ASSIMILATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS AMONG CREATIVE
WORKERS: THE CASE OF BENGALI-INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE KANSAS CITY
METROPOLITAN AREA

by

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B.A., Presidency College, Calcutta, India, 2004
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

This qualitative research explores the relationship between urban amenities and the employment of creative Indian workers using personal interviews conducted with Indian professional workers and their families working and residing in the Kansas City (KC) Metropolitan Area. In addressing the debate of whether creative workers follow jobs or jobs follow creative workers, the findings indicate that the decision of Indian creative workers to locate in the Kansas City metropolitan area was primarily influenced by the availability of job opportunities and had little to do with available amenities. A key finding from this study is that the presence of local amenities central to the lifestyles of American professional workers was more important to Indian professional workers than the availability of ethnic Indian amenities such as Indian grocery stores, restaurants, temples, and the screening of Bollywood movies in local theaters. It was also found that "social" amenities (e.g. participation in ethnic Indian associations and formation of networks with other Indian workers residing in the city) are crucial to the retention of Indian professional workers rather than amenities offered through the market. Further, Indian workers preferred residing in suburbs over inner city neighborhoods because of their strong emphasis on the educational achievement of their children and the presence of better schooling opportunities in the suburbs. While 'distance from work' and 'safety of the neighborhood' were other amenity considerations shaping the settlement decisions of Indian professionals, the presence of co-ethnics in the neighborhood was not an influential factor. The study revealed that most Bengali professionals considered themselves to be assimilated in United States and they appreciated the fact that they are not forced to forsake any aspects of their ethnic culture in the United States. However, some considered that their hectic work schedule, family responsibilities, and involvement with ethnic Indian associations often inhibit adequate assimilation with Americans outside of work. Furthermore, the research found that most Bengali professionals preferred not to impose career or marital choices on their children. However, most second-generation Bengalis were skeptical of their parents' overemphasis on academic achievement and interference in their personal lives.

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I bow down before my grandparents Anil Chatterjee and Parul Chatterjee for the sacrifices they made for me. "Chotoma," I wish that you were amidst us today to see me complete my degree and return home. To say I miss you is an understatement.

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Dedication

Dedicated to my late grandmother, Parul Chatterjee.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The United States of America has often been described as a nation of immigrants (Martin and Widgren, 2002; Dunn and Paul, 2002). In line with its reputation, Dunn and Paul (2002) note that immigration contributed to about 30% of the total population increase in United States in the last decade. Further, average annual migration resulted in 330,000 immigrants in the 1960s, 450,000 in the 1970s, 600,000 in the 1980s, and 820,000 in the 1990s (Martin and Midgley, 1999; Riche, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Dunn and Paul, 2002). Similarly, Hernandez (1999) observes that one-fifth or 20 percent of all children in United States are immigrants. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, approximately 2.7 million Asian Indians live in the United States and the Indian American community is one the country's fastest growing immigrant communities (Bhatia, 2007).

It should be noted that the flow of immigrants to the United States has varied according to economic conditions and U.S. immigration policies (Dunn and Paul, 2002). Researchers contend that the flow of immigrants to the United States occurred in four major waves (Helweg and Helweg, 1990; Lee, 1998; Dunn, 2001). The first wave of immigrants came before 1820 and it comprised of immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Spain, France, and the Netherlands (Dunn, 2001). The second wave of immigration came in between 1820 and 1860, when additionally German, British, and Irish immigrants arrived and pushed back the Western frontier (Dunn, 2001). The third wave of immigration occurred between the late 1800s and early 1900s and was comprised of people from southern and eastern Europe who migrated to take part in the U.S. Industrial Revolution (Dunn, 2001). The fourth wave of immigrants came after 1965, when for the first time, Latin American and Asian immigrants dominated the immigrant stock

(Riche, 2000; Martin and Midgley, 1999; Lee, 1998; Mogelonsky, 1995; Helweg and Helweg, 1990; Dunn, 2001).

Among the Asian nations, Indians constitute a major immigrant group to the U.S. (Dunn and Paul, 2002). In fact the Asian Indians are the third largest Asian American ethnic group in the United States, larger than all other groups except the Chinese and Filipinos (Dunn and Paul, 2002). From 1990 to 2000, the Asian Indian population in United States grew by 106 percent (Bhatia, 2007). Compared to the seven percent growth rate of the general population, Indians constitute the fastest-growing Asian American community (Bhatia, 2007). Furthermore, Asian Indians are active participants in the U.S. labor force. In 1997, their labor force participation rate was considerably higher compared to other Asian and non-Asian groups (Lee, 1998; Riche, 2000; Dunn and Paul, 2002).

In terms of education, Asian Indians are ahead of most immigrant groups in the United States. Kao and Thompson (2003) note that native- and foreign-born Asian Indian men have a high school graduation rate of 90-94%, Indian women have a rate between 78-87%. This ranks fourth among Asian nations, trailing only native-born Japanese Americans (98% of men and women), native-born Chinese Americans (97% of men and 96% of women), and foreign-born Japanese Americans (96% of men and 92% of women) (Kao and Thompson, 2003). While most Asian Indians migrated to the United States in the late twentieth century, the history of this migration stream extends back into the nineteenth century.

History of Asian Indian Immigration to United States

The first Indian was admitted to the United States in 1820 (Chandrasekhar, 1982; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). For the next fifty years, fewer than ten Indians arrived each year in the United States (Chandrasekhar, 1982; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). The slow immigration of Indians resulted in

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fewer than 700 Indians over a period of 80 years from 1820 to 1900. The fact that no Asian

Indians were admitted to the United States between 1893 and 1898 lowered the number of Indian

immigrants in the U.S. during the period. However during the initial years of the twentieth

century, the number of Indian immigrants to United States increased from 9 in 1900 to more than

1,000 in 1907 (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). By 1910, the presence of Indians in United States had

become alarming enough that the Asiatic Exclusion League and the American Federation of

Labor began to stigmatize immigrant Indians as the 'Tide of Turbans', 'ragheads' and even as a

distinct 'menace' (Brown, 1975, 1982; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990).

Irrespective of their religious affiliations, Indian immigrants were generally seen as Hindus

(Brown, 1982). Almost 90% of the Indians were from the Jat[1] farming families, and practiced

Sikhism (Jensen, 1980; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). The early Sikh immigrants were mostly

occupied with work on the Western Pacific Railroad. They later migrated to the rural areas of the

Central Valley of California and resorted to their traditional occupation of agriculture (Jensen,

1980; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990).

After the 1940s, a slow but fluctuating number of Indian immigrants came to the United

States. This trend continued for the next two decades until 1965 (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990).

When the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was passed, there was an upward surge of

Indian immigrants (Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports, 1964-80; Bhardwaj

and Rao, 1990). In this context, Kanjanapan (1995) identified three policy changes contained in

the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act that led to a rapid influx of Asian Indian immigrants.

First, he observed that the new act abolished the national origins quota system and replaced it

with a new visa preference system. More specifically, an annual quota of 120,000 was assigned

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[1] The Jats are a community of traditional non-elite tillers and herders settled in the Indian states of Punjab, Haryana,

to persons from the Western Hemisphere regions while a quota of 170,000 persons was assigned to persons from the Eastern Hemisphere areas for a total 290,000 persons from all countries. In this general quota system, there is no national origin quota other than the limitation that no more than 20,000 annual visas would be issued for a single country (Kanjanapan, 1995).

The second change Kanjanapan (1995) noted was the replacement of a preference system with a new law favoring family relationships. In addition, the new preference system made a distinction among job skill levels and gave greater preference to professional workers. The act allocated 26% of annual visas to spouses/children of permanent residents and granted 24% of the annual visas to more distant relationships like brothers/sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces. The third major modification in the 1965 Act was the introduction of labor certification. Kanjanapan (1995) argued that labor certification procedures were designed to ensure that immigrants entering as workers are equipped with skills needed for jobs in the United States.

The impact of the Act of 1965 was dramatic. While fewer than 600 Asian Indians migrated to the United States in 1965, approximately 10,000 arrived by 1970 (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). The peculiarity of the immigration trend of that era was that the number of European immigrants greatly declined while the number of non-European immigrants sharply increased (Reimers, 1981; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). For instance, in 1984, the number of Asian origin immigrants was four times the number of European immigrants (Gardner, Robey and Smith, 1985; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). As Bhardwaj and Rao (1990) observed, *"Asian immigrants have increasingly become part of the 'visible' U.S. minorities; this visibility is shared by the Asian Indians as well." (pp. 198-199).*

However, the number of Asian Indian immigrants remained low compared to the Korean, Chinese and Filipinos (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). The number of Indian immigrants increased to

97,484 persons during 1976-1980 period, fluctuating between 15,000 and 22,000 immigrants annually. Most Indian immigrants were men. But during the period 1972-1976, females outnumbered males, mainly because prior Indian immigrants started to bring their wives (Bhardwaj et al., 1990).

The Context of Asian-Indian Migration

Scholars believe that Asian Indian migration to the United States has more to do with American 'pull' rather than Indian 'push' factors (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). Bhardwaj and Rao (1990) noted that the Indian immigrants coming to the United States were not from economically challenged families, but were educated, professional elites who had access to worldwide professional cultures. The American economy, on the other hand, was being restructured and aimed for unprecedented expansion. As Bhardwaj and Rao (1990) explained, *The race for technological supremacy was in full swing, demanding in its wake engineers, scientists, and college teachers" (p.199).* Furthermore, the rapid expansion of the health care industry led to greater demand for physicians (CCME, 1976; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). Bhardwaj and Rao (1990) argued that the reorganization of the American economy generated *"a powerful pull on the technological cultures of the developing world, India included"* (p. 200). Since most Indian professionals are trained in their respective fields through the medium of English (Krauter and Davis, 1978), their integration with the professional culture in the U.S. came with relative ease (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). Owing to the preference imposed by the 1965 immigration laws, 80% of Indian immigrants between the years 1966 and 1973 were trained for 'professional, technical, and kindred' occupations (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). Thus, during the 1960s and early 1970s, Indian professionals (comprising engineers, medical graduates, natural and social scientists) outnumbered those from other countries (Bhagwati and Dellalfer, 1976; Bhardwaj and

Rao, 1990).

Biradavolu (2008) observed that there were other reasons that contributed to the migration of high-technology Indian professionals to the United States during the 1990s. First, Biradavolu (2008) observes that starting in the late 1980s, there was an increasing labor shortage in the information and technology sector of the U.S. economy which created demand for IT professionals. Indian engineers, equipped with quality education and training, migrated to United States to meet this demand.

Biradavolu (2008) additionally notes that there were two other changes in the computer industry that contributed to a rise in the immigration of highly skilled workers to United States in the 1990s. The first concerns the rising cost of software in IT systems. Software currently accounts for more than 85% of the cost structure of a total computer system. However, in the late 1950s, it accounted for less than 15% of the cost of a system (Biradavolu, 2008). Simultaneously, software production has remained relatively craft-like and labor intensive (Gibbs, 1994). As Biradavolu (2008) elaborated, *"In sharp contrast to hardware production, which has become highly automated, software development is prone to "bugs," delays, and cost overruns" (p.74).* Thus, software productivity and quality have lagged behind that of hardware, resulting in a "software bottleneck" (Biradavolu, 2008). Because of this labor intensity, more software workers were needed as the IT industry grew (Biradavolu, 2008).

A second reason is that in the 1990s, the realization dawned that computer systems needed to be adjusted in order to accommodate changes in the date when the year 2000 arrived. This issue came to be known as the Y2K problem. This problem was not restricted to the IT industry and was faced by other sectors of the U.S. economy as well (Biradavolu, 2008). As a result, it was

estimated that in 1997, 190,000 Y2K-related jobs were waiting to be filled in the United States (Baker and Kriplani, 1997).

Together, these two factors were responsible for the increased demand for immigrant workers by U.S. industries. The magnitude of demand of skilled workers was such that in October 1998, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation that raised the number of visas for foreign temporary workers with professional skills from 65,000 specialists each year to 95,000 in 1998 and up to 105,000 each year until 2002 (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2003; Biradavolu, 2008).

The Scenario in India

India was also witnessing political and technological change during the same period. It was under the leadership of the then prime-minister, Rajiv Gandhi, that India liberalized its economy, placing high priority on rapid technological modernization. Although other sectors of the economy received attention, Rajiv Gandhi's emphasis was on the modernization of the nation's communications sector. Within a month of being prime-minister, Gandhi passed a new "Computer Policy" that deregulated the industry and allowed the import of computer equipment. The era witnessed the increasing involvement of corporate actors in determining India's economic policy. The new partnership between public and private actors in the electronics and the IT sector resulted in the formation of the policy known as the "Integrated Policy Measures on Electronics" in 1985. The policy exempted the electronics sector from various taxes and import duties paid by other industries (Chakravartty, 2000).

The "New Software Policy" of 1984 officially recognized India's comparative advantage in having a low-wage, English speaking labor force in data processing and software services. Accordingly, the policy liberalized software imports and also terminated restrictions on foreign

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equity. Transnational corporations like Texas Instruments (TI) and Hewlett Packard (HP) entered the Indian market in the mid-1980s and Texas Instruments became the first multinational corporation to invest multi-millions of dollars in software operations in Bangalore in 1986. This marked the first global recognition of Bangalore as India's Silicon Valley (Chakravartty, 2000).

Besides providing platforms for attracting IT firms, the Indian government has also taken steps to offer quality education in science and technology at a subsidized cost to eligible students. For instance, Sahay (2009) notes that the tuition fees for the IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) remained highly subsidized until 1991 at 250 rupees per annum ($10 at the 1991 exchange rate, and $5 at today's). Although at present, the tuition fees at the IITs have risen to 22,000 rupees ($440) a year, it hardly stands in comparison to the tuition fees charged at an elite American engineering school, which are forty to fifty times higher (Sahay, 2009).

Though the post-colonial Indian state is not averse to the migration of its skilled citizens to developed countries around the world, it expects them to return back and contribute to the country's growth (Sahay, 2009). In other words, it encourages migration of high-tech workers and meritorious students with the assumption that *"when the graduates return from countries like the U.S., they bring money, they bring a tested education, and above all bitten by entrepreneurship bug."* (Financial Times, April 24, 2000; Chakravartty, 2000).

In an attempt to win its emigrants back, the Indian government has taken every step to modernize Bangalore, which is the center of the IT services and software industry in the country. Projected as the "City of the Future" for India, leading IT companies like Infosys, Wipro, Texas Instruments, Hewlett-Packard, and Digital Equipment Corporation have set up their offices in Bangalore. Further, the Government of India has announced the issuance of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) Cards for those living abroad and having foreign passports. The PIO Card would

benefit returning Indian emigrants by extending a visa-free regime, and conferring special economic, social, and cultural benefits (Sahay, 2009).

An important focus of this research therefore was to unearth the specific causes that facilitate or discourage migration of Bengali professionals to the United States. Additionally, it studied the factors that deter Bengali immigrants from returning to India, despite the facilities and opportunities offered by the Indian government. Other key purposes of this dissertation are to examine the urban amenities preferred by Bengali-Indian professionals and their assimilation process in the United States. Therefore, a brief overview of the Bengali-Indian community is provided in order to familiarize readers with the history and cultural specifics of the community.

The Bengali-Indians

This research focused exclusively on Bengali-Indian[2] professionals from India residing in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Bengalis in India, primarily come from the state of West Bengal. However, some are dispersed in other parts of India as well. For the purpose of this research, I have studied Bengali professionals not only from the state of West Bengal but also from other parts of India. However, Bengalis from Bangladesh are not considered for this research.

West Bengal is situated in the eastern part of India and is the home to 71 million Bengalis (Census of India, 2001). It has been further been estimated that 30,000 Bengalis have immigrated to the United States. During the colonial period of Indian history, the Bengali elites justified their social dominance by virtue of their high class and caste positions. They were referred to as "Bhadralok" or the respectable people (Niyogi, 2011). During British rule, the upper-middle class Bengalis engaged themselves in English education and conspicuous consumption practices.

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[2] The term Bengali is used to refer to people who speak the Bengali language and reside primarily in West Bengal (India), and in Bangladesh. The ethnic group is characterized by distinct cultural traditions, language, and food habits.

As Niyogi (2011) notes, they were interested in becoming "more English than the English." However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the ideals of enlightenment began to appeal to the Bengalis and this gave impetus to the national struggle for independence (Niyogi, 2011).

After India achieved independence in 1947, Bengal was partitioned into Hindu-dominated West Bengal (under the territory of India) and Muslim-dominated East Bengal (under the territory of Pakistan). East Bengal got liberated from Pakistan in 1971 and became the independent nation of Bangladesh. During the 1970s, Bangladesh witnessed rising tension between its Hindu and Muslim populations. This resulted in an increasing influx of Hindu refugees to West Bengal. The political stability in West Bengal was further jeopardized by the rise of a Maoist group called the Naxalites. Upper-middle class Bengalis had difficulty preventing their sons from being influenced by Maoist ideals and joining the Naxalbari movement. As a result, many young people from elite Bengali families were sent abroad for graduate studies in order to keep them isolated from the influence of the Naxalbari movement and allow them to escape the police brutality employed to suppress the movement (Banerjee, 1984; Niyogi, 2011).

In her comparison of two ethnic groups from India--Bengali-Hindus and Punjabi-Sikhs--Niyogi (2008) notes that while Bengali-Hindus use their sub-national ethnicity to portray themselves as educated and possessors of "progressive liberal" ideals, Sikhs use their sub-national ethnicity as a tool to transcend class barriers and build solidarity based on the narratives of martyrdom, bravery, and a history of being marginalized[3] (Niyogi, 2008).

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[3] Sikhs are an ethnic community, residing in the state of Punjab in India. Sikhs believe that the identity of a true Sikh stems from the spirit of bravery and martyrdom (Niyogi, 2008). The ethnic identity of the Sikhs in intricately tied to the policies of colonial and independent India. After the independence of India in 1947, a combination of economic forces (particularly the anger and frustration of those disadvantaged by the 'green revolution'), unmet demands for greater decentralization of power from the central to the state government, religious revivalism among Sikhs, and increasing antagonism between Sikhs and Hindus, created the demand for the sovereign Sikh state of Khalistan in

Urban Amenities and Professional Immigrants

Theorists like Portes and Rumbaut (1996) have noted that immigration to the United States is an urban phenomenon and the immigrants mainly concentrate in the bigger cities. Asian-Indians, like other Asian groups (e.g. Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, and Koreans) have predominantly located in metropolitan areas. Bhardwaj and Rao (1990) note that 70% of Asian-Indians reside in eight major industrial-urban states-New York, California, New Jersey, Texas, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio. Also, as a group, they remain much more concentrated in metropolitan areas compared to the general American population (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990). Little is presently known about the role of urban amenities in attracting and retaining Asian Indians in general, and Bengali-Indian professionals as residents of U.S. metropolitan areas.

In his work *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida (2002a) argues that the advanced nations are characterized by information-based, knowledge-based economies. Florida (2002a) posits that the creative economy is supported by an extensive venture capital system. Innovation, which forms the crux of the venture capital system, is possible only in geographic areas that offer "low barriers to entry for human capital" (Florida, 2002b, p.743). In other words, Florida (2002b) notes that talent is attracted to areas characterized by diversity and high-technology industry, which, in turn, is attracted to places with high levels of human capital and high levels of diversity. He reasons that companies cluster in a particular place in order to draw from the concentration of talented people who create innovation and economic growth (Florida, 2002a).

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the 1980s (Niyogi, 2008). Furthermore, the demand of Khalistan was articulated more concretely abroad among the Sikh diaspora than in India (Niyogi, 2008). This was mainly because a vast majority living abroad were rural peasants whose migration was triggered by unfavorable land rights legislations (Niyogi, 2008). In 1984, the Government of India launched 'Operation Bluestar' and the Indian army invaded the Golden Temple (sacred temple of the Sikhs), under the leadership of the then prime-minister Indira Gandhi. Later Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her armed Sikh security officers. Agitated by Gandhi's assassination, anti-Sikh riots were allegedly organized by Congress leaders. The widespread killing of Sikhs, mainly in the capital city of New Delhi, and other North Indian cities, led to a major divide between the Sikhs and the Indian government (Niyogi, 2008).

Florida's (2002a) personal interviews with creative workers revealed that many had moved to places first based on lifestyle considerations and then looked for employment in that preferred destination (Florida, 2002a). This study investigates the role that urban amenities play in the decisions of Bengali-Indian professionals as creative workers to migrate to a U.S. metropolitan area as well as the role of amenities in facilitating their adaptation to social life in such a location.

The Assimilation of Bengalis in the United States

Robert Park argued that the process of assimilation in the host society is inevitable and is accompanied by gradual disappearance of ethnic differences (Alba and Nee, 2003). In this context, Massey (1981) argued that residential proximity among racial groups is an important measure of assimilation because it provides a rough estimation of the degree to which immigrant groups are spatially isolated from the mainstream American society. Additionally, Alba and Logan (1993) report that residential assimilation with the White majority tends to increase with higher socioeconomic status, acculturation (measured in terms of English proficiency), and duration of stay in the United States. Scholars like Lieberson (1963), Gordon (1964), and Massey (1981) believe that residential assimilation aids other forms of sociocultural integration (like interracial marriage) that are closely related to residential proximity.

Interestingly it has been observed that although the majority of the Asian immigrants who arrived in the United States during the 1980s were living in the metropolitan areas, they prefer to settle in suburban areas rather than inner cities (Nee and Sanders, 1985; Alba and Nee, 1999). Speaking exclusively about Asian Indian immigrants in New York city, Khandelwal (1995) views the new settlement pattern as an attempt of the educated, economically well-off Asian Indian population to assimilate with their White American counterparts. This research

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investigated whether assimilation is easier for Bengali professionals by virtue of them having a better education and progressive cultural ethos. I also studied the settlement pattern of Bengali-Indian professionals in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area and unearthed the reasons behind their choice of a particular neighborhood for residential purposes.

Besides residential assimilation, interracial marriage can also be taken as an important indicator of assimilation in the host society (Massey, 1981). It has been observed that the second generation from immigrant families experience more interracial marriages compared to the first. This trend can be explained in terms of the fact that second generations are better educated and have greater command over English and job skills, which in turn, lead to lower unemployment rates and higher earnings in comparison to the native population (Chiswick and Sullivan, 1995; Qian and Lichter, 2001). My research examined the extent to which Bengali professionals are "progressive" and "liberal minded" in accepting interracial marriages within their families.

Ethnic Associations and their Purpose

In discussing how Asian- Indians in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Texas try and maintain their cultural heritage, Caroline Brettell (2005) notes that Indians also use ethnic organizations to facilitate civic engagement and integration in the host society. For example, Pete Sessions, the Republican Congressman, was invited to the annual event of an Indian organization and congratulated on becoming a member of the Caucus on India and Indian-Americans in Washington (Brettell, 2005).

In his study of an Indian-American Association (IANA) in Dallas, Pawan Dhingra (2003) observes that the organization leaders and members join IANA because they feel stereotyped and less comfortable with the mainstream American culture. However, the IANA strives to maintain the image of Indians as a "model minority" by downplaying the issue of racism (Dhingra, 2003).

For example, Dingra (2003) emphasizes that the IANA did not organize any panel or event to discuss the increased harassment towards South Asians in the neighborhood after the 9/11 attack (Dhingra, 2003). Dhingra (2003) believes that such aloofness on the part of IANA is an effort to maintain the "model-minority" image of the community, which is free of problems despite its non-White status.

This research examined the purpose that ethnic organizations serve for Bengali professionals in Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Echoing Niyogi (2008), I contend that Bengalis provide an apt case study for this purpose because their high education and job skills make them fit the "model minority image" with remarkable accuracy.

In their familial life as well, Indian immigrants strive to maintain their cultural traditions. However, their effort to socialize the second-generation to accept traditional Indian values has received considerable resistance from the latter (Ghosh, 1995; Agarwal, 1991). Now I briefly discuss some of key issues over which the first- and second- generation Indians disagree.

Intergenerational Conflict Among Asian Indian Immigrants

Sathi S. Dasgupta (1989) contends that Indians are characterized by family centrism. This implies that the interests and attitudes of the individual are subordinated to the interests of the family. Though first generation Indian immigrants feel the need to grant some amount of autonomy to their children in regard to their career choices, they prefer to set the limits within which their children make choices (Dasgupta, 1989). Problems arise when career-oriented parents try to impose their own medical or engineering profession on their children (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Indian parents also try to convince their children to accept arranged marriages. They believe that it would be easier to assimilate their children's spouse to the family if they are Indians

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(Agarwal, 1991). Some Indian parents also believe that endogamous marriages lead to greater compatibility between marriage partners (Agarwal, 1991). In contrast to their parent's viewpoint, the younger generation expressed dissent about the fact that they are expected to spend the rest of their lives with a stranger who comes from a vastly different cultural background (Ghosh, 1995). This research investigated whether Bengali professionals allow greater acculturation of their children to American society and are more receptive toward the diffusion of American values within their families as a result of embracing progressive ideals or other factors.

Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this dissertation can thus be summarized as follows: First, the study examines factors that facilitate or discourage migration of Bengali professionals to the United States. Second, the study identifies factors that deter Bengali immigrants from returning to India, despite the facilities and opportunities offered by the Indian government. Third, the study investigates the role that urban amenities play in attracting Bengali-Indian professionals to a particular city in United States and staying there. Fourth, the research tries to understand the purpose that ethnic organizations serve for Bengali professionals in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Fifth, the study examines the settlement pattern of Bengali-Indian professionals in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area and identifies the reasons behind their choice of a particular neighborhood for residential purposes. Sixth, this research investigates whether assimilation is easier for Bengali professionals by virtue of them having a better education and embracing a progressive cultural ethos. Finally, the study examines whether the Bengali professionals, by virtue of having progressive ideals, allow the greater acculturation of their children to American society and are more receptive towards diffusion of American values within their families.

Organization of the Chapters

The dissertation is structured as follows; this introductory chapter is followed by the Literature Review, which discusses the existing literatures in the field and identifies theoretical perspectives that address various aspects of Asian Indian immigration to United States. The third chapter, identifies the knowledge gaps in the theories discussed in the second chapter, describes the issues that are addressed by this research, and highlights the contribution this research makes to the knowledge base on this topic. The fourth chapter describes the research methodology that was used to address the research issues. The fifth chapter presents the research findings. The final chapter summarizes the key findings and presents the conclusions.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

In this chapter, I examine the existing research literature that is relevant to my study. I begin by examining the literature on theories of migration, starting with human capital theory. This is followed by discussions of the new economics of migration and social network theory. I also discuss literature pertaining to Settlement Preferences of Professional Workers, Patterns of Inter-Racial Relationships, Asian Indian Ethnic Organizations and Amenities and Indian Family and Cultural Traditions.

Human Capital Theory

Portes (1995) asserts that international migration can be understood in terms of labor-capital dynamics. The theory contends that countries with large supplies of labor and small amounts of capital produce low equilibrium wages, while the opposite is true of countries where labor is scarce and capital is abundant (Portes, 1995). All things being equal, migration to capital-rich nations will continue until wages decline sufficiently within them and rise sufficiently within labor-rich nations to produce an international equilibrium (Portes, 1995). In this context, Borjas introduced the concept of the "global migration market," where individuals rationally calculate the comparative costs and benefits of migrating from or staying in their country of origin (Portes, 1995). Hence, Portes (1995) argues that people migrate to those places where the expected net returns over a given period of time are the greatest. The net return of migration is calculated by multiplying the productivity of human capital in the destination country by the probability of finding employment in the host country and subtracting from it the material, social, and psychological costs associated with migration (Portes, 1995).

Interestingly, Portes (1995) asserts that most international labor migration originates in intermediately-developed countries rather than in those countries where development and wages are the lowest. Furthermore, in such intermediately-developed nations, the very poor and unemployed are not the first to migrate. It is people with some resources (e.g. small rural proprietors, urban artisans, and skilled workers) who initiate the process (Portes, 1995). In fact, research has revealed that the employment differential, and not the wage differential per se, is the most crucial factor prompting migration (Maldonado, 1976; Fleisher, 1963). Thus, changes in the employment structure of the country of origin may trigger migration to the destination country as well (Dunn, 2001).

Portes (1995) further contends that spontaneous migration (i.e. when people migrate without any coercion or inducement) is largely a twentieth century phenomenon. Such spontaneous movement of people can be explained in terms of the integration of peripheral societies into the global economy and peoples' growing awareness of opportunities existing abroad (Portes, 1995). In this context, Saskia Sassen (1988) argues that the introduction of industrial capitalism in developing countries in search for cheap labor produces new forms of disruption within them. Workers in developing countries are exposed to modes of production and consumption practices of the advanced Western world, yet their employment is short-lived and too poorly paid to realize their desired consumption aspirations (Portes, 1995). Furthermore, firms prefer to employ female workers because they are less costly and are more compliant (Portes, 1995). As a survival strategy, unemployed males are forced to emigrate from their country (Portes, 1995). Portes (1995) posits that apart from economic factors, other considerations like prior contact, the extent of economic penetration, and social organization of sending societies should be included in migration analysis. As Portes (1995) elaborates, *"Decisions to migrate do not occur in a*

vacuum; the "costs" and "benefits" that enter into such individual calculations are themselves conditioned by an institutional structure reflecting external hegemony. Resulting transformations in the economy, society, and culture of peripheral regions provide the contexts in which migration abroad becomes a plausible, even necessary option for their populations." (p.22).

The migration decisions of Asian Indian immigrants cannot be explained without the analysis of ideological factors (Helweg, 1987). Helweg (1987) contends that Indian immigrants always consult their families when making the decision to migrate. Interestingly, Helweg (1987) notes that Indian families often encourage the migration of younger family members to western countries for education. This is because they consider western education to be of superior quality, which will add to the prestige of the family (Helweg, 1987). Helweg (1987) notes that often such decisions are not based on accurate information because potential Indian emigrants share an unrealistic expectation of life abroad. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that the families of emigrants in India hide the failures and problems of their relatives, and highlight and celebrate only their successes (Helweg, 1987). Helweg (1987) elaborates, *"The point is, however, that a western education does not bestow the automatic key to opportunity in India that it did a decade ago. However, when emigration was considered, most potential leavers did not realize this because they had only experienced what had been communicated to them from home and the university, not the job market." (p.171).*

Portes (1995) observes that human capital theory broadly overlooks the immigration context. He states that "modes of incorporation" or the process of absorption of immigrants into various social contexts of the host society should be given adequate consideration. Portes (1995) posits that the structural context interacts with the immigrant's human capital in determining the extent to which their talents are productively used. Accordingly, Portes (1995) observes that modes of

incorporation entail three levels. The first is the government's policy toward different immigrant groups (Portes, 1995). For instance, during the last two decades some refugees arriving in United States have been granted special resettlement status while others have faced prosecution with their requisition for asylum being rejected (Portes, 1995).

The second level of reception involves the domain of civic society and public opinion. In practice, a few immigrant minorities are viewed favorably in the United States while others are unpopular and upon arrival and have encountered protest and resistance (Portes, 1995). However, Portes (1995) notes that the second level of reception is not necessarily dependent on the first. For instance, people in New England have cordially accepted a large number of Irish immigrants despite their illegal status. Portes (1995) locates the third level of reception in the ethnic community. For instance, some immigrant groups are too small in number to form distinct communities and are dispersed among the native-born population while others join communities of fellow ethnic immigrants to help them avoid prejudices and cultural shock (Portes, 1995).

Despite criticisms, some aspects of the theory are applicable to understanding the Asian Indian immigration to United States (Dunn, 2001). Dunn (2001) notes that it is greater aspiration for career advancement, the chance of attaining greater human capital (particularly education) and the expectation of a higher wage that play an important role in inducing high-skilled Indian immigrants to move abroad. The phenomenon is often referred to as "brain-drain" (Dunn, 2001). In other words, qualified Indians, dissatisfied with defective market functioning in India, decide to migrate to the United States or other countries where wages are compatible with their qualifications (Dunn, 2001). Thus, high-skilled Asian Indian men came to United States during the 1960s in search of employment opportunities. Moreover, they have succeeded in earning

high wages as research indicates that their annual incomes often top $100,000 (Mogelonsky, 1995; Dunn, 2001).

The New Economics of Migration

The new economics of migration posits that international migration is the result of restrictions imposed on a household's economic advancement in the sending countries (Dunn, 2001). Unlike human capital theory, this perspective does not believe in the existence of complete and well-functioning markets (Durand and Massey, 1992; Stark, 1991; Massey, Alarcon, Durand, and Gonzalez, 1987). In this instance families send one or more of their members to foreign countries to gain access to scarce investment capital and to insure themselves against economic fluctuations (Dunn, 2001). As Stark and Bloom (1985) maintain, *"Clearly, the family is a very small group within which to pool risks. But the disadvantages of small scale may be made up by an ability to realize scale economies yet remain a cohesive group. Such scale economies are achieved by the migration of one or more family members into a sector where earnings are either negatively correlated, statistically independent, or not highly positively correlated with earnings in the origin sector." (p.175).* Accordingly, the theory suggests that individuals relocate permanently in those sectors that are more likely to yield the highest lifetime income (Dunn, 2001).

The theory also emphasizes the role of remittances and believes that the exchange of commitments to share income (between the immigrating individual and his/her family in the sending country) provides coinsurance (Stark and Bloom, 1985). Stark and Bloom (1985) contend that such coinsurance provides justification not only for the migration of one or more family members but also for the non-migration of the rest of the family. Hence, the theory contends that migration decisions are often jointly made by the migrant and his/her family

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members. It has been argued that migrants often outperform natives in the receiving economy. This is influenced by the fact that earlier immigrants offer "network and kinship capital" to the new immigrants. Stated differently, the new migrants are typically assisted by those who have migrated earlier. Earlier migrants, on the other hand, expand their trade by employing new migrants from their home country (Stark and Bloom, 1985).

Additionally, the theory emphasizes the relationship between aging and labor migration. Research suggests that older workers are less mobile than younger workers (Stark and Bloom, 1985). Stark and Bloom (1985) contemplate that in the future, workforces in many low-fertility countries will show a declining propensity to respond to external economic changes. As Stark and Bloom (1985) note, *"Thus, to the extent that mobility is one of the key requirements for economic efficiency, it would be useful to know more about the extent to which the aggregate migration behavior of a population is influenced by its age distribution and the underlying bases for this relationship." (p.177).*

Dunn (2001) challenges some of the assumptions made by the new economics of migration. She contends that in addition to economically challenged families, individuals from well-off families also migrate to higher-income countries to fulfill their career aspirations. Further, it can be argued that human capital theory and the new economics of migration concentrate solely on the supply-side factors of market mechanisms (Dunn, 2001). They grossly overlook the idea that migration may be driven by demand-side factors in the host societies (Piore, 1979).

Despite its drawbacks, some aspects of the theory can be used to explain labor market participation of Asian Indians in the United States. The concepts discussed by the theory that readily apply to Asian Indian immigrants include the barriers to economic advancement in the sending countries and the opportunity for social and cultural adjustment in the host country.

Market disequilibria and structural restrictions have often led Indians to search for job opportunities abroad. Wages and annual incomes from jobs in India are often insufficient to support desired lifestyles, thereby inducing many Indians to look for opportunities abroad (Dunn, 2001).

Social Network Theory

Migration can also be defined as a network-creating process because it helps develop an increasingly dense web of contacts between countries of origin and destination (Portes, 1995). These networks, once established, allow the migration process to become self-sustaining, unaffected by short-term economic changes and fluctuations (Portes, 1995). As Portes (1995) illustrates, *"Costs and risks of moving abroad are reduced by the operation of these social bridges across national frontiers, allowing women and children to join male family heads abroad. People begin to move for reasons other than the original economic incentives-to join family members, for example or to fulfill normative expectations as to "proper" behavior for young workers." (p.22).*

Portes (1995) defines a social network as *"sets of recurrent associations between groups of people linked by occupational, familial, cultural, or affective ties." (p.8).* Social networks become important in economic life because they provide access to capital and information. They also impose certain constraints on the unrestricted pursuit of self-interest (Portes, 1995). Although 'size' and 'density' of social networks directly affect economic behavior, they appear to be inversely related (Portes, 1995). The larger the size of the network, the more difficult it is for all members to be interrelated which lowers its density (Portes, 1995).

Moreover, there are differences between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital. As Putnam and Goss (2002) explain, *"bonding social capital brings together people who are like one*

another in important respects (ethnicity, age, gender, race, class etc.), whereas bridging social capital refers to social networks that bring together people who are unlike one another." (p.11). Warren, Thompson and Saegert (2001) emphasize that bonding social capital characterizes a closed circuit based on close-knit networks whereas bridging social capital links individuals and the groups to which they belong to a wider social circle. Applying these concepts to Asian Indian immigrants in the United States, bonding social capital would refer to the ties that Indians have amongst themselves in a particular community. Bridging social capital would refer to the ties that Indians have with their American friends, and members of other non-Indian groups living in the United States.

Granovetter (1974) argues that there is a structural tendency for those with weak ties to have better access to job information compared to those with no connections. The primary reason for this is that acquaintances tend to have access to different social circles than close friends (Granovetter, 1974). Those with whom one is closest are likely to have the greatest overlap in contacts. Therefore, such contacts are likely to possess the same information (Laumann and Schuman, 1967; Rapoport and Horvath, 1961; Granovetter, 1974). In his empirical study of recent job changers, Granovetter (1974) found that professional, technical, and managerial workers are more likely to hear about new jobs through weak ties (27.8%) than through strong ties (16.7%). However, they are most likely to hear about them from ties that are of medium strength (55.6%). Granovetter (1983) cautions that such a flow of information is only possible when the groups are not closed and they allow for cultural diffusion and interchange.

Portes (1995) observes that large, dense networks are most effective in developing normative expectations and enforcing reciprocal obligations. He emphasizes that two important dimensions of networks are 'clustering' and 'multiplexity.' Clustering refers to the degree to which the

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subsets of a network have greater density than the network as a whole (Portes, 1995). Such subsets are sometimes referred to as "cliques." Cliques may be "horizontal" or "vertical". They are "horizontal" when the actors involved in them enjoy similar power, and are "vertical" when a more powerful actor shows special favors to his/her subordinates in exchange for respect and collaboration (Portes, 1995).

Multiplexity refers to the degree to which relations between participants involve overlapping institutional spheres (Portes, 1995). For example, individuals related by work may also be connected by family ties, political affiliations, or religious memberships. Portes (1995) contends that in situations where "everyone knows everyone else," community norms are overly emphasized and violations of reciprocal obligations incur greater disapproval. In sum, Portes (1995) contends, *"Depending on the characteristics of their networks and their personal positioning within them, individuals may be able to mobilize a significant amount of resources, escape close scrutiny of their selfish behavior, or on the contrary, be tightly bound by group-enforced expectations." (p.12).*

The application of social network theory to migration has its own limitations. First, it can be argued that government does play an important role in influencing the magnitude and direction of migration (De Haas, 2008). Secondly, De Haas (2008) cautions that migrants should not simply be assumed to be "bridgeheads" facilitating subsequent migration. In other words, they may act as restrictive "gatekeepers" who are unwilling to help potential immigrants (Bocker, 1994; De Haas, 2003, 2008). It might also be possible that links with non-migrant kin and friends may weaken over time. As a result, migration may again become selective (De Haas, 2008). Finally, kin-based networks might be exclusionary for people who do not belong to particular social or kinship groups. The exclusionary side of social networks closely aligns with

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what Portes and Landolt call the "downside of social capital" (De Haas, 2008). Portes and Landolt (1996b) define the "downside" of social capital as *"the same strong ties that help members of a group often enable it to exclude outsiders." (p.3).* I believe that the "downside" of social capital can be applied to Asian Indian immigrants with considerable accuracy. India is a country with diverse cultural and ethnic traditions and, the ethnic identity of Indian immigrants often assumes greater importance than their national identity (Niyogi, 2008). It might be presumed, therefore, that networking for Indian immigrants is more effective when it is ethnic or regional in origin rather than being national.

The network theory of migration can very well be applied to the migration of Asian Indians to the United States. For example, Portes (1996) notes that even though both Mexico and India have unequal income distribution patterns, many more Indian professionals migrate to the United States compared to Mexican professionals. This is illustrated by the fact that Indian professionals have established stronger networks with employers in Silicon Valley than their Mexican counterparts (Alarcon, 1999). Alarcon (1999) notes that employment in Silicon Valley is influenced by the operation of social networks initiated by studying in an American university or through employment in a subsidiary located abroad.

Because Indian professionals score above Mexican professionals on both of these counts, more Indian professionals than Mexican professionals migrate to the United States. Moreover, once initiated, the migration process becomes self-sustaining and leads to further immigration of Indian professionals (Alarcon, 1999). As Massey, Alarcon, Durand, and Gonzalez (1987) clarify, *"migration displays the intrinsic tendency of becoming more extensive over time…These high levels of international migration are supported and sustained by social networks forged from the*

relationships of kinship, friendship, and paisanaje, which have been adapted to the migrant

enterprise."(p.316).

Having discussed popular theories of migration, I will now talk about the settlement

preferences of professional workers. Portes and Rumbaut (1996) posit that immigration to the

United States is an urban phenomenon and is largely concentrated in big cities. They observe that

the inclination of immigrants to settle in a few metropolitan areas is not a recent phenomenon,

but one that has been observed for the last three decades. I will now discuss the theoretical

perspectives that underscore the role of urban amenities in influencing the location of

professional workers in large cities.

Settlement Preferences of Professional Workers

E.G. Ravenstein (1889) postulated that the migration between places declines with

increasing distance. He stated that most long distance migration is likely to be directed toward

urban areas and that rural-to-urban migration is likely to occur in ascending stages (i.e. from

farm to village to town and then to city). Everett Lee (1966) expanded on Ravenstein's (1889)

theory and observed that migration varies according to the amenities offered by a region, the

diversity of its population in terms of occupational skills, race and ethnicity, and the state of

economy, technology, and level of development.

In this context, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) note that migration to the United States has

generally been an urban phenomenon and immigrants settle predominantly in the bigger cities of

the United States. As Portes and Rumbaut (1996) observe, *"In 1993, less than 5 percent of legal*

immigrants went to live in nonurban areas, and more than half settled in just ten metropolitan

locations. In particular, recent years have seen the gradual end of what was a significant

component of pre-World War I immigration: rural-bound groups coming to settle empty lands or

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work as farm laborers." (p.44). During the three decades following 1967, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) note that approximately one-fourth to one-third of all immigrants were concentrated in three main destination areas. While New York was consistently the most preferred site, the next two preferred places alternated among Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami. Further, the single most significant change observed during this period was the rise of Los Angeles to the second most preferred place of settlement and the decreasing gap between the size of this inflow and that of New York (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). Portes and Rumbaut (1996) contend that the spatial concentration of immigrant flows, their strong urban bias, and the consistency of destinations over time are a reflection of the economic opportunities available to them. They elaborate that like native youths, newly arrived immigrants try to search and settle for immediately available opportunities. Portes and Rumbaut (1996) state, *"Regardless of their qualifications and experience, recent immigrants generally enter at the bottom of their respective occupational ladders." (p.45).* Therefore, they note that foreign manual workers are channeled toward the lowest paying and most strenuous assignments. Similarly, immigrant professionals (like physicians and nurses) are forced to accept less desirable entry-level jobs within their professions and sometimes outside of them.

In the absence of other recruitment opportunities, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) argue that entry-level jobs at the bottom of job ladders are more easily obtainable in large urban areas and in areas witnessing rapid economic growth. Once immigrants from a particular nation "discover" the existence of such employment opportunities in certain urban areas, the process becomes self-sustaining with ethnic networks stimulating further immigration (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996).

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) believe that it is not surprising that the principal concentrations of the largest immigrant groups have taken place in Los Angeles, a large metropolitan area which

has witnessed rapid economic growth in recent years. They observe that the American population as a whole is moving from the Northeast and Midwestern parts of the country to the South and Southwest regions. However, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) believe that this spatial displacement will not result in greater dispersion of ethnic communities. They provide three reasons for this assumption. First*,* ethnic groups concentrated in regions that are losing population are less likely to move as their relative numbers increase over time. Second*,* when ethnic minorities migrate, they generally move to those places where their own group enjoys a substantial presence, including places that are experiencing out-migration. Third*,* when ethnic groups migrate from their place of settlement, they do not necessarily become dispersed, and often reunite in the new place of settlement (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996).

In his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida (2002a) argues, "*Advanced nations have shifted to information-based, knowledge-based economies*" (p. 44). Borrowing from Peter Drucker, Florida (2002a) defines a "knowledge economy" as *"The basic economic resources-'the means of production,' to use the economist's term is no longer capital, nor natural resources…..nor 'labor.' It is and will be knowledge."* (Drucker, 1993). Florida (2002a) calls such a knowledge-based economy a "creative economy" and refers to the key workers employed in such an economy as "creative workers."

Florida (2002a) notes that the creative economy is supported by an extensive venture capital system that accelerates the formation of new firms and aids commercial innovation. Florida (2002a) contends that this venture capital system has unleashed the talents and energies of creative people (Florida, 2002a). It should be noted, however, that before a venture capital company can give money to entrepreneurs, it has to raise the money (Florida, 2002a). In this pursuit of raising money, venture capital flows to places that have a well-developed "social

structure of innovation" (Florida, 2002a). In other words, Florida (2002a) contends that firms generally cluster in places that enjoy a concentration of creative workers among other elements. Companies cluster in order to draw from the concentration of talented people who create and/or support innovation and economic growth (Florida, 2002a).

In this context, Florida (2002a) points out some characteristics of places that draw creative workers. By providing lifestyle choices and amenities such as a cutting-edge music scene or vibrant artistic community, a "creative setting" draws creative people. Furthermore, creative workers prefer places that encourage fusion and interchange between different forms of creativity. Florida (2002a) states, *"it also facilitates cross-fertilization between and among these forms, as is evident through history in the rise of creative-content industries from publishing and music to film and video games. The social and cultural milieu also provides a mechanism for attracting new and different kinds of people and facilitating the rapid transmission of knowledge and ideas." (p.55).*

In his interviews with creative workers, Florida (2002a) found that they do not desire strong ties with long-term commitments that are associated with traditional social capital. Rather, they prefer a more "flexible, quasi-autonomous community" that allows for quicker adjustment opportunities and helps build a wide network of relationships.

Florida's (2002a) interviews also revealed that many creative workers had turned down jobs, or decided not to search for them in places that did not offer ready access to a variety of entertainment options like music, art, outdoor sports, etc. Additionally, some of his interviewees moved to a community based on lifestyle considerations and then looked for employment there. Demand for instant access to recreation on a "just-in-time" basis was a major factor in their decision (Florida, 2002a). Florida (2002a) espouses, *"When putting in a long-day, for instance,*

they may need an extended break in the middle to recharge their batteries. Many who do this tell

me a bike ride or run is a staple of their day-to-day productivity. And for this, a beach house or

country getaway spot doesn't do them much good. They require trails or parks close at hand."

(p.224). Florida's (2002a) research also revealed that communities that offer a vibrant and

diverse nightlife are preferred by creative workers.

Another important factor affecting the selection of places by creative people is diversity

(Florida, 2002a). By diversity, Florida (2002a) means the presence of people of various races and

ethnic groups, different ages, different sexual orientations and alternative appearances (e.g. body

piercings and tattoos). Additionally, Florida (2002a) notes that creative-minded people enjoy

diverse music, food, and people, *"Successful places do not provide just one thing; rather they*

provide a range of quality of place options for different kinds of people at different stages in the

life course. Members of the Creative Class come in all shapes, sizes, colors and lifestyles; and to

be truly successful, cities and regions have to offer something for them all." (pp. 233-234).

In this context, Florida (2002a) stresses the importance of what he calls "third places," which

are neither home nor work, but venues like coffee shops, bookstores and cafes that provide

opportunities to meet less formal acquaintances. In today's world where people are more likely

to live alone or change jobs frequently, third places offer the much-needed opportunity for

human interaction and the development of acquaintances (Florida, 2002a).

The bottom line is that cities need a 'people climate' more than they need a 'business climate'

in order to attract creative people (Florida, 2002a). However, Florida (2002a) contends that

creative places need not be big cities but do need to be cosmopolitan, i.e. where one can find

people to socialize with, where there is interplay between diverse cultures and ideas and where

outsiders are easily accepted and quickly assimilated. Following Bonnie Menes Kahn (1987),

Florida (2002a) believes that 'tolerance for strangers' and 'intolerance for mediocrity' are two essential qualities of a city that appeals to the members of the creative class.

