a minority in Ford. Rajan alluding to this trend stated: “Initially I moved fast and then there was a stop. I was expecting a promotion but it did not materialize. Now of course chances are slim. There is the Ford 2000 policy that focuses on women and minorities. Indians do not count as a minority in Ford.”⁷⁰

While these incidents specifically refer to gendered nature of discrimination, interviews from Detroit suggest that despite the high income and predominantly professional characteristics of the Indian community, there were continuous problems of discrimination faced by Indian professionals. Time and again people talked about problems of mobility; initially they rose fast in the work hierarchy but later on faced problems of stagnation. Upendra confirmed this but was philosophical about it. “Yeah I was moving up, but not lately, but there are few jobs at the higher level. Often I felt that I was discriminated against but that was natural. Sometimes I felt that I can do that job, but the other person will get the job. At least you feel that way, at least in the beginning. How do I deal with it? You are still much better than you are in India. See good and bad is not an absolute thing, it is in relation to something. So despite the problems, this job is good.

It has retirement and in a few years I can retire and get 50 per cent of my salary.”⁷¹ Even some physicians in the sample referred to problem. Sheila elaborated on one such dimension:

I think that there were some opportunities that were withheld. There was a time that I could be in the director's role. But the opportunity was not even presented to me, and then I was called in and told that they were concerned that it might affect my academics and didn't want me to get bogged down with administrative work. But you know, it should have been my choice, but it was not even presented. There is subtle discrimination, it is not clear-cut. They will not give you certain opportunities when they have to. Take the case of merit raise salaries. A few years ago they said that only people with special merit will get raise. But there is only one best teacher a year, so you may not get the raise. I went and asked for it and interestingly the next time you get a bigger raise. You know in a way 'squeaky wheel gets the oil.' That's exactly what it is. Now you have to fight it. I wasn't like that before, but now it has been like that.⁷²

The problem of discrimination in the Indian community was not particular to the Indians in Detroit but was written about in the pages of the India Abroad. There, however, were a few works that associated the Indian community with the model minority discourse. One such work that bolstered this myth was reported in the pages of the newspaper. The survey conducted in New York City found that Indians were successful immigrants who had attained their American Dream. The survey stated: “This person does not start from the rock bottom . . . but instead becomes an instant middle and upper income professional and moves into an affluent suburban style with fewer problems of social and economic integration.” Another such study titled A Study of the Affluent Overseas Indians in the United States further perpetuated this myth of successful Indian.⁷³ By and large, however, the news reports in India Abroad spoke of discrimination faced by Indians. A survey by a sociologist reported in India Abroad noted that in a sample of 300 immigrants who migrated in the sixties and the seventies, almost every respondent complained of discrimination at work.⁷⁴

News reports, articles and letters to the editor in India Abroad frequently pointed to discrimination or nature of discrimination and that it operated at multiple levels from the institutional to attitudinal. Letters asked Indians to be careful about looking at the median income of the Indians in America, and the need to see even high incomes in comparative perspective. A reader wrote: “Thus, if there are a great many doctors and engineers in one group, a fair comparison should be between doctors and engineers of the two groups.”⁷⁵

The pages of India Abroad especially documented discrimination among physicians ranging from problems of upward mobility among physicians, to their categorization as Foreign Medical Graduates. A report in the newspaper stated that the growing realization among a large number of doctors that they would never rise to the head position of the department, or get positions in teaching hospitals at prestigious universities made them resort to private practice.⁷⁶ It also quoted a physician as saying: “The brown man can reach the second highest position in a large company here or become the associate dean of a school, but not the boss.”⁷⁷

Moreover, physicians considered the term “Foreign Medical Graduates,” (FMGs) as derogatory since it did not take into account the fact that they had spent their entire practicing life in America.⁷⁸ As FMGs, despite being legal residents and American citizens, they were forced to follow different rules, when they wanted the same right to pursue their professional objectives, as an American medical graduate.⁷⁹ As FMGs they had to follow different licensing criteria, which was not uniform, and differed with each state setting its independent guidelines for training residents as well as hiring physicians: Illinois required one year of residency, and Louisiana three. These different criteria were

seen as deliberate form of obstruction to keep out foreign doctors.⁸⁰ Moreover, many states required that licensed FMGs who wished to relocate, to first reapply for their physicians' license. This practice was not required of American physicians. On the one hand, this practice set different standards for American Medical Graduates and FMGs; on the other, it required extensive documentation of their records ranging from the time they attended medical schools to the time they trained at hospitals. The increase in the numbers of examinations for FMGs to complete certification was perceived as part of larger process to curtail these graduates' access to opportunities in America. The curb in residency of FMGs, was further cited as proof of the increasing trend of problems faced by Indian physicians.

These practices were not limited to Indian FMGs but were particular to all FMGs. A study by Eui Hang Shin and Jyung-Sup Chang on Korean physicians in America concurred with the findings dealing with the issues Indian medical doctors were made to deal with. Reporting the pervasiveness of discrimination among the Korean medical graduates, the authors argued that FMGs were predominantly found in the residual training positions, and related the nature of discrimination to the needs of the labor market. They also stated that "Immigrants' status often carries with it connotations of functional defects, cultural differences or other unsuitable attributes which may result in discrimination."⁸¹

The newspaper reported similar trends among foreign nurses. The state of New York mandated a language test conducted by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. The exam was a prerequisite for taking licensing exam. Before 1981 the Licensed Practical Nurse Exam, conducted by the State Board of nursing, was the only

exam required of nurses trained abroad. Whatever the rationale behind these exams, the Indian professionals in these fields saw these as discriminatory practices.

While India Abroad reported frequently on problems of physicians and nurses, these issues were not particular to health related professions, but were also common to other professions. The frequency of news reports concerning Indians' use of legal avenues to resolve workplace problems point to this. Legal suits were filed for a variety of causes ranging from discrimination, issues of upward mobility, and denial of work. Some of the cases reported were by a physician against Florida State University for denying her employment based on sex and national origins; by a professor against North Carolina State University for promotion and salary increases because of his race and national origins. The increase in such cases resulted in India Abroad dealing with the issue entitled "Racism and Asian Indians." Different articles in this special edition gave more details on some of the cases of discrimination.⁸² Joy Cherian, an Indian who was appointed as a Commissioner by President Reagan on the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in 1987 also reported that he received at an average, 6 letters and a dozen phone calls from Indians regarding this issue.⁸³ While the number of litigations filed by Indians was increasing; they represented a small proportion of Indian population. Few people filed litigations since they required substantial financial resources. A letter pointing to the extent of this problem wrote, ". . . there are many Indians who have to suffer injustice in employment silently because they cannot afford to go to court."

Along with individuals reporting cases of discrimination to EEOC or fighting individually through the court system, ethnic and professional associations also joined the

fray in alleviating the problem. While reports suggested that workplace struggles by Indians were passive, ethnic professional associations were taking up the cause of these Indians.⁸⁴ The existence of ethnic professional associations in professions where Indians existed in large numbers, made them feasible to lobby and petition for their constituents. One of the powerful Asian Indian professional associations was the Association of American Physicians from India, commonly known as AAPI. In the decade of the eighties, AAPI emerged as a powerful group as they lobbied for Indian physician's interests. It also became a powerful agent of the Foreign Medical Graduates to the American Medical Association. It set up an office in Washington D.C. to deal with the political aspects of legislation affecting Indian physicians. It garnered the support of Congressional representatives—Jim Bates of California and Stephen Solarz of New York, who produced bills that did not make much headway but did alert Congress about the nature of discrimination. Each state had regional and state representations; and in Michigan, MAPI or the Michigan Association of Physicians from India furthered the causes of physicians.⁸⁵ AAPI briefs frequently point to stories of discriminatory treatment to FMGs, and the practice of discontinuing residencies before completion of training, in what AAPI termed were flimsy grounds. The lack of residency positions for FMGs was another problem that new medical professionals from India faced. The General Accounting office validated these reports by agreeing that there were discrepancies in the procedures in licensing FMG's. The lack of effort on the part of the American Medical Association to resolve the problems of FMGs was made the said group accuse the AMA of the "attitude of benign neglect."⁸⁶ The problems of FMGs were so intensive that the American Medical Association set up a unit to deal exclusively with them.⁸⁷ They were

recently allowed to take the Single Pathway State Board Part II examination, which hitherto could only be taken by American educated graduates.⁸⁸

In Detroit, a chapter of Michigan Association of Physicians from India existed but according to physician members, it rarely delved into issues of discrimination and was more of a social group. The large settlement of Indian engineers in Detroit, however, resulted in the opening of a new organization Association of Engineers from India. However, according to an interviewee who went to a few meetings reported that the organization was just beginning to deal with the problem of upward mobility.

Indians in Detroit not only talked of problems of discrimination but multitude of problems relating to the process of hiring itself. Finding employment was one of the hardest tasks for a new immigrant and was dependent upon a host of factors, especially the demand for a given profession. According to a report in India Abroad, 1970, the minimum time required in finding a job for a professional immigrant was between two to six months, despite availability of jobs.⁸⁹ Labor recruitment however, depended on market demand of a given profession at a given time and varied for different professions across time.

Locating employment depended on the nature of the economy. Good times furthered occupational recruitment; economic downturns curtailed employment demand. The effects of economic recession, however, were not uniform and affected different industries, occupations and the political economy of a city differently. While engineers were having problems finding work in the early parts of decade of the seventies, this period was the heyday for medical professionals. For physicians' employment difficulties began after 1974 with the implementation of new legislation restricting foreign medical

graduates and despite professional credentials, they could not find residencies in hospitals. During this time, however, employment opportunities for engineers were on the rise.⁹⁰ In recent years, the employment of computer professionals, physiotherapists and occupational therapists from India is further indication of occupational growth influencing migration in particular fields, and physicians were having difficulties finding residency positions in hospitals.

Finding a job was a problem, especially for foreign students. Along with political economy of a region and the nature of the economy, immigrant origins also affected locating jobs. Two engineers who sought employment in the Washington D.C. area faced this issue. While employment opportunities existed for engineers, majorities of these were for U.S. citizens since they were related to defense production. Rajan stated: "There was a recession going on especially in D.C. In D.C. jobs were for electrical or defense contractors. You had to be a U.S. citizen. I couldn't get a job in Maryland because of top security."⁹¹ Karan stated that: "In my field you needed to be a citizen, because of security clearance...I had to take a low paying job. I was doing a technician type job after getting my masters in engineering because they agreed to sponsor me. Anyone employing a foreign student would pay you less, if they were going to sponsor you, we all know that."⁹²

Other impediments constrained educated immigrants from finding jobs suited to their occupational training. Getting employment was conditional upon educational and professional credentials or what is termed as human capital. Although the Indian immigrants were educated, they found that the meaning of human capital was relational and primarily associated with education and experience acquired in America and not in

India. While the American medical establishment set up a system of evaluating degrees from other nations by institutionalizing the ECFMG exam, other fields did not have a similar system, impairing a newly arrived immigrant from finding employment. Many American employers did not accept educational degrees attained in another country, resulting in new immigrants' underemployment. Documenting this trend as early as 1970, a report from India Abroad found that among 30 engineers surveyed for its report, only 10 were employed in their occupational fields, the rest were working as janitors, clerk-typists, messengers and temporary helpers.⁹³ The wide spread prevalence of this problem was further revealed through frequent new reports of legal cases filed by individuals or groups to rectify this problem, or reports of verdicts dealing with such cases. Some of the verdicts reported in the newspaper were against New York City's Department of Personnel for denial of employment to 25 foreign-trained engineers, 9 of whom were trained in India, for non-acceptance of educational credentials from another country.⁹⁴ The Department of Personnel held that these educational degrees were not accredited by a U.S. institution despite the World Education Service's contention that these educational credentials were equivalent to those issued by American institutions. Dr. Joy Cherian, an Indian born EEOC member, also talked of the prevalence of this problem. In an interview with India Abroad, Dr. Cherian stated, "many companies blatantly violate national origin anti-discriminatory laws by rejecting applicants on seeing that you studied in Bombay, Delhi . . . It's simply on the presumption that you are a foreigner without verifying the facts."⁹⁵ Similar instances were also reported among immigrants interviewed in Detroit. These immigrants faced problems in finding employment and ultimately resorted to getting education in American educational

institutions. Rajan who faced this problem stated: “They don’t recognize your Indian degree. They don’t consider you. I was ready to do a draftsman job.”⁹⁶

Knowledge of English and different accents affected location of jobs by Indian immigrants. In the state of New York, from 1981, nurses were required to pass an English Language exam along with their state nursing license exam.⁹⁷ While these policy changes were seen by the organizing agencies as part of improvements of the services offered, Indian immigrants saw these moves as part of a concerted attempt to curtail employment of foreigners.

Different accents also created biases in employment since many employers perceived it as problems in communicating skills, resulting in denial of jobs. Rajan stated: “I worked in an athletic store to learn English.” India Abroad in a report quoted Dr. Cherian, an Indian member of E.E.O.C. as stating, “discrimination on the basis of a person’s foreign accent continues to be one of the most important issues to all first-generation Americans . . . Accents are being used as a cover to deny promotions and other high ranking positions to new immigrant.”⁹⁸

Moreover, the preference of employers for “American experience” further created problems for new immigrants. Not only did it negate their Indian work experience, but it also resulted in underemployment as evident from the story of an engineer as reported in India Abroad.

In the last three weeks I have tried 50 employment agencies, 10 to 12 companies but cannot find a job. They all say you have no American experience. The agencies even discourage U.S. from filling the forms. The big companies with higher starting salaries and growth potential just will not hire U.S.. The employment agencies insist on American job experience. How can that be possible for U.S.? So we start, if we get jobs, low on the ladder and will never catch up with our American colleagues who are promoted faster because of their job experience here.⁹⁹

Added to this was the problem of the need for letters of recommendations. Noted a physician “A recommendation letter from someone in Gujarat and Maharashtra means a lot less than one from a colleague I know.”¹⁰⁰

Being a foreigner also emerged as a problem as Indira found: “I went for an interview as a medical technologist. And the first thing this doctor said was ‘You people come and take all the jobs and I was so shocked that I started crying. I didn’t even know how to respond to that. It was so unexpected. I don’t think he asked me anything. This one really shocked me. I thought that they were so prejudiced’.”¹⁰¹

Even in the medical field, where a well-established system of examination existed, changes emerged in the form of new examinations, which were seen as compounding physicians’ difficulties in finding employment. These new exams corresponded with the decreasing labor market needs for physicians. Whatever the rationale behind these exams, they were perceived by Indians as attempts to stall their employment opportunities. In 1977 a Visa Qualifying Examination (VQE), a two-day examination began for foreign physicians as a result of a Federal legislation mandating that foreign nationals seeking U.S. training had to attain a passing scores on this examination in order to be eligible for either the exchange-visitor visa or the permanent resident visa. In 1984, both the VQE and the old standard one-day examination were replaced by the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination in Medical Sciences (FMGEMS), a two-day examination entirely like the VQE but which was now required of both foreign-trained nationals and U.S. citizen International Medical Graduates. This system was further changed in 1992, to include Parts 1 and 2 of the three-part United States Medical Licensing Examination (U.S.M.L.E.), along with a Clinical Skills Assessment

(CSA) in order to get certification process. The CSA tested a medical graduate's ability to interpret clinical patient data and communicate effectively in the English language.¹⁰²

Along with these exams new regulations passed by the American Medical Association made it tougher for many medicos from India to get residency despite passing the above exams. News stories from India Abroad cited multiple cases of doctors who were working in hourly jobs. Doctors frequently reported hardships in getting residencies and even after graduation hardships in getting practicing positions. A doctor pointed out that the AMA, Medicare and some legislators had manipulated requirements to completely shut out foreign medical graduates. Stories abounded with physicians doing small jobs in medical fields. The report also cited another doctor as stating, "The residency qualifications have changed, each time exams becoming tougher. It is like a radio's volume, turned up and down according to American requirements,"¹⁰³ According to another story in India Abroad, roughly 4,000 physicians of Indian origin were underemployed due to their inability to get residency positions in hospitals, so many were doing paramedic jobs.¹⁰⁴

Immigrants did not expect difficulties in locating employment on arrival. An immigrant in Detroit, who faced these problems stated, "It didn't click [in India] that I wasn't going to get a job."¹⁰⁵ Although news about economic downturns trickled to the other side, it usually did not stop migration streams, resulting in unemployment for new immigrants. Lack of employment opportunities also forced many immigrants to retrain in their professional fields once again in America.

Moreover, it also emerges that the attempts of the federal government to curb illegal immigration affected employment opportunities for many legal immigrants,

including Indians. A case in point was legislation passed under President Reagan aiming to curb illegal immigration by holding employers responsible for hiring illegal aliens. According to a General Accounting Office report, cited in India Abroad, this law adversely affected the hiring of Hispanic and Asian immigrants since many employers did not hire people based on their appearances and accents.¹⁰⁶

And finally, political economy of a city affected employment opportunities. If good times in Detroit's economic environment brought immigrants to new jobs in Detroit, bad times resulted in cutbacks in the labor force. Along with political economy, change in technology, reorganizations in industries shaped job opportunities. In the beginning of the chapter Satish alluded to periods of economic downturn affecting employment. Arun, however, talked of changes in technology creating problems of job security as well as mobility.

I worked in an industry that is really struggling. It is a dying industry, it is hydraulics. Industry is shrinking and it is losing ground to technology that is modern....

There was mobility . . . it is hard for me to gauge whether it was because I didn't push myself because when I started I told them I didn't want any mobility in terms of managing people. I was interested in managing technology than managing people. Actually I was keen to become an expert in what I was doing but that itself was throttled to some extent. Later on I asked for growth . . . but I don't know if it was because of my own inability or the industry. There was a shrinking pool and it affected mobility.

I was constantly running against the tide. There was a lot of work. As Alice said in Wonderland, "there was a lot of running I had to do just to keep my place." They were constantly downsizing, they were constantly demoting¹⁰⁷

Immigrant stories point out that upward mobility was linked to duration of stay.

While a large majority was gainfully employed, their early employment history was checkered. This fact was also evident from the Census Bureau's data on The Foreign Born Population in the United States, which provided detailed immigrant characteristics

over short time intervals of two to three years; before 1980, between 1980 to 1981, 1982-1984, 1985 or 1986 and 1987 to 89. The data highlighted that immigrant groups arriving from India in the decade of the 80s were less situated in the professional and technical labor force; and each new immigrant cohort was at a lower level than its previous cohort. Fifty eight per cent of the immigrants who arrived before 1980 were in the management and professional specialty occupations, and only 37 per cent of those arriving between 1987-90 were located in these occupational categories. Asian Indians in technical and administrative workforce rose from 29 per cent to 36 per cent, operators and fabricator workforce from 5 per cent to 12 per cent, and the population in the service occupations rose from 4 per cent to 9 per cent.¹⁰⁸

Table 4.2

**History of Labor Force, Unemployment, and Income for Asian Indians,
1980-1990**

	Before 1980	80-81	82-84	85-86	87-90
16+	194,962	40,122	56,443	48,033	74,631
In Labor Force	79.1	75.5	75.1	73.4	62.7
Women in Labor Force	66.1	59.6	59.6	57.8	46.3
Men in Labor Force	89.3	89.1	87.7	85.7	77.1
Unemployed per cent	5.4	7.1	7.4	8.1	13.9
no workers in family	0	1.2	1.31	5.6	5.75
	1	25.35	28.22	28.84	35.37
	2	52.77	56.03	53.35	47.08
	3	20.65	14.42	16.23	11.00
Median income	\$65,495	\$47,479	\$42,146	\$33,941	\$26,119
Mean income	\$87,887	\$57,858	\$49,417	\$39,386	\$30,599

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Foreign Born Population (1993, Table 4) 216

Not only was there an occupational decline, but this data in table 4.2 also shows that the labor force participation rates among new immigrants arriving between 1987-90 as the lowest among all Indians; 2.7 per cent of the total population—77.1 per cent of men

and 46.3 per cent of women in the labor force. The latter group also exhibited high unemployment rate of 13.9 per cent in comparison to 5.4 per cent for those who arrived before 1980. It also revealed that the new arrivals had a lower income despite the fact that almost 47 per cent of the families had two income families.¹⁰⁹ These figures are surprising given the relationship between migration and economic betterment and suggest that besides educational and skill levels other factors were involved in the placement of immigrants in the work force.

This relationship between income and duration of stay is clearly evident from table 4.2; which shows that those who arrived before 1980 had higher median and mean income, at \$65,495 and \$87,887 respectively. In comparison the median and mean income among those who arrived during 1987-90 was the lowest at \$26,114 and \$30,599 respectively. Moreover, table 4.2 also highlighted the fact that longer immigrants stay, lower the unemployment and poverty rates; longer stay was also were related to high labor force participation rates by immigrants. The poverty rate for Indian immigrants who arrived between 1987 and 1990 was 9.1 per cent and those who arrived before 1980 a mere 2.5 per cent. The relationship between duration of stay and decreasing poverty levels further emerges in comparison of 1980 Census data with information about 1980 immigrants in the Foreign Born Population. According to the Foreign Born Population report the poverty rates for pre-1980 cohort in 1990 were mere 2.5 per cent.¹¹⁰ However the 1980 Census data showed a different picture; the poverty levels among Indians were at 7.4 per cent. Within a decade, poverty levels for this cohort had declined from 7.4 per cent to 2.5 per cent.¹¹¹

The labor force characteristics of Indian immigrants today continues to be defined largely by the labor force needs of metro Detroit's economy, an economy that has undergone substantial changes in the past three decades. In the sixties, the demands of the manufacturing industry influenced the migration and settlement of engineers. Although the demand for engineers continues to grow, in the eighties with the coming of automation, demand for electrical and computer professionals increased. Along with it, the increase in the service economy resulted in the migration of medical professionals to Detroit's hospitals. Among medical professionals too there have been major changes, the increasing need of the geriatric care influenced more the migration of physio and occupational therapists. While new jobs were being created in Detroit, those already employed in auto ancillary industry, such as Kulwant, feared retrenchment as a result of movement of jobs out of Detroit to Mexico under the NAFTA rules.

Detroit immigrants' work histories and their location point to the centrality of the political economy of the city in shaping the nature of the Indian community. Indian immigrants in Detroit also reflect the complexities of the labor market and urban political economy and their intersection with individual lives. Along with this, other variables such as immigrant skills and technological changes also affected the employment market and the Indians working therein. As economic immigrants, Indians in Detroit sample present a checkered history; there are some that have gained their American Dream, others whose dreams were shattered by economic stagnation, and for few, even pink slips and golden handshakes at an age when the immigrants were least ready for it. These changes not only affected their economic status, but also shook their belief in the

American economic system. It has resulted in underemployment or starting new independent ventures in middle age.

For women, however, migration brought mixed results. Highly motivated women found themselves restricted by their childcare responsibilities resulting in their transience from work when they least expected it. These women were positive that in India, they would not have quit work given the prevalence of affordable domestic help along with the moral and financial help from their families. Professional women also faced barriers as women, working in industries that in India were accepting women, but in the U.S. as yet were slow to accept women professionals, affecting their work environs as well as their mobility.

However, for women who did not expect to work in the U.S., paid work has been an uplifting experience that succeeded in breaking barriers imposed by the social system. These women found a new identity, gained a new self-respect that they never conceptualized in India. While their entrance in the workforce was related to the inability of men to support their families, and in relation to supporting family economy, it has progressed beyond that to incorporate it into an essential part of women's new identity that is specific to America. This new aspect of women's identity has not taken away from their domestic responsibilities but has added to their existing responsibility. Household work remains women's primary responsibility despite gains made in the work world. As the next chapter shows, this is a role that they are beginning to question.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁴ Radha, interview by author, 5 August 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census "Social and Economic Characteristics: Metropolitan Areas, Labor Force Characteristics for Selected Racial Groups," table 50.
- ⁶ Ibid.
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- ⁸ U.S. Bureau of Census. 1990 Social and Economic Characteristics, Metropolitan Areas, t-51, 4868.
- ⁹ By 1990, the second generation of Asian Indians had become active in the labor force. The term "Asian Indian" includes the foreign-born population as well as this new second generation. The labor force participation rate for the foreign-born population was 73.9 per cent.
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**AMERICAN DREAMS
GENDERED MIGRATIONS FROM INDIA**

VOLUME II

By

Vibha Bhalla

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Chapter 5

INDIAN FAMILIES IN DETROIT

1. You have nobody. I will give you one example. Devi was very small, the kids were very small and he would go to office. He is a tennis player. So he came back changed his clothes, took his racket and went away to play tennis. I sat down the stairs and I started crying. I had no clue why I was crying . . . Here I am with the kids all day and instead of relieving me he is going back out again to play. You do get into situations when you are unhappy. You have nobody to talk to. Here you need emotional support from your husband. If that is not there marriages break up.

. . . In the beginning I used to be scared of him. Really, even after coming here. I was really very naïve. I used to ask him permission to do everything whether he liked it or not. Finally he said don't you have mind of your own? Make up your mind, if you like it go ahead and get it, if you don't, then don't. Then I started making real decisions.¹

2. It is hard being a woman. Can't talk about India because I was with my parents, going to school and had an easy life. In this country being a woman is tough, especially if your husband does not help you. Household, kids, cooking, cleaning, doctors appointment, PTA meetings, keeping track of everything... Raising the child, it is your responsibility but your husband helps you. I tell him there is a doctor's appointment can you take them? And he says yes. Otherwise he doesn't keep track of those, even his appointments. I somehow kind of started doing the bills because he was going to school, but now he does it.

After 8 hours of work you come home and you got to make sure that dinner is on the table. If you are late, your husband does it of course, but he buys hamburgers, boils spaghetti. It is not like he has the pressure of 'got to go home' and cook.

I think that women brought it on themselves, the women's lib movement; I want to work and then they got stuck in doing 2 jobs, 3 jobs—full time mom, full time wife, full time work. I just don't know how I did it, but I did it.

There is a lot of, lot of adjustment in life that you got to make. It's the women who make the adjustment. I have been pretty lucky with him. First 20 years it was probably 100 per cent on my part. You have to work on him, slowly and now sometimes it is pretty much 50-50.

If you ask me now it is easy, a lot easier now. My kids are grown. He drives himself. Before that I used to not even come home, honk and say hey come on, it is your soccer game time. Somehow, I did it; you just do it.²

The above two narratives by women focus on the husband-wife relationship as well as on the domestic responsibilities of women. The first by Indira draws attention to

two factors: first, her higher expectations from her husband in the United States, and second, her changing notions of the role of an Indian wife. Living in a small town outside of Detroit, she led a lonely life in the absence of social networks of neighborhood and friends that were central to her life in India. To alleviate this loneliness she depended more on her husband for companionship, much more than she did in India. When Indira spoke of her husband, she spoke of him in the traditional Indian sense where women looked up to their men to make decisions for the family and sometimes even for her, and she followed his guidance. In the U.S. however, at the irritated suggestion of her husband, she broke away from the traditional expectations and began making independent decisions that later on did not please her husband.

Divya's narrative, however, emphasized the multiple burdens facing Indian women in the U.S. ranging from household work, taking care of her children's day-to-day activities and her subtle complaints of juggling these responsibilities. Although her husband helped her with household chores, the primary responsibility of managing the house, cooking, taking care of the kids and their day-to-day activities remained hers, despite holding a full time job and commuting approximately an hour each way to work. Her burdens eased over the years with kids growing up and becoming responsible, and her husband increasingly helping her with work, although she did not elaborate his responsibilities. She gave hints at having higher expectations from her husband, and a resignation that was not likely to happen. Over the years however, the household situation had improved. In a way Divya's expectations from her husband were different from an Indian woman's expectations since few Indian men worked at home. In India, however, middle-class women had the luxury of hiring hired help. In the absence of hired

help, and mounting workload, Divya's expectations from her husband concerning household work in the U.S. increased, and emphasize Indian women's changing expectations from their men. The failure to meet these expectations resulted in new tensions in Indian families over division of work at home, tensions that were absent in India since household was women's domain.

This chapter looks at Indian families in Detroit and explores the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and with extended families, focusing on continuities and changes in relations within Indian families as a result of migration and settlement. It argues that gender relationships within families were transforming after migration as a result of women's initiatives, and Indian women in the U.S. wanted more power and freedom in their lives. These transformations encompassed all spheres of domestic relationships ranging from the household division of work to the husband wife relationship and to relationships with the extended family in India. While these attempts were not entirely successful, women's lives have changed as a result of distance from India, the absence of the hierarchical family structure, and their social networks.

Families are social and cultural units, and as such, the meaning of family and the set of individual and collective familial relationships are determined by social norms particular to a given culture. Study of continuities and changes in Indian families in Detroit necessitates understanding family norms in India and the roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals within families. The patriarchal and hierarchical Indian family system, as stated in chapter 2, assigned men roles as household heads and economic providers and women the domestic and child rearing responsibilities. In hierarchical family relationships, an individual's place within the family was dependent

upon age, sex and relationship to the household; male members were assigned a higher place than women members and older members had more power than younger members. Indian families were joint, nuclear or extended families, and despite the differences in families, the aims of the family were the common good of all. Marriages, the bases of family formation, were usually at the initiative of and arranged by the elders in the family rather than by individuals involved and carried a set of social obligations, especially by women, towards the family of their spouses. The relationships between husbands and wives were secondary to obligations to the larger families. A woman's status within her new family was dependent upon her ability to follow the set of expected goals and responsibilities for the welfare of her spouse's family. In decision-making, the role of the wife was subsumed to that of the older women in the family, usually the mother-in-law and her husband. As such women's identity was subsumed under the aims and goals of the family.³

These family relationships with their assigned responsibilities were already transforming in India. Women's public roles through employment and higher education were leading to changing attitudes and expectations towards relationship between husbands and wives. The onset of love marriages, along with education and employment, was changing expectations, especially women's expectations. But these transformations were not followed by changes in the larger family and social structure and couples or individuals with different expectations were expected to follow the traditional gender ideology and the responsibilities towards family that accompanied it.

It is within this changing cultural milieu in India and the tensions between old traditional expectations and new notions of family relationships that Asian Indian

families in Detroit need to be contextualized. Did coming to America and the creation of physical distance from the family structure in India create new family dynamics? Did living in the U.S. and exposure to new norms shift family dynamics? Indian families were now operating in a culture whose family norms they perceived as sharply different from theirs; America in the eyes of Indians was an individualistic society as opposed to the family oriented Indian society.⁴ How much was the dominant American culture at play in bringing about changes in Indian families? Were there any differences in the transformation of attitudes between men and women? And what attitudes were Indian families transmitting to the second generation, their children?

The existing literature on Indian families points to transformations within families and suggests that women increasingly gained power in America. Sathi Das Gupta in her study on Indian immigrants in Colorado found that the loss of extended family structure and kin relationships as a result of migration resulted in structural changes within Indian families, which aided in transforming the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.⁵ Parmatama Saran thought that basic family patterns remained the same although the family became less authoritarian.⁶ Johanna Lassinger too found that family relationships were transforming in America with women gaining more autonomy.⁷ Aparna Ryaprol stated that constraints and pressures of extended family were absent in America allowing women more independence.⁸ While these studies argue that Indian women in America had greater mobility and freedom than their counterparts in India, suggesting reasons for gender transformation, rarely do they explain the reasons for these changes or the specific process that accompanied them. Did conflicts and tensions accompany transformations in

family relationships or did they evolve naturally and harmoniously? Did these changes vary with time, and what aspects of family relationship transformed first?

Family formation among Indian migrants in America was not uniform. Usually men arrived first and women followed. In the case of Indians many of whom arrived as students, the single migrants—predominantly men – returned to India to find their partners, and they brought wives usually selected by their families who they married within a short span of time.⁹ Moreover, many expatriates returned to India to find marriage partners for their children. At the outset, it appears that the differences in formation of Indian families in Detroit did not entail a shift away from Indian family norms. Irrespective of the modes of marriages or manner of migration, men and women expected to follow Indian gender norms. The meaning and expectations of marriage meant that women followed their household obligations, looked up to their spouses for guidance and decision-making, and men remained the economic providers and household heads. However, these gendered norms were implemented in a new country and as such in a different context, especially for women. While men continued to operate in the public sphere by working or studying, for women life at home in America was different from that in India; the act of migration created structural differences between families in India and Indian families in Detroit. First, the absence of social networks of family, extended family, and the neighborhood relationships in America created a sense of isolation for women on a day-to-day basis. Second, household chores of women also changed. In the absence of daily help and servants in America, married women were responsible for all household chores from cooking, cleaning, laundry, and multitude of other tasks unlike their counterparts in middle-class India. Many educated Indian middle-

class women, were not training for day-to-day household activities since they were expected to manage homes with hired help. In the U.S. however, given the high cost of labor, these tasks became women's responsibility. If social isolation ultimately allowed women to gain more power and responsibility within their household as well as a closer relationship with their spouses as found by Sathi Sengupta, absence of household help increased women's responsibilities in America.¹⁰

The effects, or the extent of these structural changes on husband-wife relationships, and on the roles and responsibilities within marriages, however, remain nebulous, as the existing literature is suggestive rather than analytical. The expatriate Indian newspaper India Abroad, however, provides some insights into these matters. Its letters to the editor column as well as readers' opinion pieces became public forums where men and women began debating family issues. These letters provide us with glimpses of the issues involved, a sense of their timing, and the extent of continuity and change. They also offer valuable insights in depicting male and female attitudes towards these questions.