Florida (2002a) underscores ten factors that attract members of the creative class: (1) challenge and responsibility -- being able to contribute and have impact and being aware that one's work could make a difference; (2) flexibility -- a flexible schedule, a flexible work environment and to certain degree, the ability to influence and control one's work; (3) a stable work environment and a relatively secure job -- by this characteristic, Florida (2002a) refers to the preference to avoid chaos and uncertainty; (4) compensation -- includes base pay, core benefits and sufficient money on which one can depend on; (5) professional development -- the opportunity to learn and grow; (6) peer recognition -- the opportunity to achieve esteem and recognition in one's professional circle; (7) stimulating colleagues and managers -- creative people like to be in close association with people who are neither too dominating nor are excessively relaxed; (8) exciting job content -- the opportunity to work on exciting projects that have the possibility of breaking new ground or pose a challenges the intellectual circle; (9) organizational culture -- includes all the factors discussed above plus a culture in which one feels worthy, and supported; (10) location and community -- this is discussed further in the following section.

Florida (2002a) also found that creative class people desire to be involved in their communities. He attributes this not to the welfare-oriented mentality of the creative class, but to their desire to actively establish their own identity. Florida (2002a) also emphasizes the importance of a research university in promoting the economic growth of a place. Accordingly, Florida (2002a) attributes the success of Boston's Route 128 and Silicon Valley to the proximity

of research universities like MIT and Stanford. The presence of a research university adds to the infrastructural facilities of a creative economy.

Florida (2002a) cautions, however, that the presence of a university in a proximate location does not automatically ensure growth. The city should have the capacity to absorb and exploit the innovation and technologies that the university generates and should be able to offer the desirable lifestyle amenities necessary to attract and retain the creative class of workers. Florida (2002a) elaborates, *"Stanford did not turn the Silicon Valley area into a high-tech powerhouse on its own; regional business leaders and venture capitalists built the local infrastructure that this kind of economy needed. Palo Alto, bordering Stanford University, functions as its hub in providing office space for startup companies, venture capitalists and high-technology service providers, as well as a wide range of amenities."* (p.293).

Florida (2002a) argues that in order to be an effective contributor of regional growth, the university must produce and support three factors: (1) technology -- universities should be centers for cutting-edge research in their fields and should be an important source of new technologies; (2) talent -- universities should be effective talent attractors thereby inviting renowned researchers , scientists, and graduate students who might generate spin-off companies and thus encourage the proximate location of more companies; and (3) tolerance -- universities should also offer a progressive, open and tolerant atmosphere to help attract and retain members of the creative class. (Florida, 2002a).

In their article "Consumers and Cities," Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz (2004) similarly note that the role of cities as centers of consumption has received little attention in the existing literature. They observe that with an improvement in the standard of living, there is an accompanying increase in the amount of money being spent on an appropriate place to live. If this trend

continues, Glaeser et al. (2004) contend that the future of cities will depend on their ability to provide attractive places for wealthy workers who are increasingly less inhibited by constraints on employment location.

Glaeser et al. (2004) point out four critical urban amenities that attract skilled workers. The first is the availability of a rich variety of services and consumer goods. As evidence, Glaeser et al. (2004) point out that cities with more restaurants and live performance theatres per capita have grown steadily over the past 20 years in both the United States and France.

The second amenity that Glaeser et al. (2004) discuss is the aesthetics and physical setting of a city. They believe that more attractive cities like San Francisco have done better economically since the 1980s. Weather conditions, such as the average temperature in the month of January and precipitation appear to be a crucial determinant of population or housing price growth at the county level in the United States (Glaeser et al., 2004).

The third critical amenity outlined by Glaeser et al. (2004) is the availability of good public services. They believe that good schools and low crime rates are linked to urban growth. Consistent with the findings of Berry-Cullen and Levitt (1999), Glaeser et al. (2004) propose that an exogenous increase in crime rate is associated with lower population growth.

The fourth essential amenity is speed (Glaeser et al., 2004). Importantly, Glaeser et al. (2004) contend that the range of services and jobs available in a metropolitan area is related to the convenience with which individuals can travel around the city. As a corollary, they posit that individuals will typically avoid areas where transportation costs are high. Interestingly, though the decentralization of jobs to urban fringes has increased commuting distances, it has decreased the commuting time relative to traditional downtowns (Glaeser et al., 2004).

In highlighting the importance of transportation facilities, Glaeser et al. (2004) envision two models of cities - "car cities" with a decentralized employment structure and "walking/public transport cities" with extremely high levels of density. In the United States, where public transportation is relatively less important, gas taxes are low. They predict that low density "car cities" will continue to enjoy growth. Growth is possible in cities that are handicapped by older infrastructure and high gas taxes, provided they offer other amenities to high-skilled workers (Glaeser et al., 2004).

Glaeser et al. (2004) note that not all consumer goods affect population growth. For example, video gadgets and cable television create disincentives to go to a movie theater. This is not the case, however, with consumer amenities that are difficult to duplicate in the household setting and cater mainly to workers with higher human capital. For instance, Glaeser et al. (2004) observe that the presence of live performance venues and restaurants contribute to the growth of cities. Interestingly, Glaeser et al. (2004) note that amenities that appeal to less-educated workers (like bowling alleys and movie theaters) are negatively related to population growth.

In a similar vein, Clark, Lloyd, Wong, and Jain (2002) note that the proliferation of high-tech jobs associated with the restructuring of the U.S. economy has given rise to greater consumer aspirations among the skilled workforce. With the increase in the citizen's income, education, and political empowerment, there has been a rise in individual agency. Consequently, the rise of individualization and volition in tastes and preferences has given rise to numerous and complex niche markets. However, such affluence is matched by increasing numbers of structurally disadvantaged populations in cities. However, the city as an "Entertainment Machine" is structurally biased towards the rich. The large numbers of bureaucratic decision-makers in both the public and private sectors of cities have declined because they are unable to cater to the many

tastes and preferences of niche markets. Additionally, there has been a decline in the explanatory

power of the classical economic variables like distance, transportation cost, local labor cost,

proximity to natural resources, and market size as factors influencing business location. This

change can be explained by technological advancement (internet, fax, air travel), which has led

to time-space compression (Clark et al., 2002).

In such a changing economy, a city that witnesses a rise in leisure pursuits will consequently

witness a rise in related occupations such as tour guides, restaurant critics, etc. There is a need

for emphasis to be placed on the arts and other aesthetic considerations of the city along with the

traditional focus on the spatial dynamics of it. This assigns a new role to government and public

officials, who often respond to public concerns like clean air, beautification of towns and

pedestrian responsiveness rather than to more private concerns like jobs, contracts and tax breaks

to individuals and firms (Clark et al., 2002).

Waldinger (1996) emphasizes that urban structures are not determinative and that

immigration outcomes are shaped by the interaction of urban structures and characteristics of

ethnic groups. Waldinger (1996) states that, *"each immigrant receiving area has its own*

particular group of newcomers, and the economic and the political structures of the immigrant

receiving areas are also distinctive. Those structures are not all determining, as immigrant

trajectories are shaped by the interaction between distinctive urban institutions and the specific

characteristics of the relevant ethnic groups" (p.1078).

In line with Waldinger's (1996) argument, Khandelwal (1995) points out the peculiarity of

the settlement of high-skilled Asian Indians in Queens, New York. She notes that new Indian

immigrants initially settle in neighborhoods like Flushing and Elmhurst, where apartments are in

close proximity to public transportation. Since these areas are perceived to be suitable for new

immigrants, there is a rise in ethnic chain migration in the Flushing and Elmhurst neighborhoods. However, Khandelwal (1995) observes that after spending their initial years in these neighborhoods, the immigrants move to more desirable residential areas in suburban settings. Khandelwal (1995) believes that this step confirms the process of "settling down" in a new area and then striving for upward economic mobility. The move from city to suburb indicates that families are willing to spend money on automobile transportation in order to live in "better" school districts for their children (Khandelwal, 1995).

Most Asian Indian immigrants move out of the initial settlement areas to middle-class, upper-middle class or affluent residential areas, which are dominated by a White American population. Khandelwal (1995) interprets the move as an attempt of the educated, economically well-off, Asian Indian population to assimilate with their counterpart White American economic class. Some Asian Indians participate in pan-American organizations like Rotary and Country Clubs, and have already achieved partial integration into American society (Khandelwal, 1995).

However, Khandelwal (1995) notes that this ongoing process of moving in and out of receiving areas and has transformed the receiving areas into centers of ethnic Indian life. The receiving areas contain places of worship, business, and other activities that serve many Indians. Indians residing in suburban areas return to these places to shop for ethnic goods, to practice their religion, and also to meet their friends and relatives who arrived later and have not yet moved to the suburbs (Khandelwal, 1995).

It can be argued that Khandelwal's (1995) case-study of skilled Asian Indian immigrants exemplifies the fact that high-skilled immigrants are not attracted solely by the amenities and facilities offered by the cities. Rather, their settlement preferences are more likely shaped by

their desire to assimilate with their counterpart economic class in the White American population, and to provide better educational opportunities for their children.

Michael Storper and Allen Scott (2009) question the aforementioned line of thinking that creative individuals move in search of consumer or lifestyle preferences. Storper and Scott (2009) argue that the existing literature is devoid of any consistent analytical description of the factors responsible for the origins of urban centers. They posit that existing theories assume the pre-existence of urban centers because it is the basis for subsequent amenity-based changes to occur.

While the existing literature focuses on the preferences that supposedly motivate location choices (warmth, diversity, low-density, high-density, cultural amenities, tolerance), Storper and Scott (2009) question the validity of purported preferences and suspect the preferences may be purely correlational. Richard Florida underscored the importance of 'tolerance' in attracting the creative class to a residential location. Storper and Scott (2009) argue that tolerance, as an operational expression of diversity, has not become more prevalent in many American metropolitan areas than it was half a century ago. Even if one accepts the argument that tolerance has increased in American society, Storper and Scott (2009) argue that there has also been an accompanying increase in traits like indifference, narcissism, separation and individualism among the urban elites in contemporary America.

Although today's cities are characterized by increased diversity, they are still spatially segregated on the basis of class, color, sexuality, lifestyle and political differences (Bishop, 2008; Storper and Scott, 2009). Storper and Scott (2009) state, "*The very same individuals who are claimed to be so motivated by tolerance and the quest for diversity typically live for the most part in upscale and relatively homogenous neighborhoods, often in the suburbs and in any case*

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significantly removed in social and spatial terms from the populations that are supposed to offer what we might call 'diversity externalities.' Even the much vaunted gay communities that play such a prominent role in Florida's vision of the vibrant city are significantly set apart from the rest of urban space in most large American cities."(p.156). Thus, Storper and Scott (2009) espouse the relevant research question to be: What are the specific circumstances that sustain and account for the different kinds of innovative spurs that prevail in different places at different times?

Storper and Scott (2009) observe that industrially advanced societies are characterized by high levels of urbanization and selected units of capital and labor come together in a geographic space to form interconnected systems or agglomerations of firms and workers. In such agglomerations, productive activity is broken down into specialized tasks, and are integrated together again through the process of economic coordination between firms and within labor markets. They further note that the primary form of agglomeration leads to additional clustering and such clustering is often the result of the establishment of households in the labor catchment areas of the production centers. With such agglomeration in place, other social and political changes like transportation networks, socially distinctive neighborhoods, and institutions of governance emerge to support the urbanization process. Therefore, Storper and Scott (2009) contention is that in the absence of basic dynamics of agglomeration, cities would be no more than service hubs or aggregations of like-minded people, and would be limited in terms of size and complexity.

Storper and Scott (2009) argue that there is nothing inevitable about the growth and decline of cities. The high-wage metropolitan areas in developed countries enjoy prolonged economic growth precisely because their internal economic dynamics remain at a high level and external

markets become more and more accessible through ongoing declines in unit trade costs. Therefore, Storper and Scott (2009) contend that although human capital and skills are indispensable to urban growth, they do not constitute the primary factors responsible for urban growth. Consequently, we typically do not witness the agglomeration of arbitrarily assorted workers in cities. Instead, we see select types of workers with specific skills, associated with particular industries, locate together in particular cities (Storper and Scott, 2009).

The revival of growth in New York in the 1980s and 1990s was hinged on preexisting organizational and business networks. When the city was able to take advantage of the new wave of innovation in financial services, additional workers migrated to take advantage of rising employment opportunities. The increased income from hi-tech industries consequently contributed to greater demand for cultural and other types of amenities. Hence, it was the restructuring of the economy, coupled with growth driven by digital technologies, trade liberalization and financial globalization that contributed to the economic revival of New York and not the in-migration of skilled immigrant workers (Storper and Scott, 2009).

On the other hand, Storper and Scott (2009) do not claim that the individual locational choices have no role in shaping urban growth. The important point is that talented individuals do not move unless they are able to capitalize on their personal talent or unless relevant employment opportunities are in sight (Storper and Scott, 2009). As Storper and Scott (2009) explain, *"These are individuals who have by definition invested considerable resources and time in acquiring know-how, skills and qualifications, and they are presumably unwilling to dissipate their investment in this respect by moving to places where their personal assets are systematically at risk or undervalued in the local job market. Such individuals typically choose to locate on the basis of some sort of structured match between their talents and the forms of economic*

specialization and labor demand to be found in the places where they eventually settle. By the

same token, there is no reason to suppose that Silicon Valley, Hollywood, or the City of London

came into being because massive numbers of the creative class located there in advance of

clusters of firms in semiconductors, film-making or finance, respectively." (p.162). Echoing

Scott (2005), Storper and Scott (2009) assert that although there were a few innovative firms in

Silicon Valley in the 1950s and 1960s, and some temporary studios in Los Angeles between

1905 and 1915, the places had nothing that would identify them as the future hubs of computer

engineers and movie-makers.

Although the above-mentioned literature talks about the settlement preferences of white-

collar immigrant professionals, one must emphasize the fact that settlement in a preferred

destination does not imply acceptance into the society. Considering this point, I will examine the

existing literature regarding inter-racial relationships, how immigrants adjust in the host society,

and how their acceptance is shaped by prevailing social circumstances.

Patterns of Inter-Racial Relationships

The Assimilation Perspective

Robert Park and E.W. Burgess (1921) define assimilation as, *"a process of interpretation and*

fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other

persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in

a common cultural life." (p.735). It has been pointed out that this definition did not take note of

the complete erasure of identity generally associated with the assimilation process (Alba and

Nee, 2003). Subsequently, a revised definition of assimilation was provided in the "Encyclopedia

of Social Sciences," in which social assimilation was defined by Park (1930) as *"the name given*

to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural

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heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain national existence." (p.281). Park posited that ethnic differences would eventually diminish and communal harmony would prevail (Alba and Nee, 2003). In their book, "Old World Traits Transplanted" (1921), Robert Park and Herbert Miller contend that assimilation would proceed more smoothly if immigrant groups were left to adjust at their own pace to American life, rather than being forced to forget their familiar customs and traditions.

In his work *Assimilation in American Life*, Milton Gordon (1964) emphasized the multidimensional nature of the concept of assimilation. He defined acculturation as the minority group's adoption of the "cultural patterns" of the host society and understanding the hidden and inner nuances of it (Alba and Nee, 2003). In the process of defining acculturation, Gordon distinguishes between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" cultural traits (Alba and Nee, 2003). The "intrinsic" cultural traits are those that are *"vital ingredients of the group's cultural heritage,"* while "extrinsic" traits *"tend to be products of the historical vicissitudes of the group's adjustment to the local environment"* and hence are considered to be less central to a group's identity (Alba and Nee, 2003, p.24). This implies that "extrinsic traits" are readily sacrificed by the group when making adjustments to the host society. According to Gordon acculturation could occur in the absence of other areas of the assimilation process and the stage of "acculturation only" could continue indefinitely (Alba and Nee, 2003). Gordon's major contention was that structural assimilation (or the integration into primary groups) leads to all other types of assimilation. This implies that prejudice and discrimination toward the group will decrease, intermarriages will rise, and that the group's sense of separate identity will decline (Alba and Nee, 2003).

Extending Gordon's (1964) formulation that assimilation unfolds in a series of generational steps, Gans and Sandberg popularized the concept of "straight-line assimilation" in 1973 (Alba and Nee, 1999). The concept adds to Gordon's (1964) formulation that portrays the unfolding of the assimilation process in a sequence of generational steps (Alba and Nee, 1999). In other words, the theory believes that each new generation represents a new state of adjustment to the host society which is a step further from ethnic "ground zero" (the native community and culture of the immigrants) and a step nearer to being completely assimilated (Lieberson, 1973; Alba and Nee, 1999). Further, it is implied that generations are stimulators of ethnic change, and that ethnic change is not just influenced by time alone. Thus, each generation encounters a distinctive set of issues in its relationship to the host society and ethnic group, and their resolution brings forth a unique pattern of accommodation (Alba and Nee, 1999).

Alba and Nee (2003) contend that Gordon's theory assumed acculturation to be largely a one-way process, which assumed that American culture would remain unaffected in the process of cultural contact. In other words, Alba and Nee (2003) believed that Milton Gordon broadly overlooked the fact that American culture is a differentiated product of diverse influences. I will now turn to discussing several facets of the assimilation of immigrants in the United States: residential segregation, social mobility, interracial marriage, and political participation.

Residential Segregation

Massey (1981) argues that residential segregation is an important aspect of the assimilation process because it provides a rough measure of the degree to which immigrant groups are spatially isolated from the mainstream American society. Besides being an important indicator of the assimilation process, residential segregation bears implication for other aspects of sociocultural integration (like interracial marriage) that are closely related to residential

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proximity (Lieberson, 1963; Gordon, 1964; Massey, 1981).

Prior research has found that recent immigrants are only moderately segregated from the White majority in the United States (Alba and Nee, 1999). Additionally, research into metropolitan levels of residential segregation has found that Asian and Hispanic residential segregation from the White majority is considerably less than that of African Americans (Alba and Nee, 1999). In fact, research conducted by Alba and Logan (1993) reported that residential assimilation with the White majority tends to increase with improvement in socioeconomic standing, acculturation (measured in terms of English proficiency), and duration of stay in the United States. As Alba and Nee (1999) elaborate, *"For Asian and Latinos, the most powerful determinant of the racial and ethnic composition of their neighborhoods is their own socioeconomic position: the greater their income and the higher their educational status, the larger the percentage of non-Latino whites in the population of the neighborhood where they reside. The ability to own a home also tends to increase residential exposure to the majority group, as does residence in the suburbs, which reflects socioeconomic status to an important degree." (p.157)*

In contrast to the settlement pattern of the European immigrants who migrated to United States in the earlier part of the century, it has been found that 43 percent of the immigrants who arrived during the 1980s were living in parts of metropolitan areas commonly described as "suburbs" (Alba and Nee, 1999). The suburbanization trend was found to be particularly high among the Asian immigrants (Nee and Sanders, 1985; Alba and Nee, 1999). For example, in 1990, it was found that 58 percent of Filipino households were in the suburban areas of the metropolis, increasing from 49 percent in 1980 (Alba, Logan, Stults, Marzan, and Zhang, 1999). Rates of suburbanization were found to be lower among the Latinos, although it was as high as

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46 percent for Mexicans and 51 percent for Cubans in 1990 (Alba and Nee, 1999).

It was also found that suburban residence became much less selective for Asian immigrants during the 1980s and was not strictly limited to those who were linguistically assimilated (Alba and Logan, 1991; Alba, Logan, Stults, Marzan, and Zhang, 1999). Thus, it can be said that the barrier on settling in suburban areas has fallen for new immigrants, even for those not well-versed in English. New immigrants can now reside in suburban areas without any hindrance to their functioning in their daily lives (for instance shopping or enjoying recreational activities), most likely because they find considerable presence of co-ethnics and ethnic infrastructure in their vicinity (Alba and Nee, 1999).

Residing in suburban areas also implies having a large number of Whites as neighbors. Perhaps this would mean little to the immigrants themselves, who may find enough co-ethnics in their neighborhood to have a similar life to that they would enjoy in an ethnic enclave. However, it is likely to have a major impact on the children of immigrants, who will grow up in frequent contact with Whites (Alba and Nee, 1999).

It has been found that most of the recent immigrants display high levels of geographic concentration in their settlement pattern (Farley, 1996; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Waldinger, 1989; Alba and Nee, 1999). Additionally, the degree of geographic concentration among new immigrants exceeds that of older ones at a comparable stage of immigration (Massey, 1994; Alba and Nee, 1999). Asian Indians are the only immigrant group which does not display such a clustering tendency. This can be explained by the fact that a large percentage of Asian Indian immigrants are professional workers and their job considerations typically override their preference to settle in places inhabited by a large number of fellow Indians (Alba and Nee, 1999).

Social Mobility

Massey (1981) contends that whatever criterion is used to judge the assimilation of immigrants, social integration always increases with social class. In fact, Piore (1979) argues that the process of immigrant assimilation is a function of social mobility. Similarly, Barry Chiswick (1977, 1978) found that after initial years of economic struggle, the earnings of immigrants reach parity within ten-to-fifteen years and then exceed those of native-born workers of the same ethnicity (Alba and Nee, 1999).

In this context, Alba and Nee (1999) note that recent high-skilled immigrants from countries like India, China, Africa, Western Europe, and Canada join professional or managerial jobs in greater proportions than the native-born American population. In contrast low-skilled immigrant groups from countries like Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, and other Central American countries are disproportionately represented in low-wage, blue collar and service jobs. Thus, in recent years, the United States has experienced a bimodal attainment pattern in the occupational and earnings attainment of immigrants, which roughly corresponds to the differences between immigrants from Asia and Latin America (Alba and Nee, 1999).

Farley (1996) has compared the earnings of immigrants (as reported in the 1990 Census) with the earnings of native-born Americans in fourteen metropolitan areas, including New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Houston, and Washington D.C. He found that although the cost of immigration was most profoundly felt in the initial years of arrival in the United States, immigrants achieved considerable economic mobility over time (Farley, 1996; Alba and Nee, 1999). It was further reported that after twenty-five years of residence in the United States, immigrants earn 93 percent of that of native-born Whites (Farley, 1996; Alba and Nee, 1999). However, earnings differed according to the country of origin of the immigrants (Farley, 1996; Alba and Nee, 1999). For instance, Hispanic men (both foreign and native born) were found to earn substantially less

than White men, while Asian (both foreign and native born) men had earnings comparable to that of White men (Farley, 1996; Alba and Nee, 1999). When social and demographic characteristics (like place of residence, education, English-speaking ability, work disability, and marital status) were controlled, it was found that Hispanic men earned 84 percent and foreign-born Asian men 87 percent of their White counterparts (Farley, 1996; Alba and Nee, 1999). In contrast, native-born Asian men had incomes comparable to White males. Farley (1996) notes that the socio-economic standing of Asian immigrant men improved since 1980. Alba and Nee (1999) explain the greater economic assimilation of Asian immigrants as a result of greater demand for high-skilled workers owing to the technological transformation of the American economy.

Interestingly, Borjas and Freeman (1992) reported that immigrants who come to the United States as children often achieve economic parity with native workers. In this context, Sherrie Kossoudji (1988) and Marilyn Fernandez (1998) underline the importance of English-speaking ability in achieving upward mobility in the United States. Kossoudji (1988) notes that although English language ability is not a measure of the assimilation process, it is a specific skill needed to achieve mobility in the U.S. labor market. As Kossoudji (1988) elaborates, *"not being able to speak English imposes a real cost on some immigrant workers, both by reducing observed earnings and by altering occupational opportunities. Generally, immigrants who do not speak English are 'pushed down' the occupational ladder."* (p.254).

Taking a critical perspective of the assimilation process, Fernandez (1998) contends that although skilled Asian Indian immigrants to the United States score highly on English-speaking ability, they tend to encounter glass ceilings in their professional careers (Fernandez, 1998). For instance, in her analysis of the 1990 census data, Fernandez (1998) found the existence of hurdles in the career advancement paths of college educated Asian Indian Americans in the Bay

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Area. Fernandez (1998) observed that Asian Indian males were less likely to be managers than U.S. born white males even if they had comparable educational qualifications. When immigrant Asian Indian males became managers, their earnings advantage or disadvantage compared to their White counterparts varied according to the industry in which they were employed. Immigrant and U.S. born Asian Indian females were also disadvantaged in acquiring managerial posts. They also earned less compared to U.S. born White females once they acquired such posts (Fernandez, 1998).

Interracial Marriage

Intermarriage between the members of a minority and majority group can be taken as an important indicator of assimilation in the host society. As Murguia and Frisbie (1977) put it, *"the frequency with which members of a minority intermarry with the majority population is perhaps the most conclusive, objective indicator of the degree of assimilation of the minority." (p.374).* Similarly, Milton Gordon (1964) believed that intermarriage leads to other forms of assimilation and thus provides an index of a group's acceptability (Massey, 1981).