The letters from India Abroad suggest that first issue that emerged in Indian families was regarding the division of labor at home. The emergence of household work as a problem in the U.S. was seemingly strange since Indian gendered norms clearly defined it as women's work. In India after all, the arrival of women in the workforce had not transformed relationships; despite women's outside work, home had continued to remain their primary domain. The fact that an American woman married to an Indian man wrote the first letter in 1978 that initiated this debate, seemed to explain the origins of this debate. As an outsider to the Indian community, her lack of insight into the gender

norms was palpable. Her letter was also a representation of her ethnocentric notions. She was disturbed at the division of housework within Indian families where women, even professional women, continued to perform household chores without any help from Indian men. Highly critical of Indian men for their lack of participation in the household work while their wives were working outside and inside the home, the letter stated:

In almost every home that I have visited I have had the misfortune to meet a terrible M.C.P. i.e. "Male Chauvinist Pig." This all supreme gent will sit in the living room and virtually order his wife—who may herself be a qualified doctor or professional—to get everything from an ash tray to dinner. And while the men intellectually gossip about their newest car, the poor “domestic help” will be frantically trying to save the honor of all great women of Indian mythology by finishing the dishes before the guests leave.¹¹

At this rate the Indian woman will never be liberated --not even in the United States.

SS¹²

Her letter drew attention to the fact that Indian women, even working women, continued to follow Indian gendered norms towards household work in the U.S. Her letter indirectly asked Indian men to share in this work. The response to SS's letter was swift. In a period of three months, 17 people responded to this letter; 3 women, 10 men—and 4 people signed their names with initials; 9 were Indians, and one an American. A large majority of these letters were against SS. Although the nature of their arguments varied, they agreed on the common theme that Indian gender ideology was responsible for the division of work within Indian homes. Interestingly, the women, the victims in SS's letter, did not see anything wrong in serving their men, and they in fact were happy to do so. They even defended men's lack of help; wrote one “ we do not blame them—for they are not accustomed to helping in certain things . . . and that “they do more than what we really expect from them.” The second argument that ran in the minds of women was that liberation, which they thought SS was espousing, equated to neglected homes and break

up of Indian marriages. They linked the stability of Indian marriages to following traditional division of work, and for the larger goals of preserving their marriages, wanted a continuation of *staus quo*.¹³ This kitchen debate, however, turned into an Indian women vs. U.S. women debate that highlighted the negative impressions on women's liberation. Criticizing 'SS,' the author of the letter, women decried her attempts at liberating Indian women and pointed out that liberation did not necessarily lead to equality at home; many American women suffered abuse at home and discrimination at jobs.¹⁴ Others informed her that India's Hindu Code gave women legal equality with men, whereas in America, ERA had not yet passed as yet.¹⁵ Letters also explained the Indian family system where it might seem to an outsider that men dominated, but in actuality these men "respect and depend on their wife's opinion and judgments, and treat her with dignity."

Men especially were harsh. Their letters expressed negative notions of American women, women's liberation that Indian men and women held. Wrote one: "Thankfully the disruptive winds of women's liberation have not, for the most part, ruffled the peace of Indian women."¹⁶ Another, suggesting that liberation led to unhappy homes wrote: "Indian women do not care about liberation, but about happiness and oneness of the family."¹⁷ One pointed out that: "In actuality, it was the women who held the power in the Indian homes . . . Indian women may seem subservient and submissive, but in reality they are the uncrowned captains of the family ships."¹⁸ Basically, these letters explained the differences between Indian and American homes and notions of family, and suggested that the men, like the women, did not see anything wrong in women working at home.¹⁹ Indian women, despite working at home, remained *ardhangini*, an invisible part of the self.²⁰

This debate became linked to the larger issues of becoming American, and if letters were any indication, India of course won hands down. American household practices—where men and women shared the household work—were problematic. Moreover these letters also reflected a fear that any change in domestic work was tantamount to role transformation, which in turn could shake the core, the very foundation of Indian marriages. Questions relating women's dual burden in America, however, were missing which was strange since the number of Indian working women was increasing in America. While men argued for status quo, they suggested that women wielded real power at home in decision-making and in running the family. The picture that emerged was that all was well in America for Indian women. If at all they were feeling the burden of housework in the absence of servants and had become "glorified domestics" as SS had contended, it never emerged from this debate.²¹ What was strange in this kitchen debate was that few women wrote on an issue that was more pertinent to them. Whether this trend reflected the male readership of India Abroad, or that women were submissive, or they did not care for this issue was not clear. Whatever the case, like Indian men, they took over an issue that affected their women, and spoke on their behalf. In any case, women's silences suggested the validity of the existing system.

There however was a lone woman dissenting. Her letter suggested newer expectations of equality in marriage among younger women, and this equality translated into men sharing in the household chores. Sharing of work for her was a trait that needed to be adopted from the American culture. This person wrote:

As a student of social and behavioral sciences, I believe in a participative relationship. In a family institution, the male spouse should participate in all household activities. One does not degrade oneself by offering a helping hand.

It is unfortunate that Indians who have chosen to live in an advanced country like the US have not chosen to change themselves . . . Why don't more Indians take the good things from other ethnic groups?²²

Indian women, however, were increasingly participating in paid work in the U.S., and this new reality, especially the location of Indian women in professional fields, was lauded in the news reports and opinion columns of India Abroad. Articles, however, began writing about increasing problems at home related to cultural adjustments, work pressures, issues of household responsibilities and child rearing.²³ Indian men with traditional outlook, it seems, found it hard to adjust to the idea of working women. Moreover, the impression was gaining ground that working women were failing in their responsibility as mothers, and neglecting their children. Discord within families over housework were increasing and working Indian women in the U.S. wanted to change the existing relationship with men at home in order to adjust to new conditions in America.²⁴ The author of this article, while seemingly stating that each family needed to make individual choices, was suggesting a break from the traditional Indian values. She stated: "To continue to survive, one must unlearn, let go and leave one's pattern of life behind. The choices that Indian couples have to make are what to keep in their lives and what to cast out."²⁵

The problems at home regarding women's household responsibilities were exacerbated among Indian families in America because women did not have servants in America as they did in India. Resolution of this problem demanded that women either quit working in order to take care of their household responsibilities, employ servants, or expect men to aid in housework. The first two options were not economically feasible given the high cost of labor, as well the centrality of women's income to the family

economy. The third alternative, that men should aid women, seemed the most feasible. This resolution, however, was beset with problems since by asking men to work at home implied transforming gendered norms affecting men. Indian women were faced with dire situation since alternatives to their domestic roles had yet not evolved.

The urgency in this issue could be discerned from the fact that in 1981, a month after the publication of the above article, another appeared in India Abroad and again focused on the increasing tensions among Indian families. The author argued for change in household relationships and division of work. Stating that although Indian marriages were “standing like Himalaya challenging and imperishable through the centuries, and ...were for eternity,” the author also pointed out that these imperishable marriages were undergoing crises in America.²⁶ If the first author talked about professional women, this one focused on ordinary Indian women for whom work was becoming necessity, “to live the American lifestyle, two incomes were necessary.”²⁷ Women’s outside work demanded that men help women within their households. Interestingly, the author pointed out that increases in family tension were not limited to dual income families, but were also evident in homes where women did not work due to increasing stress of life in America, which she did not define. The author concluded that Indian families needed to readjust in America, and this readjustment could only be accomplished if men contributed to household labor. She stated:

... husbands and wives must look to each other for help. It is imperative in present American life style that both work here as a team. This can happen only when both are willing to learn enough of each other's work to become a substitute. If both do not share duties and interchange roles, their survival here can be very painful.

... It should be remembered that any relationship based on exploitation can eventually explode and break under continual pressure. Out of necessity, if not for the sake of fairness, both spouses will have to revise, reconsider and restructure

their roles to adapt to the stressful life of this country. If we think that our marriages are shatter proof simply because we come from a traditional background, we are not facing reality.²⁸

Interestingly, the author rooted her arguments for readjustments at homes by using Indian philosophy and scriptures. Indian religion, she stated, despite separation of spheres, assigned men and women equality; women were equal partners with men, were the *sahdharmicharinis*. And she reinvented this concept to suit the new conditions and concluded: "If the idea of *sahdharmacharini* applies anytime or anywhere it is now and here in America," in the equal distribution of work at home.²⁹

These articles drew attention to the fact that tensions among Indian marriages were increasing in America and second, that division of housework had emerged as a major problem. Moreover, this debate suggested that it was the Indian women who wanted a renegotiation of traditional gendered norms since they were initiating these debates. Male voices on this issue were absent.

The viewpoints and expectations of Indian women in America, however, were not uniform. While the above articles expressed the sentiments of families where women were working, the old ideology represented in the first kitchen debate in 1978 continued to exist in America. The next round of debate was initiated by a woman in 1983 who followed the traditional beliefs of division of work; men worked outside the home and women inside. Consequently, changes espoused by working women were not acceptable to this group of women. The woman, who started the new debate, argued that tensions within Indian homes were increasing because of breakdown of traditional relationships. Reverting to traditional ways could alleviate the problem. She stated:

I am ashamed of people who have changed their life style after coming to the United States. Back in India I used to see wives worshipping their husbands. On

the other hand I see housewives and those who are working make their husbands do cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. I would rather commit suicide than ask my husband to change my own kids' diaper. Sometimes the wives work and help their student-husbands pay tuition fees. The husbands no longer remain husbands because of this. They go down in esteem and when they have to do housework, they resent it.

If the husband wants to work it is fine, but the wives should not ask them to help them. After all, I do not think ladies should forget their own culture.³⁰

There were eight letters written in response to this letter, with six definitely from women. The other two probably included a woman and a lone man. These letters suggested that within five years women's attitudes had changed and women were vocal in their expectations in having men work at home. Women wrote about marriages in terms of teams, where collaboration in housework was essential to the team's success. Respondents further cited psychologist's reports to prove their point that couples who worked as a team, shared responsibilities at home and outside, were the most fulfilled and happy individuals, and suggested to the initiator of this debate: "Its high time we females try to broaden our outlook towards life in order to be successful citizens."³¹ This group of new women was rejecting traditional ideology, comparing it to the master-slave relationship, and stating that marriages where couples carried such extreme views were likely to break.³² Others wrote about the need for change in America and distinguished between practical, cultural and traditional viewpoints. Traditional relationships continued where men were the primary earners. "Traditionally" wrote one woman, "an Indian woman married for economic security and a tacit understanding that she would raise the family and do the household work." These traditions however were breaking down. "I have notice that a good number of India immigrants [mostly men] go to India and marry physicians just to protect themselves from possible future unemployment. In cases like this can one blame the wives if they make demands on their husbands? If a man wants to

live off his wife, how can one have respect for him? It is time to redefine marriage and its obligations if we want this trend to be reversed.”³³ Traditional norms were breaking down with men expecting women to earn an income, thus necessitating changes in domestic obligations. In many families, it seemed, women were becoming the primary earners, and in such cases, the author seemed to suggest that women’s demands on men to contribute to household work were justified. “It is time to redefine marriage and its obligations, if we want this trend to be reversed.”³⁴ A man also wrote about the cultural and practical aspects of division of work at home, but his interpretation was different from the woman above. His practical aspect included that women were the experts in their housework, and thus should continue to work there.³⁵ His letter, however, did not deal with the larger part of the debate and how it affected working women.

In these letters, the new theme of women’s dual burden emerged. Wrote one angry woman: “A lot of us combine two jobs, one outside the home and one inside. . . Perpetual exhaustion was not asked for by any woman who married a man and went abroad.”³⁶ Another woman, on the similar theme of woman’s unending work wrote: “A wife’s job is never done . . . A working woman gets home tired after a hard day’s work as much as the husband does. It will be cruel on the part of the husband to relax and watch television when she starts cooking, feeding the children and cleaning up –without any help from anyone.”³⁷ Not only was women’s burden increasing but women also talked of role reversal for Indian women in America where they were burdened with additional responsibility of outside work like mowing the lawn, and gardening, which were considered male tasks in India. In addition, this woman wrote, “How many women take

the responsibility of grocery and other shopping by driving around in India as they do here.”³⁸

Letters also provided rationale for male help in the household work:

“Cooperation” wrote one woman “strengthens the marriages.”³⁹ Their reason for this expectation was based on the simple fact of dual burdens facing women and the fact that “after all we do not have servants to out beck and call as our sisters do in India.”⁴⁰

Moreover, women also argued that in order to instill these values among their children, it was essential for men to work at home.⁴¹ And in unison, various letters rejected the claims by the initiator of this debate that male participation in house results in marital problems. Wrote one: “a marriage is not so fragile that it results in divorce the male partner takes out the garbage or cooks a meal.”⁴² While no woman wrote about real help by their spouse, some did mention supportive husbands. “Even though my husband does not know how to cook, he sends out for pizza, and even though he hates cleaning he will do it off and on—more to prove that he cares than because he loves doing the job.”⁴³

And a young girl 14 years of age joined the fray and threatened to marry a non-Indian if Indian men did not change their ways.

These letters increasingly pointed to a diversity of attitudes among Indian women on the definition of marriages as well as the role of men in the household work. Hidden in this debate were questions central to Indian women’s identity in America. Should women work outside the home or take care of the household work? The majority of women’s letters showed that women, especially working women, were increasingly identifying with work and did not expect to leave it, and such initiated the debate to change the working relationship at home. This division of work was not easy given the fact that

women kept writing of stresses in their life and household. Among stresses was "the stress of performing all household chores without outside help. The high cost of labor, many Indians in this country cannot afford hired help in contrast to India."

The new debate on women's expectations however, rarely criticized men. Women highlighted the longevity of Indian marriages, and lauded the good qualities that many Indian men possessed. A writer stated, "despite these problems, most Indian marriages flourish happily. The basic reason for this is the fact that both partners feel a very strong sense of commitment to each other and to building a life together."⁴⁴ Another, while lauding the good qualities of Indian husbands, bemoaned the fact that "years of conditioning have led them to adopt a superior (lord and master of the house) attitude. This is what the women by and large have to cope with and it is this issue that needs to be addressed."⁴⁵

Transformations at home, however, were dependent upon changes in male attitudes towards housework. This transformation, however, was not so simple as it seemed since it needed to be accompanied by changes in their ideological makeup since they were brought up with the notion that women worked at home. Men, too, wrote profusely and their letters also showed a combination of the old and the new ideology towards housework, some sought to change, while others wanted a continuation of traditional norms. While they upheld the roles of Indian women when compared to American women, rarely did they discuss their own participation in the household chores.

The question of male participation within at home was first brought forth by an Indian man married to an American woman. Wanting input from other Indian men in dealing with the problem of household work, the man wrote:

My wife has tried her best to make me aware of the problems...and believe me, aware I am. The only problem is my lack of enthusiasm for "change". My wife is a professional; works at least as long if not longer at her job away from home; provides equal-at times greater --financial support for our family. And yet...I can't find myself sharing domestic responsibilities which "at home in India" were handled either by an aya or one of the many "women" in the family. I would hope that some other Indian husbands would share how they have managed to overcome the deep-seated style of "hands off household jobs."⁴⁶

This anomalous letter did not get a response. Majority of the men, in other forums, wrote letters supporting the continuation of the traditional system. They extolled women's work, accepted its importance, and quoted Indian scriptures to show equality between men and women's work despite differences in their spheres of activity. But they reemphasized traditional Indian household roles, with women taking care of the home and men the outside work. The only exception was in cases when economic circumstances necessitated women's work as is evident from letters below.

If the wife has to work for economic reasons or for a meaningful career, it is understandable. But neglecting the young ones just to increase the bank balance shows total lack of concern for their needs.⁴⁷

Another stated:

In the Hindu religion, man and wife are considered two wheels of a cart. Both have to share equal responsibilities and try to live in harmony instead of competing with each other. Let men do their duties of providing financial support and let women do rearing of family. This is our ancient tradition and it has worked for thousands of years.⁴⁸

These men seemed to be oblivious of the fact that women's work participation was increasing, both for economic needs as well as changes in attitudes towards women's work. They quoted the Indian *shastras* or scriptures, and accepted work in the house only if the woman was sick: "... there is inherently nothing wrong in a man helping his wife in these jobs, especially if she is not feeling well."⁴⁹

If these male attitudes were any indication, Indian men were not changing. Indian families were in a state of flux regarding the issue of housework and tensions within families were increasing. While women were expecting and demanding more participation by men in household work, few men were willing to accept this. This inability was resulting in the emergence of the cult of Indian superwomen in America, seen earlier in the narrative of women like Divya, who carried on happily her outside and multiple aspects of housework and childrearing seemingly without any complaints. This Indian superwoman rationalized that their men were incompetent and helpless, not capable of performing multiple tasks. These superwomen accepted the fact that their husbands “couch potatoes” and “genial” husbands.⁵⁰

Others, however, were preaching to Indian women to take control of their lives and to follow the example of American women. This aggressive group of women seemed to be the ones who identified with outside work, and saw their domestic responsibilities as secondary. A woman who was a proponent of this ideal wrote:

The difficulties Indian women who work face is trying to manage their home the way their mothers did back home. Three hot meals, the elaborate entertainment, the spic-and-span house that all of us so fondly remember was only possible because our mothers managed these with the help of an extended family member, maid, dhobi, cook and at times a gardener.

If one sees an old TV show, it seems life for an American household was somewhat similar. However, when American women entered the workforce, certain changes followed. Breads and pies are now bought rather than baked; friends and relatives are entertained at a restaurant. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong in using this as a model.

We know that the superwoman and wonder-woman are a myth and a fantasy. In reality, one makes choices, and I feel that a workingwoman has more choices in America than a workingwoman in India, in 1988.⁵¹

This woman was seeking alternatives in the American homes. Others were reshaping their own marriages by aggressively setting new roles of housework, for their

men. Wrote one: We women play a big part in making our destinies. It is not karma that makes our marriage what it is. If working women do not expect and extract more from the men they are married to (or plan to marry) they will end with genial husband.⁵²

By the decade of the nineties, a group of women seemed to be taking action regarding their household works, and refused to join the cult of Indian superwomen. Not only were a section of Indian women changing but some Indian men too started writing about their household chores, and complained of inactions on part of women to help them with financial decisions. The following letter documented a man's travails of his household burden. The person stated:

No sooner have the wedding flowers wilted, than the wife starts manipulating to assume the dominant relationship and break away any influence of family.

I do not know any woman who took cooking seriously. As a matter of fact, I admire the man who can manage to make her do that. I am personally sick of eating pizza, Chinese food and spaghetti and meatballs. I look forward to the summer when I can barbecue.

The extent of work required in a home is much greater in the U.S. Of all the people I know, no man, repeat no man sits down and watches the tube while the wife is breaking her back over the stove. I will list the work I do, which would also be true for most of the other men I know. It is:

Painting, repairing appliances; gardening; lawn-mowing; snow shoveling; fall cleanup; car repairs and maintenance; swimming pool service; bathe kids and put to bed; read to kids and help with homework; take kids to sitter and doctor; stay at home when kids are sick; clean up after dinner; serve when we have company and clean up; iron shirts and vacuum.

The men I know do similar amount of work, some do grocery shopping and laundry but not some of the above chores. I always joke, "a man's work is never done."

In spite of all the MBA's, work experience and decision-making, I have not met any women who will take the responsibility of making and tracking investments. They will not invest the family money in the market, certificates of deposits, mutual funds or other instruments. They just want the freedom to have the credit cards to go shopping with and not worry about where the money is coming from.⁵³

Although this letter detailed this gentleman's household chores, they did not include cooking; these tasks were also not time bound or part of daily responsibilities.

These letters suggested a wide range of views prevailing among Indian homes regarding male and female roles in homes. If the letters over a couple of decades were any indication, women retained primary responsibility of household work; change while occurring was slow in coming and only in rare cases did men take equal or more responsibility.

Issues on household division of work were also occurring in the lives of Indian families in Detroit, and women's and men's attitudes varied over time. Women who migrated in the decades of the sixties and the seventies followed traditional gender roles where men were the economic providers and women the domestic caretakers. In these traditional Indian patterns, women performed household chores and did not expect their husbands to participate within their homes. Moreover, interviews draw attention to the fact that women's identities were rooted in their household tasks, and women took pride in their household work, especially their cooking abilities. These women, many of whom came from joint family households where their household tasks were tedious in comparison to their work in the U.S.; as daughters-in-law they inherited tremendous household responsibility without wielding any real power. Coming to America and to a nuclear family not only gave them added power but also drastically reduced their housework. This emerges from the accounts of the accounts of Raksha and Usha. Raksha stated:

Here work is not difficult. In India everyday I used to get up at 4 O'clock and go to bed at 10 at night. The whole day I used to do household work. My mother-in-law was sick so I had to do all the work, cooking, washing clothes, take care of my young sister and brother-in-laws. Here work was not difficult, it was much easier than in India. You make *masala* [food paste with spices] once and can cook in four pots on the stove at the time.⁵⁴

Life in America was much easy. It was like no one is here to tell me what to do. Like over there my mother-in-law was there and she would tell me what to do. I used to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning. Clean everything, fill up water—it used to come 1-1 ½ hrs. in the morning—and I never saw dark in life at my mom's house. It was much easier life here.

Right away I got pregnant and I used to feel so hungry and I couldn't eat thinking she might not like it. I was so young and I didn't know what way I can stand up and tell them what I like. I had a brother-in-law an unmarried sister-in-law, father-in-law. Everyone used to eat and then I used to eat at 2 o'clock, evening same, eating after feeding everyone and I used to go so hungry. I used to crave for some Bengali food but I couldn't tell them I want that.

They cook differently and I didn't like that. I had to develop instant tolerance power to stay over there. I still remember it was very hard.⁵⁵

This group of early migrants took pride in their cooking abilities and any extra workload was taken in stride. In the early years, few women were present in the Detroit community, and cooking for others gave these women fame and provided them with intense pleasure. Raksha recalled: "The third day I was here, he brought 15 people home. They were bachelors and needed to eat too. No, I did not mind."⁵⁶ These women of the earlier generations also assumed additional cooking responsibilities that were absent in India. The absence of Indian food materials in the U.S. resulted in many women learning to prepare time-consuming food products that were traditionally bought in India, especially Indian sweets. Furthermore, the social and religious networks resulted in increasing interactions among members of the Indian community, and food was a central component of these get-togethers. In addition, marriages, special occasions at homes, and the temple all resulted in an increase in women's work, but none of the women in the sample complained about their extra workloads. These events and women's work were revealed with pride. "He liked *ladoo* [an Indian dessert]. I started making it here. In India I never made it. If somebody would get married and they would tell you 'cook 500 *ladoo*, 500 *gulab jamun*, 500 *mathis*, 500 *jalebis*.' [All Indian desserts] I used to be happy that

people asked me.”⁵⁷ Noted Soudamini with pride: “He told the temple people that we would cook food. I had to cook for hundreds of people.”⁵⁸

It is interesting to note that while these women were carrying on their cooking responsibilities with pride, there were many in these early cohorts who did not know how to cook. Coming from families where servants worked, these women were expected to marry into similar homes where their main responsibilities were to manage their home with the help of servants. Moreover, many families, training their daughters for professional work, overlooked their training in home based activities resulting in their inability to perform the most essential household task of cooking. These women, however, were learning the art of keeping homes modern, and following the new cultural trends rooted in *Femina*, a women’s magazine which introduced women to the art of keeping a modern home, about cleanliness, and flower arrangements along with actual cooking.⁵⁹ In America, women like Nalini, learnt the art of cooking intricate Indian food through social networks. She stated: “I learnt how to make *rasogulla* right away. I didn’t know too much how to cook; we had servants in our house all the time. My mother was a professional; only in emergency did we cook and she was a very good cook and would cook only when we would entertain. I burnt quite a few meals. I had no sympathy for my husband who expected me to cook. Those ladies [in the social network] taught me how to cook.”⁶⁰ Uma’s account followed similar lines. “I had never cooked in India, but my first day here in our apartment I wanted to have breakfast for him. And I could make omelet. I had brought a recipe book. But the dish was so salty, you didn’t know if it was *ande mein namak* or *namak mein anda*. [Salt in eggs or eggs in salt]”⁶¹

In these households, the traditional division of work remained. Women took care of domestic work and childcare, and men were responsible for keeping finances. Few complained or even considered asking for spousal help in household chores. The gender socialization of these women did not permit them to let their spouses to contribute in the household chores. Illustrating this Raksha stated: “No, he never worked at home. I never let him do that. No, no . . . Even if the others did we were different. I just did not want that men should work in the home.”⁶²

By the decade of the seventies, however, women’s tone changed. As women joined work, or went in for higher education, moved into homes from apartments, their workload increased. The busy work schedules of their men resulted in taking over responsibilities, which traditionally were male domain. Men’s outside work took precedence and as the pressures of work increased so did woman’s work at home.

“No washing dishes, no laundry, no grocery, I did everything. When the snow fell I had to clean it. One thing he liked doing once in a while was cooking because he liked it. Maybe once in a week. I knew he was tired when he came back and he used to work 7 days a week. So I was left alone. . . .”⁶³

There, however, were rare cases where men did equal amount of work at home as was the case with Sheila’s marriage. Talking about her husband, she stated:

He wasn’t a regular Indian man; he knew how to cook. I knew that I didn’t have to cook for him all the time. He didn’t expect anything from me. He was not the traditional Indian man.

Nothing was expected of me, if I don’t cook, we go out and eat. I still do the laundry because he does all the whites and blacks together. Someone comes to iron someone does the cleaning. We had a maid the second year, the first year he would clean. He vacuums. No clashes, I might have to get after him, it is never a source of tension.

He is a gourmet cook. When we have company, he does the main dish; I do the mundane, most of the day to day.⁶⁴

By the decade of the eighties, women in Detroit were exhibiting attitudes that were in sharp contrast to women migrants who arrived in the decades of the sixties. If the

early group of migrants did not ask their men to work and rarely witnessed a dispute over household distribution of work, latter immigrants were vocal in their expectations of male participation in house work resulting in tensions within their homes over division of work. Identifying with professional work, many amongst the new genre of women resented time spent on household activities and were vocal in asking their men to work. For these women, assuming household responsibility was hard. Moreover, through migration, they gained responsibilities beyond their expectations, and everyday jobs that they did not want to identify with. And some of these women were overwhelmed about their newfound responsibilities, as did Radha:

Household chores were hard initially. Anything I cooked never turned out good so there was no motivation really and then I felt I am spending all this time cooking. I don't like cooking; I hate to cook. Now, he helps out... If the kitchen is dirty it doesn't bother him he says he will do it tomorrow. But then it bothers me. Earlier on he didn't do anything at home and I was very stressed out, tired all the time and I told him but nothing happened. Things didn't change, although I made attempts.

I don't think we dealt with it. It created crack in our relationship. When bad things happen you can never erase them.

Despite the fact that he is at home I still have to work because I still have to make sure that I have to make the lunches in the morning. He doesn't know what to do with the lunches, what to make? I still have to make sure that there is something in the house that the kids will eat.

Nowadays he takes care of the kids in the morning, cooks them breakfast, sends them to school, picks them up in the evening when they come home from school.

I cook the dinner, he does the dishes.

I do the laundry just because I don't like the way he does it, but then he folds the clothes.

Housecleaning we have someone come and clean. That has been the biggest boon in our lives. Before this we always had this thing on our mind, bathrooms was dirty we need to clean them. Every weekend was spent thinking about cleaning although we didn't really do it.

He writes the bills.

Life as a woman is hard. Its hard in the sense that women have to worry about a lot of different things that men don't have to...things like taking care of everyday chores. You have to provide food everyday, you have to make kids lunch everyday. You can't say I will do it tomorrow whereas the things that most men

take care of there is no time bound rule/ routine that they have to follow. He does the taxes, if he doesn't want to do it today, he can do it tomorrow.⁶⁵

Radha's narrative alluded to increasing tensions in her marriage over the division of household work. At the time of interview, Radha's husband was working out of their home and had taken on some responsibility but it was not satisfactory for her. Moreover, her account also emphasized that male responsibilities were not based on daily activities but were task oriented that could be done at any time. Consequently, even when her husband's roles increased, it never included cooking, which remained her responsibility. Radha expected an equitable distribution of work in order to devote enough time to her outside work, and although she can be identified as a superwoman, yet her emergence as one was under duress and not something she was proud of.

Radha's husband however, did not see this conflict this way. He claimed, as did other Indian men, that they had changed, and were contributing to the household work, and also cooked. There indeed were men who knew about household work and cooking, and many were instrumental in teaching their wives how to cook. But once their wives learned the art of cooking, these men withdrew; the pressure of their work necessitated spending too much at work, as was the case with Gita. She stated: "He was living in this country for so long and he knew a bit of cooking. We used to cook together, in fact he taught me how to cook many things. We explored and found this Indian recipe book that was for Americans, so that was great because all the ingredients were available from the market. . . actually come to think of it, he does not cook now."⁶⁶

In America, despite the tensions within families and despite women's attempts to share work equally, women retained the task of day-to-day cooking, although a large majority of the men who arrived in the decade of the eighties knew how to cook and

periodically cooked. Men, especially those who had migrated in the decade of the eighties, had started helping but rarely to the satisfaction of women. As families were becoming economically secure, more and more families in the Detroit sample were resorting to Indian traditions of using hired help within their homes, especially for cleaning homes. In some professional homes, eating out became more common and women also spoke of using catering services or buying prepared food. In many homes, however, the increasing tendency among women to become part-time workers had slowed this change and women remained responsible for household work. Men in the sample talked of working at home, their wives however, merely smiled at this. Even in non-traditional families, even when men were working out of home, or had retired women remained the main domestic responsibilities.

Indian women in Detroit were continuing to negotiate household division of work and individual families were finding different ways to deal with the situation. These changes, however, were not without tensions. The alternatives have been more toward the emergence of the cult of superwomen, but this new identity represents women's failure to change domestic relations within their homes. The emergence of superwomen is out of necessity. Even in homes where men have started helping women, the gender division of work was task oriented with women becoming responsible for daily chores while men have responsibility for tasks that were not time bound. Cooking, the main daily task at homes, remained women's responsibility. But there were major changes in women's cooking tasks. Women talked of eating out, buying pre-cooked or half cooked food for their homes and unlike the earlier cohorts, they did not take responsibility of cooking for large social gatherings that was spoken so highly among earlier group of women. While

this new group of women was very active in public sphere, it caters food for larger social events and preferred potlucks.

In many economically well to do households, the conflict was resolved by returning to the traditional Indian ways, and by hiring part time help. Yet migration resulted in the reversion of traditional roles for women, as few men were ready to take on equal household opportunities. In America on the other hand responsibilities of men and women increased within their homes, for taking care of children, in shepherding them from one activity to the other; on the other, pressures of work and the long commuting time was resulting in stress. To solve this demand, many times traditional couples were resorting to the traditional forms in India. Men were becoming the wage earners and women were ending with part-time work so as to take care of their domestic, especially childcare responsibilities, despite the professional nature of their work. Even in families where men were working from home, cooking, the main task remained women's although men were becoming more and more active in other household chores. But the management of the home remained women's as pointed out by a workingwoman.

While household tensions were aplenty among Indian families in Detroit, they were not the first contentious issues that emerged in the families. Detroit families also draw attention to husband-wife clashes ranging from problems of adjustment, stress of daily living in the U.S., and changing social norms. Moreover, conflicts in marriages also arose due to relationship with extended families and in-laws, personality differences, different expectations between couples as well as problems related to upbringing of children. These discords, or a combination of the above factors resulted in the domestic abuse and in some cases, even in breakup of marriages. In the Detroit sample, five

women and two men had undergone divorces, but many others were living in marriages full of tensions.

Tensions between husbands and wives relating to problems of adjustment to America, as well as to their husbands were the first documented by the Detroit sample. In arranged marriages, women were married at young age, and family and friends mediated these women's transitions to their new homes. In migrating to America through marriages however, women moved away from their family, social networks and all things familiar, to an alien world and unfamiliar men who happened to be their husbands, but in reality were virtual strangers. Their unfamiliarity with America, lack of real communication with their husbands resulted in acute loneliness and homesickness; men's inability to understand this created early tensions in marriages.⁶⁷ The problems of loneliness to an extent were mediated by the presence of Indian community; women in university campuses found well-established women's networks that helped their entry into the U.S. as well as their new homes. Women coming to suburban homes, however, faced severe loneliness, and spoke of incessant crying in missing their family. This problem prevailed among women irrespective of their time of arrival. A large number of the women in the sample spoke about their homesickness. Usha also highlighted the stress associated with it. "Life was very stressful. I mean you leave your family and you have nobody to talk to and the mail only comes once a day. I used to have one friend in the apartment complex and I used to talk to her on the phone. She used to help me here and we used to meet on the weekend talk about India and when our kids are grown up we will retire to India."⁶⁸ For Gita, a working woman in India, life at home was full of loneliness. "He would leave at 6 in the morning and come back at 7 in the evening. And

here I was a really busy person in India. Life was very hard for me. . . I used to walk to the Kmart a lot and if I met an Indian person I would make sure that I take their phone number.”⁶⁹ While Gita’s husband made conscious attempts to spend time with her and, understand her, and introduced her to America and things American, others reported lack of such attempts by their men.