It has been reported that racial intermarriages have increased from 0.7% in 1970 to 2.2% of all marriages in 1992 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996; Qian and Lichter, 2001). Additionally, it has been found that exogamy with native-born Whites has increased among all racial minorities, including African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and American Indians (Gurak and Fitzpatrick, 1982; Heer, 1974; Kalmijn, 1993; Kitano, Young, Chai, and Hatanaka, 1984; Monahan, 1976; Murguia and Cazares, 1982; Sandefur and Trudy, 1986; Qian and Lichter, 2001). Besharow and Sullivan (1996) positively view the growth of racial intermarriage and believe that it will replace racial antagonism with inter-group harmony.

However, intermarriages have been uneven across racial and ethnic groups. For instance,

native-born Asian Americans (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans) are most likely to have experienced exogamy or to cohabit with Whites, followed by Latinos and African Americans (Blackwell and Lichter, 2000; Qian, 1997; Qian and Lichter, 2001). Such an increase in inter-marriage among the second generations can be explained from the fact that the second generation is likely to be better educated, have greater command over English, and have higher job skills, which lead to lower unemployment rates and higher earnings in comparison to the native population (Chiswick and Sullivan, 1995; Qian and Lichter, 2001). Consequently, racial intermarriage is more likely among natives than among their immigrant counterparts. Thus, researchers believe that the generational replacement of older immigrants with their native-born children will lead to rapid assimilation in the American society (Gordon, 1964; Hirschman, 1983; Qian and Lichter, 2001).

Qian and Lichter (2001) find that immigrants are more likely to marry same-race natives than marry interracial partners. Further, they note that such racial endogamy between immigrants and natives occurs even when it involves considerable difference in socio-economic status, language fluency, and cultural values. This implies that assimilation of the new immigrant group will proceed slower because of the rise of intermarriage between native and foreign-born racial minorities reduces the number of marital partners that can facilitate their assimilation (Qian and Lichter, 2001).

Nevertheless, many of the young Asian immigrants who arrive in the United States with elite educational qualifications or later receive graduate degrees or other advanced training in United States (Farley, 1996) are often strongly motivated to acculturate in American society (Qian and Lichter, 2001). As a matter of fact, despite low economic returns to schooling (Chiswick and Sullivan, 1995), Asian immigrants have done well to earn the reputation of "model minorities"

and have experienced social and economic mobility (Hirschman, 1983). Further, they are more residentially assimilated with Whites than any other racial minority and immigrant group (Logan, Alba, and Leung, 1996; Massey and Denton, 1987). Thus, Qian and Lichter (2001) believe that Asian immigrants will experience greater interracial marriage with Whites than their native born counterparts.

Criticizing the assimilation perspective, the segmented assimilation thesis emphasizes that present day immigrants are received differently by various segments of American society (Zhou, 1997). Such differential acceptance in the host society implies that some will experience upward mobility and others will suffer downward mobility. In the case of those who start at the very bottom, the chances of upward mobility are not very strong and the possibility of assimilation remains doubtful (Zhou, 1997).

Pluralistic Perspective

The pluralistic theory views American society to be a collection of racial and minority groups (Zhou, 1997). It contends that ethnicity can serve as an asset rather than a liability (Zhou, 1997). This notion provides a means of understanding how ethnicity may be used as a distinct form of social capital to help with adaptation to the host society (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970). Raymond Wolfinger (1965) argued that the thesis of the melting pot is a myth. He posits that in order for an ethnic group to possess sufficient political skill and influence, it first needs to develop a "middle class attitude." The development of this "middle class attitude," Wolfinger (1965) believes, takes place in the second and third generations. However, he believes that immigrants still retain their sense of ethnic identification.

Wolfinger (1965) contends that like party loyalty, which is often passed from one generation to the next, ethnic pride may be "inherited" as a symbol of self-identification and internalized in

the socialization process. Agarwal (1991) believes that Raymond Wolfinger's views on the three levels of "absorption of immigrants in American society" helps to identify the differences between the melting pot and multicultural approaches. Wolfinger identifies the first level of absorption as "acculturation," which refers to the process of adapting to the structural aspects of the dominant society. This includes the ability to be conversant in English, obtain higher levels of education and income, and become involved in the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the host society. The second level is "association," where groups begin to act like non-ethnics in terms of a general lack of differentiation from the host society. The third level is "assimilation," which takes place when there is a disappearance of ethnic identity (Agarwal, 1991). Applying this model to Asian Indian immigrants, Agarwal (1991) argues that despite a high potential for "acculturation" given their proficiency in English, Asian Indians continue to adhere to their traditional customs and moorings.

From a pluralistic perspective, Min Zhou (1997) posits that the pre-emigration cultural characteristics of immigrant groups are not necessarily lost in the host society, but rather intermingle with the culture of the host society. However, Zhou (1997) cautions that the cultural practices of immigrants cannot be equated with their homeland cultures because immigrants are selective about *"what to pack in their trunks to bring to America, but also what to unpack once settled"* (p.73).

In sum, the pluralistic perspective argues that ethnic organizations and amenities not only cater to the ethnic needs of an immigrant community, they also aid in preserving the ethnic identity of the community in the face of the assimilation process. I will now examine the purpose and function of ethnic organizations with special reference to Asian Indian immigrants in United States.

Asian Indian Ethnic Organizations and Amenities

It has been observed that Asian Indians prefer to have some ethnic organizations and amenities in the place of their settlement. Research notes that ethnic organizations help preserve the cultural traditions of immigrants and facilitate their adjustment in the host society (Rangaswamy, 2000; Dhingra, 2003). Rangaswamy's (2000) examination of the functioning and activities of the Indo-American Center in Chicago aptly highlights the usefulness of ethnic organizations for immigrants. The organization was formed under the guidance of M.K.G. Pillay (1924-94) in 1990. It caters to everyone regardless of ethnicity, religion, language or political affiliation. One of the most prominent programs of the Center is the Citizen's Outreach Program, which prepares immigrants to apply for U.S. citizenship. Volunteers conduct instructional classes in English, offer lessons in U.S. history, constitution, and government to immigrants applying for U.S. citizenship. Statistics reveal that in 1995, the Center processed over 4,000 citizen applications and more than 1,200 people successfully became U.S. citizens through its outreach program. Furthermore, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service conducted interviews on the Center's premises, making it easier for the immigrants to complete the citizenship process in a familiar setting (Rangaswamy, 2000).

In 1994, the Center arranged a free medical camp in association with the Indian Medical Association (Illinois) Charitable Foundation. In summarizing the effort of the center, Rangaswamy (2000) states, *"In its own way, the Indo-American Center provides an avenue for those who are well-off in the community to directly assist those who are less fortunate among them, brings together the suburbanites and the city-dwellers, and creates a sense of community that goes beyond geographical proximity and cuts across class, gender and generation gap."* *(p.309).*

English language Indian newspapers also serve Chicago's Indian community. They contain news about both India and Chicago. One such newspaper is the "India Tribune," which was started in 1977 as a fortnightly newspaper. The publication became a weekly in 1982 and branched out with a New York edition in 1993 and an Atlanta edition in 1994. The "India Tribune" covers a variety of topics appealing to almost every kind of reader. The front page and editorials generally contain articles about political or economic events relevant to Indians in Chicago. The weekly consists of sections like "States' Round-Up," "Politics," "Economy," "Legal Matters," "Sports" and "India and the World." The magazine section of the weekly, "Filmi Duniya," reports gossip and stories from "Bollywood" (the Indian film industry at Mumbai). Community pages routinely report on association meetings and celebrations, political fund-raising events, awards presentations, and outstanding achievements by Indians. Infighting and fissiparous tendencies among the groups are generally downplayed and editorials often try to focus on "unity" and "communal harmony." The newspaper also arranges an annual event, the "India Tribune Nite", featuring a dinner-entertainment show, where the local Indian youth get an opportunity to exhibit their talents (Rangaswamy, 2000).

In discussing radio and television shows broadcast in Chicago, Rangaswamy (2000) discusses a television show "Chitrahaar" which has survived for more than fifty years. "Chitrahaar" began as a Saturday morning live broadcast featuring local talent and dance clips from Hindi movies. Eventually the program tried to address specific Indian occasions like Gandhi's birthday and attempted to cater to all religious and linguistic communities. "Chitrahaar Night" is an annual event that showcases programs such as beauty pageants, fashion shows, and song and dance routines from Hindi-films performed by second- generation Indians. The event is well received

by Indian parents because they appreciate the fact that their children are being exposed to Indian cultural traditions in a positive and enjoyable way (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Another television show, "Bharat Darshan," produced by Super Broadcasting in Skokie, offers cable viewers in metropolitan Chicago current news and sports from India, talk shows, cooking shows, live concerts, and Indian TV serials. TV Asia, launched by Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan in 1993, was the first high-cost attempt to use satellite technology to reach Indians on both North American coasts. Broadcasts are primarily in Hindi, Urdu, and English, but also in other major regional languages. Asia Broadcasting Network owns TV Asia. It is supported by an international consortium of businesses and caters to Chicago neighborhoods on a daily basis (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Listening to ethnic radio is another popular pastime among Asian Indians in Chicago. "Jhankar" is an AM/FM radio program, which is broadcast over a seventy-mile radius around Chicago from recording studios in Bloomingdale. The show features popular Hindi movie songs from the 1950s, an era that the pioneering Indian immigrants recall with nostalgia (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Rangaswamy (2000) also discusses the participation of Indians in games and sports in the Chicago area. She notes that second-generation Indians and Pakistanis organized their own basketball teams and that the Indo-Pak National Basketball Tournament (IPNBT) was started in 1989. The tournament upheld a fair and open competition among players and soon expanded to include teams from other states. The summer tournament of 1996 witnessed the participation of sixteen teams, ten of which came from different states in America (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Interestingly, Caroline Brettell (2005) describes how the Indian Association of North Texas (IANT) in the Dallas Fort-Worth area provides Asian Indians with a platform for civic

engagement and integration in the host society. For example, Pete Sessions, the Republican Congressman, was invited to the annual event of IANT (known as India Nite) and was congratulated on becoming a member of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans in Washington. In another year, Frank Pallone, a Democratic Congressman from Washington and the founder of Congressional Caucus was invited to the event. Brettell (2005) further notes that the themes of the events organized by IANT often aim at consolidating India-US relations. Thus Brettell (2005) posits, *"Clearly, India Nite has become an instrument that situates the DFW Asian Indian community in relation to local and national power structures, and to both political parties." (p.258).*

Having discussed the functioning of ethnic associations and amenities at great length, I will now focus on Pawan Dhingra's perspective on ethnic associations. Interestingly, Dhingra (2003) posits that Asians use ethnic organizations to perpetuate the "model minority" image. He believes that the purpose behind ethnic organizations differs across generations (Dhingra, 2003). The first generation starts cultural and religious organizations to preserve their cultural heritage and to increase the likelihood of socio-economic mobility through establishing contacts (Hurh and Kim, 1998; Nee et al, 1994; Williams, 1988). These ethnic organizations help sustain ethnic unity until members became residentially, occupationally, and socially integrated into the host society (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998; Gans, 1962).

On the other hand, the third and higher generations of Asian Americans rarely join ethnic organizations because learning about their ancestry is of less importance to their parents (Tuan, 1998). The organizations that they join are mostly American in origin, and are primarily social, artistic, and political in nature (Kondo, 1996; Zia, 2000). Thus, Dhingra (2003) observes that such organizations are pan-ethnic instead of being specifically ethnic.

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The uniqueness of the second generation stems from the fact that they are positioned between the first and the third, and they maintain attachment to both ethnic and mainstream cultures (Dhingra, 2003). Dhingra (2003) notes that the level of integration of second-generation ethnic minorities with the White majority shapes the way they make sense of their parents' ethnic culture. Because they are faced with the perpetual stereotypes as "foreigners," Dhingra (2003) argues that second-generation immigrants are encouraged to both promote the model minority stereotype and learn about their ancestry to understand their "foreign" background.

Dhingra (2003) studied the Indian American Networking Association (IANA) in Dallas, which is composed mostly of college educated white-collar professionals. His study revealed that organization leaders and members join ethnic associations because they feel stereotyped and less comfortable with mainstream culture. His respondents believed that even though their cultural heritage would fade away across generations, their racial stereotypes as non-Americans would remain. Ethnic associations like IANA serve to counter negative impressions by bringing Indian Americans together and presenting an image of them as a "model minority" that contributes to the economic growth of the U.S., particularly in high-tech fields (Dhingra, 2003).

The organization strives to maintain the "model minority" image through a variety of means. It should be noted that the IANA prefers to involve professionals, whose titles advertise their class status. Being accepted as a IANA member implies having access to financial capital by virtue of working in corporate offices and cultural capital through one's command of the English language. Non-college educated Indian Americans or those not in corporate occupations do not fit with the IANA's ethos (Dhingra, 2003). To put it in the words of Dhingra (2003), *"The model minority also implicitly contrasts other minorities who lack such stellar resumes and English skills." (p.264).*

In line with its image of helping professionals, IANA offers structured networking opportunities and programs in business. For example, IANA organizes a program, "Professional Socializing," on one Friday of every month at a popular bar or restaurant in Dallas. Dhingra (2003) explains that such meetings are predominantly social events and serve to provide a platform to share one's business interests. The professional events of IANA include e-commerce and Internet start-up meetings (Dhingra, 2003).

The IANA also strives to maintain the "model minority" identity by downplaying issues of racism and discrimination. IANA group leaders in Dhingra's (2003) interviews revealed that Asian Americans in the U.S. face minor prejudice. They do not encounter major problems and can achieve mobility without drawing attention to discrimination. As Dhingra (2003) summarizes, *"The institutions do not become a space for discussing, much less organizing around, Asian American issues, despite members' concerns about discrimination." (pp. 266-267).* This is reinforced by the fact that since the 9/11 attack, IANA has not offered a panel or event to discuss the increased harassment toward South Asian Americans, despite the rising number of hate crimes in the area (Dhingra, 2003). Dhingra (2003) argues that the lack of events upholds the model minority image of a community, which is free of problems despite its non-White status.

In collaboration with first generation organizations, the IANA organizes community service activities, like health services for the elderly and educational support for youth. However, the IANA does not address internal issues of the community like domestic violence or poverty. Recently, the IANA organized an educational session informing high school students about popular business career options. IANA helped a Hindu temple organize a spelling bee for South

Asian American schoolchildren, reinforcing the minority image of Indian Americans as meritorious spelling bee champions (Dhingra, 2003).

Importantly, IANA organizes various outreach programs, like assisting in soup kitchens, volunteering at community shelters, and doing charitable work in other countries. Such community outreach programs to Dallas charities credit the ethnic group as giving back to their local area, rather than taking advantage of local resources as other minorities often supposedly do (Dhingra, 2003). In sum, ethnic associations provide one means by which Asian Indian immigrants try to preserve their cultural traditions and practices in their own familial lives.

Indian Family and Cultural Traditions

Sathi S. Dasgupta (1989) argues that Indians are characterized by family centrism, which implies that the interests and attitudes of the individual are subordinate to the interests and goals of the family. Non-immigrant family members also believe that their lives would be miserable without the support of their family in the United States. Interestingly, some of Dasgupta's (1989) respondents revealed that one of the most important reasons for them to stay in the United States is that they can earn enough money to help their parents and family members in India while still maintaining their aspired standard of living, something they feel they could not have achieved in India. Indian immigrants feel that one basic trait they need to learn and borrow from Americans is the value of independence. By independence, they generally refer to the character traits of assertiveness, ability to make independent decisions and take responsibility for their own actions. Yet, they denounce the fact that independence often comes with the extra baggage of individualism. Indians denounce self-centrism that places individual interests above those of the family (Dasgupta, 1989). Interviewees in Dasgupta's (1989) study revealed that they have sacrificed chances for promotion, lucrative job offers and opportunities for salary raises because

they declined job transfers to places, either overseas or to other parts of the country, where their family members were reluctant to move.

In a similar vein, Mehta and Belk (1991) found that Indian friends are expected to be friends for life who may be readily relied upon for help. Interestingly, Mehta and Belk (1991) note that Indian households in the United States are in possession of ample numbers of "identity kits." The "identity kits" (e.g. wooden statuary, wooden screens, inlaid woodwork, various kinds of native cloth pieces, brass vessels, copper vessels, replicas of Indian landmarks, family photos, DVDs of Indian movies, etc.) prevent the total alienation of identity with the foreign country (Mehta and Belk, 1991). Thus, the Indian immigrant family, according to Dasgupta (1989), exists as *"an emotional refuge for its members within American society. It has become a 'haven' of intensive, primary experience in a world of competition and impersonal relationships." (p.118)*.

Dasgupta (1989) notes that Indian immigrants strongly uphold traditional values and practices, like marriage as a life-long alliance, religious affiliation, conversing in their native language, and gender-based segregation at social gatherings. For instance, Dasgupta (1989) observed that during celebrations arranged by Indian associations, men and women interacted with each other, but tended to assemble separately.

Rayaprol (1997) notes the infusion of elements of modernity into the traditional structure of rigidity. Rayaprol (1997) observes, for instance, that Indian temple areas often have soda vending machines and pay phones, thus *"adding to the non-traditional components of a traditional setting." (p.81).* She notes that on certain occasions, many devotees sit on chairs instead of on the floor or carpet (as is traditionally done), thus resembling services at churches or synagogues. In another example, Rayaprol (1997) observes that devotees did not remove their shoes when entering the temple, which goes against traditional Hindu practice. She also observes

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that in every religious gathering, the temple priests use English to address the audience,
something not done in India (Rayaprol, 1997). This perhaps has to do with the assimilation
process since many non-Indian friends and relatives attend the social gathering of Indians.

The traditional concept of "prasad" (sacred food) is becoming increasingly obsolete among
second-generation Asian Indians, who prefer American food (Rayaprol, 1997). Bhatia (2007)
aptly captures this situation in stating that, *"Indian immigrants now live in dual societies and
inhabit multiple homes, roles, identities, and languages. Their networks and ideas of belonging
transcend national boundaries that bring together the local and the global and the home and the
host country into a single "social field."…..The Indian participants use the space of home or the
inside/private culture as a site to imagine Indian culture and to perform and enact the identity of
being Indian with other family and community members. The complex and multilayered process
of creating Indian culture in the diaspora included practicing aspects of the home culture such
as puja (prayer) and rituals, watching Bollywood and Hindi films, and participating in other
social and cultural practices. The community events are imagined, recreated, and personalized
in the home space in order to activate old memories and to show affiliation and identification
with Indian culture." (pp. 222-223).*

Drawing on the study by Gil and Vega (1996), Zhou (1997) proposes that such deviation from
cultural tradition and family solidarity can be explained in terms of the duration of stay in the
United States. In other words, Zhou (1997) posits that the sense of familial solidarity and cultural
tradition is negatively correlated with the duration of stay in the U.S. In the next section, I will
discuss how second-generation Asian Indians come to terms with the fact that they participate in
both Indian and American cultures.

Intergenerational Relations

Zhou (1997) notes that in the United States, immigrant children often become Americanized so quickly that it becomes hard for their parents to keep up with them. There is a growing anxiety among Asian Indian parents that their children will become like other American youth, and forget about their roots and cultural heritage (Zhou, 1997). Zhou (1997) notes three important ways in which migration affects parent-child relationships. First, due to lengthy separation (because of work responsibilities of the parents) it becomes increasingly difficult for family members to adjust to each other when they meet. Second, after migrating, women often join the workforce to contribute to the family income. Zhou (1997) contends that when both parents work outside the home it weakens parent-child interaction. Third, due to their parents' lack of proficiency in English, children often assume the role of interpreter and translator. Such role reversal often weakens the authority of the parents. Furthermore, the children are often confused about their cultural belonging. While on the one hand, they often do not fit into the frame of reference provided by their American peers, they are also confused by their parents' efforts to make the best of new environment and at the same time retain traditional familial values (Zhou, 1997). As Zhou (1997) explains, *"Generational consonance occurs when parents and children both remain unaccultured, or both acculturate at the same rate, or both agree on selective acculturation. Generational dissonance occurs when children neither correspond to levels of parental acculturation nor conform to parental guidance, leading to role reversal and intensified parent-child conflicts."* (p.84).

In typical Indian families the identity of an individual centers around the family and religion (Ghosh, 1995). In this context Goode (1963) observed that despite the rising number of nuclear families in urban India, interfamilial relations are extremely strong. Poole, Sundberg, and Tyler

(1982) note that the decision making process in joint family systems rests on *"the cultural values and expectations about power, autonomy and cohesiveness within the family" (p.349).*

Dasgupta (1989) contends that Indian parents feel that since they and their children cannot hide their phenotypical differences like Europeans, it is better to be proud of them. In the United States, immigrant Asian Indian parents view their children's academic performance as the only means available to them to fight the stigma attached to minority status or the only way that Indians can be proud of their ethnicity. Thus Indian immigrants want to portray occupational mobility as their master identity and therefore want it to take precedence over their minority status in the larger society. One important facet of Indian culture is that sons are expected to provide economic security for the family in the future. For that reason, high academic performance is expected from boys and not expected from girls (Dasgupta, 1989).

In her interviews with Indian immigrants, Dasgupta (1989) finds that Indian parents want their relationship with their children to be friendly. However, they feel that their children should fear them to a certain extinct. Dasgupta (1989) also observes that unlike typical Indian fathers, immigrant Indian fathers are not hesitant to openly express love and affection for their children. Dasgupta (1989) attributes this role change to two factors. The first factor is the belief on the part of the interviewees (parents) that self-confidence is a very important personality trait for success in America. Too much authoritarianism on their part might hamper the development of this trait in their children. The second factor is that the lack of extended family (in the U.S.) makes parents realize that they are the only ones their children can look to for affection and comfort. No difference is observed in the treatment of children by immigrant Indian mothers. They play the same emotional role in relation to their children in both contexts (Dasgupta, 1989).

In their study of second- generation Asian Indian children, Saran and Leonhard-Spark (1980) observed that the second generation of Asian Indian children, though not totally similar in behavior to their American counterparts, are more Americanized in their attitudes than children of their age in India. As one of the respondents in Priya Agarwal's (1991) study tacitly explained, *"We are coconuts-brown on the outside, white on the inside." (p.34).*

Sadly enough, some Asian Indian parents view the independent nature and novel ideas of their children as deviations from the traditional cultural norms (Wakil, Siddique, and Wakil, 1981). On the other hand, caught between peer pressure and parental restraint, the second generation cannot understand the reason behind the dissent of their parents about some of their activities (Ghosh, 1995). Saran (1985) notes that immigrant children often try to conform to their parent's expectations because they are aware that their family values differ greatly from that of their American peers. Therefore, they try to adjust their roles according to the context they are in. As Rangaswamy (2000) nicely explains, *"Trying to define themselves as either Indian or American often leads to contradictions and paradoxes. Sometimes they operate from an Indian "base," sometimes from an American one, depending on their particular situation, and they want to accept both as equally valid." (p.170).*

Ideally, Asian Indian parents want their children to be disciplined, well-behaved, good in academics, independent, helpful, courteous, and honest (Dasgupta, 1989). However, Dasgupta (1989) notes the term 'independence' may have a different connotation for Indian parents. 'Independence' for Indian parents does not mean complete independence of their child from their control. They do not expect their children to be financially independent when they are in college. And, they consider it their duty to provide for their children's education (Dasgupta, 1989; Ghosh, 1995). Conforming to the western way of thought, first generation Asian Indian parents feel the

need to grant some amount of autonomy to their children in regard to their career choices, but prefer to set broader limits within which children make their choices (Dasgupta, 1989).

Problems arise when success-oriented Indian parents try to impose their own medical, engineering, and scientific professions on their children. Professions like elementary or secondary school teacher or social worker are not highly regarded by Indian immigrants, mainly because they do not offer lucrative salaries. Therefore, students who try to make a career in these fields are often pressured to choose alternative careers that pay better wages. Furthermore, those who can't afford to go to medical school in the United States are sent to one of the many medical colleges in India that set aside seats for the children of NRIs in exchange for hefty premiums (what are known as "capitation" fees) that range between $25,000 and $50,000. Some parents prefer to educate their children in India (especially daughters) as a measure to shield them from "corrupt" influences in American society (Rangaswamy, 2000).

It should be noted that for Hindus, premarital chastity of girls is extremely important and the scandal of an 'affair' might result in a girl remaining unmarried for her entire life (Nair, 1978). For that reason, parents have been known to impose differential standards for their sons and daughters in the matters of dating and marriage (Agarwal, 1991). As justified by one of the respondents in Agarwal's (1991) study, *"It comes down to this: my daughter can get pregnant. My son can't." (p.48).*

Indian parents feel that if their children marry other Indians, it will be easier to assimilate their spouse into the family (Agarwal, 1991). As one of her respondents in Agarwal's (1991) study explained, *"If the girl my son marries is not Indian, she may not feel comfortable with our customs. Gradually we would be less close to our son and to our future grandchildren. It would be easier for an Indian girl to become part of our family." (p.49).* Respondents in Agarwal's

(1991) interviews further emphasized that having Indian values in common provides a stronger foundation for marriage. The factors that are typically considered in the selection of spouse in arranged marriages are horoscope match, educational level, caste, religion, occupation, height, weight, age, income, number of family members, unmarried brothers and sisters, property ownership, and place of residence (Rangaswamy, 2000). The preference for arranged marriages among Asian Indians in the United States is reflected by the size of the contact list maintained by an Indian matchmaking service in California, which claims to have a database of six thousand candidates that is continuously updated (Rangaswamy, 2000).

A study by Siddiqui and Reeves (1989) revealed that Non-Resident Indians (NRI) often rely on their family back home to select a spouse for their son/daughter who is conversant in the same native language. Motwani (1984) observes that although Indian parents try to socialize their children from a very early age to accept arranged marriage, they are sometimes unsuccessful.

Contrary to their parent's viewpoint, the younger generation express dissent about the fact that they are expected to spend the rest of their lives with a stranger who often comes from a vastly different cultural background (Ghosh, 1995). They argue that such differences in upbringing may result in marital incompatibility and disagreements (Ghosh, 1995). For instance, young Indian-American women, who have been brought up to be independent and career-minded, complain that their parents expect them to return to traditional standards of feminine and "housewifely" behavior after marriage (Rangaswamy, 2000). Quite naturally, they expect more egalitarian treatment from their husbands than what their mothers received (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Additionally, the second generation disputes the parental idea that *"you love the person you marry, not marry the person you love."* (Agarwal, 1991). Agarwal's (1991) study revealed that second-generation Indians were not averse to meeting someone of the parents' choice but want

wanted the freedom and opportunity to get to know the person and then decide whether to marry him/her. Furthermore, a majority of the second-generation interviewees revealed that they would prefer an arranged marriage with another Indian who grew up the United States to an arranged marriage with someone directly from India. Agarwal's (1991) respondents reasoned that this would allow them to share the commonality of their Indian-American background as well as avoid offending their parents.

A survey of Indians who got married in the United States showed that 24.6 percent of the men and 8.3 percent of the women got married outside their "race." Indian parents viewed these cases of interracial marriage as tragic. They openly discussed how they could prevent this from happening to their own children. Part of the disappointment for Indian parents stemmed from the fact that they looked forward to acquiring a new Indian family when their children get married. That does not usually happen when their children marry Americans, who view marriage as more of a personal or private affair between two people. Similarly, Americans who marry Indians are not quite prepared to accept the fact that their association is not just with the individual, but with the entire family as well (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Chapter 3 - Statement of Research Question and Issues for Research

It is emphasized by human capital theory that people migrate to those countries where the expected returns from their education and skill are the greatest (Sanderson, 2010). In other words, migration is a strategy to maximize returns to the migrant's stock of human capital (Borjas, 1989; Sanderson, 2010). In contrast, social network theory posits that the decision to migrate is often shaped by the individual's family members and friends who decide to immigrate and settle in particular places (Sanderson, 2010). Social networks supply migrants with information and resources that lower their costs and maximize the returns to moving (Sanderson, 2010).

It can be argued that both theories overlook the contextual factors involved in the decision to migrate. For instance, Sunil Bhatia (2008) contends that before the 9/11 attack, many Americans did not regard Indianness as "foreign" and some Indians also considered themselves as "White Americans." After the incident, Bhatia notes that Indians were increasingly suspected, stereotyped, and treated with prejudice. To make matters more difficult, U.S. immigration laws became more stringent (Bhatia, 2008). Indians became less comfortable assimilating with non-Indians and wanted to be secluded (Bhatia, 2008). Sadly, the heinous attack of 9/11 gave birth to an atmosphere of suspicion. Many South Asians were stereotyped and discriminated against (Bhatia, 2008). For example, Bhatia (2008) documents the increasing discrimination against Sikhs (an ethnic community from India) because of their appearance and ethnic features (having turbans and beards).

Stark and Bloom (1982) posit that the decision to migrate may not always be based on economic maximization. In fact, in the Indian context, Western education is always viewed as superior. Having a degree from a Western university adds to the prestige of the family (Helweg,

1987). The problem is enhanced by the fact that families of emigrants tend to underplay the

failures and disappointments of their relatives and highlight their success stories (Helweg, 1987).

Thus, it can be hypothesized that Indians are often tempted to migrate for the sake of enhancing

their family prestige and are often not fully aware of the adversities existing in the host country. I

contend that both of the aforementioned theories fail to fully address the context of migration

and the specific factors enabling or hindering the migration of Indians in a particular time period.

Therefore, my research examines the following set of questions:

**1. What are the specific facilitating or discouraging factors that Bengali immigrants
encountered during the time of their migration? What was the contextual situation in India
and the United States that prompted Bengali immigrants to migrate to the United States?**

India has shown remarkable progress in the field of education in the recent years. For

example, the premier Indian educational institutes like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs),

Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have produced

highly qualified students, who, in turn, have greatly contributed to the prosperity of the Indian

economy (Sahay, 2009). Further, the education offered at the IITs is highly subsidized and the

present tuition fee of 22,000 rupees ($440) per year is hardly comparable with the tuition of an

elite American engineering school, which is forty or fifty times higher (Sahay, 2009). The

selection process at the IITs is extremely competitive with an acceptance rate of less than 2

percent. Further, Bhatia found that many of the graduates believed that they received a high

quality education at the IITs (Bhatia, 2007).

It has also been noted that with the recent technological advancement, Indian cities like

Bangalore and Hyderabad, have become hubs of IT services and the software industry by

attracting large corporations such as Hewlett-Packard, Infosys, Wipro, Texas Instruments, and

Digital Equipment Corporation (Sahay, 2009). However, even with such career avenues and

facilities being offered by the Indian government, few Indians have swapped their six-figure salaries in United States to initiate new ventures in India (Sahay, 2009).

Additionally, in order to attract the Non-Resident Indians back to India, the government of India offers special privileges to them (Helweg, 2004). For instance, the Indian state of Gujarat's iNDEXb program provides individualized investment portfolios with market analysis and investment opportunities to entice immigrants to return (Helweg, 2004). Also, the organization offers returnees privileges like avoiding the waitlist to obtain immediate telephone lines, admission of children to good schools, and purchases of vehicles (Helweg, 2004). The Government of India is planning to issue the "Persons of Indian Origin" (PIO) cards for those Indians residing abroad and possessing foreign passports (Sahay, 2009). The PIO Card would benefit Indians abroad by extending a visa-free regime and conferring special economic, social, and cultural benefits (Sahay, 2009). Such economic and educational benefits should serve as a pull factor to induce Indian emigrants to return to India. These programs have thus far had little overall effects in prompting the return of Indian professional workers from the U.S. Therefore, my study examines the following question:

2. What are the factors influencing Bengali immigrants to not return to India?

Richard Florida (2002a) suggests that technological innovation can only flourish in a supportive social milieu. He posits that by offering lifestyle choices and facilities, a 'creative setting' can attract creative people, thereby leading to innovation and economic growth (Florida, 2002a). Florida's (2002a) interviews with members of the creative class revealed that they have turned down job offers in places that did not offer entertainment on a "just-in-time" basis. In this context, Florida (2002a) also discusses the importance of "third places," like coffee shops, bookstores, art galleries, and cafes where one meets less formal acquaintances. The significance

of such places stems from the fact that they provide a platform for human interaction and acquaintance (Florida, 2002a).

Florida (2002a) also underscores the importance of heterogeneity and diversity of a place in attracting the creative class. Florida (2002a) defines diversity in terms of the presence of people of various racial and ethnic groups, different ages, sexual orientations and with alternative appearances (e.g. those with body piercings and tattoos). Additionally, Florida (2002a) observes the desire of creative people to be involved in their community affairs and posits that such involvement can be interpreted as the desire of the creative class to establish and validate their own identity in places where they live.

Similarly, Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz (2004) in "Consumers and Cities," contend that the future of the cities depends upon their ability to provide attractive places for increasingly rich workers, who are less inhibited by choices of employment locations. He talks of four urban amenities that are critical in attracting the creative class: offering a variety of services and consumer goods, having an attractive aesthetic and physical setting, the availability of safe neighborhoods with lower crime rates, and functional transport and communication facilities (Glaeser et al., 2004). Glaeser et al. (2004) further note the importance of large urban markets in increasing the welfare of consumers. This is mainly because entertainment options (like baseball, opera, art museums, ethnic restaurants) require large audiences to be successful.

Challenging Florida's (2002) argument, Michael Storper and Allen Scott (2009) in their work, "Rethinking Human Capital, Creativity, and Urban Growth" (2009) claim that in the absence of internal economic dynamics, cities would be no more than basic service hubs. Though Storper and Scott (2009) agree with Florida that human capital and skills are indispensible for urban growth, they don't accede to the view that human capital is the primary factor responsible for

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urban growth. In other words, Storper and Scott's (2009) contention is that skilled workers do not move unless they can capitalize on their personal talent. In order to address these debates, my study will examine the following research question:

3. What are the factors that made Bengali professionals choose the Kansas City Metropolitan Area over any other city as their place of settlement?

After reading the existing literature and borrowing from Florida's (2002a) contention that creative people want to be involved in their community and establish their identity in places where they live, I felt that it would be interesting to examine the urban amenities preferred by Bengali professionals in Kansas City. Many Bengali professionals can be viewed as creative workers that add to the diversity of the urban social milieu. Therefore, I address the following set of questions in my research:

4. What are the urban amenities preferred by Bengali professionals residing in Kansas City Metropolitan Area? Further, what goods, services, and lifestyles appeal to Bengali immigrants in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area? What types of these amenities could be considered ethnically oriented versus those preferred by the cultural mainstream? How important are these amenities as a factor inducing Bengali professionals to migrate to a city in United States?

Previous research emphasizes that ethnic associations serve to maintain ethnic solidarity and help meet needs of the ethnic community (Rangaswamy 2000; Rayaprol, 1997), Dhingra (2003) found that Indian ethnic organizations provide a networking platform for Indian professionals and help to further the image of Indian immigrants as "model minorities." Thus, such organizations provide an institutional means of facilitating the social mobility of Indian immigrants while helping them to retain their cultural heritage and ethnic identity. Therefore, my study explores the following question:

5. What purposes do ethnic associations serve for Bengali professionals in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area?

Assimilation theory states that Asian immigrants are more likely to choose suburban residential locations and they experience little or no residential segregation from the White majority (Nee and Sanders, 1985; Khandelwal, 1995; Alba and Nee, 1999). Khandelwal (1995) notes that Asians Indians typically do not move to their suburban residence in their initial years of settlement in United States. They migrate to suburban areas only when they have become acclimated to life in the United States and they generally prefer middle-class, upper-middle class or affluent residential areas, which are predominately populated by White Americans (Khandelwal, 1995). Khandelwal (1995) interprets the move as an attempt of the educated, economically well-off Asian Indian population to assimilate amidst their counterpart White Americans in their equivalent economic class. Furthermore, research indicates that Asian Indians are the only immigrant group that does not display high levels of residential concentration with fellow Indians (Alba and Nee, 1999). Therefore, my study explores the following set of questions:

6. Do Bengali immigrants in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area primarily live in suburban areas? If so, why? When do Bengali immigrants start living in suburban areas? In other words, does their movement to suburban areas take place in the initial or later years of their arrival to United States? In suburban neighborhoods, are the Bengalis residentially dispersed or clustered in close proximity to other Bengalis?

As immigrant workers residing in a foreign country with a different culture where they are socially defined as minorities, Bengali professionals and their family members are faced with the issue of assimilating the culture of mainstream American (i.e. White) society. The ability to assimilate such culture would be important, not only for successfully negotiating the workplace, but also the social sphere of life in America for the immigrant and his/her family members. It is important to note that it would be a mistake to consider the broader Indian ethnicity as a monolithic category. For instance, in her study of Bengali-Hindus, Niyogi (2008) takes note of their "progressive" and "liberal" values compared to other Indian ethnicities. She also notes that

Bengalis appreciate and encourage education at elite institutions. For them, education is a virtue in itself (Niyogi, 2008). An important issue is whether such values influence their ability to assimilate mainstream American culture? Further, does a path of assimilation that includes economic success inculcate a perception by Bengali professionals that they represent 'model minorities' in American society? My study explores the following set of questions:

7. What is the nature and extent of the assimilation of Bengali professional immigrants to mainstream American society? What factors promote or inhibit their assimilation chances? As part of the assimilation process, do Bengali professionals view themselves as 'model minorities?'

The existing literature provides evidence of the incompatibility of second generation Indians with the cultural traditions of their parents. For instance, Min Zhou (1997) describes the confusion that second generation immigrant children experience about their cultural belonging. While they do not fit into the frame of reference provided by their American friends, they are also confused by their parents' effort to get them socialized to traditional Indian customs (Zhou, 1997). Zhou (1997) also talks about the anxiety of Indian parents that their children will become like American youths and forget about their Indian cultural heritage. This problem is further enhanced when Indian parents try to impose their own medical, scientific, and engineering profession on their children and choose marital partners for them (Rangaswamy, 2000). The younger generation then complains that they have to spend the rest of their lives with a stranger who comes from a different cultural background (Agarwal, 1991; Ghosh, 1995).

Dhingra (2003) poses the interesting proposition that while the first generation maintains their ethnic heritage and creates ethnic organizations to preserve them, the third and higher generations rarely join ethnic organizations because they learn little about their ancestry from their parents (Dhingra, 2003; Tuan, 1998). Therefore, if the third and higher generations join organizations, they tend to be pan-ethnic organizations instead of being specifically ethnic. The

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uniqueness of second generation immigrants stems from the fact that they are positioned between the first and the third generations, and they maintain attachment to both ethnic and mainstream cultures (Dhingra, 2003). Dhingra (2003) draws on the existing body of literature to claim that second generation immigrants care about their parents' native language, customs, and the values of prioritizing family and community over the individual (Kibria, 1999; Min and Kim, 1999; Thai, 1999). Based on this literature, my research examines the following set of questions:

8. What are some of the issues of intergenerational dissonance in the families of Bengali professionals? Do Bengali parents allow the assimilation of their sons and daughters to American culture?

Chapter 4 - Research Methods

This chapter describes the research methodology I used to address the research questions listed in Chapter 3.

Research Design

My research employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design using qualitative methods. My research design was non-experimental because I lacked the ability to "intervene" and control the process of assimilation and adaptation of Bengali professional immigrants in the United States. My only source of control was over those who were observed and interviewed in the research process. I used qualitative methods because I felt that this approach is better suited than quantitative methods to more fully illuminate the nature of human affairs, perceptions, feelings and the real context in which the processes of assimilation and adaptation occur.

The study population in this research was immigrant Bengali professional workers and their families residing in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. The Kansas City Metropolitan Area was chosen as the area of study primarily because it has the largest concentration of Bengali professional workers within a 150 miles radius from Manhattan, Kansas. This research focuses exclusively on Bengali-Indian[4] professionals who migrated from India and are residing in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. In India, Bengalis primarily come from the state of West Bengal. Yet, some are dispersed in other parts of India as well. For the purpose of this research,

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[4] The term Bengali is used to refer to people who speak Bengali language and reside primarily in West Bengal (India), and in Bangladesh. The ethnic group is characterized by distinct cultural traditions, language, and food habits.

I studied Bengali-Indian professionals not only from the state of West Bengal but also from other parts of India. However, Bengalis from Bangladesh were not considered for this research.

Personal interviews were conducted with Bengali professionals workers, their spouses, and their children (or the second generation). The term 'second generation' is used to refer to the children of first generation immigrants (Zhou, 1997). The contemporary literature has used it to refer not only to the U.S. born children but also to immigrant children who arrived in United States before attaining adulthood or they reach the age of 13 (Gans, 1992, Portes, 1996; Zhou, 1997). For my research, I used the contemporary definition of the term which includes both U.S. born children and children who immigrated to United States before the age of 13. However, for the purpose of my research, I only interviewed second- generation subjects who are 13 years old and above. The age criterion for children was used because a certain level of maturity and understanding was required to answer my interview questions and properly reflect upon the assimilation of Bengalis in the United States.

Methods of Securing Subject Participation

The help of Bengali professors at Kansas State University was enlisted to locate "gatekeepers" and guides to facilitate introduction and access to the Bengali community in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. I also got in touch with the associations of Bengalis in Kansas City (namely the Kansas City Bengali Association (KCBA), Sangam Midwest, and the Pratichi Club of Kansas City) in order establish contact with persons in key positions and subsequently with the community at large. Thus, the first few steps of my research involved visiting the websites of these associations, learning about their activities, and contacting them to inform them about my research.

The next step was to make the community members aware of my research. I primarily relied on the community leaders in order get the email addresses of Bengali professionals. I sent a personalized email message to these Bengali professionals informing them about my research and requesting their consent for research participation. Further, they were asked to identify other possible participants if any. In other words, I utilized purposive sampling with a snowball technique to secure a sample of subjects for the study.

I sent out a reminder email after ten days only to those professionals who chose not to respond to the first email. This helped elicit additional participation. Finally, I contacted community leaders to help me gain access to those who did not respond to my second email. I interviewed 50 respondents comprised of Bengali professionals, their spouses, and children. Following Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), I utilized the criterion of *saturation*[5] in determining the number to interviews to be conducted. The following table shows the number of interviews conducted by age and employment sector of the professionals. In some cases, the spouse and/or children were unavailable or ineligible (mainly children because of being under age) for the interview. In those cases, only the professionals were interviewed. The actual names of the respondents and their current employment were not disclosed, only pseudo names and their employment sector were used to ensure anonymity.

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[5] Glaser and Strauss (1967) defined theoretical saturation as a process in which the research continues to sample relevant cases until no new insights are obtained from the data.

Table 1: Number of Interviews conducted by the Age and Employment Sector of the Professionals

Serial No.	Professionals and Families	Age (years)	Employment
1.	Abhirup Saha	30-40	IT Sector Professional
2.	Samata Saha	30-40	IT Sector Professional
3.	Akash Banerjee	50-60	IT Sector Professional
4.	Sunanda Banerjee	50-60	School Teacher
5.	Angshuman Bakshi	40-50	Professor
6.	Somlata Bakshi	40-50	Small Business Owner
7.	Ashok Moitra	50-60	Professor
8.	Sayantika Moitra	50-60	Research Associate
9.	Dinesh Moitra	15-20	High School Student
10.	Asish Thakur	50-60	Professor
11.	Buddhaditya Chakraborty	30-40	IT Sector Professional
12.	Pamela Chakraborty	30-40	IT Sector Professional
13.	Dipak De	40-50	Consultant
14.	Judhajit Sen	30-40	IT Sector Professional
15.	Ranjita Sen	30-40	School Teacher
16.	Kalyan Guha	30-40	IT Sector Professional
17.	Kushal Sarkar	50-60	IT Sector Professional
18.	Nandita Sarkar	50-60	Consultant
19.	Pallab Sikdar	60-70	IT Sector Professional
20.	Mita Sikdar	60-70	Consultant
21.	Partha Acharya	60-70	IT Sector Professional
22.	Dipannita Acharya	60-70	Day Care Center
23.	Sumana Acharya	20-25	Accounting Professional
24.	Prateek Karmakar	70-80	Professor

Serial No.	Professionals and Families	Age (years)	Employment
25.	Indrani Karmakar	70-80	Housewife
26.	Subrata Karmakar	25-30	Consultant
27.	Pulak Sanyal	50-60	IT Sector Professional
28.	Deepti Sanyal	50-60	Housewife
29.	Kabita Sanyal	20-25	Graduate Student
30.	Purnendu Roy	50-60	IT Sector Professional
31.	Srabanti Roy	50-60	Consultant
32.	Arnab Roy	20-25	Undergraduate Student
33.	Rabindranath Ghoshal	60-70	Professor
34.	Probhal Ghoshal	60-70	Research Associate
35.	Rajat Dasgupta	50-60	IT Sector Professional
36.	Rachana Dasgupta	50-60	IT Sector Professional
37.	Ranadeep Bhowmick	60-70	Professor
38.	Basabi Bhowmick	60-70	Insurance Professional
39.	Sugata Bhowmick	20-25	Undergraduate Student
40.	Sambit Basu	50-60	IT Sector Professional
41.	Priya Basu	50-60	Housewife
42.	Sanjay Ghatak	30-40	IT Sector Professional
43.	Saikat Ghosh	30-40	IT Sector Professional
44.	Subir Mazumdar	50-60	IT Sector Professional
45.	Sagarika Mazumdar	50-60	Small Business Owner
46.	Sudipto Samanta	50-60	IT Sector Professional
47.	Sujit Chatterjee	40-50	IT Sector Professional
48.	Sunaina Chatterjee	40-50	Architect
49.	Sunirmal RoyChowdhury	60-70	IT Sector Professional
50.	Supriyo Adhikari	30-40	IT Sector Professional

Methods of Data Collection

Personal observation and interviews with Bengali professional workers and their family members were the primary methods used in the collection of data. Interviews were semi-structured, non-directive, and focused. The informal and open-ended nature of the interviews also helped me collect in-depth information. Resonating Bronislaw Malinowski's (1922), I believe that the purpose of interviews is *"to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his visions of his world." (p.25).* The interview subjects in this research were the Bengali professionals, their spouses, and their children or the second generation. Most interviews were conducted in the Bengali language, expect for a few interviews with the second generations (owing to their limited fluency in the Bengali language and thus wished to be interviewed in English).

Each interview began with me explaining the purpose of the research to the interviewee and getting the interviewee's verbal consent about participation in the research. Equipped with the questionnaire at hand, I was responsible for keeping *"the informant on track, attending to the business at hand."* (Johnson, 2002, p.112). However, Johnson (2002) rightly assigns the interviewer a passive role as a listener, and he posits that if the interviewer is successful, the interviewee will take the more active role as a speaker. Therefore, I allowed my respondents the freedom the express themselves adequately.

The interviews I conducted were in-depth. According to Johnson (2002) an in-depth interview can be described as:*A researcher who uses in-depth interviewing commonly seeks "deep" information and knowledge-usually deeper information and knowledge than is sought in surveys, informal interviewing, or focus groups, for example. This information usually concerns very*

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personal matters, such as an individual's self, lived experiences, values and decisions, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge, or perspective" (p.104).

Accordingly, Johnson (2002) contends that the word "deep" used in the term "in-depth" interview has several meanings. *First*, deep understandings are held by participants or members of a social group about their everyday activity, event or place (Johnson, 2002). The interviewer also seeks to achieve the same level of deep understanding as the members of the group (Johnson, 2002). As Johnson (2002) elucidates, *"In this respect, the informant would be a kind of teacher and the interviewer a student, one interested in learning the ropes or gaining member knowledge from a veteran informant" (p.106).*

Further, Johnson (2002) has important suggestions for a researcher like me who is connected to the group under investigation. Johnson (2002) posits that if the interviewer happens to be a current or former member of the group under investigation, he or she may use in-depth interviewing to explore or validate their understanding, or to see whether such understanding is shared by other members of the group. *Second,* Johnson (2002) states that deep understanding goes beyond the commonsensical explanation of cultural events, activities, places, or artifacts. Thus, in-depth interviewing goes beyond the apparent understanding of an event and strives to cover what is hidden from ordinary view or reflection. *Third,* a deep understanding helps reveal how our commonsensical assumptions and practices constitute our interest and how we make sense of them. *Fourth,* a deep understanding helps us articulate and grapple with multiple views or perspectives on the meaning of an activity, event, place, or cultural object (Johnson, 2002). Therefore, throughout my research, I strived to gain in-depth understanding of the Bengali community in Kansas City.

An important issue concerning in-depth interviewing is the researcher's relationship to member's knowledge and life experiences (Johnson, 2002). Johnson (2002) aptly contends that if the researcher is completely ignorant and inexperienced of the issues to be addressed in the interviews, the interviews will take the shape of instruction, with the experienced interviewee instructing the novice interviewer. Downplaying such interviews, Johnson (2002) elaborates, *"Such interviews are commonly very uneven in quality, with the early ones usually telling more about the novice's ignorance than about the phenomenon being studied" (p.107).* In fact, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland (1995) observed that generally such interviews prove to be worthless as a source of empirical data. Thus, I made myself adequately familiar with the existing literature in my field of investigation and the dynamics of the community in question.