Instead of aiding women to adjust to America, as did Gita’s husband, many were asking their wives to cease all thoughts of their birth family. Following the traditional norms where women focused on their new families after marriages, these men failed to understand their wives needs and even expected their wives to stop all communication with their birth families. Sushma complained of her husband’s attempt to break up her relationship with her parents, which she was not willing to do. She stated:

The first months were not pleasant. He said ‘I don’t want you to think of your parents now.’ I didn’t like that and I told him who are you to tell me not to think about my parents? And then I was so lonely and he was telling me not to deal with my parents. It was bothering me why I have to live with him if he says such things to me. He was also concerned about what did you did with your money before you got married. That was none of his business. My mind was going through revolution, and I was even thinking of leaving him. Finally, I said I want to divorce you and go home. I don’t need you for anything, I don’t deserve this. I was ready to divorce and go back to India.

He kept saying, in coming to America, he also created distance from his family. He also said that I went against my grandfather’s wishes and married you. I did not take any dowry. I said that is you, not me. My family is very important to me.⁷⁰

While the other women were submissive, Sushma objected to these commands and was very vocal in voicing her anger at her husband. Representing the new women, she did not hesitate to question her husband’s wishes, and resisted his attempts. Her husband’s rationale for breaking up these bonds was rooted in his desire to strengthen his bonds with his wife. While in Sushma’s case this problem was resolved, in Nalini’s case tensions that began with this problem reverberated through out her marriage.

There was always anger and bitterness about how untraditional my upbringing was. I came from a loving family where love was very much the rule. In his family it was control the traditional Indian way where the husband control the wife and if he cannot control he is not man enough kind of thing.

I tried to do what he wanted to do and inside of me something would rebel. Well, I would fight back and demand to be treated like a human being and then all hell would break loose and then there would be terrible fights. In other words he wanted COMPLETE submission.

He would not let me write letters to my parents. He would open every letter that came from my parents and he would read it. My parents would write being sad about things and then he would get mad. He was very rude to my parents and thought that they were interfering in his life if they asked about how is your life? What was I doing all day? He thought that my mother was being obnoxious. He wrote nasty letters you know and he made me stop writing to them. I was outraged by it, I was astounded by it because in a way our letters were our private matters and even my mother never opened our letters at home. They trusted us; they understood that this was your private. Maybe my parents were different you know.

He would put me down. I tried to do as best as I could and nothing I did was good enough. I was ugly, I was this, I was that. His way of controlling me was putting me down verbally. Then I kept asking him why did you marry me? My parents didn't beg you to. I was the loving daughter of loving parents.

My mother was sick. He would not allow me to go home. He refused to pay for my ticket. Even though his family appealed to him. His rationale was that you got married and your family is nothing to you now. He didn't like me taking education. He felt that I had enough education already to be a good mother already so I just did cooking and clearing which I could not because that was not me.

He gave in but if he could have stopped it he would have stopped it. There was family pressure from India plus also the feeling that he would be busy with his new job, grant-writing etc. and at that time he didn't care. He was extremely busy with his profession.

I kept thinking why is he like this, am I not good enough and that didn't seem right enough. . . For the first 20 years of my life that was how I felt. It took me a long time to understand what it was all about. He was a very, very egoistic person, selfish kind of man. One of the things I realize now is that he got married for someone to take care of him and not the other way around.⁷¹

Nalini's account emphasized her husband's desire to control her life, cease all contact with her parental family and follow his wishes meekly. Nalini's family however, brought her up with notions of independence, and of expressing herself contrary to the expectations in a traditional wife, that her husband expected. These differences in expectations of the role of a wife and husband created constant tensions in her marriage.

Her husband's attempts to assert his power over her in the traditional way were usually resisted by her, although from time to time she succumbed to his wishes. These issues of power and control, however, became factors that defined her marriage and its problems. Some of the biggest clashes in her marriage related to her desire to maintain relationships with her families in India which was against the traditional norms where women were expected to sever relations from her own family and adapt to their spousal family and expect it to be the main family. Yet Nalini's husband was also modern, he shunned dowry at the time of marriage and wanted an educated wife. Women like Nalini, who spoke their mind, fought against their submission, were increasingly becoming the norm. Mona, a decade later also talked of conflicts with her husband over their respective families, although she stated that he was very loving towards her.

While the existing literature on Indian immigrants speaks of separation from India resulting in the formation of closer bonds between families, among Detroit families these bonds, if they developed, usually took place over time. Age and women's individual personalities and attitudes were some of the factors that determined the relationship with their husbands. The attitude of men towards their wives in the early years, and their understanding of the needs of women in a new nation, were central to the development of these relationships; moreover, many women, brought up with traditional ideology, looked up to their spouses for guidance. Lack of support, loss of temper and other behavioral and attitudinal norms established the future course of relationship. In many cases, the companionship of men was not available either because of work responsibilities of men, or their inability to understand women's needs and carrying on their life and activities without inclusion of their wives. If Indira, at the beginning of the chapter, spoke of being

scared of her husband, Chandra spoke of similar sentiments a decade later. "Couple of times he was really dominating and I was really scared of him."⁷²

In many cases, the differences in expectations among women and men from each other further created tensions between newly married couples. Some of the problems were mentioned were tensions of dowry and different upbringing. Tripta faced issues of dowry: "Yes dowry was one of the issues," in her marriage early on.⁷³

Issues of power and control also emerged in men constantly putting women down, berating them, and eroding their self-confidence. It happened with Nalini and similar events also occurred in Indira's life. "He used to tell me I don't know any finances. He thought of me as very incompetent. Really, he never thought that I could write a bill or a check. . . And I told him do you know you never gave me an opportunity. But then he found out when he was sick. So one day I told him we could have been really happier if you could have relaxed a little."⁷⁴

Age also emerged as a factor in women's inability to form relationships with their husbands. In arranged marriages in India, the central factor in finding spouses was related to economic ability of men rather than age differences or thoughts of compatibility. Indira, Nalini, and Usha all alluded to age differential emerging as an impediment in forming companionate relationships with their spouses'. Indira stated: "There was 14 years difference between us. There was a generation gap. Even when I grew up he was still a generation ahead... He never treated me like a wife. He put all three of us [2 children and her] in one category."⁷⁵

These conflicts, barring the age variable, were rooted in differences among men and women on the notions of modernity and tradition, and the role of a wife and a

husband. Changes in Indian women and men were dependent upon individual families, and these changes were not uniform.

Among men, as seen in Nalini's case, modernity implied a man accepting her as an equal, allowing her to further her education and career plans as well allow her to continue keeping her relationships before marriage. Modernity for her husband, however, was in not seeking dowry, having an educated wife who could take care of their future family, and who could interact with his circle of educated friends. Nandini's and other narratives highlighted the hypothesis of Promila Kapur and Maria Meis referred earlier in chapter two, when they stated that women's attitudes and expectations towards marriages were changing at a rapid rate than that of men. Men showed contradictory tendencies; they professed to be modern, yet retained traditional notions of a wives as someone who took care of them and their families, as well as showed modernity in behavior.⁷⁶ These contradictory tendencies, and differences between thinking emerged as sources of problems. Nalini's account draws attention to problems related to these issues.

These difference in notions of the role of a wife also appeared in relation to the question of religion. It appears from interviews that many men considered cultural and religious practices as archaic and were moving away from them. For women, however, religion and religious traditions were important. Moreover, women in the sample were moving towards religion to alleviate their personal problems and loneliness. The attempts by these women to instill religious cultural norms in their children were objected by men.

Nalini stated:

Religion he didn't believe in. He thought that I was a cuckoo believing in God and all that. So he used to call me a religious fanatic. I thought that my son needed to be exposed to that culture. My husband did not want me to go there. He was also kind of anti-Indian and he did not want to be an Indian. And I was taking

my son to Bichitra and the Temple and one day he came and yanked him out of the group. He just wanted my son to be home. 'You are putting lot of nonsense ideas in him,' he said. He looked down upon the Indians.⁷⁷

Chandra pointing this out stated: "At home I followed Indian tradition, their family is very westernized. I was always the outcast from the family for what I used to do—Hindi things. If I wanted to teach them Hindi, they did not like it. My son is more Indian than my husband. My son goes to a temple; my husband does not."⁷⁸ Indira who became a regular volunteer at the temple spoke of her husband's opposition to it. "My husband used to get so mad. He never wanted to come to the temple. So he had all these excuses, me not cooking. . . so I used to cook everything so he didn't have excuse. He used to say that I spent all my life there."⁷⁹

These women also lacked financial control over their homes, since their men rarely gave them any money. Women's financial power came with the increasing work load to men at work and their inability to perform day to day activities associated with their role. But in the early years, this lack of financial control created a dependency on men.

1.He was very thrifty, all the time insecure with money. We shouldn't spend money, I never got any credit cards, I never got any checkbooks, nothing, I had no control over the money when I first landed in the country. Every week he would give my \$ 5 or so.⁸⁰

2.He used to take me grocery shopping, I had no credit cards, we had an account and even then my name wasn't on it. Because he was so busy with his job that he had to sign me on so that I could write the bills.⁸¹

This lack of financial control affected women's movements of their visits to India to meet their families, even in dire circumstances.

Aside from personal problems, one of the biggest problems between couples was on the nature of relationship with the extended family, especially in-laws, who for the

most part were residing in India. Women, rather than men, spoke of this problem. While distance from India allowed nuclear families to flourish, especially women to be independent from the hierarchical structure, the problems of the hierarchical structure periodically emerged among Indian families. These problems were of two kinds; first, on the issue of financially supporting families in India, and second on periodic visits to India and relationships with in-laws.

While men, as caretakers of their family, were responsible for their family in India, women too, going against the gendered ideology, wanted to support their families in India, and sponsor the migration of their family members. Moreover, Radha and others also spoke of families in India having higher monetary expectations from their sons who were in the U.S. given America's imagery as a prosperous nation. In early years when families were in the process of establishing economically, such high expectations also created problems. Noted Radha, "We had financial clashes. We were sending money home and we weren't making much more . . . It affected our marriage."⁸²

But some of the biggest tensions emerged in relation to frequent visits to India, or visits of in-laws from India. The biggest issue was where to spend the bulk of their visits, with the in-laws or with the women's family. In traditional Indian families, women accepted their husbands' families as their own and kept distance from their birth families'. Women in the Detroit sample were willing to take care of their traditional responsibilities as long as they did not include breaking relationship from their own families. The distance from India had resulted in women's lack of attachment to their spouses' families. Moreover, among the new generation of women, the idea of helping out the in-laws family was acceptable as long as men accorded their in-laws or their families, similar

respect, which few men were willing to do. For families already beset with conflicts, these trips to India, or relatives' trips from India, were fraught with new tensions, especially among the new generation of women who expected to take care of their family as well as expected their spouses to respect and accept their family. Moreover, many young women, who came in the decade of the eighties, spoke of not being trained social norms or different sets of behaviors towards the two families. While young Indian women's expectations had changed, the older generation, especially women of the older generation rarely changed. Their power within families was dependent on controlling the lives of the younger members, especially daughters-in-law, resulting in tensions in families, even families that were otherwise living happily. Conflicts with in-laws deeply affected women in Detroit as is evident from their accounts below.

I expected to stay with my family for 2-3 weeks before he came and they [his family in India] would not let me. I stayed with them only for one week. I came after 5 years and I stayed with my parents for only one week; that broke their heart and my heart too. And yes his family believed that too that you control your wife; she married and she belongs to us. In our family this was not the case. Our cousins' husbands were not like that. They were not the sons-in-laws of the family; they were like the sons of the family.

The next time I went I made a contract, but he wrote a letter to his family saying if they [my parents] didn't let me stay with them he would divorce me. His brother came with that letter. It scared me, it scared my father, they were upset, they didn't want anything to happen, they let me go immediately. As strong as they were, they were nothing in front of these people, because their daughter's happiness mattered the most. It was his way or nothing at all.⁸³

Trouble started after I went to India. My father-in-law was very dominating, very attached to my husband. He told me I could spend x amount of time at x place. He won't let me stay at my father's. I was not allowed to go to my home although my sister-in-laws came to stay their family. He was always yelling and screaming. In their home it was hard. They were very mean to me. My *buas* [aunts-fathers sisters] came to visit me and *bauji* [father] said *boria bistra le ke a jao*. [Bring your bag and baggage]. But they would not let me go.

The biggest thing they did was they brainwashed my husband against me. They planted lot of negativity against me. I don't know what happened but he was never the same man.

There are a lot of double standards in his family. For eg. My mother-in-law taught him not to go to my mom's house, so he never slept there all these years. When my in-laws come here, they stay at my sister-in-laws house. So when his parents come here, he turns into a monster. He says my parents are here and don't even stay with me. He blames me for everything says it is my fault.

... Now when I look back, when they come here, he becomes a monster.⁸⁴

The relationships with my in-laws didn't work out well, and my father-in-law created havoc in my life. My parents and in-laws did not get along. I was married and living with my in-laws and he had left for America, my father-in-law insulted my father. He didn't allow me to pick them up at the airport and I cried my heart out.⁸⁵

I landed and after 3 hours I say I am going to see my mom now and there is a little bit of are you sure expression, and it didn't strike me that there was anything wrong with it. . . I had two bags one for my family and one for my parents. I gave it to my mother-in-law and told her this is what I bought for you ...and now I am going to go to my mom's house and I didn't show them what I have. I didn't know I should have done that. . . I go back and the atmosphere is totally changed, totally cold, dry. My mother-in-law doesn't want to talk to me...Next morning I wake up and everything I bought for them is on my bed. Its like take it I don't want it. And I am like totally lost and I have no idea what is going on.

I didn't do a thing but I was miserable. I asked my *bhabhi* [sister-in-law] what is going on. She said they are very upset at you for the way you behaved because you didn't show them what you gave them [her parents].

So that was the start of the relationship. On top of that my husband is miles away. He has no idea what is going on... That probably was the worst time of my life because I probably learnt the hard way. I learnt that they had the power to make me feel bad, and I also learnt that I was tied because I loved my husband and I didn't want to hurt him.

I was so scared that I wouldn't move out of my in-laws house unless I was really sure. So, I used to work on stolen time. If I was coming back from college, and I had a little time I would go to my parents home not letting my in-laws know about it. It was hard on my family because we hadn't done things this way.

So I passed a year. I was very bitter, I was very hurt, I was very afraid. I couldn't get over it. . .and I told my parents if you had taught me, told me about these things I would have been better prepared and not so hurt. The hurt was so much it took me 6-7 years to get over it.

His response was I know what you are saying but he couldn't bring himself to say that his mom was wrong, his sister was wrong. He didn't bring himself to say that and that added to the problem. I couldn't put it behind me. I couldn't bring myself to deal with them. I couldn't bring myself to talk to them on the phone...

[years later, on another visit] I was more aggressive. I told him I am going to go to my mom's house and I am going to tell her, but I am going to go when I want to go. So it's kind of the first coming out. You are still afraid. You don't want to be disrespectful; you don't want to sound like, you guys I don't care anymore, I am not going to take this anymore.

Now I tell my husband I am not going to go back again. Now I talk with the other sisters-in-law and they all had the same stories, different versions. I haven't gone back. My parents come here every year. . . .⁸⁶

Whenever my in-laws are visiting, I don't need to go on the treadmill. I loose weight automatically.⁸⁷

He was laid off and then we decided to go back to India. I did not have an American dream, I missed India a lot, I missed the Indian life. My parents were ill, and I thought that this was the best thing. And so we went to India, and I gave up my green card, and then it was horrible, horrible, horrible in India. . . One of the problems was my in-laws. We moved in with them and my mother-in-law tried to put restrictions; I couldn't meet friends, I couldn't socialize at home and I thought in this day and age! And me coming from Bombay, modern, outspoken! We would go out. I would talk to my husbands friends and they didn't like that. . . They just wanted me to be home and not do anything. My husband was total putty in their hands; he was nice to me, though. It was not a good idea to go back.⁸⁸

These tensions were rooted in women's refusal, especially younger women's refusal, to break away their relationships from their families even after marriages. Detroit women's interviews highlighted that these women, whose views reflected their liberal upbringing in their parents' ideology who educated their daughters, but did not train them towards family obligations, partly because of hope and belief that corresponding changes were occurring in other families too. Women, especially of the younger cohort, expected to have a friendly relationship with their in-laws rather than the traditional daughter-in-law relationship. This kind of relationship, however, was dependent upon transformation in ideology among all; the lack of change even in one person resulted in creating problems. Moreover, Detroit stories also point out that women in their married families, especially their mother-in-laws were least likely to change since their power base was based on the continuation of the hierarchical system and controlling their daughter-in-law. Denied power their entire life, their power came with control over their daughters-in-laws. Noting the tensions that occurred in her family because of her mother-in-law's

attitude, Abha stated: "In our minds and in our fathers' minds it was a very idealistic marriage, very simple but it broke down because of the women of their family."⁸⁹

Family conflicts in Detroit also emerged regarding 'sponsoring' families to settle in America. By the decade of the eighties, America had emerged as the 'Promised Land' and immigrant families in Detroit were helping their families settle in the U.S. by sponsoring them through the family reunification category. Who to sponsor and who not to sponsor also created further tensions within families. Men usually supported their family; attempts by women to do the same were not always looked favorably upon and even resisted by men. Male support was support was essential to the resettlement of the family given the financial resources needed in the settlement of a family member. While professional women like Sushma could afford to do so without any financial help from their husband, Chandra could not. She complained: "He did not want my family to come here. I have taken care of your family for 25 years and you can't even do that to my family. . . ." ⁹⁰ Sushama, however, went against her husband's wishes. "I wanted my family to come here and he wasn't too keen. I told him it won't cost you a penny. I will take care of them."⁹¹ This trend was not all pervasive among Detroit families. There were many families where men supported women's families, and supported them in early years.

Problems of Children

Tensions between couples also emerged with regards to the upbringing of children. The source of problems were two major issues that were evident in the following two narratives:

He had been taking all these stresses...Indian culture and we should be doing this and American culture is bad. Especially for my daughter and for me also. I never wore skirt and you cannot wear certain things like that. Everybody was wearing and everybody was working but I took it because I was his wife but my daughter.

When they become teenagers they get upset. She couldn't go to school functions like dance, she cannot go to the movies she cannot wear this she cannot come late, why she is doing that

There was stress between us because we can't see things at the same angle. My point was that we have to go along with the kids; we don't have to be authority figure with them. I got the idea because my father was military type, his nature; he wasn't in the military but his nature was military type. When he was in the house everybody quiet, he is coming home, everyone quiet he is sleeping, don't do certain things. At that time I decided that when I have kids I am not going to be like that. That doesn't work.

But my husband he said it is my way or highway. Dressing no, no staying up, no staying out, no talking with, especially with boys. He wanted to admit her to a girl's school—Miriam High School. But we couldn't afford the tuition. Then he will be after me, you are giving her too much freedom, you are letting her do everything and she will go bad. That time I didn't tell my daughter anything. She wasn't on drugs or got pregnant or that kind of person, just doing things like all high school kids do, they want to enjoy life.

So that was very difficult for me. I tried explaining but he wouldn't listen. That was very hard on me. He wanted to divorce me at one time, because he said that nobody is doing whatever he says. So he said he will look for an apartment. He just wouldn't talk to my daughter practically for months. He thought she doesn't listen to him.⁹²

We had arguments about the kids and how to raise the kids. We were poles apart. His thing is that love is conditional like you do what I say and I will show my affection. Here I am arguing parental love is unconditional. They are your kids and you love them because they are your kids no matter what they do . . . She was going through all her problems. Here was a kid who was totally lost and had no clue what to do with her life, and here he is disappointed. Here he had all those high hopes for her. . . when you go to college, studies is not enough, you have to have mental maturity. She didn't know how to handle it and it came to a point that the university won't accept her. She didn't want to come home. My husband was totally crushed since he had high hopes for her. . . Deep down he was really crushed that she could not go to medical school.

My husband didn't talk to her for three years. And they were living in the same house. For him you had to have good grades or I am not paying for your school. See he is nice, but everything is ultimatum for him. He stopped paying for tuition. So she started working for a job, but how much you make you still can't pay the tuition. So she stopped going to school and we still didn't know about it. She would leave every morning

He wouldn't talk to her for 3 years; and he was mad at me for talking to her. I tell you these kids have no grandparents, aunts, relations they only have us and if we both stop talking to them can you imagine your situation.

You hear a lot of kids committing suicide and that was my greatest worry.

He was unreasonable. It's like those teen years he didn't know how to handle. He is suspended back in time in India. Back home when we grow up games, sports and everything is secondary. Always study, study, study. So he is happy if kids

study 24 hours. He didn't want them to find summer jobs because he said you should be studying not doing any part-time job. He didn't like that because kids were using their study hours.

He suffered the most I think. He used to love them, he used to take them everywhere and he suddenly didn't know how to deal with them in teen years. Then he is expecting them to do something.

Men get lost because it is not even control, power or anything. They don't know how to deal with things here. I know he didn't want to be a control freak but he knew no other way. He thinks that's the way you care. I said you don't have to choke them. He is so afraid.⁹³

The first account highlights the tensions between Usha and her husband regarding cultural issues related to bringing up daughters in America. Her husband desired to follow Indian cultural norms at home, and his definition of Indian culture meant segregation of sexes and consequently his attempts to control his daughter's mobility as well as her interactions with her American friends, especially with members of the opposite sex. His desire in doing this was rooted in his erroneous assumptions and negative connotations of the dominant American culture. Usha, however, did not subscribe to these notions and wanted her daughter to have a normal childhood like her friends. Their inability to deal with this created tensions between the two.

The second account, however, dealt with Indira's husband's high educational and professional expectations for their daughter, and his for her to be a physician. The daughter, an exceptionally good student in school, faced problems at university resulting in her dropping out, which devastated her husband, and resulted in his refusal to speak to her. Indira's and Usha's accounts emphasize the inability of their husbands to comprehend the roots of the problems and consequently deal with the exigencies of the situation. Their inability to make their daughter listen to their wishes, to be guided by them exposed the inability of old Indian norms to deal with Indians situation in the U.S. Indian parents, like Indira's husband, expected to shape the educational and professional

choices of their children, and parents guided and in some cases, chose educational options that led to upwardly mobile careers. Upwardly mobile careers, by Indian definition, were the ones that allowed for high income and resultant economic security, and in the U.S. the most sought after careers among Indian families were to be physicians. The failure of children to follow parental wishes resulted in family conflicts, as was the case in Indira's family. Yet in both accounts, the men also emerged as victims of old ideology that made them inapt to deal with problems of teenagers particular to American conditions. Living in America required an understanding of children's problems which few men were doing.

These two scenarios were not particular to the two families above but reflected two problems that plagued the Indian community. The problem between parents and children became so acute that through the pages of India Abroad liberal parents, counselors and psychologists' cautioned parents not to blindly expect Indian behavior among children in America. Parent-child relationships in India noted one, were based on "respect, obedience and overprotection."⁹⁴ In the U.S. however, these relationships were more democratic, individualistic and assertive. Articles reminded parents' carrying old cultural norms that children were identifying primarily with the dominant culture of their schools and cohorts rather than following Indian norms as expected in the above cases by their fathers. One psychologist reminded the readers of India Abroad that children spent 90 per cent of their time in school, and with the American culture and implored parents to change. "They will not be and cannot be like their parents, as they were born and are growing up in a different culture," he stated.⁹⁵ These well meaning people also noted that problems were more acute with regards to female offspring, as was the case with Usha's

daughter. While parents were willing to accept these notions of Americanization and of living with dual cultures towards their sons, with their daughters they wanted to retain their Indian traditions. American culture was not only seen as an individualistic culture but also a depraved culture from which their daughters needed to be saved. The notions of American lifestyle for a girl hinted at promiscuity, and parents, especially fathers, wanted to control their daughter's interaction with the dominant culture by restricting their movement and behavior.⁹⁶ Kuldeep spoke of following these traditions in her home, giving more freedom to her son and attempting to control her daughter, resulting in constant tensions with her daughter when she was a teenager. She also wanted her daughter to focus on studies rather than on her friends and other extra-curricular activities. The divergent views of parents on bringing up their daughters, the amount of freedom assigned to them created problems among the above couples.

Articles in India Abroad also spoke of the high pressure facing Indian children to succeed. "The typical Indian parent wants child to achieve, compete and make the grade regardless of the child's intelligence, aptitude and motivation."⁹⁷ The writer wanted parents to realize that children were motivated more by their peer culture, and suggested that parents needed to relearn parenting skills in the U.S.⁹⁸ Yet the above case scenarios point out that few parents heeded such advice and created not only a wall between parents and children but also between mothers and fathers. These tensions were not only apparent in Indira's and Usha's family but also in the families of Veena, Mona and Uttara. Veena's son left home at 17 due to tensions with his father and Mona's children were negatively affected by their father's attitude. Mona spoke of the need among parents to

change, to counsel them rather than force them, and be cognizant of their needs.

Elaborating on these tensions, she stated:

The children were not very motivated, maybe because of our situation, my marriage and my conflicts with my ex-husband. His style of telling the kids was not very nice . . . they thought all the time that he was demeaning them. He did not have a way of talking with them. You know nowadays they say talk to your kids, what a request can do a demand cannot do, a command cannot do. It increases the self-esteem, even though the capabilities of the child are limited, there is some ways to motivate them, to be comfortable to talk to them. My husband did not have that way about him. I don't nag my children about education; I do tell them it is important. I kind of estimated their capabilities, told them that any degree towards a good profession would help them.⁶⁹

At the time of interviews, Uttara was facing a similar problem due to tensions between her son and her husband regarding his university education. Her husband was refusing to pay for his education until and unless it was science-based education leading to engineering or some other technical field, the son was motivated towards artistic pursuits.

Domestic Abuse

These multitudes of conflicts within Indian families in Detroit were giving rise to abuse in many families. Abuse, while not publicly discussed in the Indian community in Detroit, was widespread, if these interviews were any indication. Women in Detroit spoke of both physical and mental abuse. New brides were especially vulnerable to abuse as they were in a strange city, cut off from their social and family networks, and with strange people who were the friends of their husbands. In cases of abuse these women were without any help. The following accounts by Nalini point to this factor.

I could not bring myself to talk to these people because these are the people who were his friends and their wives and if ever that they would say that she is young or... he would come home and scream at me that I was talking about private things to them and I stopped talking to them.

And there were some physical things too slapping me around. I once told him a man is supposed to love his wife not beat her.

Once I remember I we were coming back from a party and had a fight in the car. And he said get out of the car actually and instead of being submissive, so I opened the door and I walked out and he drove away and I started walking. And I walked just the opposite of which way the apartment was just to calm myself down. And I was crying. If you think about it, it was 4-5 months after I had come here and I still didn't know the city very well because I still hadn't walked out of the area where I lived. While this was not too far from the area, it was not my backyard either. I mean I remember walking around at 1 o' Clock at night in a strange city. He thought that after a while I would be so devastated that I would, that he had just whipped me into shape.¹⁰⁰

Chandra, however, spoke of sustained mental abuse. "For 20 years he would scream at me, yell at me. I used to get so scared of everyone. The more I wanted them [his family] to love me, the more they hated me. I was having a very hard time at home. There was emotional and physical abuse. He just needed to find fault with me, there was a pattern about it."¹⁰¹ While Nalini and Chandra were aware of their abuse, and the failures of their marriages, they had few alternatives and chose to live unhappy married lives. Economically, they both depended on their men for support; while Nalini rationalized the situation, Chandra accepted her unhappiness based on the Indian philosophy of fate, and mismatching of horoscopes. "These people didn't even tell me that he was a *maglik*. Now I found out."¹⁰² Nalini however was bound to this marriage due to respect for her mother. She stated:

Ours was not a happy marriage. Even if I thought about getting out of it, I knew I couldn't because of how devastated my parents would be, you know, especially my mother since she wanted me to come to a different country, get educated. She did get me married in spite of some of the objections of the others in the family. I couldn't do that to my mother. I couldn't walk out of my husband because of my parents. I couldn't do that.

Although I felt hurt by his treatment, I was angry at him, but in my mind there was no other choice.¹⁰³

Nalini's narrative suggests that divorce for her and others in similar situation was not an option. In seeking divorce, one had to calculate its effects on the family, and its members. Family honor and responsibility of women towards larger family unit resulted in her sustaining unhappy marriage. Men and women, especially women, were not independent of families' expectations, even though families resided in India. Moreover, divorce in the Indian community was seen as bad and attached a social stigma not only to the women in question but her entire family. Consequently, unhappy couples continued to live seemingly happy lives in the eyes of the community, celebrated family events and anniversaries, even wedding anniversaries, but behind closed walls they led separate lives, barely communicating with each other beyond children's needs.

Problems of battered Indian women were not particular to Detroit sample but also emerged periodically in the pages of India Abroad in the decade of the eighties, and new literature is emerging on this subject specific to the Indian community.¹⁰⁴ Counselors spoke of the widespread nature of this problem and its silent character. Similar to the situation facing Nalini, it stated: "Family ties, the element of shame, the stigma of divorce, and the community pressure to stay on and not confront the problem head on, are common problems among Asian women."¹⁰⁵ The counselor also pointed out that men denied its existence and that the only people who came to them were the ones who did not have any resources. While specific articles on this problem were few, the existence of this problem also emerged from the fact that new centers for abused women were on the rise among Indian communities in America; these shelters operated in LA, Chicago, New York and some communities in New Jersey.¹⁰⁶

Few Indians were seeking divorces, not only in Detroit, but also across the U.S in the decade of the seventies. A study reported in India Abroad related this trend to Indian social norms that highlighted the need to stay in marriage. The study, comparing Indian and western marriages, found that although the problems of marriages were similar in these cultural setting, there were profound difference in dealing with them. Indians did not consider separation or divorce because of problems of social acceptance. "Being together is more important to an Indian couple, while Americans would be more concerned with individual happiness."¹⁰⁷ In addition, the author also found fatalistic attitudes among Indians, and pointed to the economic pressure on Indian women since few were financially independent. Moreover, for the sake of their children, women continued to live in such marriages and centered their lives on their children, essentially sacrificing their personal happiness for what they view as stability.¹⁰⁸ The alternatives women in Detroit spoke of were within marriages and ranged from living with tensions, or limiting physical relationships with their spouses; Sushma and Mona spoke of the latter. Sushma stated that during the period of crisis: "I told him you are not the right man. Don't come near me."¹⁰⁹ In Mona's case: "I separated from him. I moved out of our room. The relationship that a husband and wife have ended during this period."¹¹⁰ Nalini initially choose not to have children until they were secure in their marriages. "From the beginning I felt that our marriage was not going to last and I didn't want to bring a child into it. So I fought the idea for a while and I was on birth control and I didn't get to the idea of getting pregnant because I didn't feel secure enough in our marriage," she stated.¹¹¹ Chandra had a nervous breakdown. "My daughter came and found me and called my friend who took me to the doctor. I now see a psychiatrist, psychologist."¹¹²

Divorce

Although few Indian women claimed to initiate divorces in Detroit, although Sushma and Mona thought about it, divorce among Indian community, despite claims of Indian cultural norms, was on the rise. Five women and two men had undergone divorce in the sample. Extramarital relationships by men played an important part in the breakup of these marriages in Detroit. Uma stating the cause of her marriage break up stated: “I worked every third night, same for my husband. So we were together every third night. She [her friend] had started coming even in my absence and people started telling me that I should not trust her. Soon I started suspecting too. I started telling him something is not right with our marriage, what can we do. If every third night is getting to you maybe we should send our son to India, to save our marriage.”¹¹³ For Nalini too similar circumstances ended her marriage. She stated: “He had started having an affair and I didn’t even know about it. Everybody knew about it but me. Someone, who had gone through the same problem called me and told me about it. I didn’t believe her.”¹¹⁴ This problem was not limited to Detroit but was prevalent across America. According to India Abroad, many Indian men and women were finding love outside their marriages. A report found that living in a society where sexual mores were more liberal, and where ideas of romance prevailed was resulting in many Indians going against the tradition bound Indian expectations that looked down upon romance. In addition, the report also stated that many single Indian men had girlfriends in America, but still returned home to marry Indian wives of their mothers’ choice and on their return to America, went back to their girlfriends.¹¹⁵ In the eighties, news reports in India Abroad drew attention not only to the prevalence of high stresses among Indian families but also the breakup of families and

increasing divorce rate, which the paper claimed was “alarmingly high.”¹¹⁶ Stress in America, culture shock, and problems of adjustment in an alien country, were some of the problems sited. Reports in the India Abroad found that marriages that were breaking up were not short-term marriages but of long duration, and the age group of marital problems was 35-50 years.¹¹⁷ Another survey found that marriages that the rate of marriage break up among Indian families was “alarmingly high,” and that a majority of these marriages were breaking up after approximately 17-20 years.¹¹⁸ In Detroit with the exception of one marriage, majority of the marriages broke up after 15-20 years of marriage. The report also stated that women found it harder to adjust, in the absence of social relationships. Many were used to traditional roles of wife, and the new pressures on women to contribute economically were creating tensions at home. Another report stated that, “The rise in a woman’s workload, made worse here for a lack of domestic help, improvement in financial status leading to more independence and extramarital relationships allowed by more relaxed sexual mores, especially among men. In India, men were part of the larger family unit, and in the U.S., however, they operated as individuals, forgetting their social commitments and values.” For women migrating from India, coping with the fast pace of life, working outside their homes and the increasing domestic workload at home caused resentment among them, leading to increasing, and failing marriages. A woman described the high stress on women and their additional responsibilities as a new kind of ‘slavery.’¹¹⁹

The breakup of marriages, even unhappy marriages, was resisted by women like Nalini and Uma. Indian women’s identities were related to their roles as wives; consequently even professional women were not brought up with the notion of living life

alone; and as such breakup of marriage caused emotional problems. The dissolution of marriages was a stigma that brought shame to the women. Women getting divorces in America began to depend on their men –father, father-in-law to find a situation. Divorces in India were rare and few women knew how to cope with it.

He left on some pretext. I begged him, I told him I couldn't live without you. He said I am not coming home but do not tell anybody about it. . . He didn't want us to tell people. People would call for him; I would call the operator and tell them to page him.

And I said how will we get groceries, and he said that is your problem. It was month of January so after dark my sister and I would walk so that nobody would see us.

In April I called his brother and told him about it who said I should go back to India. One of our friends said he won't let that happen. He said if you don't write to your parents I will.

It is still fresh in my mind. . . I wrote a letter to my father. Your house was like a *ghonsla* [a bird's nest]. You gave us food, shelter I grew my wings, and flew far far away. Today those wings have been cut off and can you accept me back.

He wrote, you were our daughter; you will always be our daughter. Whatever has happened, you will have to ask yourself, did you do anything wrong? If not keep your head high and we will keep our head high too. If you have done something wrong, correct those. He used to write Gita's *shlokas* [hymns from Gita].

I wrote to his family also. His father went to my father and asked what should we do? And my father's reaction was now she should finish her education; what future she has until she does her degree. But his family wanted me to live with them and the two families had a little problem, discrepancy in thinking. They thought that my parents were encouraging me to go through divorce. If I came back and stayed with them everything was going to be OK.

I wanted to commit suicide. I came to the hospital, wrote a prescription for sleeping pills, got them and went home and I looked at my child sleeping and thought how could I leave him alone. Then I thought I would give him sleeping pills too. . . so I thought that I needed psychiatric help. Next day I came to the hospital and told the chief resident about my suicidal and homicidal tendencies and said I want you to help me. Till that time I was holding it all in. He said talk to your family and friends. I told one friend and then they told others.¹²⁰

Uma's narrative highlights her inability to deal with the eventual break up of her marriage, despite her husband's extra-marital relationship. Her hopes of his eventual return, her shame, and her inability to deal with the situation resulted in her contemplating ending her life. Her narrative also drew attention to her inability to deal

with desertion resulted in resorting to her dependency on the men in her social and family circle for guidance: her and her husband's common friend, her brother-in-law and her father and father-in-law to deal with this shocking situation.

In the divorce proceedings, women lost out financially. Similar stories came from other women, who say despite legal provisions that allocated them fifty percent of their combined assets; they lost out because of their lack of awareness of financial investments, which over the course of their marriages were substantial. Part of the reason was their inability to seek the right lawyer. Nalini stated that she chose her lawyer from the yellow pages of the directory; "it is something you never do," she stated.¹²¹

While the reports were documenting abuse among families and host of problems, lack of compatibility was rarely mentioned as a problematic issue in Indian marriages leading to divorce. A letter to the Editor of India Abroad in 1985, however, brought another issue to the forefront. The letter stated:

We are a middle-aged couple with grown up children. We subscribe to traditional Hindu values and made our children the focal point of our lives, although we had a bad marriage and endless fights which we managed to keep secret for most of our lives. In the process we have grown apart, we have no common interests and do not enjoy doing things together. We have discussed splitting up and doing whatever we want for the rest of our lives. The problem is that we love Indian community and our image is a good one. Will the community reject us if we should split? Or should we continue to suffer and put on a false front? How do other couples in similar situations solve their dilemma? What are the after effects?¹²²

This letter was revolutionary in many ways. While it seemingly drew attention to the problems of incompatibility within marriage, a common problem in arranged marriages, the solution it sought—the dissolution of marriage—was radical by Indian standards. It signaled a move away from the traditional norms that sanctified the permanent nature of marriages, and the social importance of marriage to seek personal

happiness. The response to this letter drew attention to the widespread existence of marital problems among Indian families. Wrote a respondent: "America is an industrial society with individualistic life patterns by emphasizing individual growth over family commitment and self fulfillment over sacrifice."¹²³ Another highlighted the need for Indians to change marriage expectations and blamed the increasing divorces on inability of Indian marriages to change in America. Wrote another: "It is unrealistic to expect Indian marriages to endure with traditional values in a society where half the marriages end up in divorce. The Indian perception of the traditional spouse cannot work here: compromise and constant updating of marital communication become imperative to a successful marriage."¹²⁴ Wrote a divorced woman about her reasons for divorce: "A lot of little problems, some big hurts, the burden of too many responsibilities without support and our own insecurities and unmet needs. The communication gap widened and we felt isolated."¹²⁵

Despite problems in marriages, readers—both men and women—spoke of Indian social norms as a big factor in the continuation of marriages. "To accept the differences and live on –divorce was not a solution according to Indian philosophy. If you can't make the best of everything, make the best of what you have," suggested one.¹²⁶ A woman stated: "Fear and rejection of the Indian society and relatives made each of us take abuse from the other."¹²⁷ Social norms as well as the attitude of men denying the existence of problems, constrained families their taking independent steps, although some women suggested seeking help of marriage counselors, essentially adopting an American practice. Seeking outside institutional help in itself was radical move and showed that women, at least some women were not willing to be the traditional wives and victims. The

proponent of this move wrote: “They owe it to themselves to try a separation and if children are involved they should consult each other so they can better accept the eventual divorce or reunion. Things might still break up but one has the satisfaction of having tried. More often than not, the process provides a solution by forcing upon the individual an increased awareness of the partner’s point of view.¹²⁸ These letters also showed that despite economic independence, because of the prevalence of these social norms, few women were willing to leave unhappy marriages:

Even though each of us is economically independent and capable of leading our own lives without the other, we are still bound in this so called marriage simply because of our young children, not wanting to subject them to the trauma of a broken home. Advice to Chicago—once the children are grown up, achieve personal goals regardless of the views of the Indian community.¹²⁹

Among Detroit women, however, this trend was not noticed and women were suffering unhappy marriages and did not seek divorce. So the majority of Indian families in Detroit continue to deal with family tensions and conflicts; they were searching for answers to what went wrong, or fighting to save even unhappy marriages.

People don’t understand it but it has hurt me so deeply that I can’t get hurt anymore. Now I have decided that even if I have to give up my kids I will do so but you can’t hurt me anymore.

Before I used to say a lot, and I used to show my emotion, show him that I was very weak. I don’t do that anymore. I speak very little, and I am very strong. We used to have joint account. For the past 13-14 years I started keeping one separate account and he hit the ceiling. He did not like that.¹³⁰

Usha also lived in an unhappy marriage, and never contemplated divorce. “I didn’t understand him till the day he died, that is the truth, really. Marriage was not what I was thinking off. But in India, 30 years ago this was life; you follow your husband. I was following in certain ways. I was taking too much stress. I didn’t even talk to my friends but I used to cry and I just prayed. You don’t talk divorce at that time,” she said.¹³¹

Living life as divorced women however was problematic. Divorced women were stigmatized, held responsible for the break up of their marriages and opened themselves to new problems. Some set out to prove to their family and to the Indian society that they did nothing wrong, others lived with such insinuations. "I had to prove myself that I did not do anything wrong . . . How back home in India it is always a girl's fault and I have three younger sisters who might be affected. I wanted to prove to my family and his family, I wanted to show to them that I did nothing wrong. I hired a detective who proved that they were living together."¹³² The social stigma and perceptions of divorced women followed Nalini. Nalini's narrative highlighted the fact that women, even women in her social circle, were responsible for her victimization, since they blamed her for the break up of her marriage.

I started realizing that once I was officially divorced, people started looking at me in a different way. I could feel that especially in those newly coming from India that immediately decided that I was a loose woman. And these were younger men. I was shocked to have this attitude. Even if I said a friendly hello and hi, even in the temple never looking down at them, never occurred to me that they were men or...and I was older at that time, mother of a college going child. And I immediately learnt that as soon as they learnt that I was divorced they were thinking that I was easy to go to bed with or something like that kind of insulting insinuation was there. So I could not be as exuberant or as outgoing. I had to be reserved and very strict with myself. I did not have to do that with my good friends, they accepted me as I was with other people and it took me a long time to be outgoing again.

Even among my social circle both men and women blamed me. They were mostly saying that her husband left her so it must be her fault. She was not a good wife to him. They thought that I was going to unravel the fabric of the Indian society. I could not confront them, because it is unsaid. You know that there is that attitude but you cannot openly talk about it.¹³³

Mona also emphasized the social aspect of divorce and the gossip that always followed divorces. She stated: "I didn't want single guys to come to my apartment

because they could say that I was having an affair. So I told them that they [her single friends] could not come until that affair was settled.”¹³⁴

All of the divorced women, at the time of interviews, were remarried. Divorce while not really acceptable, had become more acceptable among individuals as well as in the Indian community. Many of the divorced women in the sample were in their second marriages; some were arranged and some were love marriages.

Divorced women in Detroit, despite their desire to continue unhappy marriages and the stigma attached to divorced women in the Indian society, expressed personal happiness at the end of their married life, which they considered an ordeal. Many resisted attempts to get married and moved away from their identity as a housewife and tried to reassert their professional identity. Although some were already following a profession their divorce provided a new drive towards their professions resulting in their successful careers. Second marriages, in these cases were a result of social pressure. Although women moved beyond their identity as a wife, their families, especially parents, exerted pressure on these women to remarry since in their eyes, women needed to be taken care by men. Uma recounting this pressure and circumstances leading to second marriage stated:

So many people tried to make me meet him and I said I am not interested in meeting anybody. Father said why don't you meet again. And I told him I don't think that you can love again. He said your mother hasn't slept for 10 years and everyone says that this guy is nice. If you say yes, *hamari maut sudhar jaye gi*. [We will die happy.]

And for that I agreed to meet him. And I thought that if I talk about my ex-husband so much no man will want to marry me, I went with that idea. He had been married to an American. He said “My sister says you are good and everyone says you are good. I am not going to get to know you. It is going to be like an arranged marriage.” I said ok but can't promise that it will work out and now I know that divorce can happen.

I wanted to have a pre-nuptial agreement before marriage. I didn't want him to feel that I was marrying him for his money and at the same time I was protecting my son's interests.

Now my thing had changed, but they were all the same. My father said how can you talk about pre-nuptial arrangement? And I said in America they do that.¹³⁵

Her narrative shows that her second marriage was at the insistence of her parents.

But it also shows that her belief in the sanctity of marriage had ended and she wanted to follow American practices of pre-nuptial arrangement in marriage, which were rejected by her family. Other marriages followed what these women considered were the American dating practices. In break up of marriages, that few women wanted, they have attained a new confidence and independence, assertiveness. They also spoke of a mental calm, at peace with themselves. These women, however, broke away from Indian norms, dated again, and some married again. For women who carried notions of Indian women, and had arranged marriages, in middle age began experiencing dating, and enjoying romance in their life.

I didn't think that I really wanted to marry again to tell you the truth. I was still raw from that hurt. I just wanted to focus on my profession. I felt that part of my life was over with. I never enjoyed married life, maybe there were some pockets of contentment but too much of it was unhappiness. So I thought that marriage was unhappiness.

When I decided to get married again they were like why did you get married again? Your son could have looked after you. Men and women both, I think that the women were harsher than the men.

He is kind of romantic kind of person so for the first time in my life I am enjoying that and half of my life is over. He buys me flowers, gives me mushy cards.

. . . I sat down with my son and said that aunty had introduced me to this man and he was so excited that he said 'Okay, mom!' And he was giving me pointers about what to do. He was like mom, you know what men are like, be very careful. Go out and have good time let him shower you with attention, give you good things and take you to good places, good theater and movie and good things and all that. And I was roaring with laughter. My God, what the world has come to. The son is giving the mother the pointers, instead of it being the other way around. I was so embarrassed at that time. He was very supportive. He wanted me to go out and have fun. He said, 'Mom, you need somebody to give you a good time. You never had a man to give

you a good time. So now, live it up.' He encouraged me to do that. [Laughingly] Yes I followed those pointers.¹³⁶

Nalini's narrative touched upon many themes first of all her resistance to the idea of remarriage. When she decided to get married, however, she alluded to many among her social circle disapproving her decision. Third, she spoke of romance in her marriage, and lastly the attitude of her son who was supportive to her dating and remarriage. These marriages have not all been smooth sailing and continue to face day-to-day ups and downs; women talked of existence of tensions, especially with regards to children from other marriage. But these women are hopeful, they are talking about issues and they are not quiet; take things lying down as they did in their first marriage. Conflicts about the old problems of household division of work, and behavior and attitudes towards children from previous marriages exist. Nalini again brought these to fore, and her story suggests a continuation of her marriage despite the problems she was encountering:

There have been ups and downs, there have been issues, there have been issues everyday. We resolve them by talking them out. Cultural differences are big problems. I am more assertive now. There is NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. [Laughs! Speaks very assertively, slowly stressing each word] I learnt! I have changed about 90 per cent. This is more of a companionate marriage than it ever was. So that's why I think we will survive.

I was dumped with everything. I used to work full-time, drive long distance and come back exhausted and do the housework. I felt that I didn't need this. I do everything, he doesn't do anything and he gets stubborn about it. And then I remind him that you used to do all these things yourself when you were not married to me. Men haven't changed in America, but many young men are changing.

I come home, I don't even change, I wash up and start cooking. It took me a long time but nowadays every two week I have somebody come and clean my house.

Indian women in Detroit were trying to renegotiate gender relationships in America. These efforts, however, were within the framework of traditional Indian norms. The changes began with women's attempts to transform household division of work and seek more male participation in the housework than in India and broadened to include

issues that allowed women more power within their family and the extended family. , These efforts were slowly but surely resulting in women asserting their independence from the traditional definition of an Indian wife and a daughter-in-law, and more towards becoming an independent individual who was instrumental in defining her relationship with her family, and her spouse's family. These changes, as seen in chapter two, were already happening in India, but the pace of change was much faster in the U.S. Distance from India definitely helped shape these women, but along with distance it is the circumstances particular to America, and the problems within families that also shaped women's lives. The distance did make a difference—in day-to-day activities. Also for many women and men, this distance has resulted in assigning more meaning to their marriages. Marriages in America are more egalitarian and relationships in many marriages more companionate. Women definitely had more independence than in India, and were making by and large their own household decisions. Women were more assertive about their wants and their dealings with their birth family and especially the extended family comprising of her in-laws. Although attitude of women has changed more than that of men, men too were transforming but not to the extent wished by women, and many were resisting changes since any break from tradition was accompanied by loss of power. Lack of change was resulting in homes becoming arena of conflicts and in many families' men and women were still struggling with the issue. But similar to studies on other immigrant women, Indian women were negotiating these changes within their family and were not ready to leave their family. Changes that women sought were within their own spheres, and there was nothing revolutionary about it. The new Indian women in America, however, continue to prescribe to the traditional gender norms in many areas.

They expect men to be primary economic providers. Even women, who at the time of interview were primary earners or earning more than their spouses were uncomfortable with their roles. Along with their gender ideology, the social expectations of Indian community were playing a big role in their expectation. Family, and their identity as a wife were an important factor in this decision.¹³⁷

Although the majority of the women had not gained the equitable relationship they sought, these heightened expectations were pointers to the new Indian women in America. Personally they were reasserting themselves, breaking away from any constraints and are pursuing new interests. This ideological change was evident in their not transmitting woman's submissive ideology to their daughters. Women were encouraging their daughters' to break away from cycle of oppression. Usha, whose daughter was divorced, was appreciated of her efforts to end a painful marriage. "I am glad she broke away the cycle. She did not want to suffer the way I did."¹³⁸ Changes in women's attitudes were also evident in their relationship and expectations from their children. The high expectations of parents had of their children taking care of them in old age, as in India, were present but definitely diluted. This change was partially rooted in their belief in their efforts to financially support themselves; many professionals were earning much more than their children. Furthermore, their awareness was also in the fact that the American social security and welfare system assured them some income in old age. These women seemed to be understanding of the problems of stress facing their children living in two culture, and spoke about not pressuring their children into professions that children did not want. Although parents have definitely lost control over their children's lives and their life decisions, women have accepted these changes more

readily and were comfortable in allowing their children more choices. By and large, women were also more accepting their children's choices of marriages, and even their decision to break up marriages.

Despite these changes, women in many ways continue to follow the old ideologies. They continued to expect men to be economic providers; this attitude was even prevalent among the lone woman, who at the time of interview was the primary earner of her family. She continued to wait for the moment when he could become the primary earner again. Women, even professional women, expected changes to occur within their roles, and do not want role reversal, just more freedom within their roles. Marriages, in the eyes of the women, still retained importance. The lone single woman in the sample longed for companionship leading to marriage. Being single was not out of choice but indication of failed romance that brought unhappiness, and other family circumstances. Families remained important and men and women remained tied to their families. Although women had gained power within their families, this power gained in the cases of many women was circumstantial and rarely came from their independent initiatives.

In Detroit although men were resisting changes, since any renegotiations of gender relations was only at the loss of their power and control over their families, their power within their families was definitely on the wane. Men were also emerging as the victims of the system, trying to keep a balance between their perceived parental obligations and their wives' expectations, and rarely succeeding. They definitely had lost their traditional control over family; their silences on this subject or denial of existence of problem in itself were an indication of this trend.

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- ⁸¹ Nalini, interview by author.
- ⁸² Radha, interview by author.
- ⁸³ Nalini, interview by author.
- ⁸⁴ Chandra, interview by author.
- ⁸⁵ Mona, interview by author.
- ⁸⁶ Abha, interview by author, 29 June 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁸⁷ Gita, interview by author.
- ⁸⁸ Mona, interview by author.

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- ⁸⁹ Abha, interview by author.
- ⁹⁰ Chandra, interview by author.
- ⁹¹ Sushma, interview by author.
- ⁹² Usha, interview by author.
- ⁹³ Indira, interview by author.
- ⁹⁴ R. Nagarajan, Essential Role of the Family," India Abroad (June 10, 1988)
- ⁹⁵ R. Nagarajan, Essential Role of the Family," India Abroad (June 10, 1988)
- ⁹⁶ C Paul Varki, Need For Parent-Child Communication," India Abroad (Sep 2, 1988): 3
- ⁹⁷ C Paul Varki, Need For Parent-Child Communication," India Abroad (Sep 2, 1988): 3
- ⁹⁸ C Paul Varki, Need For Parent-Child Communication," India Abroad (Sep 2, 1988): 3
- ⁹⁹ Mona, interview by author.
- ¹⁰⁰ Nalini, interview by author.
- ¹⁰¹ Chandra, interview by author.
- ¹⁰² Ibid. The term *Manlik* denotes a special star constellation; *mangliks* are supposed to marry other *mangliks* in order to have a happy married life.
- ¹⁰³ Nalini, interview by author.
- ¹⁰⁴ Uma Narayan, " 'Male-Order' Brides: Immigrant Women, Domestic Abuse and Immigration Law, in Hypatia vol. 10, no 1 (Winter 1995) 104-119; Lee Adair Lawrence, "Brave-and Battered: Abuse turns South Asian Women's New Lives Upside Down in U.S." in Far Eastern Economic Review, Aug 11, 1994, 48-49
- ¹⁰⁵ Aseem Chabara, "Giving Shelter to Battered Women," Life and Leisure ,India Abroad (May 31,1985): II
- ¹⁰⁶ Aseem Chabara, "Giving Shelter to Battered Women," Life and Leisure ,India Abroad (May 31,1985): II
- ¹⁰⁷ Veena Merchant, "Expectations of Marriage in Two Cultures," Veena Merchant, Life and Leisure, India Abroad (May 10, 1985): IV
- ¹⁰⁸ Veena Merchant, "Expectations of Marriage in Two Cultures," Veena Merchant, Life and Leisure, India Abroad (May 10, 1985): IV
- ¹⁰⁹ Sushma, interview by author.
- ¹¹⁰ Mona, interview by author.
- ¹¹¹ Nalini, interview by author.
- ¹¹² Chandra, interview by author.
- ¹¹³ Uma, interview by author.
- ¹¹⁴ Nalini, interview by author.
- ¹¹⁵ Kirthie Abeyesekera, "Women, Culture-Shock, Stress Takes a Toll," L& L, India Abroad II (May 31, 1985): IV
- ¹¹⁶ Lynn Hudson, "Divorce in the US can be tough for Indians", India Abroad (May 10, 1985): 1
- ¹¹⁷ Rekha Bhalla, "Pressure in U.S. Step up Divorce by Indian Couples," India Abroad
- ¹¹⁸ Lynn Hudson, "Divorce in US Can be Tough," Life and Leisure," India Abroad (May 10, 1985): 1
- ¹¹⁹ Lynn Hudson, India Abroad
- ¹²⁰ Uma, interview by author.
- ¹²¹ Nalini, interview by author
- ¹²² Anonymous, "Suffering in Chicago" India Abroad, (March 1, 1985), IV
- ¹²³ Disillusioned in America, "Marital Problems" India Abroad, Life and Leisure India Abroad, (April 12, 1985): IV
- ¹²⁴ Disillusioned in America, "Marital Problems" India Abroad, Life and Leisure India Abroad, (April 12, 1985): IV
- ¹²⁵ Anonymous, "Marital Problem," Life and Leisure India Abroad (May 10, 1985): IV
- ¹²⁶ Disillusioned in America, "Marital Problems" India Abroad, Life and Leisure India Abroad, (April 12, 1985): IV
- ¹²⁷ This letter was written by "Someone who had been there, Virginia" and was among the letters that appeared under the heading "Suffering and Sadness in Marriage," India Abroad, (May 10, 1985), IV
- ¹²⁸ Someone who has been there, "Suffering and Sadness in Marriage," Life and Leisure, India Abroad (May 10, 1985): IV

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- ¹²⁹ Waiting in Miami, "Suffering and Sadness in Marriage" Life and Leisure India Abroad (May 10, 1985): IV
- ¹³⁰ Chandra, interview by author
- ¹³¹ Usha, interview by author.
- ¹³² Uma, interview by author
- ¹³³ Nalini, interview by author
- ¹³⁴ Mona, interview by author
- ¹³⁵ Uma, interview by author
- ¹³⁶ Nalini, interview by author
- ¹³⁷ Nancy Foner, "The Immigrant Family: Cultural Legacies and Cultural Change," in The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience, Eds. Charles Hirschman, Philip Ksinitz, Josh DeWind, 257-264 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999); Nazli Kibria, Family Tightropes: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1993); Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, "Overcoming Patriarchal Constraints: The Reconstruction of Gender Relations Among Mexican Immigrant Women and Men," in Gender and Society, Vol. 6, No.3 (September 1992) 393-415.
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Chapter 6

STAYING ON: FROM SOJOURNERS TO SETTLERS

1. I used to tell them stories of different kind, moral stories, stories of great people. But the children were growing up and I wanted some way to teach them Indian culture. I was telling them Indian stories but that was not enough. I wanted some group environment.¹

2. The children were growing up and were not exposed to our culture. And other students were asking them we have a church where is your church? What religion do you follow? It was embarrassing for them.²

3. I never told them that this is our culture. I should have told them about it. When the older one was young there was no temple. And when I tried to tell them about my life, they would say, mother we don't want to hear about what you did. We should have, it was our culture and heritage. I should have, both of us should have done it. But see I was ignorant of this. See my mother used to tell me you don't have to go to temple to pray, you can sit anywhere any pray. So that's how I was brought up. I didn't see *Gita* [an Indian scripture] till I came here, so how can I teach my children? And by the time I came to know, the children were grown up and settled in their ways. But the values we taught! But it is not Indian values, these are human values.³

These three narratives, pointing to the decade of the sixties, the seventies and the eighties respectively, point to the creation of an Indian identity connected to Indian folklore and religion. The first narrative by Sampath explains his attempts at connecting his children to their Indian roots by telling them Indian folk tales and the oral tradition since the children growing up in the U.S. were least aware of their Indian heritage and according to their parents were becoming American. His inability to retain his children's interest resulted in his attempts at forming a cultural group of like-minded people with young children and to inform them of Indian culture.

The second account by Ram Lal, similar to Sampath's refers to the inability of his children to explain their religion to their peers in the absence of a visible institutional

symbol of Indian religion. Underlying this narrative was the need of the Indian community to define themselves not only among themselves but also for the other groups in Detroit. This issue was resolved by the construction of a Hindu temple in Detroit. The temple fulfilled multiple needs; it solved the problem of symbolic need for the second generation, fulfilled the spiritual and religious needs of the Indian community and also became a place that became the focal point of Indian community in Detroit, as well as the new cultural center.

The third narrative by Indira relates to her lack of knowledge of Indian religious scriptures. Growing up in India, religion for her was a personal connection between an individual and God, and scriptures and rituals were not part of her religion. Yet in Detroit, Indira found a new affinity with God and became part of the women volunteer force that sustained the daily activities of the temple since the decade of the eighties. What the above narratives do not say is that religion and culture gave ethnically diverse Indians a common platform; Indira, Ram Lal and Sampath belonged to different ethnic groups.

This chapter traces the settlement experiences of Indians in Metro Detroit. It outlines the construction of an Indian identity, and also focuses on the issues of acculturation and adaptation facing the Indians. These two issues were inter-related and not mutually exclusive. The emergence of an Indian identity was in relation to the cultural and social forces operating in the larger American society. Indians were living in a nation and a society that was culturally and socially different from their cultural norms. Despite these cultural polarities, Indians were consciously or unconsciously acculturating and adapting to American social norms and behavior, at the same time establishing a group identity, which distinguished them as a group from the larger society. These two

developments occurred simultaneously. The chapter looks at these issues in three decades, the sixties, the seventies, and the eighties. Although many issues overlap, this chapter will highlight the new issues that define each period. It relies primarily on oral interviews of Detroit immigrants as well as debates in the pages of India Abroad. Although thirty years is a small time frame, the chapter shows that there were distinct issues being played out in three decades.

Adaptation and acculturation are processes that are mired in complexity and are determined by multiple facts ranging from migrants' culture of origin, their objectives in migration, their knowledge of the new nation, their contact point of entrance, as well as ages, and genders. Issues of acculturation and adaptations were also dependent upon the reactions of the receiving society. Migrant's duration of stay was an equally important factor in migrants' adaptation; the longer the stay, the more the chances of adapting traits of the host culture.⁴ These variables were not constant during the thirty-year period under discussion; there were sharp differences in the expectations of Indian migrants who came in the sixties and those who migrated in the eighties. Those who arrived in the earlier period were mere sojourners whereas those coming in the latter parts were immigrants who came with intentions of settling permanently. Their knowledge of the U.S. accordingly varied too. Those who came earlier had much limited knowledge of the U.S. than those who came later.

The 1960s

In the decade of the sixties, two parallel developments occurred. The Indian community, although sojourners, began creating an institutional infrastructure that affirmed their Indian identity, and this Indian identity took national character over

regional or ethnic character. Second, despite their desire to continue living as Indians, to deal with life in America, Indian consciously or unconsciously, began adapting to new practices that were not the norm in India and as such were characterized as “American.”

In coming to America as temporary residents Indians encountered a world that was vastly different from their familiar world. India and the U.S. were worlds apart, economically, socially and culturally and the only common denominator between the two nations was their democratic tradition. Economically there were acute differences between the two; India, a newly independent nation was largely underdeveloped and poor, whereas the U.S. was the bastion of economic might. Even culturally and spiritually the two carried different worldviews. Indians saw America as an individualistic society diametrically opposed to their hierarchical family oriented social structure. While Indians held American knowledge in high esteem, they carried negative impressions of American family life and cultural values. The pre-migration awareness of America was limited and in no way prepared Indians for their daily life in the U.S. where they confronted different weather, urban landscape, and even homes.

Migrants’ knowledge of America was selective and limited primarily to their aims in migrating. America for the primary migrants was a bastion of higher learning, an advanced nation or what they termed as a “rich foreign country.” Knowledge was also sifted through the lens of gender, and men and women viewed America in terms of their particular spheres. While the primary migrants talked in terms of their public sphere and in terms of their acquisition of higher learning, women spoke of the U.S. in terms of their homes, and in terms of consumerist notions of “better goods” in relation to their domestic sphere. Then there were the women, primarily the wives who knew of America through

their spheres, as did Raksha: “We went to an exhibition in India [in the 1950s]. They showed that American kitchens were not dirty, that there were carpets in all rooms.”⁵

Coming to America was for many Indians their first plane travel, first visit abroad, and for many women, first unaccompanied trips. Migrants’ limited knowledge resulted in big gaps between their imagination and reality. American fascinated, confused and scared the migrants. For some the early interactions were exciting; Nalini vividly remembered the picture post card America that she confronted: “First touch down, I remember very clearly. We were landing at Pittsburgh. You know it is a hilly town, all the lights were on, snow was falling It seemed like a never-never land. Seemed like it was a movie set.”⁶ For Indira, if American cleanliness, of the cities enthralled her, American food, and food habits horrified her.⁷ Homesick, and alienated from things familiar she stated:

We stayed in a motel for 2 weeks. You can’t cook in a motel. He [her husband] brought some spaghetti and I look at it and it looks like worms, and first time I am seeing spaghetti and I could not eat it. And back home you drink everything hot—hot milk, hot tea— and here you can’t even get anything hot. We used to drink tap water. Those days all I wanted was something hot. Milk and cold! You never see anything like that in India. I didn’t care what I got as long as it was something hot. But now I love spaghetti.⁸

Early migrants recounted the physical surroundings and the weather, the planned urban layout with straight-line divisions of avenues and streets and especially the cleanliness of the cities. Many, coming from temperate, and hot Indian climate, carried vivid memories of fall and winter, especially the snowfalls and snowstorms. Indira recounted her amazement at seeing the naked trees in fall. “Like fall—one day all the leaves are on the ground, and I thought oh my God, what happened? One day we were watching snow all day. My daughter and I sat near the door and saw the snowflakes since we had never seen any snow.”⁹ Moreover, coming from a culture where men and women

had distinct patterns of dressing, the unisexual clothing that was in vogue in the U.S. confused. "People are new to me and you sit there and see people with long hair, and they are guys. And the outfit they wear you don't know it they are men or women."¹⁰

For the primary migrants, those who came to the universities or to work, spoke highly of the educational environment and also the resources available to students.

Sampath also alluded to better services in the U.S.

"I liked most of the things in America. When I went to the bank, banking was so simple. Everybody was so honest and I like that very much. The most I liked was the library. You know I could take 5-6 books at a time; that was unusual for me. What America had done was remove all the barriers between the reader and the knowledge. In India you could take only one book at a time. Here all the shelves were open; that I liked the most."¹¹

Although living in America, by and large, Indians remained aliens to American culture. As temporary residents, as sojourners, they saw every action, every trip as part of a touristy adventure. They traveled around the U.S., and Canada, visited Toronto, big cities and saw America with its modern contraptions, skyscrapers and its history. The early migrants talked especially of their travels to New York city and its centers of attraction ranging from the Empire State Building, Ellis Island, and the Statue of Liberty, to Radio City Hall and Macy's. Uma recounted her trip to New York: "We were going up the escalator; someone said this is an escalator and I said I know it, I saw [it] in an American movie. I once came from Maine in a greyhound bus, and I counted that I passed through, nine states - Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania. . . In those days you used to count how many states you had seen."¹²

Although few Indians had intentions of adapting life as an American, they willingly adapted to American consumerism. Standards of living were markedly different from those in India, and things seen as necessity in the U.S. were considered as luxuries

in India and within the grasp of few people. Electronic goods like televisions and refrigerators, cars and carpeted homes were beyond the reach of most Indians in India. These consumerist benefits were so central to the early immigrants' living experiences that they frequently alluded to them in their conversations. According to Nalini: "We had a car; that was a tremendous experience living in a nicer apartment and having a car and a TV, which we did not have in India . . . car and TV was unthinkable in those days in India, you know. We had a radio in India, and that was a big deal, you know."¹³ Acquisition of these goods also commemorated some event. Uma bought her first color TV in 1969 to watch Neil Armstrong's moon landing. "We were the only ones among our friends to have a color TV."¹⁴

Adaptations however ended largely with consumerism. Indians in their ethnocentric assumptions carried notions of superiority rooted in their rich cultural heritage and assigned negative connotations on many aspects of America life. Americans were wanting in family values. According to an early migrant:

America was an individualistic society with loose morals. People didn't care about the family that is what I thought. After I came here I found Americans much better than I thought in India. People are much more courteous. Moral standards were very high than what I thought it was. People were very hardworking. So my impression of America improved considerably.¹⁵

Despite a desire not to change, Indians in the U.S. were forced to adapt and these early adaptations affected women more than men. American homes were completely different from Indian homes; 'standing kitchens' or kitchens with countertops and with gas stoves [in India women prepared their meals sitting on a stool and used either a coal/wood burning stove, or a kerosene stove that sat on the kitchen floors], carpeted homes and bathrooms with tubs were rare in India. Consequently, women had to retrain for

domestic chores and home-centered activities that were familiar to them. Raksha commented upon this: “you know in India those days you did not have gas stoves. Our kitchens were dirty since we had *angethis* [coal / wood burning stoves]”¹⁶ Many times, men became women’s teachers in these trainings. Noting this Nalini stated:

My husband was trying to show me how to operate the hot water and the cold water... I managed to learn. I learn by mistakes. You know once the faucet was on, how do you turn the shower on. I didn’t know how to operate an oven. I didn’t know how to control the temperature [of the stove]; my husband ate many burnt meals. The spices tasted different, the oil tasted different, the cooking methods were different, and pans were different; those days nobody had a *karhai* [Indian wok.]¹⁷

Even cleaning norms in American homes were different. Indira documenting her experiences stated:

The apartment was very dirty. So I washed it with water and started scrubbing, and people downstairs were mad. Water is leaking downstairs; and then I had to clean the whole thing. I didn’t know that the water leaked or floor is like that. [it was a wooden floor.]¹⁸

Moreover, women faced major hurdles in their main household activity, the production of food. In the sixties, no Indian food store existed in Detroit and few Indian food ingredients were available in and around Detroit. Although majority of foodstuffs were ordered by mail from “Kalustian,” a store in New York City, women were forced to adjust their daily cooking methods by using ingredients available at local grocery stores. These adjustments were major enough for women to comment upon in detail on what was available and how they adjusted.