However, Johnson (2002) cautions that the veteran researcher with actual lived experience should not take their knowledge for granted. If they do, their former status as members of a community may constitute a hindrance when they interview others. So, in spite of having the advantage of understanding and practicing Bengali culture, I was careful that I don't take my knowledge for granted.

Interestingly, Vo (2000) contends that researching one's own community does not mean that one is innately familiar with every aspect of it. For instance, in her research on the Asian community in San Diego, Vo (2000) observes that in spite of being an Asian, she was unfamiliar with the organizational infrastructure of the community. As Vo (2000) puts it, *"I had moved to the area to attend college, so the majority of my interactions were with Asian Americans involved in the academic community; therefore, I had minimal contact with the larger Asian community before I began my project in 1992………..Yet as a researcher who wanted to "hang around" the Asian American organizations, I did not fit into an easily identifiable role, since I*

did not own a business, was not a professional, did not work for a nonprofit organization, was not interested in being an Asian political representative or politician, and was not looking for a job in the community" (p.21). I would say that the circumstances portrayed by Vo (2000) reflect my situation with remarkable accuracy. Therefore, I spent considerable amount of time and effort to built rapport with the Bengali community in Kansas City. I used elements of urban ethnography as a research technique. This involved spending time in observing the social setting of Bengali families and the consumption preferences of Bengali professionals for urban amenities.

It has been argued that if the researcher and the subject share a good rapport, subjects will be cooperative and will not be hesitant to pass on the most sensitive information (Shaffir 1991; Dean, Eichhorn, and Dean, 1969; Wax, 1971; Ryen, 2002). But, Ryen (2002) notes that rapport building is a challenging task even when the researcher and the subjects share the same cultural background. M.N. Panini (1991) observed this in studying the Indian context, *"In a way, the fieldworker's search for the status of an 'insider' is like chasing a mirage. In societies comprising.....class, ethnic, factional divisions, a fieldworker cannot be accepted as an insider of every section of society" (p.8).* Fortunately, I enjoyed considerable rapport with my research subjects by virtue of being a Bengali myself and the fact that I was engaging in a scholarly endeavor that was appreciated by the community. Additionally, the traditional cleavages of caste, class hierarchy was not observed within the Bengali community in Kansas City. The community was relatively homogeneous in the sense that most members were professional workers earning high-end salaries and possessed progressive values and beliefs.

However, following Vo (2000), I abstained from taking sides on any issue at hand, and avoided conflicts based on personal differences or strategic disagreements. In line with MacLeod

(1987), I believe that a researcher's role is not to lecture their research subjects on how to go about their lives. Rather, his/her focus should be on finding out what people think and do, and the reason behind such thinking (Vo, 2000). Similarly, Casey and Lury (1987) posit that ideally a researcher should, *"gain the trust of the community by openness and frankness; participate in community activities whilst retaining an independent stance on local controversies and disputes"* *(p.69).*

Also important to the interviewing process is the wording of the questions. Thus, abstractly framed questions are more likely to yield general, unanalyzable responses than those concretely framed. For instance, a question like "Describe your life in America?" will yield general information in comparison to the question, "Do you consider yourself as being assimilated in American society? What are the factors promoting and hindering your assimilation process?"

For the purpose of my research, I needed to collect data on the economic profile of my respondents. Because people are often uncomfortable revealing their actual annual income to a stranger, I categorized annual income into five subsets ((a) Below $20,000; (b) $20,000-$50,000; (c) $50,000-$100,000; (d) $100,000-$200,000; (e) $200,000 and above) to choose from. This helped respondents to avoid revealing their actual income, while simultaneously providing sufficient precision and more accuracy in measurement (See Appendix One for the interview schedule). Additionally, I was skeptical that some respondents might exaggerate their role and participation in ethnic associations in order to portray themselves as adherents of cultural traditions. Thus, the interview schedule has two consecutive questions: "Are you affiliated to any Bengali or Indian associations in Kansas City? Describe your attachment to such associations?"; "Are you involved in any Pan-American organizations in U.S.? If yes, in what capacity?" These questions helped me develop a comparative understanding of their civic inclination and

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involvement. Similarly, questions like, "How do you spend your weekends? What is your favorite pastime during the weekends?" made an attempt to understand whether Bengalis spend their leisure time observing their cultural traditions and preserving their ethnic ties. The question was also instrumental in addressing whether Bengalis associate themselves with Pan-American interests and associations during their weekends, which facilitate their assimilation process. Similarly, the questions, "Considering all aspects of Bengali culture, which aspects do you feel strongly about retaining? What aspects do you feel least strongly about retaining?" served the dual purpose of understanding the ethnic attachment of Bengalis and their level of assimilation to U.S. culture.

Other questions like, "What are some of the ethnic amenities/facilities, if any, that you use in Kansas City? What are your contributions, if any, towards creating such amenities in Kansas City? What ethnic amenities would you ideally prefer to have in Kansas City?" helped not only identify the ethnic amenities to which Bengali immigrants have access, but also those amenities that they would prefer to have in Kansas City.

 Finally, the questions, "What are your views on second generation dating? Do you believe in arranged marriage and do you intend to conduct an arranged marriage for your son or daughter?" are designed to find out how the Bengali professionals look upon arranged marriages and whether they are receptive to the idea of their son or daughter choosing a marriage partner from a different racial and cultural background. In this regard, Julie Tammivaara and D. Scott Enright (1986) pointed out that questions that are "cathected" or connected to informant's emotions, can lead to richer conversation, provided that a high degree of rapport has already been achieved between the interviewer and the interviewee. For example, a question like, "How is your son or daughter assimilated to U.S. culture?" may elicit more useful information than a question like,

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"What do you think of the assimilation pattern of second generation Asian Indians in United States?"

Conformity to local standards is equally crucial while conducting research. For example, certain codes of conduct regarding age, gender, social background, and knowledge status are observed and emphasized in certain cultures; certain topics are considered taboo in certain cultures for male/female interaction; there are culture related codes concerning the distribution of power, which may not be at concurrence with the values held by the researcher. Furthermore, it should be noted that the cross-cultural context inherently has a differential notion of status. For example, status can be linked to age (tribal societies), to knowledge (in traditional Chinese cultures), to religious knowledge (in traditional Muslim societies), and to socio-economic positioning (in feudal/capitalist cultures) (Shah, 2004). Wax (1979) noted that a, *"fieldworker's gender, age, prestige, expertise or ethnic identity may limit or determine what he or she can accomplish" (p.513).* Yet, Cicourel (1964) observed that this also depends on the subject of study and the investigation circumstance.

Similarly, emphasizing the importance of understanding the cultural uniqueness of Asian immigrants in studying them, Suh, Kagan and Strumpf (2009) posited: *"Knowledge of communication patterns among Asians is critical to the understanding of interactions with Asian immigrants. Given a cultural orientation valuing group customs and collective perspectives, most Asians tend to present "desirable" opinions, rather than personal views. In most Asian countries, individuals tend to reflect the thinking of elders or the majority. Normative values and loyalty to the group take precedence over individual ideas, and are considered essential to cultural discipline" (p.196).*

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Therefore many times in an interview situation, an Asian respondent may just resonate what he/she perceives the researcher wants to hear (Suh et al., 2009). I was thus careful in interviewing my research subjects and observed whether their behavior and actions conform to their verbal responses. Conformity to the values and nuances of Bengali culture was observed by while conducting the interviews (Ortin, 1998; Suh et al., 2009). For instance, addressing an elderly person by his/her first name is not considered acceptable in the Bengali culture. I was cognizant that my interaction with respondents conformed to such cultural norms.

Understanding gender nuances is also of utmost importance in studying immigrants. For instance, Suh et al. (2009) noted that the modesty and humbleness of Asian women are prone to be misunderstood as reluctance to answer questions and participate in research. Similarly, their tendency to give short and simple answers may be misinterpreted as disinterest in research (Suh et al., 2009). I was aware of such gender differences when conducting interviews with female subjects.

Finally, throughout the interviews, I asked follow-up questions to help me clarify and fully understand a response. Importantly, Rubin and Rubin (2005) argued that follow-up questions should generally be used when the answer to a question is too strong, too simple, or too broad. Further, they noted that follow-up question(s) becomes necessary when the researcher feels that an event or explanation has been intentionally omitted or mentioned in an ambiguous fashion or merits further explanation. Thus, Rubin and Rubin (2005) defined thoroughness as, *"it means you do not leave major threads hanging, ideas incomplete, or key terms undefined or unexplained, or fail to figure out the mechanism that explains the theme….it means filling in key blanks, missing information, missing steps in an argument, or missing events in a sequence"* (p.183).

However, Rubin and Rubin (2005) also cautioned that recognizing there is missing information requires that a researcher has done background work on the topic under consideration. Therefore, I prepared adequately before conducting the research and made myself familiar with the literature on Indian immigrants and about the Bengali community in Kansas City. Interestingly, Rubin and Rubin (2005) also emphasized that patience is an important quality for researchers doing interviews. Thus, the researcher should wait until a subject is done with his or her narration before talking again (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Following Rubin and Rubin (2005), I used follow-up questions when I felt that the interviewee is addressing a particular theme which is important for my research. Similarly at the end of the interview, I asked my respondents whether they want to add any questions or comment on the interview (Bhatia, 2007).

Every interview was recorded. Interview tapes were later transcribed for close analysis. When this was not possible, detailed "process notes" of interview conversations were taken, which were clarified or elaborated immediately after the interview.

Observation as a Technique

The qualitative researcher should also recognize the significance of non-verbal messages and rituals. Potter (1997) suggested that an inductive discourse analysis must pay close attention to social practices like hesitations, pauses, silences, and overlaps. Hence apart from the interview, the other important tool for my research was observation, which helped me note unexpressed viewpoints. Records were made not only of what an interviewee said, but also of his/her behavior. Of course, recording of such notes were made in a covert fashion as it might have a deterrent influence on some interviewees' willingness to give information.

With or without actual recordings, I also recorded the circumstances surrounding the interview to provide details of the context in which the conversation took place. Field notes were

an important component of my research. When it was not feasible to take field notes, I relied on my mnemonics to write about the context in a later stage (Bhatia, 2007). As Johnson (2002) observed, *"it is imperative that he or she takes process notes regarding the interview itself, to gain an understanding of the interview as a social occasion and how the questions and answers mutually constitute the sense of what is being said. The questions asked guide and influence the answers given, and so it is important for the interviewer to grasp why the informant proffers one segment of talk as an answer rather than another"* (p.112).

Data Analysis

I transcribed the interviews on the same day that they were conducted. The analysis of the interviews was done in two stages: (a) initial coding of themes and issues, (b) manual transcription of the tapes. While in the field, I listened to the tapes and reviewed my field notes to help me identify the themes that will be instrumental in analyzing the data (Pande, 2004). However, at the initial stage of the analysis, these categories remained open to modifications (Ely, 1984; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Pande, 2004).

The initial themes were the various sections of my questions in the interview schedule: general information, reasons and context of migration, urban amenities, ethnic associations and their purpose, assimilation, and intergenerational relations. Such open coding helped identify themes from the data collected (Pande, 2004).

After formulation of these themes, I searched for sub-themes or sub-categories within each (Pande, 2004). For example, within the theme of urban amenities, the sub-categories were: the preferred urban amenities, involvement in ethnic organizations, etc. Similarly, the category of intergenerational relations entailed further subcategories like intergenerational consensus or dissonance on marital preferences, on occupational choices, involvement in ethnic Bengali or

Pan-American associations. Likewise the assimilation theme had subcategories like residential, marital assimilation in the United States, involvement in Pan-American organizations, socio-economic profiles of friends, etc.

Interviews were manually transcribed using a tape log and this helped me analyze contextual, linguistic, and para-linguistic data i.e. things that doesn't get detected during the transcription process, like volume or pitch of the respondent, but are still important (Valentine, 2002). The tapes were transcribed following the procedure below:

1. Each tape was numbered and registered.

2. Psuedonyms were assigned for each of the respondents.

3. Date and location of the interview were noted.

4. Classification of the events (e.g. interview, conversation, interaction during a Bengali get-together, etc.) were made (Valentine, 2002).

After following the above-mentioned steps, a table was drawn with three columns: Log, Theme/Context, and Quotes. The first column noted the location of the transcribed information. The second column contained the theme and context of the information recorded. General themes, my observation and impression, contextual information, important notes, para-linguistic clues were also recorded in the column. The third column entailed the transcribed speech in its most accurate form possible (Valentine, 2002).

During the transcription process, special note was taken of the "silences", "pauses", and "hesitations." Additionally, attempts were made to understand as to what is indicated by silence?; why someone hesitated before voicing his/her opinion? Moreover, the exact time of the interviews, pauses, and interruptions were noted by reading the meter on the recorder (Valentine, 2002).

English Translation and Data Analysis

In the study of immigrants, Suh et al. (2009) observed that the timing of translation of responses from native language to English and the sequence of data management is of utmost importance. As Suh et al. (2009) stated, *"Translation can significantly influence study findings if not handled appropriately" (p.196).* Suh et al. (2009) provided three strategies of translation: English translation before analysis, contextual comparison during analysis and, English translation after analysis. Let us briefly discuss these strategies:

Strategy A: English Translation Before Analysis

Under this strategy, translation is done immediately after the interview in the native Asian language. The strategy offers advantages in coding and allows the researcher to examine the data for quality and initiate the analysis (Suh et al., 2009). However in this strategy, the associated meaning and implicit expression by the Asian respondents are often lost during the translation process (Larkin et al., 2007; Suh et al., 2009).

Strategy B: Contextual Comparison During Analysis

In this strategy, translation occurs later in the process of analysis. Thus, the transcription and the initial coding are done in the native language followed by translation into English during the analysis phase (Suh et al., 2009). Suh et al. (2009) emphasize that the English translation should be done along with constant contextual comparisons between meanings in the two languages during the categorization of the codes. Such process makes it feasible to capture the explicit and implicit meanings from the transcripts, and also the culturally specific expressions and concepts (Suh et al., 2009).

Strategy C: English Translation After Analysis

This strategy involves translation of the research findings in English only after the study is completed. In this strategy, the researcher usually captures explicit and implicit meanings implied in the language and also the culturally specific expressions. However, the researcher adopting this strategy is more likely to encounter problem during translation because of the syntax and linguistic differences between languages (Suh et al., 2009).

I used Strategy B, where the first level of coding is done in the native language, which in my case was Bengali. It should be noted that contextual meanings in one language are not always translatable into another language because language resonates the cultural and historical backgrounds of people who use it to communicate (Duranti, 1997; Suh et al., 2009). For instance, Suh et al. (2009) noted that in contrast to the Asian culture, English communication style underlines individualistic concepts and contexts over the collective contexts. Consequently, if translation is done immediately after the interview, many unspoken words like "I" are included in the transcript, which may thereby change the context of the narratives (Suh et al., 2009). Thus, echoing Suh et al. (2009), I translated from the second level of coding by comparing the contextual difference between the English and Bengali in order to highlight cultural meanings and expressions throughout the analysis.

Ethical Considerations in the Field

Absolute confidentiality was maintained for all interviews. As part of the debriefing procedure, subjects were told that their names would never be identified or connected in any way with the information they provide in an interview; a pseudonym would be assigned to each respondent. Only the pseudonym and the group to which the subject belongs (professional, spouse, second generation) were recorded in the field notes and were used to write-up the study findings. In

short, I avoided causing harm to their reputation, social standing, and their communities and

organizations.

Chapter 5 - Findings and Data Analysis

The in-depth interviews with Bengali-Indian professionals, their spouses, and children led to some very interesting findings. The findings are elaborately discussed in accordance to the eight research questions. Topically speaking, the findings are presented in the following sequence: the reasons and the context of migration of the Bengali-Indian creative workers; reasons for not returning back to India; reasons for choosing Kansas City over any other city as the place of settlement; urban amenity preferences among the Bengali creative workers; purpose of ethnic associations; residential preferences among the Bengali creative workers; assimilation of Bengali creative workers in the U.S. society; and, intergenerational relations among the Bengali creative workers. In discussing the findings, I have assigned pseudonyms to each respondent so as to maintain confidentiality.

1. What are the specific facilitating or discouraging factors that Bengali immigrants encountered during the time of their migration? What was the contextual situation in India and the United States that prompted Bengali immigrants to migrate to the United States?

The study revealed that reasons for migrating to United States differed by the time and the context of migration. Indian professionals who migrated to United States before the 1990s came largely because of 'push' factors, while those migrating after the 1990s moved mainly because of the 'pull' exerted by life in the United States. Among the 'push' factors, the Indian professionals emphasized the poor salary structure, less opportunity for career advancement, and the political corruption prevalent in India.

As Prateek Karmakar, who migrated to United States in 1969, observed:

"The salary that I was getting from my job in India was not adequate to support my family. I found that jobs in U.S. offered much higher salaries and decided to migrate."

Purnendu Roy, an IIT graduate, reflected in a similar manner:

"As is the case with every IIT-ian, I got a job immediately after graduating. But in 1983, the salary scale of a job in India was not comparable to that in United States. The progress in the IT sector had not started. It was difficult even to get Sony video-recording cassettes. I felt that my education and skill would be better utilized and appreciated if I migrated to the United States."

Sudipto Samanta migrated to United States in 1976 for higher education and returned to India after completing his degree. However, he could not adjust to the work culture in India and decided to migrate back to the U.S. He shared his experience:

"I came here primarily to get my higher education. I returned to India after getting my degree and again came back to United States in 1979. The reason being I did not like the work conditions and job promotion system in India and thus decided to move back to the United States."

Some migrants identified the volatile political context of West Bengal in the 1960s to be a major cause for their migration to United States. West Bengal witnessed the rise of the Naxalbari movement[6] in the 1960s and many youths preferred migrating to the United States to avoid the turmoil. Educated youths from affluent families preferred migrating to foreign countries to avoid random police atrocities. As Partha Acharya explained:

"In the 1960s, Bengal was in terrible condition. The political environment was very much troubled by the Naxalite movement. Youths were randomly getting arrested and police became atrocious about curbing the movement. At that time many educated youths from affluent families migrated to foreign countries and I was one of them.....My initial plan was to complete my masters from the United States and go back to India. However, the situation in Bengal did not improve and I decided to stay back in the United States."

Another reason for the migration of Bengali professionals to the United States was unemployment. Importantly, such unemployment was not because of the deficiency of

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[6] The Naxalbari movement embraced Maoist philosophy and became popular in West Bengal in the 1960s.

educational qualifications or skills, but was due to the lack of available opportunities and

corruption that existed in the country. Ashish Thakur, an academic, who came to United States in

the 1980s, shared his dissatisfaction with the political culture of the state of West Bengal and the

politicization of the education system. Despite his educational credentials, Thakur was unable to

secure a job because of the prevailing corruption in the education system. He elaborated:

"I was unemployed in India only because the appointment of university professors in West Bengal was not very transparent and it depended on your political affiliation. I never received any call from the college service commission (the administrative body responsible for the recruitment of college professors in the state of West Bengal in India) even though my name was listed in the panel for five years. Even worse, I appeared in an interview for the post of assistant professor, but none of the candidates were selected for the post. It later came to my knowledge that the post was reserved for the spouse of a faculty member of the department. I got very frustrated and when I got an opportunity to come to United States I decided to avail that."

Academics also migrated to the United States to avail better educational and research

opportunities. They attributed the reason for migration to the poor remuneration scale for

professors and the limited scope for pursuing advanced scientific research in India. They

complained that most Indian universities are not adequately equipped and did not have the

financial endowments to support advanced scientific research. Thus Ashok Moitra posited:

"I came to the United States in 1986 and teachers and researchers in India were very poorly paid. Additionally, most Indian universities do not have the costly apparatus and financial endowments to support advanced scientific research. Hence, I decided to migrate to United States."

Angshuman Bakshi, an academic who migrated in 2001, echoed this sentiment:

"I came to the United States primarily to do my research. I already had a job in India but I decided to migrate primarily because the scope for pursuing advanced scientific research is restricted in India. I was lured by the quality of research publications in the United States. I decided to come here because I felt that I could do research of similar quality if I was in the United States."

In contrast, professionals who migrated after the 1990s were lured by the prospect of a better income and life in the United States rather than being dissatisfied with their job or living conditions in India. It was found that some professionals were often influenced to migrate by their friends and relatives who had experienced life in the United States. Sujit Chatterjee, who resigned from his TCS (Tata Consultancy Service) job in 1999 to migrate to United States, shared the following:

"I used to work at TCS and was having a good life in India. TCS used to send many of their employees to the United States and the employees used to share their experience of life and work upon returning. That appealed to us very much and I thought that maybe I should try my luck in the United States. Moreover, I was lured by the prospect of earning in dollars and having a better bank balance. That's why I decided to migrate to the United States."

Saikat Ghosh similarly stated:

"I came to the United States because the country offers greater opportunities. I was holding a good job in India, but I felt that the scope for career advancement was greater in the United States and decided to migrate."

Subir Mazumdar, an IT sector employee, acceded that the job situation improved in India during the 1990s, but it was not comparable to the job market in the United States. Thus, for all professionals, it was mainly the prospect of making a better income that lured them to the United States. As he commented:

"When I came to the United States in 1993, the job market in the IT sector was gradually opening up. But it was nothing compared to the job market in the United States. Financially, professional workers were making much more money in the United States than they were in India."

Additionally, some immigrants identified the boom of the IT sector in the United States during the late 1990s to be an influencing factor for their migration to the United States. Sanjay Ghatak stated:

"When I came to the United States in 1996, the IT sector was booming and there was a corresponding scarcity of engineers and technical professionals. Though I was holding a job in India, I decided to try my luck in the United States."

Interestingly, while many professionals planned on returning back to India after working for a few years in United States, many changed their decision owing to their growing accustomed to better lifestyle amenities in the United States. They argued that though the economic situation of India has improved in the recent years, it still lags behind the United States in terms of basic urban amenities and services. Sanjay Ghatak stated:

"I came to the United States with the intention of working here for five years and increasing my bank balance before returning to India. However, it is the "American dream" that mesmerized us. We were lured by the better lifestyle amenities offered in the United States. For example, in India, power cuts and water shortages are a regular phenomenon, even in the metropolitan cities of India. Here such disruptions are very rare and happen only when there is a natural calamity. The quality of life in the United States is much better and we decided to stay back."

2. What are the factors influencing Bengali immigrants to not return to India?

The study revealed that most Bengali professionals preferred not to stay in the United States and not return back to India.   The key reasons included the ability to earn a higher income in the U.S., better career advancement opportunities and, a higher quality of life found in the U.S. Most Bengali professionals agreed that they would have been less professionally successful had they not decided to migrate to the United States. Akash Banerjee illustrated this reasoning:

"Yes, I think that I definitely have made the right decision by deciding to stay in the United States. Better scope for career and educational opportunities, openness of culture, democratic set-up of the country, and better lifestyle facilities appeal universally to all immigrants around the world. I have met several successful immigrants in my career and they all believe that whatever they have achieved professionally in United States could not have been achieved in their country of origin."

Most Bengali professionals decided to stay in the United States mainly because they were earning a higher income. As Saikat Ghosh observed:

"I think that most Bengali professionals decide not to move back to India because they make more money in the United States. Personally speaking, I feel that I have overachieved by migrating to the United States. In five years of my job in the United States, I have had enough money to travel around the world. Apart from being professionally successful, I have bought a house in a posh locality, changed five cars in five years and so things have happened for me."

Bengali academics considered that there is a greater scope for pursuing high-quality scientific research in United States. The advanced technological equipment and academic freedom that researchers enjoy in the United States is incomparable and many considered these to be prominent factors hindering their return to India. As Angshuman Bakshi elaborated:

"I came to the United States primarily because the quality of work is much better here. I mean the apparatus and equipment for doing advanced scientific research is much better in the United States. In fact, I was overwhelmed by the quality of publications in U.S. journals and that motivated me to come to the United States for pursuing research work. I would add that the academic freedom that a researcher gets in the United States is much more than what is enjoyed by a researcher in India. In India, you can't deviate even a small step from what your supervisor proposes. The academic ambience in the United States appreciates and encourages creativity and uniqueness. I will return to India the very day it offers such facilities to the researchers. It's a distant dream."