Suji, cream of wheat was available. *Arhar ki dal* [a kind of lentil] was green split pea; could get red pepper. We got the yellow mustard and not black mustard. So our food habits became different. There was no *neem patti* or clove, cinnamon was available.

For *dosa*, [a food item] used pancakes mix and put some salt. *Atta* [flour] —we used Pillsbury, which was so thick, that we used to put all-purpose flour in it. And once in blue moon that whole wheat flour by Pillsbury which was not stone

ground but red, but which is still thicker than our *atta* [flour], was available. We used to mix that and make *chappati* [Indian bread, also known as roti].¹⁹ We used to order some food from New York, from 'Kalustian' and some from Chinese stores here. We started adapting our food system to whatever was available. For example we were not getting the wheat flour.²⁰

In these circumstances lay the first major differences in women's lives. Women's independent forays in search of food resulted in new freedom of movement that was rare in India for women. Moreover, with the absence of elders in the U.S. to control their activities, women gained new freedom in decision-making that was not available in India. Recounting this Soudamini stated:

In the afternoon we used to go to food stores and look at different food. And some days we would find some food and we would call everyone and it would be gone in a day.

One day we took the bus to Eastern Market and there in the Arab stores we found so much common. They had cumin, they had turmeric. We were so excited.²¹

The freedom that came with migration however, was more evident in the lives of single women who came for educational purposes. Single women in India led relatively secluded and protected lives. Majority of their life decisions were dependent upon the elders in their family. In the absence of men or elders in their family, these single women confronted a different reality and forced to make day-to-day decisions that they had rarely encountered in India. Although there were local Indians who tried to take over these parental roles, they were rarely successful. These early times were scary, yet empowering. Recounting this, Veena stated:

Nobody in grad school lived in a dorm. To live in an apartment was inconceivable . . . To find an apartment, how do you do that...In India in those days women did not live alone. These were big questions. I would write to my Dad almost everyday, every detail because it was an alleviation of guilt...there were so many decisions I was making on my own and I needed his approval . . . There was this Indian professor who took me under his wing and said, "Now that you are in America, don't you start dating . . . I had never heard that in India."²²

For Rama, the distance from families brought independent decision-making, and mobility. “It was so different to be able to make your own decisions about everything from how late you were going to stay out. I mean at home I was never able to stay out late. Here I could come back to the dorm at 12 o’clock at night. I could make my own decisions on what to buy; I was earning my own money.”²³ Women however, were aware that they were operating within the Indian society. This freedom was enough for women, both married and single, in a desire to prolong their stay in the U.S.; however, they were aware of their inability to control their destiny. Power within their homes still existed in the hands of men.

In the sixties, oral interviews suggest the existence of three major groups, although the distinctions were not sharp. There were differences between the married and the unmarried families, between physicians and non –physicians and those who lived in the city and those lived in the outskirts. Among the married group there were further divisions, those who lived or had lived around Wayne State campus and operated out of the downtown social networks of Indians, and those who lived in small towns around the central city like Pontiac or Roseville.

The hub of the Indian community was the Wayne State university network. According to the early migrants, a building around the campus where a large number of Indian students lived came to be known as the ‘India House,’ where new students and families from India moved and the graduating ones left. The social networks formed continued even after departure. India House and the surrounding environs were especially important to women since they formed their networks there. While men worked or studied at the university the women got together, and traversed their surroundings as a

group during the afternoons. Moreover, they initiated newcomers to their small community and introduced them to life in Detroit. "When I came, the second day, all the women in the building came to see me. They brought food with them."²⁴

The other group consisted largely of physicians who lived in the northern and upcoming suburbs of Detroit. Many were single and were not hesitant to imbibe American culture. In India, the upwardly mobile and well to do families were looking to Western cultures for lifestyles. Many were influenced by and interested in Western music, ate food that was common to the Western hemisphere, and even spoke English. These 'Westernizing' Indians were easily becoming 'Americanized' without much effort. In the sample, this group included younger couples, both professional, and single migrants. The majority was from the cosmopolitan centers, or had received their education in the cities of Bombay and Delhi. America for them was an exciting place. This group, which was exposed to western culture in India, interacted with ease with their American colleagues and the American social life. They visited clubs, watched shows, went dancing. Uma talked about dancing: "We were the only ones who would go for opera and dancing. But we did these in India too."²⁵ Some dated, and few unknown to their families in India even co-habited with their partners, living a life that was more American than Indian. For Rama, however America was great not only for the freedom it accorded her but also provided her the food she loved: "I loved America. I could eat tuna sandwich everyday whereas in India that was a luxury."²⁶ And then there was a small group of Indians living in the suburbs, a group whose women lived isolated lives and rarely interacted with other Indians. In the absence of any means of transportation, they were virtual prisoners. Few ventured out alone in this alien country.

The social networks forming among Indians in Detroit, however, were markedly different from those in India since they encompassed members of all ethnic groups. The term “Indian” represented a national category comprising of multiple ethnic groups. Indians in India primarily interacted with co-ethnics. In Detroit, in the absence of a critical mass of a particular ethnic group, friendships formed across ethnic groups. For many Indians, especially women who led a secluded life in India, America became a place where they met Indians of other ethnic groups for the first time. Noting this, a Bengali woman stated of her meeting with a Malayali woman: “. . . And I cooked *upma* [an Indian snack] for her and she said ‘Oh, we make it too.’ And then we discussed what was common among us, that we were both rice eaters.”²⁷

The establishment of these social networks resulted in the formation of a national identity among Indians transcending ethnic differences. This new national identity was strengthened by the fact that Americans also identified the migrants through their nationality. The organizational structure reflected their Indian identity. The Indian student Organization at Wayne State University was a main organization. Its events however, incorporated the Indian community in and around Detroit. Along with the Indian Student Association, the Indo-American Culture Society focused on cultural aspects of India, and its members included the Indian community. The activities of these organizations primarily followed Indian festivals from different regions along with national events like India’s Independence Day and Republic Day. These early organizations were not only an arena where Indians met each other but also provided a place where they showcased India to the American audience. Individual Indian students and workers, westernized or Indian, thought of themselves as representatives of India and as such informal ambassadors,

representing India and focusing on their Indian-ness in terms their behavior and outward appearance. Women respondents spoke of wearing saris—the national dress of India-- to work and to school despite the fact that they rarely wore it in India.

Wayne State University emerged as the center of interactions not only among the Indian community but also with the American community. The university institutional structure became a medium in the interaction between foreign students and Americans. The foreign student offices organized events that introduced Indians to American families and to some aspects of American cultural life, such as hayrides. It also became a central place where many local institutions interested in foreign students came to meet with them. In Detroit, the migrants especially made mention of the International Institute. Through this group women talked of going to American homes and interacting with American women. During one such visit to an American home Raksha remembered encountering new kitchen gadgets and machinery. “Once we were at someone’s house and after eating we said we will wash dishes. She said no, she had a dishwasher. I had never heard of it. She opened a box like thing and put all dishes in it. I came home and told my husband I want a dishwasher too.”²⁸

The interest of Americans in India and its religion and philosophy even resulted in the emergence of an informal group at the initiative of Americans. The study group was called the Vedanta Study Group and it discussed Indian philosophy and the Vedas. According to the person who was one of the founding members, the group would meet every Sunday to discuss the *shlokas* [hymns in Sanskrit] and Indian philosophy of the Vedas.

Some American friends wanted to study Veda and I started a Vedanta Study group. Every Sunday we would read a book at somebody's home. I would explain the *shlokas*. [hymns]

American universities in the sixties welcomed and celebrated the presence of foreign students, and gave them extra attention. Veena recounted her welcome to her university.

I stepped down [from the plane] and all those photographers went flash, flash, flash and I had no idea why. The host family —the university had arranged all that— had contacted the editor of the youth section of the local newspaper. They never had an Indian women student at the University. So they were putting me in the Sunday newspaper and I had no idea. Monday I went to the campus and everyone said hello and several of them knew my name. I was confused. And then an Indian professor hailed me and I asked him how did he know my name and he told me²⁹

These interactions with American families and the outside America were limited in nature. Those near the university and the central city met some Americans; those outside it rarely interacted with Americans. Behavioral norms also constrained men and women, especially women, from interacting with the dominant groups. Indira alluded to this: “One time my husband brought a Chinese guy he used to work with in the lab. See back home when we make tea [*chai*] you put milk and sugar, right! If you don't take any of those things, that person is diabetic, right! So this guy said ‘Don't put any sugar.’ So I said, ‘Are you diabetic?’ Then my husband said ‘Don't ask those questions.’ But I don't know; it was kind of natural for me to ask. Luckily he didn't understand my accent.”³⁰

The majority of Indians remained insulated from the political or other events of the sixties. The U.S. of the sixties was in a state of political flux and universities were a hotbed of the civil rights struggle. Yet few Indians were part of this or even remembered much about it. In 1967 Detroit witnessed one of the worst race riots, but few Indians who lived downtown had clear memories of it. Living isolated lives, which revolved around

their family and children, the developments in American political and social life were inconsequential to them. The only exception was a student who became active in the student politics of her university. Her views of the situation were:

I had become active in presidential politics. 1968 was the year of the presidential election. Kennedy was standing for elections. I was going to precinct meetings wearing a sari and seeing American democracy at work first hand. 5th April Martin Luther King was assassinated and [I] went for a memorial service with Asian and African American friends. I watched a riot . . . I was going to church meetings where they were talking about race relations and what could be done. And I remember all those black churches, at community meetings, such anger. I suddenly woke up in America. I had not been exposed to that much in India. I just wanted to learn, learn, learn.³¹

While by and large Indians experiences with America were pleasant, they also faced few problematic situations. For single women, interactions with men also emerged as problematic. Problematic relationships with professors were mentioned by one of the respondents:

A visiting professor started making advances. I was looking at him as a professor. We have very clear-cut boundaries between what a professor is and what a student is. Here that doesn't exist. He bothered me, he started making calls. That particular incident stayed in my mind, how women are viewed here. The relationship we have with our teachers can only exist in the Indian context. I didn't have too many skills to get out of it, in dealing with the situation. I just started avoiding him.³²

The Americans that the Indians interacted through the university were far different from the general population in terms of their awareness of other parts of the world and their conscious attempts to become aware of these places. These people also treated the Indians as equals and without any prejudices. Indians' interactions with the larger population however, were not so pleasant and they faced discrimination. Noting this a woman stated:

Those days we used to look different. If we walked in an area, people used to close doors. We were looking for a house to rent in the East Side and the owner of

the house refused to rent it to us. She said that I don't think that the neighbors will be happy. I was angry and told her that we were clean people, cleaner than them and if she wanted she could check our references. After a few days she called and said she was sorry, and we rented that house.³³

Towards the end of the decade, however, a new aspect was added to this national identity and it was religious in nature. In their desire to acquaint their children to Indian culture, Indian parents in Detroit further perpetuated this national identity. The fear among Indian parents of their children's alienation from Indian culture and their becoming American necessitated the creation of institutions to further this Indian identity. Although individual families were informing their children of Indian folklore, the families felt a need for a group environment, resulting in in-group meetings of family with children on weekends to impart Indian culture. This informal group that met every second weekend, lay the seeds of the first organizations that created the Indian identity in the U.S. and this new institutional setup was a conscious attempt to preserve and recreate an Indian identity. In an ethnically diverse group, religion and culture were the sole unifying factors.

This informal group that incorporated the few Indian families in the sixties met every second Sunday at the International Institute, located near the campus of Wayne State University, in a rented space at the cost of about \$5. At these meetings, children read Indian books, and recited *shlokas* [Sanskrit hymns]. The parents who accompanied their children also formed a separate group and started reading the scriptures. A rent increase, however, resulted in a move away from the International Institute to meetings at peoples homes.

During the sixties, Indians in America were living their life to the best of their abilities. While there were limited changes in their lifestyle, there were little changes in

their ideological make-up. A majority of the women and men continued to operate according to Indian cultural values. By the end of the sixties, an Indian identity emerged that was national in character, focused on Indian culture. The majority planned to return to India, but a few people like Sampath had returned to India and emigrated again this time with the intention of making America their permanent home.

The 1970s

The seventies saw new challenges arising within the Indian community. With personal decisions of prolonging stay came challenges of adjusting to life in the U.S. Although Indians were making adjustments even in the decade of the sixties, the new adjustments were different; they were conscious decisions to adapt rather than forced reactions to American living conditions. “Adaptation” and “acculturation” were nebulous terms. What was American, or American values, was something Indians were not clear about. To what degree should Indians adapt to American values and lifestyle? Could one become American without changing their Indian identity? These were important questions since changing Indian identity was problematic especially when many were consciously seeking to retain and create their Indian identity in the U.S. The complexity of these questions and the confusion they created were evident not so much in the minds of the Indian community in Detroit but were more evident among the readers of India Abroad that commenced publication in the early parts of this decade. This decade saw the constructing of the Bhartiya Temple, and the emergence of religious identity along with cultural identity, defining Indians in Detroit. Moreover, this decade also saw the proliferation of various ethnic organizations in Detroit that contested with the earlier formed national Indian identity.

The seventies brought more settlers to the Indian community and the Indian population steadily increased in Detroit area. The newcomers continued to deal with problems of adjustments with American homes as did Laila who commented upon her problems relating to the bathtub: "We didn't know why the water kept coming out of the tub. A friend told us that we needed a shower curtain."³⁴ Sheila, already aware of American culture in India, looked forward to new experiences in Detroit. "I used to go to American Repertory Theatre at the American Embassy. I always enjoyed arts."³⁵ Moreover, as a single woman, she also faced a new freedom that she did not have in India. "I felt more freedom; nobody would be asking what I am doing. I could stay out late at night and nobody would wonder what I am doing. In India [the] hostel curfew was 11 o'clock. Here, there was a sense of freedom of not having to respond to or account to anybody. We would go to bars. We also were able to socialize more with men; that was not that common in India."³⁶ Loneliness continued to plague women living in suburbs as did Usha: "I didn't have many friends. There was one lady in our building. We used to meet on the weekends and talk about going back to India. Life was lonely, even the postman here comes only once a day."³⁷ And women's forays in search of food continued to acquaint them with Detroit. "Whenever we heard that there was a Chinese or half way Indian store where fresh ginger and coriander could be found, we put the children in the car and just drive."³⁸

Acquisition of consumer goods remained the first step in becoming American in the minds of the Indians and Sheila distinctly remembered her Plymouth Duster, the first car that she bought. Other newcomers, who came in this period also alluded to consumerism. For men the first step in America, besides buying a car, was to focus on the

latest electronic gadgets. Reminiscing about his prized possessions, Upendra stated: “you know in those days in Sony TV the biggest size was 19 inches. In 1976 they came out with 21 inch TV. Then there were no remotes, then they came out with remote and in the first ones the channels will go only up and down. Cassette deck, the two-in-one was a big thing that you take to India. And then the cars, air conditioning was an option and we used to debate if we needed air-conditioning in Michigan.”³⁹

This decade brought big changes in women’s lives and they began participating in activities that were considered male domain in India and few middle and upper class Indian women participated in. Women mentioned driving especially, although the need to learn driving arose out of necessity. The focus of men on their work resulted in women taking new day-to-day responsibilities. Along with driving, women also mentioned acquiring new hobbies like swimming and bicycling along with their children. Noting the restrictions on Indian women’s participation in such activities Indira commented: “Where I come from girls don’t get on a bike; only Christian women do. I was trying to learn and went to a school parking lot and a kid there said, ‘You mean you don’t know how to ride a bike?’”⁴⁰

Changes in norms of dressing also occurred among women in this decade. For Indian women brought up with the notion of the sari as the dress for married women, change in dressing behavior was a big step. At the outset, issues related to adaptation to the American way of life seemed personal, as these were based on individual choices. Stories from Detroit however, suggest that for women migrants, these decisions were rarely independent. While men and women were changing and adapting to what they considered were American norms, women found these steps harder to take. Women were

rarely brought up to make decisions independently. And many of the changes they were adapting to, while small, were fraught with mental tensions; decisions were made after a long mental struggle. Wearing Western clothes was a big step for many women; for one woman wearing a north Indian dress *salwar-kameez* was equally hard as wearing American clothes. Indira remembering the past stated: “I still remember my first pant, check pant. Bought this bell-bottom pant—checks—they were in fashion those days, and a T-shirt. I bought it and kept it for so long so finally I thought what is the point since I spent the money. Might as well wear it, and that’s how I started. We always think that they are looking at you.”⁴¹ But there were also people like Usha, who wanted to wear not only western clothes but also north Indian clothes but were denied permission by their husbands. She stated: “I had never worn a Punjabi *salwar kameez*. My husband didn’t like me wearing one. He did not like my wearing skirts too. Everyone one was wearing except me.”⁴² Wearing skirts and showing legs was a revolutionary step.

For a large majority, however, regular wearing of pants and skirts, considered American dressing patterns by Indians, came with outside work. Indira stated:

This person I used to work with said—with good intention—I know you like wearing sari. Then he said if you go to an interview then don’t wear a sari. I took his advice. And he was true. When you are wearing a sari, they don’t look at you as a professional, they look at you as something else. Appearances matter a lot. He taught me a lot. I made so many blunders. When you are talking to people what is proper and what is not proper. In my spontaneous way I would say things and later he would say you are not supposed to say this.⁴³

Rama too commented upon this: “One day I wore a sari to the lab and I felt very strange. The company also told me not to wear it but they put it very nicely. Sari was a fire hazard in the lab.”⁴⁴

In Detroit, while the efforts to adapt to American ways were personal and family decisions, questions of adapting to American culture through dressing habits emerged as debates that raged in the pages of India Abroad. Many well-meaning Indians as well as American women married to Indians began guiding Indians on how to adapt. An American woman married to an Indian man saw assimilation through dress. Focusing particularly on Indian women and their retention of Indian dress habits, she wanted women to adopt American ways of dressing. She saw the lack of change as evidence of Indians' resistance to assimilation. She stated: "Dressing Indian style creates resentment since [it] gives the appearance that they disdain American ways. Though they have made America their home they are not making any attempt to integrate with America society." Her advice: "Wear Indian dress at home." ⁴⁵

The issue of dressing specifically targeted Indian women and their sari. The response to this letter—about 15 letters in over 4 issues of India Abroad— suggested multiple reasons explaining their resistance. Indians arguments against changing their dressing habits suggested first, that although they were not averse to learning more about American customs and traditions, they were not keen to do so at the expense of losing their traditional values. Second, they pointed out that any changes in dressing norms or in acquiring any American habits, were linked to time, and occurred sometimes over a generation; and like all other first generation immigrants, Indians were also carrying on their distinct ways. Women specifically talked about their difficulty in wearing Western clothes. On the one hand they argued that wearing a sari was not meant to disdain American culture, but was in fact, a defense mechanism against culture shock. "For anyone who has grown up thinking that a sari is a modest dress, it is very hard to wear

Western clothing.”⁴⁶ Those who disagreed with the author argued that America was a nation of diversity and as such they were allowed to continue wearing Indian clothes. They even wondered if there was anything specific that could be categorized as an “American style of dressing.” Those who supported the author suggested that wearing American clothes was the first step to adapting to America.⁴⁷

Although the dress issue was related to personal adaptation, and based on personal choices for Detroit immigrants, this issue became related to the larger question of adaptation and acculturation and elicited periodic debate in the pages of India Abroad. While immigrants admitted that change in behavior was inevitable, they also pointed out the slow pace of transformation among the first generation immigrants, similar to immigrant groups of earlier generation.⁴⁸ Readers also pointed to difficulties in adapting to American culture and its values since they had lived a majority of their lives in a culture markedly different from the one existing in the U.S. They wrote about feelings of guilt in deserting their Indian values and behavior in adopting new lifestyles; others pointed out the irrelevance of adaptation given their desire to return to India.⁴⁹ There were letters where immigrants stated that as first generation immigrants they lacked the guidance of the older generation.⁵⁰ Some wanted the help of Americans in their assimilation to the American society.⁵¹

Along with dressing, speaking American English also emerged as an issue of adaptation. Although many Indians were familiar with English, it was British English. Language intonations, pronunciations all became a problem in communicating. Majority of housewives spoke of learning English through the television. Although a large majority was familiar with and fluent in the language, different accents and nuances

stressed the need to relearn the language. In the absence of guidance from the community, Indira spoke of learning from televisions. She stated: "I saw TV to speak English. Actually the soap operas I used to watch, they taught me to communicate with the people. What do you ask? How to talk to people? How to reply if somebody asks you something. I knew English though. I had a good English background. But it is different here, so I picked up very fast."⁵²

Articles and opinion pieces in the newspaper also provided solutions to Indians on some other problems, such as communicating in English. Although a large majority of Indians were familiar with English, they rarely used it in their daily life resulting in problems of fluency. Noted a writer: "The moment one is called upon to use it for everyday purpose, it halts and jerks like an old and dilapidated automobile." Along with the problem of fluently speaking English were problems of accents, which made the knowledge of their Indian English redundant. : "It is not enough only to speak the same language. One must speak it in an intelligible manner so as not to create confusion." These articles also gave helpful suggestions to Indians on how to speak clearly in order to be understood. The author provided readers of India Abroad lesson on phonetics, pointing out problematic words —v and w, p, and b. Her suggestions to Indian on reducing the communication gap were to sharpen listening power. "Train your ears to pick up the right emphasis on syllables and the current expressions. Learn from children who attend schools in this country; listen to radio and television especially with the idea of picking up accent and current usage; speak confidently and at a slow pace. Weak enunciation can ruin the finest choice of words. Carefully select your speaking style and tone, but do not turn off people by speaking in an affected manner. Think of the English language as a

challenge and not a barrier [author's italics not mine]."⁵³ Letters supporting the author further highlighted the importance of speaking right at social interactions and adjustment to a new environment. However, one writer, while supporting these suggestions, warned Indians not to develop another complex saying, "We know enough of English."⁵⁴

Along with dressing, acquiring social skills particular to America was also the focus of one article from a well-meaning person, Jane Chandra, who frequently wrote articles in India Abroad guiding Indians to American behavior and living norms. In one of her articles, she highlighted the importance of social skills and outward appearances to professional life and upward mobility in the U.S.. Chandra advised Indians on some aspects of personal behavior, mannerism, aspects of dressing and hygiene. Her suggestions were: use deodorant and mouthwash; wear proper clothes befitting an executive; "iron your shirts, do not wash them, dry clean them, be aware of the latest style." Furthermore, she highlighted the importance communication skills:

If you have problems of pronunciation and diction, remedy themKnowledge is no good unless you can communicate it to others. Improving your spoken skills could be advantageous to you. Take a course in public speaking, and write clearly." Her other recommendations incorporated practically all aspects of life. She wanted them to "discuss current issues intelligently, and be politically active . . . Have leisure time interests, watch American movies, athletic events, PTA, be appreciative of cultural differences rather than putting them down, be a good listener, have good American table manners, how to order in a restaurant, thank you notes and hostess gifts....etc. mix with non-Indians, don't have your social life around all Indians. Keep your yard clean, along with technical know-how, social / corporate image was also important. You must be able to represent your company favorably in any kind of situation: in the conference room, in the restaurant, in the community."

In addition, she also suggested the importance of the spouse to one's mobility. "Your spouse must also measure up . . . Becoming part of America is not incompatible with retaining your own cultural identity; it is simply expanding your interests to make the most of life here" ⁵⁵

In another article Chandra advised new parents who intended to make America their home to give their children American names even if it meant going against the

Indian traditions of naming practices. In India naming practices carried cultural meanings and usually older generations or the priests suggested names for the newborn. Asking Indians to overlook the traditions, she wrote, “When your child is living in the Western world, he needs a name that is comfortable here. Your relatives at home should be able to understand this necessity when you overrule or modify your suggestions.” In case this was hard, she had other suggestions and advised parents to choose a name, which was common to both cultures, or a name which was easily pronounceable in America. Her other suggestions included giving children one Indian and one American name, finding alternate spellings to make pronunciation easy, and avoiding names with sounds that were not particular to the English language—dh, bh, kh--, and have short names. Her final suggestion was, if you still chose to have a long Indian name, chose one, which can have a logical Western name.⁵⁶ In Detroit, many Indians gave their children American names or one American and one Indian name.

These well-meaning suggestions elicited a huge debate, and many Indians bristled at the author’s suggestions. The response of Indians to basic mannerisms and ways of dressing as well as naming practices was largely negative. Wrote one: “Her suggestions for their professional rise are entirely non-substantive and irrelevant . . . Real barriers exist because of discrimination and not social skills.”⁵⁷ Others argued that becoming American meant imbibing “the basic virtues of American people, not American manners and superficialities.”⁵⁸ For naming practices three people who responded were against her suggestions.⁵⁹ Their arguments ranged from the fact that if they tried hard, Americans could pronounce Indian names to stating that changing names was part of a colonial mentality. Readers argued that America was an immigrant inclusive culture and as such

people didn't change names. A living example of the fact that other cultures were following their naming practices was in the form of Zbignew Brezinzki, who at that time was serving President Carter. There was one who agreed to change the spellings of Indian names to follow their pronunciations but rejected the idea of changing naming practices, which had cultural significance.⁶⁰

Although letters responding to Chandra's suggestions indicated that people were not keen on changing their names, Indians in Detroit were changing their names. Letters in latter issues suggested that this norm was not particular to Indians in Detroit but was a far reaching change encompassing a large number. A change in name was seen as renouncing one's Indian identity and akin to adopting American identity, a trend viewed as disturbing by many. Complaining against this new trend of Anglicizing Indian names, a reader wrote: "Madhu becoming Mike and Santham to Sue. . . we Indians have a rich tradition and therefore I find it difficult to understand this hypocrisy." His suggestions to Indians were "Spell it out, break it down into syllables and he will be glad to call you by your original name."⁶¹ Others commented "Our names are our birthright and according to the Indian heritage, it is not right to alter them merely for the sake of convenience."⁶² Wrote another who was against this trend "The answer to the problem of identity here is not changing our names, but maintaining our individuality while at the same time not being an oddball anywhere. If we insist that our name be said correctly and if our friends hear it said aloud frequently, they will get used to it. Just as they learned to say Chiu Chang, they will gradually learn to say Chandrashekar."⁶³ There were a few who disagreed with the above assertions stated that changing names allowed them to become

closer and familiar to Americans. This reader giving his own example of legally changing a name suggested that this was a way to reach out to Americans.⁶⁴

Other readers suggested adaptation of American leisure habits. A person who was enamored by the America leisure activities asked Indians to go to “picnics, tours, weekends or beaches, weekend dinner to a good restaurant, concerts, operas or baseball games although [they] can afford these” instead of saving. He wrote: “It is good to save but this should not come in the way of one’s social life.”⁶⁵ Many Indians, bristling at the notion of any direct relationship between money and enjoyment, provided a different viewpoint. These letters argued that enjoyment did not equate with imbibing American ways, but that enjoyment was a state of mind and meant different things to different people and for Indians social life meant visiting friends and family and going to movies. These letters also commented on the slow and gradual nature of adaptation. One also pointed out the differences in meanings assigned to similar things. Beaches to Indians wrote one, “were associated with eating *bhel puri* [an Indian snack] rather than wearing bikinis and burning their already tanned skins.”⁶⁶ Integrating into American society for them was in understanding American political and social problems. There was a terse letter stating, “highly qualified professionals have little time for enjoyment.”

These public debates on adaptation to America and the American way of life showed differences in peoples’ perceptions of what American was and their discomfort with what they perceived were American values. It also highlighted the wide variety of Indians and their reactions to American attitudes; there was a section that was readily accepting changes in life in the U.S. and there was a group that resisted change, and a large majority in the middle was accepting some changes in their life. What these public

forums showed was that a majority of Indians were primarily retaining their Indian identity.

Issues concerning the second generation, and their adaptation and acculturation were emerging during this time. While parents were Indians and selectively choosing to imbibe things American, children growing up in America were becoming American. Indian families in Detroit, while teaching their children Indian values, were also getting their children educated in the public school system. Many parents were consciously trying to teach their kids to learn English but not their own language at home, and changing their food habits to suit their children. These changes emerged as a result of parents' personal experiences and the problems faced by them. Sampath consciously chose to speak English at home and changed his children's food habits so that they did not face the problems he faced. He stated:

My older son became more Americanized than other children. He would eat American food; he would not eat at home. Then my wife learnt how to make hamburgers and hot dogs even though I was a vegetarian. See my philosophy at that time was different. Being vegetarian at that time I had difficulties at conferences, conventions, business lunches. I did not want my children to undergo that. So I let them eat whatever they wanted. Also I had another philosophy. Not to speak my native language at home. If you speak native language you lag behind in education. That was my feeling. My children don't speak Gujarati; they understand it. We used to talk to them in Gujarati and they used to answer in English. Later on we started speaking English.⁶⁷

Teaching children Indian culture became problematic. While for Sampath it was teaching Indian religious and folk tales, for Indira, it was a different. Coming from a more secular background, religion was a personal issue and not accompanied by rituals. These two however, took their young children to Sunday school classes or heritage classes, where they heard talks on Indian folktales and Indian religion as well as Indian

dance and language classes, based on a Sunday school format. Despite imbibing certain practices that were American, this decade also saw concerted efforts by families to further the teachings of Indian cultural practices. Indian classical dances, and Indian music were taught to Indian children. The new demand placed on cultural symbols resulted in women's emergence as cultural propagators. Many women in the Detroit sample helped with cultural activities and taught Sunday schools, as well as organized special events. During this decade, the ICS or the Indian Cultural Society emerged as the main group organizing cultural events among the Indians as well as showcasing Indians to the American population, and performed on television, as well as represented India frequently on Hart Plaza for multicultural events.

While Indian parents in Detroit were making attempts to inculcate Indian culture in their children on weekends and were comfortable in educating their children in American public schools despite concerns about children conforming to American ways of life, many Indian parents across America were uncomfortable with the degree to which their children were becoming American. One of the biggest debates in the pages of India Abroad was related to children's growing up as Americans ignorant of Indian culture. Children's acquisition of American attitudes habits was problematic for many parents and there were letters that stated that their children were turning out to be "wrong and independent."⁶⁸ The problems were exacerbated by the fact that Indian and American cultures were different and the Indians' impressions of American culture were low. American society was not only conceived as individualistic, largely bereft of family values, but was also perceived to be a society going astray. The stereotypes that Indians held of America and the fears of children becoming American were definitely

frightening. Dating especially was seen as problematic. The stereotypes that prevailed assumed that allowing children to become American was tantamount to allowing their children to have “premarital sex at the age of 15 years under their very nose in the guise of dating. This is bound to happen unless our children are tutored in the moral obligations of the Indian culture which prohibits pre-marital sex.”⁶⁹ The other fear was that American culture did not value families as Indian culture did, and would not take care of their families in their old age.⁷⁰

The dilemma faced by Indian parents was how to inculcate Indian values in their children. While parents tried to inculcate their family norms, the fact that children spent a majority of their time away from home and with their American peers made the transmission of Indian culture a problem. While parents realized the values of home as the first place to transmit Indian culture, they also realized that this method was full of problems since a large number of mothers, usually the reproducers of cultural norms, were working outside their homes in the U.S. In families where both parents worked, time constraints limited parents from playing an active role in their children’s lives. One such parent wrote, “with both parents working it was hard to teach them anything other than what they learn from schools peers, or television.”⁷¹ The initial attempts focused on importance of mothers’ role in America. There were letters that blamed working mothers for children’s acculturation to the dominant value system, and indirectly suggested women to stay at home and take care of children. One wrote: “I have seen parents leaving their few-month-old kids to the care of babysitters because somehow making a little money has become more important than mother’s love and personal care of the child.”⁷²

This point of view however did not gain much ground since there was a growing awareness that American behavior and values were coming through schools since children spent a majority of their time with their American peers in school and in the neighborhood. Consequently parents targeted schools as a means of inculcating Indian culture, but discussions occurred on how Indians should form separate schools or work with the local school boards to incorporate Indian cultural values.