Subir Mazumdar, who completed his doctorate in physics from the University of Kansas, appreciated the uncompromising financial support researchers receive in the United States for advanced scientific studies. In fact, he believed that his current research could not have been feasible in India considering the meager funding that researchers get at Indian universities. He shared the following:

"Researchers in the United States benefit enormously in terms of laboratory amenities and equipment. I remember an incident when a costly apparatus in my laboratory broke down and the very next day, it was ordered by the university. I don't think that any Indian university supports researchers in this manner….I work in astrophysics and I don't think that I would been able to do such advanced research in India judging by the meager financial support stipulated for researchers in Indian universities."

Bengali professionals who worked in India before coming to the United States were dissatisfied with their work environment and the limited freedom that they enjoyed in their jobs.

They contended that their jobs in the United States encourage creativity and help them with a

supportive social milieu. Supriyo Adhikari posited:

"Indian offices are too bureaucratic and hierarchical. That robs creative workers like us the freedom to explore and use innovative ideas to do the job in question. Here, job interference is lot less."

Most Bengali professionals also adored the fact that American jobs reward deserving employees,

irrespective of their race or ethnic backgrounds. As Sujit Chatterjee expressed:

"If an American employer finds that somebody is good for the company, he/she will help the person out. If somebody is sincere, he or she is duly rewarded irrespective of his or her racial or ethnic affiliation."

Many professionals interviewed faced job lay-offs in their careers and some of them even

acknowledged that they enjoy lesser job security in the United States than in India. However, it is

the quality of life in the United States that appeals to most professionals and hinders them from

returning back. Buddhaditya Chakraborty explained:

"The Indian and Chinese people who come to United States are highly educated and skilled. In short, they are highly talented and the most qualified immigrants to come to the United States….When these qualified people are traveling across 2000 miles from their homes and making the U.S. their permanent residence, then there must be something good here. Lucrative salary is not the only 'pull' factor because such salary is also offered in India as well…..Considering the uncertainty of jobs in United States, I thought of returning to India several times, yet the quality of life in United States has made me reconsider my decision and stay back here."

The respondents were especially appreciative of the better medical facilities, schooling

opportunities, and welfare legislation prevalent in the United States. Medical facilities in the

United States were much better than in India and many immigrants felt secure about spending

their old age in the United States. Kalyan Guha commented:

"I firmly believe that medical facilities are better in the United States and so I would prefer to spend the advanced years of my life in the United States. Even doctors in India agree that they don't have the expertise of doctors in the United States."

Srabanti Roy shared her bitter experience about medical treatment in India:

"I remember when I was in India in 2005, my father needed to be implanted with an artificial pacemaker. We went to a reputed hospital in Kolkata and to our surprise he was kept waiting on a stretcher in a corridor after the major surgery because none of the beds in the Intensive Care Unit were available. This is the situation of medical treatment in India."

Many elderly immigrants wished that India had an emergency call number like 911, offering security to citizens around the clock. Basabi Bhowmick expressed the immense functionality of 911 in the following words:

"I am very much satisfied with the medical facilities and the emergency support system in the United States. In India, there is nothing like calling 911 and getting assistance within five minutes. The way 911 helped when my husband had a heart attack is simply amazing. While on the phone, they gave me some quick medical tips that I needed to follow in order to revive my husband. They came with the paramedical staff as well.....My husband was saved because everything was very spontaneous and he was given medical relief immediately. I wished that India had a similar facility."

Indian parents typically overemphasize the education of their children and, one of the main reasons behind their reluctance about moving back to India is the availability of better quality schooling facilities in the United States. Parents appreciated that the schooling system in the United States aims at the holistic development of the child and not just academic excellence. They highlighted that U.S. education socializes a child to be independent and responsible, and emphasizes the development of communication skills. Furthermore, in sharp contrast to India, children are not intimidated or punished by their teachers and thus, feel happier and involved in their schools. Learning is typically accompanied by practical activities, which makes it more interesting and appealing to students. As Kushal Sarkar pointed out:

"Education here is more holistic and contributes to the all-around development of the human personality in comparison to Indian education which solely focuses on academic excellence. I am sure that he will reap the benefits of such holistic education when he goes to a professional sector. An American teenager will score way ahead of his/her Indian counterpart in terms of taking responsibility and communication skills."

Likewise, Sambit Basu contended:

"Suppose, we give a job to a talented American and Indian youngster. At the end of the fifth day, if you ask them their progress, the Indian youth will probably say that it has not been done because someone else didn't do his/her part. On the other, if the work is not progressing due to someone else's fault, the American will definitely notify you immediately. The American knows that it is his responsibility to get the job done and if he/she is struck on the way he/she will contact the higher officer immediately. All this happens because Americans are taught to be responsible from their school days."

Sunaina Chatterjee elaborated:

"We are very happy with the schooling system in United States. Our kids are provided with laptops in school from the age of ten. The classrooms in the schools are well-equipped with modern technology….When we went to school in India, we were always scared of corporal punishment and verbal abuse by teachers. Here children don't want to miss school and school life is filled with fun for them…During the last election, I remember that children were made to cast their (fake) votes in school. I feel that this is a very interesting way to socialize the children of the roles that they are going to play in the future and train them to be responsible citizens….Here 'independence' in a child is inculcated from a very early age in schools. In India students are scared to speak in class because they are afraid to say something wrong and be scolded by a teacher…Besides, the typical image that we have of a school-going kid in India is that the kid should be in school uniform and carry a bag filled with heavy books. Here kids can wear clothes of their liking to school; they don't need to carry their books every day to school; and, if they need some books regularly, they keep them in school lockers. I would emphasize that anything they learn in school is quickly followed by practical activity that makes learning more hands-on and interesting. In sum, a child is not being pressurized to study."

Classroom presentations form an integral part of the school curriculum in the U.S. from an early standard and Indian parents recognize it to be an enormous confidence booster among their children. Additionally, they liked the fact that parents are given the opportunity to stay involved in their child's education. As Dipak De opined:

"They are taught presenting before class from a very early age. In standard two, every child presents his/her project before the entire class. Parents are also invited to see their child's presentation. I feel that this acts as an enormous confidence booster and prepares them for professional life in advance. The schools even allow parents to have lunch with their children during the break hours, something which is unthinkable in India."

A substantial number of the interviewees liked the law and justice system in the United States. They liked the fact that regulations in the United States are more welfare-oriented and less corrupt than the system in India. Partha Acharya explained with an example:

"Suppose, you had a car accident. Will the driver of the car you assault you? No! First, he/she will check if you are okay and ask for your insurance card. Then he/she will call the police. The police will arrive immediately and will first ask if you need any medical attention. At first, they will never ask how did it happen or who was responsible for the accident. Even if you are drunk, the cops will never touch you. Can you expect this in India? In India, the driver of the car you hit will probably take the judgment in his own hand and assault you badly. If you are lucky, then probably you will be assaulted by the cops."

Similarly, Sudipto Samanta, gave the example of the legislation EMTALA (Emergency Labor Treatment and Active Labor Act) to highlight on the welfare-oriented nature of U.S. legislations:

"In United States, there is a legislation called EMTALA, which requires hospitals to provide treatment to anyone requiring emergency health attention irrespective of the person's citizenship, legal status or ability to pay. This is a rule in United States and the treatment would continue until the condition of the patient is stabilized....Suppose you are in an accident, if the situation demands that you be taken to hospital by helicopter, they will do so. Can you imagine getting this type of service in India?"

Bengali professionals appreciated that the United States allows all immigrants to practice their own culture and heritage. Some believed that they would have considered returning home if the country imposed and forced mainstream cultural values on them. In other words, the liberal and acceptable nature of American society appealed to the immigrants and prompted them to positively consider settling in the United States. Purnendu Roy commented:

"This country gives enormous liberty to practice your culture and faith. I feel that I have got more involved with Hinduism while I was in United States than I was in India. I feel that immigrants would have considered returning home had the U.S. imposed its culture on them."

Similarly, women cherished the freedom and security that they enjoy in United States, which is incomparable to the situation in India. As Ranjita Sen tacitly replied:

"I have never considered returning to India permanently because the amount of liberty and security that women enjoy in the United States is simply incomparable. As a matter of fact, my husband expressed his desire to return to India several times, I opposed considering the amount of security that I and my daughter enjoy in United States."

While immigrants recognized the existence of racial discrimination in the United States, they did not consider such discrimination to be severe or blatant, nor did it pose a threat to them. In fact, most respondents believed that discrimination is more prevalent in India than in the United States. As Rabindranath Ghoshal commented:

"I feel discrimination exists in every society. In India we have multiple dimensions of discrimination based on caste, religion, language, and ethnicity. So, I feel that discrimination is less prevalent in the United States than in India."

Moreover, immigrants felt secure about the existence of laws that prohibit people from engaging in discriminatory practices in the United States. Angshuman Bakshi pointed out:

"I would say that we witness more discrimination in India than in the United States. Here, at least, the government takes a stand and tries to prohibit overt discrimination. Here, nobody can engage in discriminatory behavior blatantly. However, in India there is no such legislation."

Bengali professionals also admired the courteous and friendlier social life in the United States. They believed that they had become more open-minded after migrating to the United States and considered that they would face adjustment issues if they decide to migrate back to India. Sagarika Mazumdar illustrated this with examples:

"I think that we become more liberal in our mindset by staying in America. Recall how badly we treat our maidservants in India. Can we think of behaving the same way with the babysitter who works in our house in America? Never! In 20 years of my stay in United States, I have learned humility and how to behave well with people who are subordinate to me......Suppose you are standing second in a queue in an American grocery and you have two items to check out and person standing in front has many. He/she will immediately request you to go ahead of him/her and that too with a smiling face. Can you think of this happening in India?"

Sunanda Banerjee similarly shared:

"I will share an interesting event. One day my mother and I were going for morning work in my neighborhood. Suddenly, I had an eye-contact with a stranger and she greeted me with a 'hi.' My mother (who had recently arrived in United States) instantly asked how was I related to her and when I said that she was a stranger, my mother could not believe me. Then I had to explain to my mother that it is customary in America to greet a stranger when you have eye-contact. So, I personally feel that we have to learn a lot about behavioral courtesy from the Americans."

Technological advancement has allowed a compression of time and distance. The interviews revealed that the invention of long-distance call facilities and software like Skype has lessened the homesickness of Bengali immigrants and helped them maintain ties with their relatives thousands of miles away. They confessed that life was not easier in the United States before such technological innovations and many considered returning back to India after obtaining their degree or working for a few years. Kushal Sarkar elaborated:

"Further, Indian amenities are very much available in United States and thus it greatly reduces the need to physically go to India in order to feel Indian…Take for instance Kansas City. We have Bollywood movies being shown in the theatre every week; we have Indian grocery stores, restaurants, temples etc. which greatly counters the feeling that we are away from India. With technological advancement, the world has become a smaller place to live. I thoroughly remember that when I came here in 1983, I had to wait for two weeks before I could call my parents to inform them of my safe arrival in the United States. Cheap international calling rates, coupled with the advent of Skype, have brought India closer…..Now I consider America to be my home. We regularly watch the Indian television programs and similarly my friends in India watch the programs broadcasted on the American channels. I regularly attend the 'Banga Sammelan' (the annual cultural event of Bengalis in United States where renowned Bengali artists perform) and it makes me feel like home."

Supriyo Adhikari, who had a transferrable job in India, justified his migration to United States as:

"It takes 36 hours to return from a city in South India to Calcutta by train. A similar amount of time is needed to return from Kansas City to Calcutta. Flight tickets to India are available every day and I can go there any time I like. It makes greater sense to migrate to United States than to face job transfer to another Indian city away from home in Calcutta."

Interestingly, Sunirmal Roychowdhury pointed out that technological modernization has reshaped the conception of 'home' to be a place where a person's skill receives maximum utility and recognition. He said:

"In the age of technological modernization, people should consider themselves as global citizens and should note that the territorial boundary of a nation is solely drawn for administrative purposes. So I feel that I have moved to an area that offers better economic prospects and consider that I have not changed my home per se."

Further, most Bengali-Indian professionals considered that returning to India becomes a distant possibility once their children are born and start attending schools in the United States. The schooling systems in India and the United States are vastly different and the immigrants believed that their children will surely encounter adjustment problems if they transfer to a school in India. Abhirup Saha summarized:

"I have never considered returning to India permanently. This is because my son and daughter were born and started attending school here. So, if I return to India I am sure that they will face adjustment problems mainly because the school curriculum is totally different in India and the United States."

Bengali professionals confessed that the urge to return to India dwindles once their parents expire and when there is no-one anticipating their return. Some interpreted their ties with India to be basically the bonding they have with their parents and it starts diminishing with the death of loved ones. While some immigrants cherished the ties they had with their friends in India, they also accepted that their ties with friends weaken over the years as they start moving on with their lives and encounter their share of personal problems. Thus for most immigrants, it is the parents and not friends who provide the greatest incentive for returning home. This diminishes once they are dead. Asish Thakur elucidated:

"Previously I used to feel homesick. Now I have got used to life in the United States and honestly we have no plans for returning permanently….Also, after my mom expired (dad expired earlier), there has really been no urge for me to back and settle in India. I would say that the frequency of trips to India depends a lot on whether one's parents are alive. Everyone is busy in India as well; they don't have the time for us. Things have changed a lot from the time we left India. Our friends have their own jobs and their families and don't have the same amount of time that they used to have for us. The only persons really waiting for you in India are your parents. Once they are gone, there is no point in going home."

Additionally, the situation in India is not very lucrative for the Bengali-professionals to consider returning home. For example, they condemned the rampant corruption and bureaucratic

delays prevalent in the government offices of India and so ruled out the possibility of returning to

India permanently. Saikat Ghosh narrated his experience:

"However, living in India has its own hassles. After my father's death, I have taken the responsibility of tax filing for my mother in India. Honestly speaking, the amount of corruption and bureaucratic complexity involved in the process puts me in a dilemma about whether to make India my permanent home after retirement. I even faced a problem in retrieving the death certificate of my father from Calcutta Corporation….Though I have been a foreigner in the United States, I have never faced a problem in plying through life in the United States. I thoroughly enjoy visiting India for a month or so, but probably would hesitate to stay there permanently."

Sanjay Ghatak resonated:

"What I dislike the most about India is the prevalence of rampant corruption and bureaucratic delays. Government officials behave as if they are doing charity to have your documents processed even though they are paid for it….I had to travel to Delhi for 2 days just to convince the officials there to process some of my documents. Things don't happen for you in India unless you know some political leaders or bribe the public servant. Indian society is plagued with corruption. So, life is easier in the United States because the basic institutions of society are not corrupt. I will return to India after my retirement only if I don't have to deal with bureaucratic delays and the lackadaisical attitude of public-sector officers. Since this is a hypothetical situation, I don't think that I will ever return to India."

Some immigrants were critical of the prevalent political culture of India and the increasing

frequency of strikes in West Bengal. Apart from inflicting enormous economic loss to the state,

strikes cause tremendous hassles for the commoners who have important engagements on the

day of the strike and depend on public transportation to move around the city. Thus immigrants

would not even consider returning to Calcutta, where political parties frequently call strikes on

petty issues. Akash Banerjee shared his bitter experience:

"Last time, we went to India, my son had some important office-related work in Bangalore and he had reserved a ticket from Calcutta. However, he missed his flight because of a 'bandh' (Bengali word for strike) and Calcutta came to a standstill. He was very upset about it….Imagine how much economic loss India suffers on the days of 'bandh' and that 'bandhs' are very frequent in Calcutta."

Nonetheless, most professionals agreed that residing away from family and friends is very much challenging and strenuous. Some of them had painful experiences to share and considered it a price that they pay for attaining a better quality of life in the United States. Rajat Dasgupta shared:

"I miss my family and friends very much. I could not attend the funerals of my father and mother. I could not see them one last time. It was very painful! That is the price you pay for staying here."

Thus, some Bengali professionals considered returning to India after their retirement. Yet, they preferred not to return to India permanently and planned on sharing their time between the United States and India. As Supriyo Adhikari stated:

"I am not considering returning to India at present. But I might change my plans after retirement……..A trend has emerged recently where aged people divide their time between India and United States. I have seen retired people spending October to April in India and the rest of the time with their children in United States. In might consider this as an option in my retired life."

3. What are the factors that made Bengali professionals choose the Kansas City Metropolitan Area over any other city as their place of settlement?

The findings revealed that the decision of Bengali professionals to locate in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area was primarily influenced by the availability of job opportunities and had little to do with available urban amenities. All the Bengali creative workers that were interviewed came to Kansas City in search of jobs rather than being lured by available urban amenities. As put by Pallab Sikdar:

"I did not choose Kansas City but Kansas City choose me. I came here primarily for my job."

In the words of Judhajit Sen, an IT sector professional who migrated to Kansas City during the 1990s:

"I came to Kansas City not because it is fancy or anything. I came to Kansas City primarily for my job. In 1996, Sprint opened its global division. Many immigrants were hired and I was one of them."

For most Bengali professionals, their job in Kansas City was not their first in the United States. While most Bengali professionals moved to the city when they were offered better career opportunities, a few moved involuntarily when faced with job lay-offs. Furthermore, there were some Bengali professionals who moved to Kansas City from the bigger cities of United States after receiving lucrative job offers. Sudipto Samanta revealed:

"For most Bengalis, their employment in Kansas City is not their first job. Some of them, including myself, have moved to Kansas City from bigger cities of the United States like New York and Chicago where all possible urban amenities were available. We have moved only because our jobs in Kansas City offered better career prospects. This tells you that none of the amenities are indispensible for us and we will move wherever we will be offered better career chances."

However, Bengali-Indian professionals differed in their satisfaction level about residing in Kansas City. Some immigrants complained that Kansas City does not have the facilities and attractions of the bigger metropolitan areas of the United States. It was found that younger immigrants were ready to move to the bigger cities of the U.S. if they find a job. Generally speaking, they preferred moving to metropolitan cities where urban amenities are readily accessible. For instance, Saikat Ghosh, a migrant in his thirties with young kids, reflected:

"I believe that because I am from the metropolitan city of Calcutta, I love residing in the bigger cities. Kansas City offers most amenities of a metropolitan city yet it lacks some facilities. For instance, I wish it had intra-city train and bus facilities. I would definitely shift to New York, even if the new job offers me 20 percent less salary. Yet, I don't like cities like Houston where everything is spread out. You need to drive for long periods in order to avail amenities of different kinds. I like metropolitan cities where amenities can be easily accessed."

The study revealed that shifting to a preferred destination (another city with better urban amenities) becomes increasingly difficult as the children of the immigrants attain school-going age. Deepti Sanyal pointed out:

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"When we moved from Chicago to Kansas City because of my husband's job, I missed Chicago very much and it was a huge transition for us. However, now we have accepted Kansas City as our home and we don't like to move to another city. The reason being my daughter is attending school in Kansas City and she will face difficulty adjusting to a new school in another city."

Some immigrants believed that the talents of youngsters often go unappreciated in smaller cities like Kansas City. Kansas City offers limited opportunities to pursue unique career options like that of musicians or painters. Consequently, the assimilation chances of second generation Indians suffer in the smaller cities of the United States. As Probha Ghoshal illustrated elaborately:

"I think that it is difficult for second-generation Bengalis in Kansas City to assimilate to U.S. culture in comparison to the bigger cities of America. This is because Kansas City has less to offer in comparison to bigger cities. Suppose, a second generation Bengali boy in Chicago plays guitar very well, his talent would be immediately observed and he will join a music band and assimilation will follow naturally. But, if the same boy grows up in Kansas City, he only has the option of performing in Bengali events and chances are high that his talent will remain unnoticed and his assimilation opportunities in U.S. culture will automatically suffer. I should say that the scope of such careers is limited in Kansas City. Further, the audience for such refined art and cultural forms is smaller in Kansas City compared to other bigger cities. So the artists want to perform in bigger cities for the sake of getting noticed and appreciated.....The very fact that cities like New York and Chicago serve as the port of entry for many immigrants also means that the cities offer varied avenues and opportunities for the practice of various art forms (like traditional Indian dances) that are not known to American culture. What is the scope of learning 'Kathak' (a traditional Indian dance form) in Kansas City?"

Few Bengali creative workers complained that they were deprived of participating in the celebration of Indian festivals in Kansas City that are more commonly offered in the bigger cities of the United States. The presence of a limited number of Indians in Kansas City makes fundraising a challenging task. Hence, renowned Bollywood artists are not usually invited to perform in the cultural events of Kansas City. As Sunaina Chatterjee commented:

"We have around 7000 Indians in Kansas City and so can't afford to bring in Bollywood superstars to perform in the events here. In Dallas, Dussehra (an Indian festival) is celebrated with great pomp and show. They try to replicate the intricacies of the festival in every possible way and there is an approximate gathering of 100,000 Indians every year. The Bollywood megastars perform in the cultural event that follows and 40,000 tickets are sold every year."

On the other hand, some immigrants appreciated the fact that Kansas City is not an expensive city in which to reside and, they could afford most facilities of an urban life at a reasonable cost. Prateek Karmakar, a long-time resident of Kansas City, noted:

"I have resided in Kansas City for 35 years and I don't feel deprived in any way. None can deny that high standards of living can be afforded in Kansas City at a cost lower than the bigger metros of the U.S. Additionally, Kansas City is a peaceful place to stay."

4. What are the urban amenities preferred by Bengali professionals residing in Kansas City Metropolitan Area? Further, what goods, services, and lifestyles appeal to the Bengali immigrants in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area? What types of these amenities could be considered ethnically oriented versus those preferred by the cultural mainstream? How important are these amenities as a factor inducing Bengali professionals to migrate to a city in United States?

Pulak Sanyal observed that Kansas City has its own charm and some of its attractions are very unique to it. For instance, Kansas City offers excellent schooling opportunities for children, boasts of having one of the finest art museums in the country, organizes the renowned 'Renaissance Festival,' and has a diverse population. Additionally, the city scores high in terms of 'originality' as well. Kansas City is often credited to be one of the birthplaces of Jazz music. As Sanyal noted:

"I feel that every city has its own charm. Kansas City has a lot to offer and in terms of urban amenities, Kansas City is at par with any other city in the U.S. Indians prioritize the education of their children and Kansas City had the best to offer in terms of schooling opportunities. So, our expectation was exceeded on that count. In fact Blue Valley School District in Kansas City is well known throughout the country. Further, the city is endowed with one of the best amusement parks in the country, "Worlds of Fun." My kids love going there and I have to take them to the park almost every other weekend. The Nelson-Atkins Arts Museum is simply amazing and it adds to the charm of the city. Some of the earliest works of painters in the United States can be found in this museum.
Every year Kansas City celebrates the 'Renaissance Festival,' which is just awesome. Interestingly, Kansas City is also credited as one of the main cradles of Jazz music in the United States. Besides, Kansas City has a long history of sports and the origin of basketball in United States is often linked to Kansas City. Also, I would say that the diversity of the city adds to its appeal. We have all kinds of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds in Kansas City

and that makes it appealing to the migrants, especially from foreign countries. There is some event going on in the city throughout the year and that makes it more exciting and interesting for the residents of the city."

Interestingly, a respondent observed that urban amenities like museums and art galleries lose much of their appeal once they are visiting and explored. As Sambit Basu explained:

"I feel that urban amenities like museums and art galleries lose much of their appeal once they are visited. Who wants to visit the same museum more than once?"

Most immigrants agreed that bigger cities have a lot more to offer. However, they doubted whether they would be in a position to consume a greater amount of urban amenities given their busy schedule. Buddhaditya Chakraborty offered the following logic:

"I am sure that bigger cities like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles have more to offer except for the fact that they don't offer you more than 24 hours a day. I doubt whether I would have been able to avail more in the bigger cities than what I am availing in Kansas City."

A few immigrants contended that a smaller presence of co-ethnics in a foreign city (as is the case in Kansas City) often generates a sense of insecurity. In turn, this leads to greater cooperation and fellow-feeling among the co-ethnics. Rabindranath Ghoshal explained:

"Because the size of Asian-Indian community is smaller in Kansas City compared to the bigger cities of United States, it often contributes to greater unity among the Indians in the city."

Nonetheless, all interviewees agreed that they can't manage without the basic urban amenities (like good schools for children, well-equipped hospitals, grocery stores, shopping malls, a movie theatre, music store, book store, library, café, restaurants, spa, car dealer and mechanic shops, etc.) and Kansas City offers much beyond the primary facilities. On being asked whether they would join a better job in a city without the basic urban amenities, a few respondents reflected that urban amenities always follow industries and it is absurd to think of an industrial city without amenities. As Sambit Basu responded:

"I can't think of an U.S. city with a substantial employment sector but without the basic urban amenities like good schools for children, well-equipped hospitals, grocery stores, shopping malls, a movie theatre, music store, book store, library, café, restaurants, spa, car dealers and mechanic shops etc. I feel that urban amenities follow industry and so it's improbable to think of an industrial city without amenities."