There was a group of parents who valuing American education, suggested that parents become active in local schools boards, and attempt to change schools curriculum to suit Indians cultural needs. Participation in school board activities, a parent suggested, would make the school board aware of Indian children's specific needs.⁷³

For the other group in this debate, the only alternative to this problem was to open a separate Indian school for expatriate children. The reason for this move, as explained by the parent who initiated this idea, was his opposition to his children becoming American. He wrote: " . . . And I, for one, would rather not have my children "melt" completely. Most Indian children here are growing up speaking only English, with the same ill-informed attitudes about India as most Americans have. Unless we want our next generation to commit cultural hara-kiri by not having any pride in our heritage or respect and love for India and the right Indian values . . . " Those who supported the idea were rooted in their ethnocentric notions and beliefs of Indian cultural superiority. "Indian values," wrote one "were universal teachings for the whole of humanity." ⁷⁴

Inherent in this debate were issues of Indian culture and what it meant. Although the underlying premise of this entire debate was to teach Indian cultural values to their children, what these values were was rarely specified. When one letter writer tried to

raise this question on the meaning of Indian and Indian values, or their sacrosanct nature, it incurred a host of personal insults. Indian culture, the writer argued, had historically evolved by adapting to various invading cultures. As such, Indian culture would similarly evolve in the U.S., and any attempt to open a separate Indian school would be tantamount to segregating Indian children. Consequently, the author questioned the very premise of opening Indian school to impart Indian culture to Indian children. She wrote: "When we seek to institutionalize "Indian" teaching, we are making an organized effort to take our children away from the mainstream of American life. This is futile and dangerous.... Should we build walls around us? For heaven's sake let's think international."⁷⁵ For her, the good points of the American educational system far outweighed its negative implications.

The majority of the letter writers wanted the propagation of Indian culture done alongside the effort of imparting American education. The idea that was gaining acceptance in this debate was to follow the Sunday school format as was historically done by other immigrants groups like the Chinese, Jews and Greeks, who had taught their language to their children through Sunday Schools. This system allowed Indian children to have experiences and learning of regular school and on the weekend, to learn Indian cultural heritage, in the process providing children with values of both America and India. ⁷⁶ Wrote one parent supporting such a venture, "We can be proud Americans and by creating a cultural awareness among our children also keep alive some of the moral values of India."⁷⁷ Some parents wanted volunteers to spend time teaching the community's youngsters; others looked up to the Indian organizations to cater to this need of the Indian community.⁷⁸

While supporting the Sunday school format, letters cautioned parents not to let their stereotypes of American culture rule their actions. Such stereotypes, they suggested, ran the risk of a separation from American mainstream culture and society. In this debate an American woman, married to an Indian, tried to set these stereotypes right and pointed out the fallacy of the notions that women did not take care of their children since they periodically leave their children to babysitters, or that American girls have loose morals.⁷⁹ For the sake of the children growing up in America, she suggested the need for assimilation, pointed out its positive aspects.⁸⁰ A large number of the letters supported her viewpoints. One reader wrote of the need for parents to adjust. "It is the parents who, because of their ambivalent attitudes to their motherland and adopted land, need re-thinking about their motives, philosophy and future plans These problems can be greatly minimized once we come to terms with our own feelings in this regard."⁸¹ Parents were asked to mix with the larger society in which they were living. According to one: "Don't let your paranoia give you wrong impressions. Try to mix more with the real Americans and don't count on TV and plastic shopping centers for your own second-hand impressions of what you think are your children's impressions." The writer asked parents to involve themselves with the neighborhood and community.⁸² Another stated: "Understanding of one's own culture is not sufficient as an adjustment tool in a multicultural and multi-ethnic society. One must try to understand the interrelationship of other subcultures in a dominant culture for better adjustment and proper relationship [without losing one's own identity]."

While the above issues of adaptation were personal issues, old settlers were also guiding Indians into becoming active in their communities as well as politically.

adaptation into American life also had political connotations. Old Indian settlers were guiding Indians to be active in their communities, as well as politically. Dr. Prafulla Mukherji, an older immigrant from India who had arrived in the 1920s took it upon himself to advise the new Indian immigrants on how to assimilate in America. Writing frequently to the newspaper he often advised/ provided hints to the community on living in the U.S. Among his letters was one that gave Indians his 10 commandments, which are summarized below.⁸³

1. Be proud of Indian cultural heritage, but also develop a sense of pride in the adopted land and be loyal to America.
2. Develop a sense of appreciation of the best American manners—by learning to say “Thank You” even to the maids.
3. The need to appreciate and participate in American cultural offering –symphony, plays, as well as in civic affairs and civic charities. “Go to football games and get to understand the zest for living that characterizes the American.”
4. Follow personal religion but also participate in the local churches once in a while, in order to understand what guides Americans.
5. Join professional associations, local community organizations, and political parties.
6. Do not be an indiscriminate consumer. “Always calculate your monthly income. But also remember that the economy of this country prospers only to the extent that its citizens put into circulation their earned income either by spending vacations and recreation or by saving in a bank. It is desirable that you spend money, and learn to enjoy life as you never enjoyed it in India.”
7. Don’t brag about India to Americans. Differences are not a sign of superiority.

8. Be appreciative of America since it gave the immigrants the opportunity of education, employment, and occupational mobility that allows you to help your motherland as well as the country you live in. America has faults but let Americans criticize them. Harsh criticism of America is a sign of ungratefulness.

9. Inculcate in your children the values of America as well as India but remember that you belong to this country.

10. Be an official ambassador from India to America. "Indeed, through your personal relations with American friends you can be more effective in your ambassadorial role."

Along with adapting to some ways of life that they perceived as Americans, Indians were also consciously constructing a new Indian identity. Although by the seventies, the Indian Cultural Society was the cultural organ of the Indian community, the growth of the Indian population resulted in the formation of ethnic organizations. In Detroit, by the end of the decade, 'Gujarati Samaj,' 'Bichitra,' and 'Tamil Sangam' were some of the ethnic associations mentioned by the Indians. Social networks that earlier were based on all Indian identity began to shift towards ethnic organizations. While the bonds established among earlier groups continued, newcomers arriving in the decade of the seventies were introduced to their ethnic networks. Attempts by early Indians to contain these efforts were not successful; however at the personal level, individuals made their decisions not to join ethnic associations. Sampath, a believer in the national identity, refused to join his ethnic organization. Others, however, were active both in their ethnic groups as well as the ICS. Ethnic groups celebrated ethnic festivals: Gujaratis celebrated *Navratre*, Bengalis *Durga Puja*, and the Punjabis *Baisakhi*. Nalini reported her first affiliations were with the Bengali group, Bichitra. She stated:

I started with the Bengali Association. When I first moved here there was no association; that came a few years later. They would do *Durga Puja* at somebody's house or get together...so I would participate in those events or cook *rosogullas* for them. There were a handful of people at that time. By the time the association started there were about 100 people, and that has grown to about 500 to 600 people in the greater Detroit area. At that time there were 15 to 20 people. They would hold *Puja*, *Saraswati Puja*. I always used to go because I thought that my son needed to be exposed to that culture. Around the same time the temple was being built and my mother passed away and I needed to go to a place and pray.⁸⁴

This growth of ethnic identity was not without protests nationally. Many Indians in America were disturbed by these new trends that in their views undermined Indian national identity. These people viewed the establishment of a national Indian identity that was a representation of modern India, and identification with ethnic culture was akin to creating fissiparous ethnic dissensions, which were symbolic of ancient and archaic times. This group of nationalist Indians also felt that India's current problems and backwardness were rooted in its caste, regional and linguistic divisions and they strongly felt that in the U.S. these divisions could be overcome given the highly educated nature, and by implication, a more rational group. Through letters to the editor, many wrote about their disappointment and bewilderment at the proliferation of ethnic institutions. Wrote one reader: "Despite the distance that separates us from home, we who represent enlightened India have not yet been able to shed our very Indian feeling about regionalism. The Indian community in America is torn apart by strong regional feelings"⁸⁵ Another complained: "India is not a nation of many states, but a state of many nations. This statement seems so painfully real! I have often wondered if there are Indians in India or whether the country is full of Bengalese, Gujarathis, Kannadigas, Maharashtrians, Keralites etc. . . ."⁸⁶ According to another, "It is disheartening to know that ancient arbitrations are claiming importance even when we are on the opposite side of the

globe...it would be suicidal to think of breaking into even smaller groups on linguistic and geographic basis.”⁸⁷ Others implored Indians to think national; “Right-thinking Indians should come forward to condemn this practice, and not only disassociate themselves, but dissuade their friends from joining these. We must not forget that we are Indians first, and then Punjabis, Bengalis, or Tamilians.”⁸⁸

The alternatives suggested by these concerned people to overcome these divisive tendencies were linked to the formation of one Indian association with sub associations of various ethnic groups. This organizational setup allowed for the representation of national as well as different interests under the same organization.⁸⁹ Wrote one person: “I am convinced that our purpose is better served not by multiplying the number of organizations but by cooperation . . . Make AIA a strong umbrella organization”.⁹⁰

However, not all readers of the newspaper supported these views. Those who supported regional associations justified their existence as well as their participation in their activities. Stating that regional interests were culturally specific and of little interest to other Indian groups, the author argued that joining culturally specific ethnic organizations was not to create separation from other Indians but to create an association of people with similar backgrounds.⁹¹ Moreover, Indian national organizations in America, they argued, were not representative of regional cultures, and even those who tried to organize things on their behalf misrepresented their culture. Consequently, these people opposed the notion of an umbrella organization arguing that “cultural diversity is a fact of life in India and cannot and should not be stifled.”⁹² Others pointed that multiplicity did not mean divisiveness, but was a reflection of the “heterogeneity and

cultural diversity of India. Multiplicity is divisive when these various groups work at cross-purpose.”⁹³

In the seventies, however, another component was added to the Indian identity and that was the religious overtones. By mid seventies, Hindu temples existed in the cities of East coast with large Indian populations, but Detroit did not have one. The origins of Hindu temple remain a little murky, with people giving different accounts. What is common in all the narratives is that the growing Indian community needed a cultural center to accommodate all Indians. Activities that had begun in the decade of the sixties in the International Institute had moved to people’s homes. The increase in the Indian population showed the inadequacy of the current system since it excluded a large section of the population. While some of the cultural activities had moved to rented spaces in churches and schools to conduct their activities, from the seventies people were beginning to talk about the formation of a space catering to the needs of the Indian community. The Detroit community at this time was largely divided between two groups based on professional lines, the engineers and the physicians. Since the U.S. labor market assigned higher salaries to physicians as compared to engineers, in the new class hierarchy developing in Detroit, physicians were the elite group. Both groups were looking for a place suitable to the needs of their population. The older settlers, primarily engineers, were looking for a place for family based social and cultural activity. According to interviews in Detroit, another group, consisting primarily of physicians, was also looking for a center, or more likely a club. The need for a center, it emerges from Detroit stories, was also felt by many professionals, predominantly physicians, who wanted to create, what was termed as the “doctors club” by many respondents. Citing this,

they drew attention to the fact that some of the early contributors and members of the doctors club were non-Hindus. The coming together of these groups in 1975 resulted in the formation of the two groups and in the idea of creation of a temple. Fear amongst many non-physicians that physicians would control power of the temple resulted in initial lack of support among many. Many in the sample did not join the early temple, based on their belief that it was a doctors club. This division resulted in the creation of a smaller temple than suited the Indian population.

The need for the temple was a result of multiple factors, aside from catering to the spiritual needs of the Indian community, and the culmination of the efforts undertaken by early immigrants to focus on Indian religious heritage. The community also wanted a center in order to introduce the second generation Indians to their cultural and religious heritage. The temple emerged not only as center for religion but its cultural center, and the Indian values emerging were in the forms of folklore, religion and oral tradition. The need for the creation of the Indian identity was also in response to the perceptions of the dominant groups in the U.S. that the term “Indian” identified Native American, and was creating confusion in the minds of the Indians. Indira, alluding to this stated: “It is interesting that the kids used to go outside, they [Americans] used to ask what are we? And they [their kids] would say we are Indian and then they [Americans] would ask what tribe?”⁹⁴

The coming together of these groups resulted in a meeting where the roots of the Bhartiya Temple were based. The various groups of physicians and those who wanted a space for Indian center for cultural activities came together in January 1975 in a hotel in Beverly. The formation of Bhartiya Cultural and Religious Society, and its initial meeting

in January of 1975 resulted in a transformation from a community hall to a temple to be called as Bhartiya Temple. Initially about 25 people met and formed an ad-hoc committee of seven persons to see the feasibility of constructing a temple, its shape, and workings, the costs involved and most importantly its funding. By March, the adhoc committee finished its task and held a fundraising dinner that about 400 people attended, and during the evening people pledged about \$150,000. In 1976 the temple committee bought 18 acres of land in Troy and bought it for \$75,000 (paid in cash). The *bhoomipujan* [formal beginning of construction with religion prayers and rites] started on July 4, 1976. According to the advice of one of the members, Indian temple became part of the bicentennial activities for America. With buying of land, the ad hoc group disbanded and various committees formed, most important at that time was the building committee. In 1976 the fundraising dinner for the temple organization again raised about \$150,000. However, the temple construction faced some problems from the City of Troy. The residents in the neighborhood, worried about noise and traffic problems, had raised many issues. The construction began in 1980 and the temple was completed and dedicated to the community in 1981. The idols were installed in 1983. The efforts of the community were central to the establishment of the temple. Not only did the community contribute generously but Indian families worked to open the temple every day for an hour in the evening in its temporary phase.⁹⁵

With the decision to settle down were emerging new issues of identity, an issue that was mired not only in personal terms but also in terms of the group in America. Should Indians be categorized as Indians or choose a new name for the group? The problem was acute since being/ remaining Indian in America meant being associated with

Native Americans, a group that was occupied an economically low status in America. Terms suggested through the letters were “Indians,” “Bhartiya,” or “Hindustanis.”⁹⁶ Another suggested that maybe Indians should add “Asian” before “Indian” to distinguish them from Native Americans.⁹⁷

Living as an immigrant group in America had political connotations in relation to the American state. Being categorized as a minority in the U.S. meant an entitlement to special benefits from the government. In 1976, an Indian association filed for attaining minority status. This act emerged as one of the most divisive issues within the Indian community, if letters to India Abroad bear any evidence. The attempts of AIA, a New York based association, in 1976 to seek classification of Indians as Asian Americans with the eventual aim of becoming a minority in America resulted in probably the largest number of letters on a single issue in India Abroad. The underlying question in this debate was if Indians in America, who claimed to be an educated and prosperous community, should avail benefits that in the minds of many were related to the underclass.

The AIA president in a letter to India Abroad stated the reasoning behind this political attempt. The immediate issue was related to a conference organized by the National Science Foundation on Asian Americas. Indians who wanted to participate in this conference were denied entry since they were not categorized as Asian Americans by the Federal government. Indians were categorized as “whites” based on a 1926 court ruling, although the U.S. Census categorized Indians as “others.” To remove these differences, the AIA asked the Federal Interagency Committee (FICE) to categorize Indians as Asian Americans. Second, the president stated that AIA was receiving complaints of job discrimination. The recession of the early seventies resulted in the

firing of many Indians since they were new and not protected by Affirmative Action programs. Third, the author also pointed out that there was a feeling among Indians that they were denied promotion because they were not white. Discrimination, he argued, was based on appearances and Indians were not white in appearance. Therefore there was an urgent need to classify them in America.⁹⁸

Those who supported this attempt argued for its benefits to Indians in terms of employment. Wrote one reader "If any employer wants to recruit minorities, they could hire Asian Americans and Indians would benefit. If the Indian continues to be a white, the employer could be dissuaded in hiring him since it would mean that he would be hiring another white at a time when they are required to meet their goals of hiring minorities."⁹⁹ Others, while not supporting the categorization of Indians as a minority because of their educational and professional character, argued for a special category for Indians, but for the time being were satisfied with the minority classification since they saw many advantages in terms of jobs, housing, loans, and federal assistance. Others highlighted the fact that Indians were discriminated against, and such provisions would help them.¹⁰⁰ Those who had experienced discrimination heartily supported such a categorization. They stated that although discrimination was not evident at the entry level, they faced it while facing promotions and supervisory position over whites.¹⁰¹ Being a minority would result in the benefits of representation by the ACLU as well as preferential treatment of jobs, government contracts for minorities, small business enterprises, education, health and the like.¹⁰²

Those against this measure emphatically stated that minority status was for groups who were discriminated against historically. One person wrote: "Minority status is ok for

those whose ancestors came here or whose ancestors were abducted. But we came here of our own free will.”¹⁰³ In a similar vein, another person wrote: “. . . the Indians had not undergone sufferings as had Chinese and Japanese people.” There was also a feeling that minority status affected marginalized populations and non-ghettoized people. Others were of the view that minority classification would negatively affect Indians entry into mainstream since a group as highly educated as the Indians seeking preferential treatment would be seen negatively by the dominant group, and as such work against Indians’ assimilation. Wrote a person: “It is astonishingly short-sighted to trade a few jobs and promotions —should they materialize at all—for the relatively smooth integration of Indians into an adoptive culture.”¹⁰⁴ Another stated: “Any categorization as a minority might get a resentment of African Americans and Hispanics.”¹⁰⁵ Some suggested that while the few Indians who were U.S. citizens would have benefits accrue to them, the entire community would feel the backlash of the majority.¹⁰⁶ Dr. Mukherji, the doyen of the Indian immigrant community lambasted the Indian community on this move. Asian Indians whimpered about discrimination when the American government had actually been giving equal treatment to them. This raised the question: Are you interested in paychecks or the well being of this country? Some of us who came here long ago never dreamed that our fight for citizenship rights for our people would lead to this type of unwholesome attitude on the part of the new crop of Hindese [used by Dr. Mukherjee] who have chosen to come to this countryBe gracious to America for some of the opportunity it has been offering you. People from India should be serving this country rather than getting anything out of it.”¹⁰⁷ Readers suggested alternatives to redress

discrimination without seeking minority status. Class action suits, wrote one reader, could fulfill the same purpose without resorting to individual legal action.

The decade of the seventies began with Indians claiming to return home. The focal point of Indian life seemed to be the Indian Embassy and the visiting dignitaries from India. That India remained on the minds of Indians was also very much evident from the letters to the editor where people primarily discussed Indian politics in detail along with Indo-American relations.

This trend of prolonging a stay was not particular to Indians in Detroit, but was common to Indians across the U.S. However, although they did extend their stay, they planned to return to India on their retirement. Through letters in India Abroad readers inquired about how to live on their Social Security income in India after retirement.¹⁰⁸ Letters in the early part of the seventies, while reminiscing about India, were also beginning to form positive notions of America. This new intent was also evident from the attempts of many Indians to reconcile their love for India with their stay in the U.S. If India was the beloved Motherland, America was becoming the Fatherland. Wrote a reader of the newspaper: "I believe in loyalty to America and India. India is my motherland, where I was born, raised and educated. But America to me is my fatherland, where I sharpened my skills and found the opportunity to work."¹⁰⁹ These positive notions were a precursor to settlement in the U.S.

Settlement is usually seen in personal and family terms and rarely in terms of leaving one's nation. Indians in the U.S., however exhibited a strong guilt, not only because they had to leave their extended families, but also because they were deserting their nation. The first generation of Indians growing up in a new India carried notions of

helping develop their nation. As educated Indians, whose skills lay mainly in the technical field, where India needed the most help, they considered it their duty to help India. Decisions of personal betterment over national welfare were not easily made. Indians' patriotic zeal, however, was being channeled into a spirit of serving India from America. This idea of service to their motherland became a constant theme in the letters to the editor especially in the first half of the decade, and debates ranged through letters on how this could be achieved. Over the decade the suggestions that emerged varied from the formation of a volunteer group, an N.G.O. adopting villages, and helping schools with technology transfer. Letters informed readers of the existence of such societies;¹¹⁰ while others asked Indians to pledge a dollar a day to India and to voluntary services to Indian organizations helping India.¹¹¹ The desire of the Indian community to help India was so great that India Abroad set up a foundation committed to helping India and Indians. In doing so, it asked its readers' help in choosing projects in India.¹¹² Some suggestions were the formation of the India Abroad Village Development Project,¹¹³ and the creation of a national service organization like Peace Corps, which would include volunteers who would work during their personal vacation time on projects in India.¹¹⁴ Questions were discussed regarding what the nature of these organizations should be and who should organize it: the Indian government or a private non-governmental agency.¹¹⁵ Some wanted to attach themselves to American non-profit organizations to do work in India.¹¹⁶ Others recommended many organizations that were in existence and undertook such works.¹¹⁷

Help to India, however was not conceived totally in terms of projects in India. Suggestions about supporting Indian arts and culture by inviting Indian artists to visit America, and / or becoming unofficial ambassadors from India as they presented a

positive picture of India, were also made. The regional and national organizations in America could “help Indian artists, promote Indian heritage like Yoga and meditation and help understand India and Indian policies and influence American politics.”¹¹⁸

Suggestions were also made to influence American policies towards India. This was a very important development since America was perceived as supporting India’s neighbor Pakistan with whom India had problematic relations, and had fought two wars, one of them in the decade of the seventies. Others took up the role of defending India’s image in America. Any attempts perceived by them as denigrating to India, especially by the news media, were targeted. One of the earliest attacked was a New York Times article titled “Imperial India”.¹¹⁹

While the majority of letters were supportive of these new ventures to help India, there were of course a few voices of discontent. A commentator, denigrating such attempts, suggested that if “if you decide you really are an Indian at heart, you must return to India and work there. Indian associations and sponsorship of Indian cultural shows is not the need of the hour.”¹²⁰ Another wrote one that the idea that one can help by being away, through cultural organizations “is like remote-control revolutions that one watches on TV, and in movies. We know that they do not work in real situations.”¹²¹ Another wanted Indians in America to stop doing this in order for them to be self-reliant. “A nation has to generate within itself ways and means and strong will to be self-reliant. Outside aid only destroys the will to be survive and be strong.”¹²²

If the decade began by Indians feeling guilt at staying on in America, the decade ended in a sour note towards India. Nationalism that was so evident a few years earlier had definitely ebbed. Readers of India Abroad were urging other Indians to acquire

American citizenship. The first sign of tepid attitudes came with the policies of the Indian government under Mrs. Gandhi to tax their expatriates' further tampered attachments to India, and drew angry responses from readers. Help to India in terms of voluntarism was acceptable, but any demand by the government to aid India through taxation was problematic and drew angry responses as evident from one such letter. The reader wrote:

It is tough to choose between a mother and an adopted mother. But in these days one should not be too sentimental. Now my future is here. And that is where I have to invest...

We stay in one place, take offer of all benefits offered by this place, and then from here we serve our motherland. What kind of people are we? We could not do anything for India. Rather, Indian could not do anything for us. Is that not why most of us are here? Most magnanimously, this country gave us something, which India could not, and now what?¹²³

Not only were readers becoming less enthusiastic about India, but many were also asking other Indians to acquire American citizenship. The rationale for attaining citizenship varied from a need to join the American mainstream, to the benefits it provided to immigrants. Those supporting political participation highlighted the need to influence politics. One such letter pointed out: "The adoption of the citizenship of this country does not mean forgetting one's heritage. But it does mean active participation in the political process, which is the real source of power . . . Immigrants are not visitors; they are a part of the social, political, and cultural life. They cannot remain spectators."¹²⁴ Those who were looking at economic benefits of becoming citizens noted the opening of new job opportunities in civil services and in technical projects that usually required security clearance for foreign nationals.¹²⁵ Irrespective of acquiring American citizenship, others were suggesting the need to become integrated through participation in civic affairs. "It is time for Indians to make their presence felt in the day-to-day affairs of the

country from PTA, Town Clubs. . . Indians should work with Americans to build a nation of future promise and health.”¹²⁶ In Detroit, however, those who attained U.S. citizenship were motivated by a desire to sponsor their family members from India rather than any political or economic motivations.

Towards the end of the decade, the Indian community had established firm roots in Detroit and the organs for Indian identity, especially the temple, were under construction. Families and individuals were deciding what aspects of Indian culture should be adopted.

1980s

By the decade of the eighties, the Indian community in Detroit was changing. The old immigrants had decided to become permanent residents and some even citizens. Becoming citizens however had nothing to do with allegiance to America but was rooted in attempts to sponsor family members, brothers, sisters, and parents to the U.S. Usually within a family one member carried the Indian passport in order to facilitate frequent returns to India. The eighties brought different set of problems for different age groups; those who came in the decade of the sixties faced crisis regarding their children's marriages, those who arrived in the seventies faced problems of teenage children, and the newcomers from India, more cosmopolitan and more aware of the U.S., were disappointed with their interaction with America.

The earliest migrants who arrived in the decade of the sixties faced new problems concerning the marriages of their children. Towards the end of the seventies, children of the older migrants were of marriageable age, and arranging marriages in the United States was a problem. People like Raksha returned to India a few times to arrange marriages for

their daughters. However, a few children had married Americans creating tensions within families, since not all children looked forward to arranged marriages as was the norm in India. Sampath, Srikanth and Ram Lal's attempts to arrange their children's marriages were not always successful. Their children married white Americans, Asian Americans, and even African Americans. Although a couple of parents did not see anything wrong in their children's marriages to outsiders, the majority were opposed to these marriages and in some cases, after decades were still trying to reconcile to their children choices of marriage partners. Indians stereotype of Americans family values were partly to blame for this; moreover, with these marriages the belief was that at the first signs of tensions, American marriages broke up. Moreover, parents also believed that they would lose control over their children. Recounting his story about his son's marriage, Sampath stated:

My son married an American. I had lot of problems with it and my wife had more problems. We talked a lot and ultimately we agreed. Those who marry Americans have great difficulty. My brother is married to an American. Although she is very nice, . . . their life is not as good as I would like to see. Indian marriages are much more pleasant. I did not want my son to commit the same mistake, but he wanted to commit the mistake so he did it anyway. We tried to show a couple of Indian girls but he did not want to see them. Whatever my son said about her did not turn out to be true. She is typical American girl. First of all we had seen other friend's son who was married to an American girl and she left him. And we had seen other situations too. Those girls who marry want to live with their husbands and do not want any part with their parents. But my son told me that his wife will not be like that and she is exactly like that. She will not have anything to do with us. She will not have anything to do with us and that is what bothers us the most. Now she is okay. She did not want to associate with us and that was one of the problems we had.¹²⁷

Indira, however, spoke of the inevitability of such marriages occurring. She stated:

We had discussions. We used to discuss about mixed marriages, cultural differences, drugs, and all those issues. It was not like an order but pros and cons of the situation. They knew what our expectations were; they had the knowledge. Even though I wanted them to marry an Indian, I never thought that was possible. They turned down the possibility of arranged marriage, that possibility went a long-long time ago, in high school. With the older one we tried. There was this guy, a computer engineer, a very good-looking guy, every parent's dream anyway she came back and said 'Mom don't ever do it again.' The first thing he asked was if she was a citizen, and then this kid got scared. She thought that all he wanted was to come to U.S.A. but not because he wanted to marry her. So she became scared.¹²⁸

The opposition to the marriages seems strange since Indians had made America their home. The majority of the female women offspring from the first generation agreed to arranged marriages and returned with their parents to find their marriage partners. Two women who grew up in the U.S. spoke of pressures of growing up Indian in America, and pressures relating to marriages.

I have never wanted to say no to my mother. Someone had proposed, [an American], my best friend's brother, but my mother had told me that whatever I do my brothers would follow. So I had this pressure. I didn't date, because it might cause problems. So we went to India to find a match. We advertised in the newspaper and it was given that the guy's going to marry me for my visa.¹²⁹

While Tripta was very conscious of her mother's wishes, Meena rebelled and dated American men. Her desire to marry an American man was opposed by her family and she subsequently returned to India to marry a man chosen by her parents. Veenu, who came from India as a teenager, was controlled and beaten by her father and brothers for socializing with men at the university, who were just friends. She left home and stayed with university friends. Usha had conflicts with her husband over bringing up children; her husband too wanted her to keep distance from American friends, especially male friends.

Children's problems

The tensions of growing up in Indian families in America as a teenager were common to Indian children across the U.S. and this fact became more evident in the decade of the eighties when this group started writing about their problems in India Abroad. Although this research did not interview any person who grew up in the decade of the eighties, parents who had teenage children spoke of having problems with their teenage children. The problems were acute enough that one woman reported that her son left home at age 17 because of constant fights with his father, and two other families drew attention to high pressures on children to achieve adversely affected their studies. The kids eventually dropped out of college without informing their parents and the families and children went through years of tensions before returning to school.

The problem of teenagers became a common topic of discussion in the pages of India Abroad in the eighties. If parents wrote of tensions regarding their children growing up in America in the seventies, in the eighties, teenagers wrote about problems of growing up Indian in America. "Growing up in America," wrote one teenager "is not a trivial problem, but a serious one for many of the Indian teenagers The phase that most of the teenagers are growing through is a difficult, painful and confusing one."¹³⁰ Problems that were mentioned included dual pressure—from parents to follow Indian cultural norms, and from their peers in school to behave like American kids. Teenagers also spoke of parents' stereotyping and mistrusting their friends; all American teenagers were seen as getting drunk or taking drugs. Moreover, parents also disrespected their decisions; and teenagers felt they knew right from wrong and wrote about their hurt when parents questioned them suspiciously and informed them that they were not ready to

make decisions on their own. Wrote one: "We have grown up in America and know more about life than our parents or grandparents did when they were in their teens."¹³¹ Teenagers wanted parents to let them make their own decisions. "We would be able to take the best of both American and Indian cultures."¹³²

Imposing restrictions on children's movements, especially the girls were another regular complaint. One woman complained about her parents' restrictions on her movement on Friday nights when her group of friends got together for movies and pizza. "This hurts us since we want to be accepted by our American friends. . . If we try to explain, they think that were talking back."¹³³ Enforcing too many restrictions on children, wrote one, did not make sense. "If children are given proper guidance and instructions, they will know to handle the difficult problems in life. Keeping them confined behind the four walls will lead only to unwanted problems when the children have to stand on their own feet at some point in the future."¹³⁴ "Our parents do not seem to realize our viewpoints or appreciate our need for more independence because they come from a different culture, which among others discouraged girls from talking with boys and expected them to wear long formal dress even during summer. So when they see American teenagers in a casual atmosphere they are naturally shocked and start worrying about their own children."¹³⁵

Other issues related to arranged marriages, dating, and issues of identity. If letters by teenagers were any indication, issue of identity posed a significant problem among the teenagers growing up in two cultures in America; were they Indians or Americans? While parents talked of imbibing the best of both cultures, children were talking of their confusion in accepting these vague terms; how did one achieve harmony with both

cultures was a question that was rarely answered.¹³⁶ Some wrote about visiting India in search of their own identity and encountered a young generation there that was becoming more westernized and living comfortably with the two cultures.¹³⁷ Although there were youth groups emerging among teenagers that were discussing these conflicts in general, problems of teenagers remained.¹³⁸ “Our lives are more difficult than those who want to totally ignore India, because we wish to determine for ourselves how much. . . of our culture to incorporate in our way of life. This sometimes results in disagreements with family members who often think we are incapable of making all such decisions by ourselves.”¹³⁹

Others stated that the conflict was inevitable since the average Indian child spent 90 per cent of his time learning American culture and 10 percent learning Indian ways.¹⁴⁰ Teenagers also spoke of pressures on them to achieve and “make the grade regardless of the child’s intelligence, aptitude and motivation.” These problems were so acute that in many families communication between parents and children had ceased resulting in alienation and psychological distancing, as was the case with Indira, Uttara, Veena’s and many other families.

What these letters did not talk about but were evident in the Detroit sample were Indians’ negative feelings about African Americans. Parents spoke of problems of their children’s friendship and marriages with African Americans. Indira talked about her own biases:

She had all kinds of friends, and mostly she was with black friends. It didn’t bother me in the beginning but it does affect you. You might not want to admit it. There is a difference between black and white kids. Why? I think it has to do with back home also in our community; color matters!
You know in that aspect he was very broad-minded. He didn’t have any problem because he was here as a student.¹⁴¹

The son fell in love with an American and a black woman. Later on he changed his mind and married a very sweet Indian girl. It was very difficult. I told him if you marry a black girl, children will not know which society they will belong to, black society or Indian society. That was my biggest problem, the children's problem. Children will be discriminated against always. They will not be equal. You are putting your children to unnecessary disadvantage. That was my biggest problem. My wife was very liberal--marry an American girl was fine but marrying a black girl was not fine. She felt it was different. Black people, their culture is different, even their language is different. Even whites have different thinking but it is less different than black people.

It was very hard for my wife. She was crying all the time. One son married to an American girl and the other son also married to an American girl and on top of that a black. See my son's argument was --and that was because of my teachings to them My teaching to them was that all human beings are alike. You have same *atma* [soul] in everyone. So he told me that you told me that everybody's *atma* is the same. So why are you getting angry? I could not argue against him. But my wife she would not argue, she said no. We hid this from most of our friends. ¹⁴²

But the biggest issue that emerged in the Indian community in Detroit in the decade of the eighties was relating to personal problems at home. The new institutions that came in the eighties in Detroit dealt with family problems. Along with the break-up of marriages, tensions within marriages were on the rise, and women were increasingly reporting domestic abuse—both mental and physical. In Detroit, Bhartiya Family Services, an organization dealing with family problems, emerged in the decade of the eighties. In the words of one of its founders:

Problems of women were increasing domestic abuse, drug problems. Women abuse was quiet rampant.

It started with desertion of women by men. We thought that we should do something. We asked prominent people and then we heard more stories about this and my eyes opened; teenage pregnancy, wife abuse, husband abuse, parents' problems --of parents who were called by their children from India, and parent-child conflict here. These problems were not heard of in India—especially love triangles.

We needed a group that could look at the Indian problem --solutions were Indian specific, understanding of how the relationship between the Indian husband and wife works...issues that were typically Indian.

Ninety per cent of the calls were from women.

The need for such services was also encouraged by women who had received services at American support group. Bhartiya Family Services provided solutions that were specific to Indian culture. Uma stated: "I used to cry all the time, so I went to see a psychologist. As soon as I go I say I don't want this divorce and they say you will get married and be happy again. I wanted them to tell me that my love will come back, so I told my chief that they can't help me. Different thinking!"¹⁴³ At the time of the interviews Bhartiya Family Services had changed its name to Michigan Asian Indian Family Services; it had established a hotline and was accessible through the Internet, but for fear of identification, many Indians, sought other resources.¹⁴⁴

In the eighties, however, problems related to the break-up of marriages and abuse within families became common in the Indian community not only in Detroit but also across the U.S. The rise in abuse was frequently mentioned in the letters and news reports in India Aboard. Moreover, the emergence of shelters and their increasing numbers was a constant reminder of this fact.¹⁴⁵ News about the establishment of hotlines specific to the needs of the Indian community in America was emerging.¹⁴⁶ Women's groups across the U.S. were organizing family violence workshops.¹⁴⁷ On the East as well as the West Coast, wife and child abuse in the Indian community was on the rise.¹⁴⁸ According to one estimate, 20-25 per cent of Indian American women faced abusive situations.¹⁴⁹ The reasons for wife abuse mentioned in one of the articles included economic frustrations, involving men who were under stress because of the degree of competition in American society, and the social isolation of women. The author of articles encouraged women and men to seek counseling or family assistance, or to go to shelters.¹⁵⁰

Indian families in Detroit were also dealing with the problem of elderly parents. Although no person was willing to speak in Detroit on this issue, many persons in the sample had elderly parents living with them. While no one spoke of this problem in their homes, they were acquainted with families who abused their elders and even left them at retirement homes, rarely visiting them. Problems of parents were twofold; the first related to their isolation and loss of independence in a city where public transportation was not good. Second, the arrival of parents brought tension among family members. In India, parents enjoyed a high status within the family hierarchy. In the U.S. however, families were operating under different context and parents lost their high status.

The issue of parents becoming part of the Indian family in America was initially looked upon favorably. Many families invited their parents, frequently to take care of their young children. Even in India Abroad readers initially wrote about parents' migration improving their quality of life, especially their children's lives. One reader voicing these sentiments, wrote: "They can take care of children, provide them with love, create interest in learning, teach them Indian culture, and native languages."¹⁵¹ Yet the issue of elderly parents taking care of their grandchildren became problematic. Letters complained about families putting their parents to work, especially in babysitting, and this trend was deemed as disrespectful to the parents. Wrote one reader: "Please, if you must have your parents or mother baby sit, be fair to them. Treat your mother well, take care of her needs and be responsive to her. Give her some of your time also."¹⁵² Yet changes in attitudes were evident among Indian families who saw nothing wrong in parents helping with the family economy. Moreover, letters also asked parents to change, to adjust to American circumstances and supplement family income through babysitting,

teaching Hindi and Sanskrit, sewing, embroidery and crocheting which were dying arts within the U.S. The letters also asked for elders to change their attitudes towards old norms and adjust to American circumstances, and not to focus on their daughters-in-laws and grandchildren's dress habits, language, and other insignificant manners. "Your children will treat you the way you treat your parents." And there were also suggestions of setting cooperatives for those in the *Vanprastha* [a term from Indian philosophy that denotes old age of life.]¹⁵³

Culturally the eighties were a period in the Indian community of attempting to find middle ground between the dominant American culture and the expatriate Indian culture. V.V. Raman, a regular columnist for readers' column "Reflections on Life Abroad," in India Abroad gave his suggestions on how to incorporate American festivals like Christmas and Thanksgiving in Indian homes. He assigned these religious events secular meaning making it easier for Indians to celebrate. For Christmas, he suggested bringing a Christmas tree at home: "Recognizing the joy and pleasant feelings the practice generates, noting the aesthetic satisfaction and the little excitements the tree and its trimmings bring to children, we could adopt the custom in our own homes also. . . Let us not forget that the occasion is to commemorate the birth of one who preached love and goodwill. And you don't have to be a Christian to pay homage to what Christ stands for." He rooted his ideas in the teachings of Hinduism, which he stated, respected the gods of all faiths. Moreover quoting a Sanskrit verse, he wrote of the commonality among religions. "As the rain waters, following different courses, all finally reach the same oceans, so our prostration to different deities are all directed to the same single Supreme One . . . It is not enough to repeat such mantras; we must learn to live by them."¹⁵⁴ For

celebrating the 4th of July, he suggested celebrating it as India's Independence Day since the themes and the struggles behind Indian and American independence were the same.

"Our ancestors were not involved in that struggle, nor were they part of the jubilation that must have attended that event. But many of us remember a similar struggle and victory in India. We can, therefore, feel the thrill of Independence Day."¹⁵⁵

The new immigrants coming to the U.S., confronted an America that belied their expectations. By the eighties a positive image of America existed in the minds of young Indians and many were already Americanized in India, in terms of clothes, language and behavior, so much so that the America they interacted with was a disappointment. Madhu's early impressions were as follows:

I found people so ignorant about other countries. I found news media to be conservative. I imagined America to be like in the sixties, total freedom that was wrong. It was deeply religious, spiritual. I was introduced to Christian Scientists. I found people to be very friendly outwardly.

When people talk to you they are very open and friendly. And at the orientation they said that fact that they ask you how you are doesn't really mean that you have to tell them.

Work was very demanding. The amount of work people did was surprising. Twenty-four hours! Professionals didn't have a family life like I was used to. My colleagues who were American I thought they date, they romance, but they were so insecure, and that was surprising. They didn't seem to have the community that we had. They were lonely people and that was surprising.

American marketing practices also were surprising: You could return something at the store, and that the customer is right was very surprising.

Arun who came to a small university town was also disappointed in the America he encountered.

America came as a disappointment. I used to read books of Buffalo Bill Cody and had an image of bravado, which was not there. I also used to watch a lot of westerners. America was lackluster. The other America I knew was glamour, glitz and the high rise. You expect America to be a city, like New York and then I came to State College and it wasn't that. When I was driving there, I kept thinking what kind of place have I arrived in? I felt a letdown. After living in places like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, State College was a culture shock. I kept thinking

main kis gaon mein a gaya hun? [What village have I come to?] I seriously questioned my decision. It took me a while to get used to it.¹⁵⁶

The new group of migrants, who arrived in this decade for employment opportunities, spoke of their initial disappointment with the focus of Indian life around the temple culture after the formal inauguration of the in 1981. Although this group of young Indians considered themselves less religious and more secular, they connected with an Indian community that was forming its base on religious identity that they were shunning back in India.

The temple emerged as the symbol of Indian community in 1982 after the completion of construction. Today women play an active role in running its day-to-day activities. While the leadership over the years has remained male, women were the volunteers that made the temple work. The leadership of the community however, was predominantly male and there were only two instances of women being head of the executive committee. At the time of interviews another woman was nominated to be the head of the governing body.

Women like Indira who were secular in their beliefs, became part of the dedicated temple volunteer force. Women's emergence as volunteers was not particular to Bharatiya Temple but was evident in all temples.¹⁵⁷ From oral interviews it emerges that women's participation in the temple activities was more an attempt to fill in the vacuum of loneliness in their lives, and their attempts to create new networks through the temple. A large number of women in the sample became active participants in the temple activities. According to one:

We had no social life. Bhartiya Temple was just a name at that time. It used to have classes, Hindi classes, and dance classes in a church basement, actually two church basements. I have been going there since the past 20 years. My belief with

God was very untraditional about praying, although the belief was always there. Yeah I changed, it started as a routine, then you get involved, in the end temple becomes a part of you. In India I would not have become involved with the temple, in India temple is a little different. It didn't start out as a conservative temple, in the beginning there were no priests, there were thirty families and you had to go one day a month to keep the temple open for two hours. Temple was at an isolated space and it was scary being there. For two years we did that. Now if I don't go to the temple I feel that I have lost something. My husband used to get mad, he never wanted to come to the temple, so he had all these excuses, me not cooking, so I used to cook everything so he couldn't find excuses. I told him if it wasn't for the temple I would have gone crazy, that is an outlet for your other needs. You see friends there, and slowly he started coming too. You are so lonely, there was no counseling, and counseling is for now. Those days you are crazy or something if you get counseling. So you need some place to go. Most of the time we sit there and talk and then you meet people.

Temple gave me strength; it gave me a sense of purpose. I cannot pinpoint the whole experience; it gave me strength to deal with difficult situation better than most people did. The temple celebrates diversity of Indian festivals, *shivratri*, *Diwali*, *Janam ashthmis*, everybody celebrates these. And then there were festivals I had never even heard of *Annakut*.

I used to be so defensive since he always blamed me for something. After I started going to the temple, I stopped arguing, what is the use of arguing, I am not angry with him. And then he got mad that I don't pay attention to him anymore.

This narrative suggests that this person's attraction to the temple was more in relation to her personal crisis, of loneliness, problems with her husband, rather than in religious needs. Temple became a catharsis for unhappiness at home, for loneliness and lack of friends, and became a meeting ground for women. Similar stories came from other women too. Women found a new refuge to deal with their problems, and a companionship and networks that were otherwise absent in their lives, and participation in temple activities gave women a sense of purpose. Aparna Rayaparol's work that details women's roles in the functioning of the Pittsburgh temple does not focus on unhappiness at home as a factor in women's participation in the temple activities.¹⁵⁸

Politically, Indians in Detroit were becoming citizens, although few were interested in political participation, and more in sponsoring their families from India.

The realization among Indians that their settlement was becoming more permanent resulted in a shift in concerns among Indian immigrants, which was clearly noted in the nature of letters to India Abroad. While India remained on the minds of Indians, life in America and the new realities confronting the immigrants gained precedence. Although many issues of the seventies continued through eighties, new issues centered on how to join the American mainstream and whether to naturalize or not. Some touted the economic benefits of citizenship from wishing to sponsor family members to the opening of new economic and employment opportunities.¹⁵⁹ Some were now thinking of serving the U.S., which could be done better by becoming a citizen. Wrote one Indian “We owe it to ourselves and to the United States to become U.S. citizens and serve it better than we can as immigrants.”¹⁶⁰ A section of the population, however, continued to state their discomfort at the idea of renouncing their Indian citizenship. Wrote one reader in India Abroad: “For several immigrants, the decision to become an American citizen is made only after tremendous internal uncertainty and an emotional tug-of-war with themselves”¹⁶¹ There were new arguments in the immigrants’ rationale for non-acquisition of citizenship besides their intention to return to India. Indians still maintained their family networks in India and frequently traveled to India. Becoming American citizens meant selling their property back home, as well as creating problems of travel to India—“If we want to go to India in a hurry, it is not very quick for in the case of those who do not hold Indian passports.”¹⁶² Citizenship, some wrote, was required for those interested in joining politics or for benefits, and with regard to benefits; letters also stated that if benefits were any incentives, they were much better in Canada

The doyen of Indian immigrants continued to implore Indians to participate in American civic, business and professional associations. While stating that it was natural to be nostalgic about India, he argued that there was a need to focus on America. "We ought to fully appreciate this great country, the land that has adopted us and given us opportunities for study and professional and business advancement that India failed to provide."¹⁶⁴

The argument to integrate into mainstream American life took on a new dimension with an increasing awareness that failure to do so by the Indian Diaspora in the past had resulted in the displacement of Indians from many countries. The fact that in the past decade two nations, Uganda (1974), and Fiji (1978), had ejected Indians further augmented this argument. Letters reminded Indians to beware and to end their isolationism. Wrote one reader: "Uganda then Fiji. Will the United States, Canada or England be next? Are we doomed to be kicked out of these countries?"¹⁶⁵ Another stated: "Many countries in the past have thrown Indians out because we projected the image of 'grabbers,' who came only to take something from those countries without becoming part of them. Examples are Burma, (1940's), East Africa (1960's), Britain (1970's), Fiji and Sri Lanka (1980's)."¹⁶⁶ The author implored the Indians to assimilate. "Let us show some sense of loyalty to a great county that has given us so much and has provided our children the opportunities they never would have got in India . . . Instead of building more fences on the islands we already have established let us build bridges to the mainland."¹⁶⁷ Another stated: The dominant group is not going to break away from its traditions. It is us who will have to embrace their way. . . The choice for an individual and community is clear. Live in alienation and choke, or change, grow and live in

contentment.”¹⁶⁸ In order to avoid this ordeal, readers pointed to a need to identify with Americans, and be part of their social and cultural activities.¹⁶⁹ Readers explained that Indians’ expulsions were rooted in their refusal to adjust to their host society and asked Indians to shed their holier-than-thou attitude, and accelerate the process of assimilation. Stated the writer: “We are new settlers of this land and we should do what settler minorities have always wisely done –to fall in line with the old settlers and residents.” Writers also asked Indians to follow the footsteps of the Jewish community who maintained their distinct cultural and practiced their religion but merged with the American way of life. “Cultures,” noted this writer, “are living organisms, which grow and are continuously molded from within and without.” He also argued that those who claimed that their sojourn in the U.S was temporary were ignoring the forces of history and were blind to the socio-economic and political conditions of India. In the ever-widening gap between economic conditions in India and America such remigrations were far fetched. Moreover, the author argued, given the nature of the U.S. as a pluralistic and multinational society, Indians had enough leeway to follow their own practices. He concluded “we should go ahead with our best efforts in identifying ourselves with the majority community, and secure for our children and ourselves a safe, secure life of dignity and self-respect.”¹⁷⁰

These readers related the lack of assimilation to the proliferation of Indian associations. One reader wrote that the increase in Indian associations was “resulting in the emergence of islands and a distance from mainstream U.S.A.” Furthermore, technological advancements rarely cited in the continuation of an ethnic culture, was also noted in the perpetuation of the Indian culture.¹⁷¹ A reader wrote that the videotapes were

bringing the “Indian way of life” into Indian homes. He wanted the local associations to take up the task of bringing Indian images to the U.S. citizens so that Americans could better understand them. Indian associations should also hold classes for the adults teaching them the “American way of English, American customs and social graces, cooking American food, American social cultural activities. “I think it is time for immigrants from India to wake up to the fact that unless we start ‘thinking like Americans,’ we are in for some rough times. The sooner we stop referring to India as ‘back home’ and to Americans as ‘they or them’ the better off we will be.”¹⁷²

The other development was related to the emergence of transnational communities. Indians wanted to be part of two nations and wanted the Indian government to allow dual citizenship providing them with an opportunity to retire home in India with their American social security.¹⁷³ In 1978, the government explored this idea but rejected it.¹⁷⁴ The desire to return to India was also rooted in the fear of many that Americans might kick Indians out, as had been done in the past by many nations against the Indian community. The emergence of the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill in Congress in the early eighties rekindled these fears. An Indian wrote that the Simpson Mazzoli Bill “should act as an eye opener and strengthen bonds with India.”¹⁷⁵

While the majority of Indians did not change their citizenship, a group of Indians was becoming politically active. In the eighties help for India was more in terms of helping India by lobbying American politicians for policy decisions favorable to India rather than in terms of developmental projects in India. While this was partly a representation that came with the decision to settle in America, this change in attitude was also a result of the US Congressional representatives who began seeking expatriate

support for the passage of their policies in Congress. Stephen Solarz, a U.S. Representative from New York, and a friend of India, fired the first salvo on this issue by complaining to India Abroad that he did not get enough letters from Indians to block the sale of armaments by the U.S. government to Pakistan. Letters to India Abroad began expressing the need of Indian organizations to inform the Indian population of such issues, in order for them to start writing to their representatives on issues pertaining to India.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, Indian parliamentarians, on frequent visits to America commented too on the need of Indians to help America in influencing American policy decisions. The participation of Indians in local and national politics also increased as seen by their support of mainstream political parties. A 1982 report stated that most of the candidates supported by Indians in the 1980 elections had won although some lost.¹⁷⁷

By the mid-eighties, many Indians were reconciling India and America. While acknowledging their Indian background, they were accepting that their life was in America. People still debated their need to resettle in India, and although there was a definite decrease in the volume of such letters, there was a corresponding increase in letters on acquiring American citizenship. Wrote a person:

“India is the motherland for most of us, from which we get our culture, family ties and our basic education. The U.S.A. provides us wide and varied educational and employment opportunities, fulfilling our emotional, intellectual and material needs. Therefore, we should continue our participation in Indian cultural and social events, we should also make a prolonged effort to get involved in local and national politics and community and school projects. Only then can we impart to our children self-esteem and balanced identity.”¹⁷⁸

As Indians were becoming Americans, they were also thinking of incorporating Indian festivals in multicultural America. A letter extolled Indians across America to celebrate Diwali by taking a day off from work in order to spread the spirit of the holiday,

which is similar to the Jewish celebrated Hanukkah.¹⁷⁹ Another, lauding this idea, suggested eliciting the help of politicians in order to persuade local authorities to declare an India Festivities Day permitting them to take time off. This he thought would not be hard since many Indians were beginning to support political candidates.

While a majority of the issues mentioned above were affecting Indian families who had settled in Detroit for a long time, families who migrated to the U.S. in the decade of the eighties faced new issues. These cosmopolitan, outgoing Indians, many of whom consciously sought to leave India, have found a society even more conservative than the one they left. Although this group interacted with dominant Americans, formed strong bonds with their American and friends with other nationalities during their university years, they somehow found themselves increasingly becoming part of this conservative Indian community. Although as yet not all in the sample were the members of the Temple, their visits to the temple for cultural events had increased. With young children growing up, they too were confronted with the questions of identity that the earlier generations underwent. Their support of the ethnic identity was in relation to their young children and their desire to help make them aware of their Indian identity. Many spoke of creating altars in homes, and celebrating Indian festivals in order to acquaint their children with their Indian heritage. Although not active in the Bhartiya Temple's religious activities, they were becoming active in the cultural societies and the cultural aspects of the temple activities. They were sending their children to weekend classes on Indian folk or classical dances in many informal dance and culture schools that were emerging in the basements of Indians homes on the weekends.

Their participation in these activities, some stated, was also due to other factors. Taking lessons from the earlier generation, many of whom lost control over their children's choices of professions, or marriages, they were seeking to form bonds with other Indians with same age children to form bonds that might lead to marriages. On the one hand, they hoped that social networks created among their children would lead to finding their dating and marriage partners among Indians. Although they had accepted that the tradition of arranged marriages in the U.S. was on the wane, they still wanted them to limit their choices to other Indians, irrespective of their ethnic grouping. One parent stated: "I hope that when he starts dating, he looks around this group of Indians."¹⁸⁰

While one does not know how representative this new trend is, it was apparent among three young families who migrated in the decade of the eighties. Moreover, these families with young children were also seeking to guide their children to science-based professions. These young families oriented their pre-teen children to special classes and schools that trained them in the sciences and in mathematical skills. The idea behind this move was to orient their children to Mathematics and Science at an early age in the hopes that they would choose careers in the science and technical-based professions. This development was taking place amid a growing awareness that parents' control over children was limited and they did not have power to guide their children in educational matters, as had their parents in India. Indirectly, this new strategy involved creating an interest in their children in areas where they wanted their children to be. Two such schools that were mentioned were the Kumon classes and Dr. Khaitan's classes. Parents stated that in these classes which were conducted in schools Bloomfield Hills area, were attended by other immigrants primarily from China, Taiwan and Korea.

At the time of the interviews, the social networks of these young Indians were other like-minded Indians, and rarely with other immigrant or ethnic groups in America outside of work. Yet some of these people were not too happy with their social networks: Noted Madhu, “None of these people I move around with would have been my friends in India. My real friends are not in Detroit.”¹⁸¹ Moreover, she also commented on her personal changes negatively. In India I used to be so fashion conscious, wear the latest cuts, here I just wear the normal. We have become so backward in America. I feel like I have become a *bhenji* [a term denoting a woman who is not modern] here”¹⁸² Voicing similar thoughts, Preeti stated: “Our friends in India are going to discos and bars and vacations abroad, and here we are going to temples and cultural functions and to India.”¹⁸³ This critical attitude was a result of the new competitive and consumerist culture that was emerging even among young Indians. The community that was emerging was very competitive, very status- and class- conscious. Competition was rife and professions and the income they generated determined ones status, along with areas of habitation. While many mentioned being personally against such dynamics, they were being swept by it. They were also critical of their own association with the traditional and conservative form of Indianness from which they had wanted to escape.

The Asian Indian community in Detroit is a well-established community by now. In thirty years the Indian community had created an Indian identity that was uniquely Indian, different from that of Indians in India and it existed only in the U.S. Each group had contributed to its formation and this identity was still being formed. The interest of the second generation in keeping this Indian identity was a factor in this development. It has well-established institutions, religious, professional and social. Religious institutions

remain important and by 1990, along with Bhartiya Temple in Troy, there exists a Hindu Temple in Canton. In addition, there is an Arya Samaj, a Jain temple, a Gurudwara representing the Sikh religion and even a mosque along with multiple churches representing the Keralite Christian community. Moreover there also exist multiple ethnic associations that represent the ethnic linguistic diversity of India. Food and cultural stores, and strip malls catering to the needs of the Indians, are growing. In thirty years, Indians in Detroit have created a little India that is Indian in spirit but different from it.

During these thirty years the residential patterns of the Indian community followed the growth of metropolitan Detroit. The early Indians who came lived in downtown areas near the campus of Wayne State University. By the decade of the sixties, the first group of workers had started moving to outlying suburbs. During the sixties Indians moved to Dearborn Heights, East Detroit, Berkeley and Southfield. During the decade of the seventies, the new areas of habitation were Madison Heights, Sterling Heights, Oak Park, Troy. Many physicians were moving to upscale Bloomfield Hills and Farmington Hills areas that were developing. During the eighties and the nineties, the area of Rochester Hills and Shelby townships were new areas where Indians were moving. In the eighties, the development across the east side of Detroit in areas around Canton, Plymouth and Northville were also increasing. During the eighties, the biggest area of Indian population growth has been Canton Township, which at this moment has the largest Indian population.

The emergence of Indian strip malls in these areas was further evidence of this growth of the Indian population. Today a Temple exists not only in Troy area but also in Canton; another proposal to construct a temple in Rochester Hills area was also underway.

The Bhartiya Temple was also becoming political. Its leaderships and agenda of events, according to many respondents was at the moment of interviews, heavily tilted towards the Gujarati community. According to one,

People who started this temple had a broader vision, than to stay with ethnic group . . . We tried our best to eliminate any one groups domination but it does exist now. It is our Indian culture. You cannot function as an Indian in the last 2-3 years; they want to bring more Gujaratis. When we were there we wanted representation from all groups, every area. Now people who have personal agenda want to manipulate, that's not going to go away. Nobody is stealing or anything, but they just want their group to be dominant.¹⁸⁴

This narrative suggests that the fissures between the national and ethnic identity that anthropologist Maxine Fisher found in New York City were also emerging in Detroit.¹⁸⁵

At the turn of the century, a new Indian identity is being constructed by the second generation of Indians. The existence of various student organizations in Michigan's universities and their growing popularity among the second generation was an indication of this trend. The roots of this new Indian culture were still rooted in India, but in the Indian film industry and their portrayal of India. If the coming of the VCRs in the decade of the seventies brought Indian films to Indian homes and the emergence of multiple video stores in strip malls, the evolution of satellite television and the DVDs was further helping in the formulation of this identify. The coming of satellite revolution had brought India to their homes. Many of respondents in this sample subscribed to Star TV, Zee TV, and B4Y (Bollywood For You), Indian channels that were bringing Indian culture to the Diaspora. The Indian culture lives on, but this culture is different from that growing in India. Although visits to India have decreased by the older generation, Indians

visits to the new mini Indias in Torotno, Windsor, Chicago and New York have increased.

Indian community and an Indian American culture are thriving in the Detroit area.

ENDNOTES

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- ³ Indira, interview by author, 21 June 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
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- ⁷ Uma Majmudar, "The Pleasure and Pains of The Indian American Ethnic Experience," 324-329, in *The Ethnic American Woman: Problems, Protests, Lifestyles* ed. Edith Blacksilver (Dubuque, Iowa, Kendall / Hunt Publishing Company, 1978).
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- ⁹ Indira, interview by author.
- ¹⁰ Indira, interview by author.
- ¹¹ Sampath, interview by author, 15 June 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹² Uma, interview by author, 6 June 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ¹³ Nalini, interview by author.
- ¹⁴ Uma, interview by author.
- ¹⁵ Sampath, interview by author.
- ¹⁶ Raksha, interview by author.
- ¹⁷ Nandini, interview by author.
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- ²⁰ Sampath, interview by author.
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- ²³ Rama, interview by author, 8 August 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
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- ²⁵ Uma, interview by author.
- ²⁶ Rama, interview by author.
- ²⁷ Nalini, interview by author.
- ²⁸ Raksha, interview by author.
- ²⁹ Veena, interview by author.
- ³⁰ Indira, interview by author.
- ³¹ Veena, interview by author.
- ³² Veena, interview by author.
- ³³ Savitri Devi, interview by author, 28 July 1999, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ³⁴ Laila, interview by author.
- ³⁵ Sheila, interview by author.
- ³⁶ Sheila, interview by author.
- ³⁷ Usha, interview by author, 10 September, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ³⁸ Nandini, interview by author.
- ³⁹ Upendra, interview by author, 22 April 2000, Metropolitan Detroit.
- ⁴⁰ Indira, interview by author.
- ⁴¹ Indira, interview by author.
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- ⁴⁷ Ram Bhat, "A Matter of Dressing," *India Abroad* (Aug 12, 1977): 10.
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CONCLUSION

This study has looked at the migration and settlement of the Indian community in Detroit. It has drawn attention to the centrality of the U.S. immigration policies in influencing the migration of Indians as well as in shaping the character of the Indian community. Moreover, it has shown that the political economy of the city shaped the character of the Indians in metropolitan Detroit area. However, one of the central component of this study has been that push factor that shaped Indians migration to the United States were rooted in conditions that were particular to India and has detailed these circumstances differed for men and women. Finally, it has shown that although Indians migration was relatively new and still continuing, Indians had a distinct history which was distinctly visible despite the short span of about 30 years.

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 indeed shaped the migration of the Indians to the U.S. However, for the Indians, it was the labor certification clause of this Act under which their immigration to the United States commenced. Labor certification was based on the needs of the American labor market and that need in the decade of the sixties was for highly skilled professionals. These manpower needs assured the migration only of professionals and resulted in Indian community's high educational characteristics. The labor needs of the U.S. changed periodically resulting in the diversity of professional migrations; engineers and physicians were the first to migrate and were later followed by computer professionals and professionals in the geriatric care, especially physiotherapists. These characteristics reflected the changing nature of American economy from the decade of the sixties to the nineties, from the manufacturing

economy to service economy, and how they shaped the political economy of the city. The professional migrants used the family reunification aspects to settle their extended families here. If labor migrations influenced Indians migrations, family migrations sustained the migration.

The political economy of Detroit changed during the migration of Indians to the city. Primarily as a manufacturing economy in the sixties that focused particularly on the auto and ancillary industry, Detroit's economy by the nineties had shifted to service economy. The decline in manufacturing was part of the national trend, but for Detroit it was also particular to the global factors and increasing competition affecting the motor industry, as well as the technological innovations occurring within the motor industry. In this shift while blue-collar jobs declined sharply, white-collar jobs, especially in the fields of computer aided technology increased tremendously. Indians fulfilled this changing demands particular to the city economy.

Detroit's political economy moreover highlights the changing nature of urban America. While the central city was declining, the suburbs were booming and providing new employment opportunities. This case scenario, on the one hand highlights the need to study the integrated economy of a region, of a metropolitan area rather than the central city, and on the other, it also emphasizes that American cities were growing and reacting to the changing needs of the economy. Although Detroit is not a major hub of global economy as is the case with New York, Miami and Los Angeles, its political economy was also being shaped by the new economy, which in turn was influencing new immigrants to settle in the city.¹ Indians migrations to Detroit draw attention to the fact

that even cities considered declining cities were attracting new immigrants who in turn were shaping the economic growth of the cities.²

Although immigration laws and political economy of a region influenced the immigration of Indians, these policies and economic needs affected an already regionally and globally mobile population in India that did not hesitate to avail new opportunities availed. Indians migrations were rooted in motivations that were particular to their families and their personal circumstances, which in turn were molded by Indian gendered norms. Personal motivations however were subsumed under family obligations; families were definitely central to Indians migrations; who migrated and how was determined by the elders in the family. Gendered norms embedded in Indian culture not only determined different lives for men and women, and consequently different expectations from men and women, and among men and women. Families high economic expectations from sons; families had obligations towards daughters. These different expectations resulted in their support and encouragement of male migrations; families responsibilities towards settling their daughters resulted in their training for domestic pursuits in preparation for their future lives as daughters-in-law and wives in another household. These different lifestyles resulted in different motivations for men and women; for men they were primarily economic in nature, for women these motivations were non-economic in nature and rooted in their desire of overcoming hierarchical constraints on their lives and their mobility, and independent thought.

Lives of men and women were changing in a new independent India. However, legal changes and legal equality did not drastically change the lives of men and women. Changes in women's lives were dependent upon their families. There remained a big gap

between the political ideology and its acceptance by the families who used these policies within their own gendered visions. Although women in new India gained the right to higher education and profession, these public roles remained at the good will of the men in the family. Thus, despite higher education and employment, women remained identified with homes and domesticity. Outside work only increased their workload, introduced them to dual burden of work. Change however was gradual and within the existing cultural norms for men and women. Consequently, men in India continued to be economic providers and women the domestic caretakers.

Modes of migration of men and women are centered in their gendered norms and in Indian these gendered norms rarely allowed women's independent migration, and consequently Indian women's migration could occur only through marriages. Marriages for Indian women were economic options and for the majority who did not participate in the labor market, their sole economic options. Marriage migrations thus need to be seen as economic migrations.

In migrating to the U.S, however, Indian immigrant women have attained new power. These gains also need to be contextualized within the culture of their home country, and not necessarily in terms of economic gains. Indian women's lives were indication of the fact that women measured their gains in relation to their prescribed spheres, their break from the hierarchical structure, distance from mothers-in-law and more power in family decision making as well as in relation of forming closer relationships with their spouses. These gains were non-economic in nature. Conversely, Indian women's lives also show that economic gains have not translated into gaining power since the control of their incomes remains in the hands of their men.

Changes have also occurred in women's lives with paid work becoming integral part of their identity, although for the majority remains secondary to their families. This development, along with their relatively gains in power within their households in the U.S. however, has not changed gender norms. Women's internalization of gender ideology allows little desire to change their roles. Indian women did not want to be the chief economic providers of their families and in cases where they were, were looking forward to times when their husbands could again become the economic heads of households. However, women did want to alter the division of labor at home, wanted more help from men in household work and childcare, more equal distribution of work rather than sole responsibility. Transformations have occurred, but not to women's satisfaction; consequently the struggle for household division of work continues. While women's lives have changed, they continue to define themselves as wives and as mothers in the traditional Indian mold; while they do not wish to sacrifice their lives for their extended families, for their in-laws, they willingly sacrificed their lives for the welfare of their nuclear families as well as their birth families. Sacrifice by Indian women continues to be an integral part of their identity even in the United States.

While Indians' immigrations were influenced by the political economy of the metropolis and they in turn shaped it, immigrations began in families and in individual aspirations. The end results of migration thus, need to be measured primarily in these terms. Indian migrants' motivations were embedded in economic prosperity, in personal freedom, in acquiring higher education. However, implicit in these aims were dreams of happy family life, success and bright futures. Migration and eventual settlements in American meant living life as an Indian in an alien land, creating new families and also

breaking away from families in India. Living life in America meant following lifecycles as determined by the Indian philosophy and living life through the stages determined by it—i.e living life in *Brahmacharya*, [educational and spiritual learning], *Grahashta* [living married life], and *Vanprastha* [moving away from temporal and material life to the final stages of life]. It is living this day-to-day life prescribed by Indian lifecycles that American dreams need to be measured, and the process for Indian immigrants has not entirely been happy one. Rarely did all cycles lead to happy, harmonious and content lives. Indian immigrants story in America is ultimately a story of their American dreams, few of which were realized, and majority were denied or deferred.

ENDNOTES:

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² Thomas Muller, *Immigrants and the American City*, (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 69-160. Chapters 3 and 4 highlight immigrants contributions to the cities and

Appendix I

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF AN ORAL HISTORIAN

Oral history seems a simple and easy task; one meets people, documents views on questions pertaining to one's research, and there emerges a rich database. Or that is what I thought when I started this study which relied tremendously on oral interviews. However, to my chagrin, I discovered that oral history encompassed a plethora of issues ranging from questions of subjectivity and objectivity to issues of the validity of memory, truth and lies, information overload, and power and control between researcher and subjects. Moreover, oral interviews were human interactions, raising concerns regarding the nature of relationship between the interviewer and interviewees. Works by people drawing on oral interactions, ranging from anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Ruth Behar to historians Daphne Patai and Jacqueline Hall to sociologists Nakano Glenn, Pierette Hondagneu and countless others, I thought, had prepared me for doing interviews. However, during my interactions with interviewees numerous concerns arose that were problematic enough to demand a separate section.

In my naiveté, I assumed that Indians in Detroit were out there waiting for me to come talk to them. I wasn't expecting a stampede, but near enough; this after all was a noble project, documenting their lives. Once I had chosen from a wide selection, I expected to conduct the interviews in a pristine, starched atmosphere, bereft of any outside influences where time stood still until I finished. It was clear in my mind that I was going to call the shots. Talking was not going to be a problem since I was an Indian and was going to be talking to other Indians. Everything was going to be great, the only

calamity that could befall was of technical kind, you know, problems of batteries or tape recorders. So before I began, a bag was ready with a couple of tape recorders, tapes, and batteries. The only concern that emerged during the pre-interview days had nothing to do with the actual interviews. It was financial in nature and associated with the high costs of tapes and batteries. These things cost a packet, and this was before I had even started driving to Detroit and its suburbs, when I constantly began eying every gas station for price comparison. But that is another story.

And then came the shock waves, one after the other. The first stumbling block came with recruiting people. The interviews began usually on the phone. I called the concerned person, usually long distance, explained the project briefly and there began the first interview, that of me, the researcher. Who was I, what was I studying, what was the purpose of this research, what were my questions, and how was the outcome going to affect them? In my bumbling, fumbling way, I tried explaining . . . some were convinced or tried to help a student from their country, others needed to think about it. But usually, I was grilled on the phone first and then more grilling followed at our first meeting. In these early phone interactions, people's different behaviors came across; some were aggressive, others were gentle. And some were trying to put me in categories that were viewed negatively among the Indian community. One particular incident I remembered. I talked to someone on the phone for half an hour. One of the first questions she asked me was if I was a feminist, which to me was one such political question. I hedged, wondering whether this was a trick question, and where was she coming from. I was not too sure what she meant. It turned out that she was a feminist, and she proceeded to intellectualize her life, from the breakdown of her marriage to the life of her children all on the phone.

She also gave me her version of events in the Indian community, and she had hypotheses for everything. For example, why there were so many women physicians? The first physician woman came and then the community discovered their financial potential and then every man went back home and brought back a doctor. She, however, encouraged me endlessly; she once was a graduate student herself and she had not finished her doctorate. She was determined that this should not happen again. She was going to assume charge. All this conversation was just on the phone and I had not even met her. There were many such conversations. I seemed to be losing control, even before I began; I also began to form impressions of some of the people, and the Indian community in general, based on my phone conversations. The first of these was that educated people who knew too much could pose a problem! And there went the objectivity associated with benign neutrality. There were of course the simple forthright people like the ones I had imagined, those who asked few questions about the project, how did I get hold of them, where was I calling from since the number did not show up on their call waiting machine, was I assuring them anonymity, and if yes, willingly gave their time. There were humble people, usually women, who thought that they had nothing to share since they just led ordinary lives.

Problems of recruitment continued. This was a snowball sample and I asked everyone I met for more contacts. One of the subjects informed me that this was a difficult task. At a social gathering she had raised this issue, and some people were disturbed by the life history method. While the project seemed interesting, it also seemed to be prying too much into their lives. Some men, I was informed, asked their wives not to meet me since I was asking too many personal questions. One woman, not associated

with the above group, informed me after a couple of meetings that she would not be meeting me any more since her husband objected to our conversations. Another, who was otherwise dithering, called me and informed me that she was willing to talk to me against the wishes of her husband and promptly gave me time. What had prompted this phone call at night, I was not sure but I accepted her invitation. Later on she informed me, that she wanted her story to be known, and was encouraged by her friends to do so. These to me were stories in themselves; educated professional women did not wield power to talk to me without their men. The first woman who withdrew was an engineer and the one who called me clandestinely was in a technical field. In contrast, there were also independent women, like the feminist above, and also men who laughingly stated they had no control over their wives or knowledge about their whereabouts. A case in point: I was never able to get hold of one particular woman I wanted to talk to. Her husband informed me after countless calls that he indeed was passing on my messages to her.

I: "So, did she say she would do it?"

He: "She grunted and I am not too sure if that was yes or no."

She finally did get hold of me but we could not meet given her busy schedule. He was willing to be participant in this study, but I wanted to talk to women first and then approach men. The idea was to incorporate couples, men and women from a family, and I told him so. And then there was another man who I really wanted to talk to but he would not accept until and unless his wife also became part of the study. The wife was too busy with social gatherings to find time this project.

During this calling period, I began making discoveries about the Indian community. People were leading very busy social and community lives, were involved in

a multitude of activities, and time to speak to a stranger was limited. I wanted to talk NOW, they were willing to meet me days or sometimes weeks, or even months later. Conversations often ran like this: “This weekend we are going to Toronto, then our daughter is coming and after that week I am free.” Another informed me: “you know *Navratre* [a festival] is coming and you will not find any one for a couple of months.” She herself was busy for *ras garba* practices [an Indian dance, practiced in the western parts of India, especially by the Gujarati community] and *Diwali* parties [an Indian festival] every weekend for about a month. And then there was *Holi* [another Indian festival] and the Indian Culture Society was celebrating it and then the Punjabi Club and then some other group . . . And when the practices and festivals were not in season, it was summer time and picnic and camping season as well as the onset of graduation season, and of course that needed to be celebrated too. I was getting frustrated and was making judgments about the community. The problem was that we Indians had too many holy traditions and the community seemed to be celebrating all with much gusto. The Indian community, I thought, needed to relax at home and connect with their kids, and with me of course.

And when we did meet me on the weekends, other issues cropped up. Homes were places where people lived, and the problem was that on weekends **everyone** was at home, and privacy that I thought was essential to my interviewing, was gone; the insulated atmosphere that I expected was totally absent. And I also discovered that the women I was interviewing were also mothers and wives, and to my dismay, their kids—grown up and small, and husbands all invaded our space in need of their mothers or wives. In comparison, few men were disturbed. The biggest distraction at home on the

weekends was the telephone. The Indian Diaspora in America and Canada was very much in evidence during the weekends, along with local friends inquiring about the potlucks, dinners, and this event or that. These interventions usually broke our momentum and took away chunks of the precious time I was allotted. I watched TV, twiddled my thumbs, talked with children or just listened in on family conversations. After a few tries, I gave up looking for weekends until and unless asked by the interviewee. If I wanted to finish the project, weekends were the least likely time to meet people. Weekday evenings were much better. Although we started talking late after men and women had returned from work, and eaten dinner, these days were usually phone free.

With interviews came a host of other issues. The first was taping the interviews. Tapes did pose problems early on; I didn't know how long the battery lasted and some interviews at points began losing clarity. There was one time when the tape ran but nothing taped. Moreover, tape recorders, however small, became intrusions; people who spoke normally otherwise, were conscious of the recorder and didn't know whether to look at the recorder or at me. It took time to relax. One person refused to speak on tape. She told me she would speak slowly to make sure that I would take notes. And then there was the question of how sacrosanct was the tape? Should casual conversations outside the tape be included? Many times, much of what was said outside of the taping was equally if not more important and gave insights to my research. At times, I started taping again; other times I just let the conversation flow. I made notes when I returned, and included them in my research.

The next problem was how should one begin interviews? There was the brief questionnaire of course, but after that . . . ? Should I ask questions, or should I just let

people talk? Since this was about life histories, I usually began “tell me about yourself.” And people began differently. One started by saying, “ I haven’t talked to my mother-in-law in so many years,” another opened by saying; “I am getting divorced.” First lesson learnt was that people began with what was current in their lives, or recent past, or painful periods of their lives that affected them the most. There also ended my presumption that people would talk where I wanted them to talk, from the point of immigration, their life in India that led to their migration and then life in the U.S. I slowly, but surely started guiding, gently prodding them to begin from their migration, my central point of interest.

Moreover, the question also emerged of time frame. How long should interviews be? This became important since people talked differently; some went in depth, and after a few hours, we had barely traversed a few years or events; then there were those who ended their entire life histories in an hour. People were hesitant, people were candid, straightforward, outspoken. People told the story their way. I was aware these conversation styles reflected people’s personalities, so I let it pass. Consequently, I met some people 3-4 times and even resorted to talking on the phone, others I met only once. The few I cited heavily were those who gave more details.

As our interviews progressed, concerns of privacy remained. By now I had accepted that women needed to work at home, especially with kitchen work, and we would be standing by the stove, with kids playing, watching TV or in their rooms. Sometimes they would pipe in and join the conversation. I remember a funny one where this person was telling me about her marriage—she was part of the marriage migration stream—and was not too sure why her husband chose her from a long list of candidates.

Her daughter –about 8-9 years old piped in, “I know.” Daddy had told her but what she knew was a secret, which she refused to divulge. At home you didn’t really know who was listening to what, but I had to accept this in households with small children. There was another time when a sick child about 5-6 years old, crying when I reached their home, lay on the couch with his head on his mother’s lap, listening and dozing off now and then, while the mother and I conversed. After our conversation began, he stopped crying and kept looking at the tape recorder; the other one sat there and listened and frequently whispered in his mom’s ears to tell me a story that he thought I ought to know. Tape recorders were signaling moments of importance, silencing both kids. These interventions I accepted. What was problematic was the few times when mothers called their grown up children, who sat interestedly listening while we conversed. Usually these were the beginning interviews when life in India was talked about. Children, it emerges, were not aware of their parents’ pasts and this was a way for them to find out. These small incidents provided interesting insights into family lives and also allowed me to connect with these families. To be honest, a majority of the time men took care of the children, were in the yard, or off to games. Children’s interference seemed to be ok, what I couldn’t understand was the attitude of the subjects, usually women. They usually screamed out to their men in the basement, in the yard “What year was it . . . ;” isolation was spatial and did not really end dependency. No man ever did that. But they were a lot quieter too.

After one chance interview at an office, without disturbance, I began to suggest outside places. I discovered that the best interviews were conducted away from homes and in offices, hospitals, and restaurants, places where women did not have to be

caretakers of their homes. However, there were disturbances here too, but of a different kind. In a hospital where I spent a couple of days, on and off, talking to a gynecologist in between deliveries, we were disturbed by announcements paging my interviewee, and in house conversations between doctors on dilation c-sections, and the future course of action. We talked over hospital beverages, snacks, and staff lunches. At restaurants, we sat amongst a sea of people, yet remained anonymous. Once a woman broke down and cried and everyone looked. I was embarrassed and pretended not to notice them, thanking my stars that it was in between lunch and dinner when only a handful of people were present. Usually, only the wait staff was interested in us, trying to comprehend who we were, especially with the tape recorder on the table. Somehow I assumed that they assumed that I was a lawyer. Once however, as we were leaving one asked: "Business meeting?" I smiled. "I saw the tape recorder and I knew a meeting was going on." We smiled and walked out.

But he had raised a very important question. Were these business meetings? In my mind, these indeed were business meetings, without any personal relationships. Before embarking on the project, I expected to keep my distance, stay away from the people and their lives, to get the interview and be out of their lives. Yet the openness, candidness, kindness and hospitality of the people took away that distance. Indian hospitality was evident in full force. As in India, when we talked, it was usually over *chai* [Indian tea] and snacks. Sometimes I was served food, usually freshly cooked, especially in the homes of the older generation. I vividly remember an old lady, not letting me go until I had eaten; and she cooked food right away. People offered me their homes to stay in while interviewing, in case I ever needed to. (I never did)

But these interactions were moving me away from my purported distance from my subjects. Whether I liked it or not, for the few hours, the few days, I spent with them, I did become part of their families, where they shared their daily lives with me. I saw their albums, heard stories about the pictures on the mantles and the tables; and within their homes, I saw the good, the bad and the ugly. While there were fun moments, there was also a scary one. Once an autistic child in a family became aggravated, so aggravated that it became hard for the mother to calm him down, and it brought the feeling of guilt that maybe my presence, an outsider's presence, had provoked him. What was more interesting, however, was the surrealistic experience of witnessing the other child who kept watching TV in the far corner of the other room, without any interest in this mayhem.

This feeling of guilt became a constant factor. I kept thinking that by talking about days bygone, I was rekindling old stories that caused sadness among people. People did talk about the good times, but they remembered the bad times more. Good times were no problems, sad stories, however led to different kinds of behavior. Eyes welled up, voices broke down; people stopped talking while trying to recover, regain control of their emotions, or some stared in space reliving the situation. Some hung their head backwards, trying to put the tears back in the eyes, to stop them from dropping. And then there were times when tears rolled down and people cried and sobbed. People poured their hearts out and told stories of miseries and loneliness; some wallowed in self-pity; others held their heads high and laughed their problems off; the range of attitudes was remarkable. I remember in some cases tears welled up in my eyes, and then there were times I laughed so hard that tears rolled down my face. These seemed funny stories

when they were recounted, yet they were loaded with irony and were not funny at the time they happened.

But the question remained, what were my responsibilities in such situations? Hug them, reassure them that everything was going to be all right, talk about something else, change the topic or just look at them, say nothing, or just get on with the conversation . . . I did all of the above, with the exception of hugs. This crying, sad experience gave me the biggest problem. Was I perpetuating this behavior by asking them about issues that caused pain? While there was guilt, there were also moments of irritation, and I would think 'Get on with your life, woman; think future, not past!' I was sometimes also suspicious, very suspicious. Was crying a ploy? Why did people cry in front of a stranger? Why did they bare their soul to me? Would I do that? NO! So what was their ulterior motive? I kept thinking of this constantly. Moreover, the question remained if one cried, did it make a better interview than who didn't or was there something to be overlooked? Did crying give more validity to their account? After a while, I started believing in what one interviewee told me. This was cathartic; she had rarely talked about these situations to anyone, and had bottled them up for years, for decades. Talking to a stranger, who promised them anonymity, encouraged their openness. One said that talking to me was just like talking to a counselor. I definitely was not one, and I hoped that people did not get any such stupid ideas. But the fact remained that some people really opened up, and they themselves noted this and commented about talking stories that they hadn't told before. Some were scared, others shocked at their openness. I did believe that they did not have any ulterior motive; they just were opening up on issues

that they had rarely verbalized. There were of course, people who barely talked, but by and large talking prevailed.

And yes, there was evidence of family politicking and attempted spying too. People wanted to know if I could find out something from the other member of the family. These, I realized, were under desperate circumstances when communication had failed. I would smile and not say anything. I never did that. But a mother did make me talk to her son who was in high school and the family was concerned about his choices about university education. There was enough bickering in the house that he had stopped communicating with her. She wanted to see what was going on his mind? I did talk to him briefly but for my own interest to see if that could emerge as another piece for future research. (He is not included in the sample.) Another person asked me to find out from her husband what he really thought of her mother living with them. I never talked to her husband.

In these interactions, the question remained at what point did the distance between the interviewer and interviewee end and the human relationship begin? It was something I never was able to come to grips with. Should I socially interact with them, should I form friendships with them? Invitations came my way, for events in the community, in their families, in their social networks. I never attended, with one exception, and informed these people that I would do so after concluding my dissertation. The only exception was a lecture organized by a professor.

While I could make clear-cut distinctions with social invitations, there were many times when these interactions began taking place at home. After our taped conversations, over tea and snacks began other conversations where others in the family joined us. In

some of these conversations issues emerged that had nothing to do with my project but somehow indirectly I was the initiator, by asking a simple question. I particularly remember a conversation between a mother and her daughter. The daughter, a working woman now, talked about her schooling, and the problems of growing up alien and an Indian in a near white, if not all, white neighborhood. Her mother had not been aware of these and I felt that this conversation made her guilty and she kept saying, "I didn't know that ...I wasn't aware of that." Sometimes, these conversations went past 11 o'clock at night, but the stories were so interesting that I just forgot about time or the fact that these people had to be at work at 8 o'clock in the morning.

During these times, I also shared my stories, and those of my friends and family. I babbled, like I usually do, on anything and everything, opening myself to total strangers. Sometimes we talked like we had known each other forever. And it frequently bothered me, that I was being too friendly. But there was a comfort zone established that resulted in people talking more freely. And the questions kept coming about my behavior and my attitude, and me as an interviewer.

Once the interviews had begun, I had discovered that I did not have any power in the eyes of my sample. I was an Indian, a Punjabi, a student on a non-immigrant visa, a student in history and urban studies with no prospects of ever becoming financially successful, and lastly a single woman. For the Indian community all these translated into failed prospects. As a Punjabi, I carried stereotypes of being loud mouthed and brash, bereft of culture; the only culture Punjabis possessed was agriculture, or that's how the jokes went. I did not have a green card, and no chance of ever getting it given the limited scope of discipline of history. I was near poverty level if not below it already and with

little chance of economic recovery even if I stayed on in the U.S., since PhD's in history were least likely to garner high salaries. And people did make me aware of these issues; they asked me repeatedly why was I studying history since there was no money in it. A few well meaning people tried to talk me into studying for computers by informing me that people in arts and humanities made better programmers. Women wanted me to go into social work, which they actually thought I was already doing. After completion of my dissertation, I would retort. Others were curious; they asked why would I study something if it didn't assure me a well paying job. Higher education ultimately translated into higher economic gains, right! It indeed was strange to many from a community that accorded money very high status that someone had no financial prospects and wasn't bothered by it. (I was but they didn't need to know this.) This problem was exacerbated by the fact that I was interviewing some very well-to-do Indians. And I never remembered ever reading about interviewers being lower in economic status than the persons they interviewed. Economically I was the underdog, did not have the status or power over my researchers. Some homes were in magnificent areas that I would have never visited on my own, and here was my poverty announced by the rattling of my car in otherwise silent, upscale neighborhoods. I constantly feared being ticketed, sure that my car's noise levels were well beyond the silent standards of these neighborhoods. My single status also garnered some interest, and I was asked details about my family and me. I of course quietly answered, but I kept thinking, don't go down that path lady! This kind of quiet deference I would not have accorded my parents or near and dear ones in similar circumstances.

Not only did I behave differently, my dress was also different from my day-to-day wear. With one exception, I always wore Indian clothes, *Salwar kameez* or *kurta pajama*. I was very deferential in my dealing with them, especially the elders. I tried speaking in Punjabi or Hindi, the languages I knew and this paid off, especially among the older generation. People opened up, one told me that I was just like her daughter. Yet beneath my dress and behavior, I felt that I was crafty. I wanted information. I talked differently with different people. With women I usually began with questions about home and kitchen and children and their work, with men I began with their public lives, what they were comfortable with, and once they had opened up proceeded with their domestic lives. These tactics were rooted in my awareness of gender differences, and the fact that men and women talked about different issues. But even without reading about gendered conversations in Mary Chamberlain's work, gender differences in conversations were obvious.¹ The subjects that men and women talked about differed. Men provided immense details about public life, their work and the community; they rarely talked about their family life until and unless I asked and then just barely answered the questions. Issues that women spent time talking about, were dismissed in an instant by men. A case in point, one woman talked about her problems in marriage at early on; she told the details; usual family problems, he stated! Women primarily focused on their domestic lives, and their children, their early settlement experiences and their loneliness. They also talked of their work with pride and dignity. Yet they remained humble in their dealing. In talking, I thought they gained power. A few men, at times, stated 'good question,' no women ever did. Women grieved more often, talked about sad things more often and cried more often, about their families, their marriages and their expectations in family

and the failure of these expectations. Men too grieved, but they rarely opined about their marriages, instead they primarily grieved about their children not living up to their expectation, especially in taking care of their elder parents. There were exceptions of course! One man grieved about his dead wife. The house remained her shrine, the way she had left it decorated it hadn't changed. Another grieved about the break up of his marriage and the loneliness. Contentious divorce was over, but contentious issues regarding child support remained and he was still dealing with family courts, and getting alienated from his children who were becoming pawns in these struggles. But these grieving differences were also rooted in their gendered upbringing; it was OK for women to cry, in fact it was the only weapon for women; men, however, do not cry, remember!! They just bottled things up, had more medical problems, and some even ulcers.

Although people talked, there were silences too, and deafening ones at that. I remember a case where someone talked of his work, his beginning with pride and then it ended. Why? When I returned later, I asked questions, very hesitatingly, and after a few minutes it came out, he was let go . . . given the pink slip and he did not want to talk about it. In this case, the person did talk a little bit, once I had directed him towards it. But this scenario repeated itself many times, and these silences talked. Big time! And I kept wondering what should my *modus operandi* be? How should I probe, and how much should I probe? I asked, a few times and in different ways. If that did not succeed, I let go. What they did not want to share, maybe I did not pry deeply enough, or that is what I often feel. This was their interview; their life and they were being kind enough to share it with me. Moreover, given that they had the choice of quitting, I did not want to bring them to that level. To me these silences were telling me that they wanted to quit that topic

and I was forced to move to another. Thus there remains a lurking fear that maybe I should have probed, but I am not sure as to how. But I felt confident that with what ever they shared, they had provided me with a mine of information. The biggest silence in this project, however, were the silences of the older generation, the parents who were sponsored by their children. These people who had the highest power in families in India, and had lost that power with migration; they simply refused to talk to me. My contacts, themselves, in this category told me of their dependence on their children, becoming prisoners in their children's homes, and their lack of mobility in the motor city. Despite my pleas of going to visit them, they refused to be part of this project for fear of antagonizing their children. Then there were silences, on issues that I chose not to discuss. People talked on issues that were not part of my inquiries. The information used in this research is just a small part of the material I gathered.

During the course of these interviews, I found some of what I had expected, but a lot that I did not expect. These interviews exposed the hollowness of my previous impressions and my naiveté. I had bought into the Census data, the current discourse that Asian Indians were well to do, upscale people. Yes, there were many, but there were also those who were barely making it, after decades of being in the U.S. In one case someone who had been in the U.S. and Canada for over 30 years did not possess health insurance; bad financial decisions, tax problems had wiped them out so to say. And then there were those who were living lifestyles beyond their means, thanks to the generosity of the credit card companies. And then there were many cases of people living in idyllic suburban surroundings, successful people, and yet living stressful, turbulent lives within their homes. I remember one woman, staying in a good neighborhood, saying out of the blue

as I was leaving: “I had so much stress, my life was full of stress. I did not have long vacations or holidays; did not have even expensive habits yet I did not have time to even smell the flowers, or such small things in life. I have had a very hard life, we were always in debt.” Her pride was in getting out of debt, and showing me car that she bought, all paid for, the last of her debt. But what had I expected? I am not too sure, but subconsciously I expected happy, contented families; happily ever after scenarios . . . that money bought happiness. There were happy people too; a lot of them although each family at some point had faced some adversity or the other. What I certainly didn’t expect was the unhappiness, the sadness, the crying, the family pains, and the turmoil that I encountered. I talk of sadness so much probably because I least expected it; it remains etched in mind. I dealt with it by using the Indian phrase *ghar ghar ki kahani* [every household’s tale], yet in India I rarely knew of these kinds of unhappiness in families. Maybe, as I alluded, I was naïve.

During the course of a year when I conducted these interviews, I met people who were opposite in every way; some were very westernized in their beliefs and thoughts, and then there were those who after decades of stay in the U.S. proudly retained their Indian identities; there were very successful people, there were not so successful people; there were highly educated, there were not so educated and so on . . . As human beings, however, they were living their lives in happiness, in sadness, in good times and in bad times, in poverty and in wealth; in sickness and in health; alone and with families; in families and yet alone. Yet they had made lives for themselves with dignity and poise. People who were down and out once upon a time, stood proud after what they had gone through, especially the women whose identities had transformed from meek, obedient

women to dignified persons who held their heads high throughout all their trials and tribulations. In the process, some had become very successful and some were barely making ends meet. Yet as our meetings progressed, I also had to deal with my increasing admiration for them. I learnt so much, especially from the women, yes indeed the 'superwomen', that when I returned home, I was reinvigorated, recharged for a few days before reverting to my lethargic, lazy, stagnant self who thought ten times before moving from the couch to the kitchen counter to fetch a glass of water in case it might be construed as exercise of body and mind.

These indeed were remarkable men and women, in their own ways. But then there were also a few irritating souls too, who stood me up time and again, tried telling me what to do, what to write, gossiped about the others, and gave their briefs on the community. The most irritating of all in this entire process was my voice on the tape. Time and again I wanted to scream at myself for talking too much, for cutting people short, not giving people enough time when they seemed to be thinking. They were thinking of words and then my voice intervened . . . that perhaps was the saddest part of the interviews.

After the interviews, however, I just disappeared. I rarely called back. It was time for analysis, and getting back to my real life, no driving, no cost cutting measures any more. I had become the detached person again. Yet even from a distance I often thought about them. Every time there was a layoff at GM, Ford or Chrysler I wondered about some of my subjects and their families. Through my contacts I try to pry some information. Every time I listened to the interviews I thought about them. I have tried to be as objective as I could be, but that is for the reader to decide. However, I did make

choices. There was one interview I did not use at all; I could not bring myself to write about her life; there was so much pain and sorrow at such a young age. She was one person who didn't cry but I was choked throughout. I just could not begin to write about it. Moreover, I think I became involved, gave her pep talks, unconsciously tried to help her, told her things will be OK and in essence lost the role of an interviewer. She however, is counted in the sample, is *Anamkia* in the participants' list, literally translated as 'woman with no name', a constant reminder of the pitfalls facing oral interviewers, as well as, a reminder of the complexities of human relationships.

After finishing this research, I plan to return to 'my people' and share the end result of the project with them. Yet there remains a nagging doubt of how 'my subjects' or the 'the sample' as I collectively refer to them, will receive me; for after all, after completion of the interviews, I did walk out of their lives.

ENDNOTES

¹ Mary Chamberlain, "Gender and the Narratives of Migration," in History Journal Workshop, Issue 43, 1997, 87-106

Appendix II

The Participants

	Name *	Sex	Age at arrival	Year of Arrival	Mode of arrival	Place of origin**	Occupation***
1	Bharati	F	13	1959	Family	Delhi	Professor
2	Pramila	F	28	1961	Family	Baroda	Food related services
3	Rama	F	22	1963	Student	Bombay	Scientist
4	Indira	F	27	1969	Family	Trivandrum	Computer
5	Nalini	F	20	1967	Family	Calcutta	Teacher
6	Meena	F	14	1966	Family	Baroda	Teacher
7	Uma	F	24	1968	Family	Bombay	Physician
8	Vimla	F	26	1966	Student	Ahmedabad	Professor
9	Soudamini	F	27	1964	Family	Ujjain	Nurse
10	Raksha	F	31	1966	Family	Ropar	Housewife
11	Veena	F	23	1967	Student	Nagpur	Social Worker
12	Amrita	F	25	1968	Family	Amhedabad	Physician
13	Savitri Devi	F	34	1962	Family	Amritsar	Business
14	Kamlesh	F	25	1965	Family	Allahabad	Housewife
15	Shobha	F	32	1974	Family	Ajmer	Housewife
16	Tripta	F	9	1971	Family	Delhi	Management
17	Kuldeep	F	26	1977	Family	Bhopal	Chemist
18	Lila	F	20	1976	Family	Chandigarh	Business

19	Sheila	F	23	1971	Labor	Patna	Physician
20	Chandra	F	20	1974	Family	Bombay	Medical Technician
21	Sneha	F	24	1975	Family	Bombay	Sales lady
22	Usha	F	21	1973	Family	Calcutta	Business
23	Chitra	F	27	1970	Family	Kanpur	Real Estate
24	Mala	F	25	1978	Family	Ajmer	Physician
25	Mona	F	22	1976	Family	Bombay	Business
26	Sushma	F	26	1976	Family	Ranchi	Engineer
27	Laila	F	21	1970	Family	Mangalore	Management
28	Prema	F	12	1971	Family	Benaras	Housewife
29	Shymala	F	37	1984	Labor	Bombay	Entertainment,
30	Kuldeep	F	22	1980	Family	Ludhiana	Factory work
31	Shakuntala	F	26	1972	Family	Madras	Physician
32	Romi	F	32	1982	Family	Allahabad	Teacher
33	Divya	F	28	1984	Family	Meerut	Bio technologist
34	Farida	F	23	1982	Family	Hyderabad	Bank
35	Radha	F	26	1986	Family	Lucknow	Engineer /Computer
36	Rachna	F	27	1984	Student	Baroda	Engineer /Computer
37	Preeti	F	23	1986	Family	Kanpur	Computer
38	Madhu	F	23	1985	Student	Jamshedpur	Teacher
39	Gita	F	24	1985	Family	Hyderabad	Professor

40	Veenu	F	19	1982	Family	Ludhiana	Real Estate/ Business
41	Sujata	F	26	1983	Family	Delhi	Administrative
42	Uttara	F	33	1982	Family	Bombay	Housewife
43	Abha	F	25	1987	Family	Ajmer	Physician
44	Karuna	F	34	1990	Labor	Delhi	Physiotherapist
45	Kulwant	F	24	1992	Labor	Delhi	Physiotherapist
46	Manju	F	29	1992	Labor	Nagpur	Physiotherapist
47	Adnan	M	27	1982	Family	Hyderabad	Engineer
48	Sampath	M	25	1957	Student	Ahmedabad	Engineer
49	Rajendra	M	18	1963	Student	Delhi	Teacher/ administrator
50	Srikanth	M	24	1961	Student	Ahmedabad	Engineer
51	Ram Lal	M	35	1961	Student	Amritsar	Engineer
52	Prasad	M	24	1968	Labor	Konkan	Physician
53	Raghubir	M	22	1983	Student	Bangalore	Engineer
54	Jatin	M	23	1980	Student	Calcutta	Engineer
55	John	M	31	1978	Family	Cochin	Factory work
56	Arun	M	27	1986	Student	Delhi	Engineer
57	Karan	M	29	1981	Labor	Ludhiana	Engineer
58	Murthy	M	30	1958	Labor	Madras	Professor
59	Vipan	M	26	1964	Student	Allahabad	Professor

60	Niraj	M	23	1975	Labor	Delhi	Physician
61	Satish	M	28	1969	Labor	Calcutta	Engineer
62	Rajan	F	25	1985	Family	Chandigarh	Engineer
63	Rajnish	F	33	1974	Labor	Meerut	Physician
64	Upendra	M	26	1974	Labor	Lucknow	Engineer
65	Anamika						

* These are pseudonyms. Real names have been changed to protect participants identity

** The place of origin noted here is the one where the migrants grew up or spent the maximum amount of time; majority had spent their lives in more than one place for education, employment, marriage or through family migration.

***The occupation noted here denotes the work immigrants identified with. Many had held other jobs in other fields.

QUESTIONAIRE

Please answer the questions applicable to you.

Name

Age

Resident Area/ Address

How long have you been in the U.S.?

Name the places you have resided in India.

Name the places you have resided in since leaving India.

What languages do you speak at home?

What languages are you familiar with?

What religion do you follow?

Marital Status:

Are you single / married/ divorced/ separated/ divorced?

When did you get married?

Where did you get married?

Did you have an arranged or love marriage?

Who arranged your marriage, or how did you meet your spouse?

Immigration and Visa

What visa category did you use to enter the U.S.?

Did anyone sponsor you to come to the U.S.?

Has there been any change in your visa category since your arrival in the U.S.A.?

Do you have green card? If so, when did you get it?

Family

Who are the members of your family/ household?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Do you/ did you ever live in a joint family? If so, please write the relationship of the members to you.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Do you have any relatives or members of your extended family living in the U.S.A. or Canada?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Family background

Education	Work History
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Mother

Father

Brothers

1.

2.

3.

Sisters

1.

2.

3.

Educational History

Educational Degree	University/ College	Year	Area of Study
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Self

Spouse

Children

Did you have any education in the U.S.A?

Educational Degree	University/ College	Year	Area of Study
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Self

Spouse

**Work History
In India**

1.

2.

In the U.S.A.

1.

2.

3.

4.

What is your personal income (approx.)?

What is your combined family income (approx.)?

Are you a member of any ethnic/professional/ religious/ alumni or any other association?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Is there any other information you wish to provide?

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