Most immigrants considered the presence of basic urban amenities to be necessary, yet they did not consider the same for the ethnic Indian amenities. Purnendu Roy illustrated this sentiment as follows:

"I don't think that I will be able to manage in a city that does not have basic urban amenities but I can definitely manage without ethnic Indian amenities."

While the Bengali-Indian professionals preferred to have ethnic Indian amenities in their city, most did not consider such amenities to be indispensable. Among the ethnic Indian amenities like Indian grocery stores, restaurants, temples, screening of Bollywood movies in the theatre, the presence of an Indian grocery store in the city was prioritized over the availability of any other ethnic Indian amenities. The importance of having an Indian grocery store in town was described by Prateek Karmakar, a long-term migrant to U.S.:

"Though we have stayed in United States for 40 years, our food habits haven't changed much. We mostly cook Indian dishes at home. Therefore, we regularly shop at Indian grocery stores in order to prepare Indian dishes at home."

Kansas City has approximately 20 Indian grocery stores and they have a comprehensive stock of Indian groceries and household items. Thus, the Bengali-Indians professionals preferred to have an Indian grocery store in town because they need spices, Indian fish, and vegetables to cook their food at home. As Sunirmal Roychowdhury described:

"We have three Indian grocery stores within a mile from our house. They have an exhaustive collection of Indian grocery products and household items. Can you believe that they even import fish (the Bengali delicacies like 'Hilsa' and 'Pabda') to cater to the Bengalis? If I were to think hard to point out what's unavailable in the stores, I would say that they don't supply few Indian vegetables like 'potol.'...Because we (Bengalis) regularly cook Indian dishes at our homes, I think that it is convenient to have an Indian grocery store in town."

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However, most Bengali-Indian professionals did not consider the presence of an Indian grocery store in the city to be indispensable. While they preferred to have the amenity in the city, most of them agreed that they could have made an alternative arrangement if there were no Indian grocery store in town. As Buddhaditya Chakraborty noted:

"I didn't inquire before moving to Kansas City whether there is an Indian grocery store in the city. If Kansas City had no Indian grocery store, I still would have moved here for the sake of my job and probably would have visited Indian grocery stores in St. Louis or ordered them online via Amazon.com. Now-a-days Amazon has a substantial collection of Indian groceries. In other words, the presence of Indian grocery store will not be a consideration behind choosing a city as the place of settlement."

Since Indian dishes are cooked regularly at home and Bollywood movies can be obtained at online sites, Bengali immigrants believe that they can do without Indian restaurants and theatres screening Bollywood movies. As Sudipto Samanta revealed:

"We avoid going to Indian restaurants because we cook Indian dishes regularly at our home. We don't go to the theatre to watch Bollywood movies mainly because the movies become available at online sites like Youtube, Netflix, or Databazaar.com within a month of their release. We are subscribed members of Netflix and Databazaar.com and so we don't want to waste money by going to the theatre."

Partha Acharya, an IT engineer at Sprint, had different reasons to offer for not patronizing Indian restaurants. He considered Indian restaurants to be an amenity that appeals more to mainstream Americans and other ethnic groups in the United States than to Indians per se. He pointed out:

"I never go to Indian restaurants out of choice. I go to Indian restaurants mainly to give company to my American colleagues at work, who love Indian food. I and my family avoid going to Indian restaurants because the food is way too spicy and oily for us. I feel that Indian restaurants are meant more for Americans than for Indians. It's like you find more Americans eating in Mexican restaurants than the Mexicans themselves."

Another respondent, Sanjay Ghatak noted:

"I don't dine at Indian restaurants because I don't think that they are able to get the authentic Indian taste in food."

Most Bengali-Indians did not attend temple on a regular basis, yet they participated whenever there was a cultural event or festival. Dipak De observed that the Indian temple in Kansas City is dedicated to the South Indian deities and Bengalis cannot relate to the rituals and celebrations at the temple:

"The temple is mainly devoted to South Indian deities and somehow I have problems relating to the rituals and rites performed at the temple."

Kushal Sarkar had a different reason to offer for the lesser attachment of Bengalis to the Indian temple in Kansas City. He believed non-vegetarian dietary habits of the Bengalis to be the cause and observed:

"The temple was built by the local Gujarati South Indian population of Kansas City in 1982. From the very beginning, Bengalis were not very much involved in the functioning of the temple. While most Bengalis are non-vegetarians, the temple in Kansas City does not allow non-vegetarian food within its premises and that's one of the reasons why we can't organize Bengali festivals in the temple. No wonder that Bengalis attend the temple infrequently."

Saikat Ghosh, an young IT professional, offered another reason for non-attendance:

"I believe that most Bengali professionals are liberal-minded and are less religious compared to other ethnic groups from India. They don't visit the temple regularly except when there is some cultural event."

Though the liberal-minded Bengali professional may avoid going to the temple for religious purposes, they agreed that the temple serves the important function of imparting Indian cultural traditions among the second-generation children. Many of the second generation children attended various training classes in Indian cultural traditions offered by the temple. As Dipak De posited:

"I go to the temple every weekend, because my son gets lessons in 'bhajan' (devotional religious songs). Also this weekly visit serves the latent purpose of familiarizing my son with Hindu religion and its cultural heritage."

The findings indicated that the importance of the temple to the Bengali-Indian professionals increases with age. The elderly immigrants prefer attending temple on a regular basis in comparison to the younger immigrants. Thus, the temple was perceived to be an urban amenity that becomes increasing important with the age of the immigrant. Sayantika Moitra, who came to Kansas City as a young bride 30 years ago, illustrated this point with the following:

"I came to Kansas City at the age of 23 and at that young age one is not very religious and can easily manage without a temple or a place of worship. As you grow older, you become more inclined towards your religion. Now, I feel like going to the temple on a regular basis."

Nevertheless, most Bengali-Indian professionals except the aged ones believed that they would move to a different city if they received a better job offer even if none of the ethnic Indian amenities are present. The study revealed that Bengali-Indian professionals prioritized job security, satisfaction and better income over the availability of ethnic Indian amenities. As Kalyan Guha responded:

"I will definitely move to a city with a better job offer, even if it doesn't have any Indian amenities. I will always prioritize 'job security', 'job satisfaction,' and 'income' over the availability of ethnic Indian amenities in deciding whether to move to a new city. Job security is the most important consideration for me and I will move to another city only if the job is permanent in nature."

Though not indispensible, some immigrants acknowledged that there would be a void in the absence of ethnic amenities. Under this condition, they planned to make alternative arrangements to avail the amenities. Dipak De pointed out:

"Without ethnic amenities there would definitely be a void in life. However, if I am offered a lucrative job in a city that does not have ethnic Indian amenities, I would definitely accept. For middle class people like us, income is a priority. I will probably search for the availability of ethnic amenities and facilities in the nearby towns or cities."

Interestingly, Abhirup Saha believed it was very unlikely that a city in the U.S. with a substantial employment sector would not have any ethnic Indian amenities available in it. To put in his words:

"I don't think that would ever be possible. All major cities of U.S. with a substantial employment sector, surely have the availability of ethnic Indian amenities within a radius of 50 miles because Asian Indians constitute a substantial portion of the professional workforce in the United States."

5. What purposes do ethnic associations serve for Bengali professionals in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area?

The findings revealed that the availability of "social" amenities is crucial to the retention of Indian professional workers rather than amenities offered through markets or those that represent aesthetic features of the urban or natural landscape. Participation in ethnic Indian associations and the formation of social networks with other Indian workers residing in the city were critical amenities that influenced the satisfaction of Indian professionals with their lifestyles in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Kansas City has three Bengali associations -- Pratichi Club of Kansas City, Sangam, and the Kansas City Bengali Association. All Bengalis professionals and their families were found to be attached to at least one of these associations.

The Bengali associations in Kansas City had the dual objectives of maintaining the cultural heritage of Bengalis in the United States and engaging in philanthropic activities. On the cultural front, the associations celebrate most of the Bengali festivals, organize cultural events like classical music and dance programs with performances from local and renowned artists of India, stage short plays, and arrange for picnics and get-togethers. The associations also publish a yearly periodical with literary contributions in both English and the Bengali language from its members. It was found that second generation Bengalis actively contributed to the periodicals.

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The associations are also very much involved in welfare and charitable activities. One recent effort was to provide relief for the victims of the tornado in Joplin, Missouri.

In explaining the purpose of ethnic associations, Rajat Dasgupta, an engineer with a construction firm in Kansas City, commented:

"One of the major purpose that ethnic associations serve is that they help retain our cultural values and traditions. Bengali associations are not only important for us but also for our kids who are growing up in a foreign land. They help socialize the second-generation children to the culture and values of the Bengalis. Without the events organized by Bengali associations, children would know very little about Bengali cultural heritage....Also, we adults get to celebrate our Bengali festivals and thus have the opportunity to continue our cultural and religious traditions in a foreign land. Moreover, Bengali associations often organize picnics and get-togethers which allow people to keep in touch with each other. Recently, they organized a cricket match in which Indians irrespective of their ethnicities participated in great numbers."

Kushal Sarkar echoed in a similar vein:

"I am an active member of a Bengali association in Kansas City and I very much appreciate the fact that it celebrates all the religious and cultural events of Bengalis. In a way, Bengali associations minimize our homesickness and sooth our sense of alienation in a foreign country. Bengalis are a small community in Kansas City and so Bengali associations perform the useful function of fostering fellow feelings among the Bengalis."

Many professionals credited a Bengali association in Kansas City for organizing coaching classes for second-generation children in the Bengali language and traditional Indian dance forms. Sujit Chatterjee, an IT sector employee and an active member of the Bengali association, stated:

"One of the organizations arranged for classes to teach the Bengali language and traditional Indian dance forms to our children. It was a noble effort and was hailed by many Bengalis in town. Appreciably, in order to encourage more people to send their children to Bengali coaching class, the training was given free of charge. They trained our children to such a level that they performed a Bengali play in one of the cultural events. We were stunned by the clarity of their Bengali accent and appropriateness of their sentence constructions. In fact, if I give you the video of the performance, you will never realize that it has been performed by children who are born and brought up in United States."

Furthermore, it was observed that Bengali associations serve the important function of organizing events in a systematic manner and identifying local talent. Ashok Moitra, an activist of a Bengali association, justified the importance of ethnic associations as:

"Bengali associations are important for organizing the Bengali festivals and events in an systematic manner. For instance, it would be very difficult to get donations if you are organizing a cultural event by yourself or with a few friends. Ticket sales are never enough to organize an event of substantial scale and bring renowned artists from Bollywood to perform at our events. People will only trust and donate when an organization is involved. Besides, our organization is registered and has tax exempt status and so people feel free to donate…..Though we bring in renowned singers from Bollywood to perform at our cultural events, we always try to incorporate performances by local talent. I feel that this provides an opportunity for the local performers to exhibit their talents in front of a sizeable crowd. Though informal, the events are helpful in promoting the local talent and boosts their confidence to perform on a larger stage."

Importantly, Rabindranath Ghoshal, a professor at the University of Kansas, believed that Bengali associations serve the useful function of representing the community before mainstream American society. The cultural events and festivals organized by the Bengali associations are instrumental in familiarizing the mainstream society with the Bengali cultural heritage and traditions. The charitable activities organized by the Bengali associations help coordinate individual efforts and thus portray the community in a positive light. As Ghoshal elucidated:

"I think that the Bengali associations serve the very important function of promoting and perpetuating Bengali cultural heritage in mainstream American society. It would have been difficult for few individual Bengalis to represent their cultural heritage before the Americans and other immigrant groups in United States, had there been no Bengali association…..For instance, last year our association organized charity work in a tornado-affected Joplin neighborhood of Missouri. If there was no Bengali association in Kansas City, I doubt whether any individual would have made any effort to go to Joplin and participate in the relief work. This does not mean that Bengalis are unhelpful, but an association is always needed to organize the individual initiatives together and make a bigger impact….Now, one can say that he/she could have gone to Joplin and joined an NGO to help in the relief work. But, that would have not have represented the Bengali community as a whole before the Americans."

Most Bengali professionals preferred having a Bengali ethnic association in their city, even if the city does have the presence of an Indian association. The majority of the respondents believed that Bengali associations cater to the unique cultural needs and preferences of the

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Bengalis, which cannot be met by an Indian association because it serves all Indians irrespective of their ethnicity. Srabanti Roy aptly described the uniqueness of a Bengali association as follows:

"Apart from religious occasions, Bengali associations organize many cultural activities like enacting plays, poetry recitations, musical concerts, etc. These events satisfy our 'intellectual' thirst and form an indispensable part of our 'Bengali-ness'. Such events cannot be organized by an Indian association because it caters to all ethnicities from India and not just to Bengalis. The ethnic and linguistic diversity of India often contributes to the formation of associations based on ethnic origins. Each ethnicity is unique and ethnic associations try to celebrate such differences and cater to the cultural needs of the people of a particular ethnicity. Indian associations are umbrella organizations that attract Indians irrespective of their ethnicities and they celebrate our unity in diversity."

The presence of co-ethnics in a city was a consideration for some Bengali professionals to migrate to the U.S. Akash Banerjee, an elderly professional described his desperation to find an Indian family when he arrived in Topeka, Kansas in the 1970s. The situation was unsatisfactory to the point that he moved back to his previous job in Texas. As stated by Banerjee:

"When we moved to Topeka, there were very few Indians. The situation was such that my wife suffered from depression and we had to move back to Texas."

It was found that the aged Bengali professionals, those who were 55 years and older, were reluctant to move from Kansas City. They considered themselves to be well-adjusted in Kansas City and emphasized their 'familiarity with the city' and 'the presence of co-ethnics' in influencing their reluctance to migrate from Kansas City. According to Partha Acharya:

"At this age, I prefer not to move from Kansas City. However in my younger days, I would have moved to any place that offered me a higher salary. Nevertheless, the reason behind my decision to stay in Kansas City is not influenced by the presence of ethnic Indian amenities in the city but because of my familiarity with the city. I have become familiar with the city's physical environment (e.g., knowledge of how to get about the city, which route to take when visiting a place, where the offices, shops, hospitals are located, etc.) and it will be difficult for me to learn all anew if I shift to another city."

Another elderly professor, Ranadeep Bhowmick, emphasized the importance of having a

trusted circle of friends and social networks in a familiar city. He reasoned:

"I get lucrative job offers almost every month but still we (I and my wife) prefer to stay in Kansas City. We have got everything here and so there is no point for us to move…..We are above fifty years and at this age you feel like settling down and not to start a new base at a different place. We have a good friend circle in Kansas City and we don't want to leave them by moving to a new city. We are away from home (India) and here, friends are your family. You should note that making friends and building contacts takes time and effort. So, we are not comfortable with the idea of moving to a new city where we have no friends…..Besides, our sons grew up here and so all of their friends are located in Kansas City. So, we don't think that they will be willing to move leaving their friends and social circle in Kansas City."

Bengali families in Kansas City regularly arrange for weekend parties and get-togethers for

their Bengali friends. The parties are helpful in fostering networks among the Bengalis in the city

and provide much-needed relaxation after the week's hectic schedule. Typically, the host will

invite their close friends (10-15 families) home for dinner and they will chat about various issues

ranging from Bollywood movies to politics in India and the United States. Such informal get-

togethers provide the Bengali families a platform to realize and practice their culture, which is

otherwise not feasible in a foreign country. Subir Majumdar, an IT professional, elucidated:

"Five days of the week we speak a foreign language and practice alien culture and habits. So, Bengali parties during the weekends are very refreshing and gives us a chance to talk in our own language and celebrate our own cultural heritage….Since, our children don't understand Bengali very well, our chance for using Bengali at our homes is greatly reduced and so we look forward to meet our friends in parties."

Similarly, Dipannita Acharya elaborated:

"Time is something that you invest in order to build social relationships. Parties are thus platforms for building and renewing social relationships. So, we attend Bengali parties whenever we are invited. Also it gives us a chance to engage in Bengali 'adda' (Bengali word for interaction and gossip) and feel refreshed after the week's hard work."

The importance of the weekend get-togethers was emphasized more by the elderly

immigrants, whose children have migrated to different cities of the United States owing to their

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employment. They believe that parties provide the opportunity of maintaining and renewing ties with other co-ethnics in the city, whom they can rely on in times of emergency. As Akash Banerjee, an elderly immigrant, pointed out:

"We should remember that we are away from India and hence we have to look to friends when in need. Therefore, I feel that parties allow one to socialize and make friends, whom they can resort to in times of need. I would say that this kind of networking is more important for people of our age, whose children have moved out and reside in some other city of the U.S."

Most of the gatherings do not mark or celebrate any specific occasion other than providing the opportunity for catching up with old friends. Sagarika Mazumdar, a frequent party organizer, summarized the situation:

"Most of the time, there is no specific occasion behind arranging a party. Often we miss the much-cherished ambience of a Bengali get-together in the United States and so parties aim to recreate such an atmosphere."

Bengalis reciprocate the invitations of their friends and hence one party often leads to another. Thus, there is a party almost every weekend of the year and sometimes people are forced to be selective about attending parties. However, the chance of being selective about attending parties is limited because of the apprehension that it won't be well received by the host and would create strained relationships within the small community.

As Ashok Moitra posited:

"A party always leads to another. It is a courtesy that when you attend dinner in someone's house, you are to reciprocate the gesture and invite them to your house as well. So, one party leads to another.....When you attend a party at Mr. X's place, you enter into an obligation to attend when Mr. Y invites you. You cannot be selective about attending parties because it creates ill-will among friends. So, it is difficult to avoid invitations."

However, some immigrants believed that the presence of co-ethnics in the city reduces the chance of interaction and assimilation with the mainstream American society. Bengali get-togethers and events organized by Bengali associations engage the professionals during their

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leisure hours and thus inhibit their chances of assimilation with the mainstream American society outside of work. As Supriyo Adhikari observed:

"The level of assimilation with the American society depends on the city in which you reside. For instance in Kansas City, there are quite a few Bengali families and I prefer to mingle with them. Conversely, when I was in Boise, Idaho, there was only one Bengali family and so my initiative of assimilating with the Americans increased. And, I had a very good experience about it and was well-received by the Americans. Sometimes I feel that the fault lies with us and we don't take adequate measures to know and mingle with the mainstream society when we have a substantial presence of co-ethnics in town."

6. Do Bengali immigrants in Kansas City Metropolitan Area primarily live in suburban areas? If so, why? When do Bengali immigrants start living in the suburban areas? In other words, does their movement to suburban areas take place in the initial or later years of their arrival to United States? In the suburban neighborhood, are the Bengalis residentially dispersed or are clustered with other Bengalis?

Most of the Bengali-Indian professionals resided in the Overland Park area of Kansas City, an upscale suburban neighborhood equipped with all the urban amenities. It is one of most highly regarded suburbs in the country. For example, *Money* magazine ranked Overland Park as the 7th best city to live in United States in 2010. Additionally, *Businessweek* magazine rated it as one of the best places to raise kids in 2009 and, *U.S. News* ranked it 3rd among the America's ten best places to grow up.

Overland Park serves as the headquarters location of many companies including the Fortune 500 company YRC Worldwide, Black and Veatch, Waddell and Reed, Ash Grove Cement Company, Examinetics, Compass Minerals, and Ferrellgas. According to the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Sprint Nextel is the largest employer in Overland Park.

However, on top of offering numerous professional employment opportunities, Bengali professionals prefer settling in suburban areas because they strongly emphasize the educational achievement of their children and better schooling opportunities tend to be available in the suburban areas. As Purnendu Roy expressed:

"I have always chosen residence in United States based on the presence of good schools in the neighborhood. It does not matter if my residence is in a metropolitan or suburban area, provided my child has access to quality education. I have seen from my experience that good school districts generally fall in the suburban areas and hence I have always resided in suburban neighborhoods."

Rachana Dasgupta resonated this point:

"In the United States, cities are organized such that the business and entertainment facilities are concentrated in the metropolitan areas of the city and good schools in the suburban areas of the city. So, when you have a child of school-going age, you are forced, in a way, to reside in suburban areas. This is completely different from the situation in India where the good schools and best urban amenities are available in the metropolitan areas and people migrate from the suburbs to avail the facilities."

Some Bengali immigrants considered suburban areas to be better places to raise kids. Apart from the recreational facilities for children offered by suburban areas, such neighborhoods shield the children from the corrupt influences of the city life. Basabi Bhowmick explained this logic:

"Generally speaking, suburban neighborhoods are better places to raise kids because it is easier to shield children from the bad influences of the city. When you reside in a suburb, children will always depend on you for rides in order to get around. In that sense you are able to monitor their movements. Additionally, suburbs generally have plenty of outdoor parks and recreational facilities for the children to avail."

Interestingly, for the Indian professionals without children, 'distance from work' and 'safety of neighborhood' were the main considerations behind their choice of residence. As Abhirup Saha, a young IT professional emphasized:

"I reside in a suburban area of Kansas City because my office is not far away from my residence. However, if I move to any other U.S. city, I will make my residential choice based on commuting time from my place of work and safety of the neighborhood in question."

Additionally, immigrants preferred settling in suburban areas with urban amenities and facilities. As Pallab Sikdar, a long-term resident of Overland Park narrated:

"I prefer residing in a suburban neighborhood which offers a reasonable amount of amenities and facilities like Overland Park.....Suburban neighborhoods in the United States are not like suburbs in India, where there are few urban amenities. Overland Park is one of the best

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suburban areas in the United States and it offers all the comforts of urban life. It has all the modern amenities and yet it does not have a large share of the hassles of the city like traffic congestion, high crime rates, air pollution, and noise. In terms of facilities, Overland Park has great shopping malls, movie theatres, good schools, great hospitals, and beautiful parks."

Ranadeep Bhowmick spoke in a similar vein:

"I reside in Overland Park and I like residing here because it is a suburb with facilities. The Indian grocery store, Walmart, Price Chopper, Best Buy, etc. is conveniently located within a walkable distance from my house."

However, it was found that elderly Indian professionals preferred suburban areas mainly because such neighborhoods are quieter and have little traffic congestion. As Sunirmal Roychowdhury, an elderly professional, pointed out:

"Generally aged people, like us, prefer living in suburban neighborhoods. The preference for suburban areas is primarily shaped by the fact that suburbs are generally quieter and peaceful places with lower crime rates. We try to avoid traffic congestion and the din and bustle of city life. I consider the quality of life to be much better in suburban areas."

Moreover, some believed that people in suburban areas are friendlier and are less individualistic than people in the inner cities. Hence, elderly immigrants feel that they can rely on their neighbors for help in times of emergency. To put it in the words of Sunanda Banerjee:

"I feel that people in suburban areas are friendlier and less individualistic than people in metropolitan areas. Hence, one can depend on his/her neighbor in times of emergency….I would say that this is appealing particularly to the elderly immigrants whose children have left home and moved to another U.S. city."

Interestingly, it was found that most Bengali professionals did not prefer staying in a residential enclave dominated by Bengali neighbors. While some considered that staying in a Bengali-dominated neighborhood reduces the chance of assimilation with the mainstream society, others believed that proximity with co-ethnics increases the chance of misunderstanding and conflict. The study revealed that none of the Bengali-Indian professionals interviewed searched for a Bengali-dominated neighborhood when they came to Kansas City. Thus, most

Bengali professionals selected residential neighborhoods dominated by professional workers, irrespective of the race and ethnic backgrounds of their neighbors. As Rajat Dasgupta observed:

"I reside in a suburban neighborhood inhabited by professional workers like me and I experience a bonding with my neighbors."

Immigrants who believed that staying in a Bengali-dominated neighborhood reduces assimilation chances, considered that the purpose of migrating to America is greatly undermined if one does not want to mingle with the mainstream American society. As Pamela Chakraborty aptly highlighted:

"I have not come here to stay confined just among Bengalis. I would love to share my culture with non-Indians. In fact, I don't want my daughter to stay confined within the Bengali community…..If we don't mingle with the Americans, it defeats the entire purpose of coming here. So, I emphasize staying among good neighbors and not among co-ethnics."

All Bengali-Indian professionals were very much pleased about residing in White neighborhoods and appreciated the friendliness and warmth extended by their neighbors. Ranjita Sen shared an amicable experience:

"My husband was returning from an official tour in Florida and it had snowed very heavily that day. The situation was such that I-70 was closed. My husband called me up at 11 P.M. and asked me to pick him up from the airport….I am not a skilled driver and plus all the major roads (I-35, I-29) were closed and so I had to say 'no.' At last he called our American neighbor, who readily agreed and picked him up. Frankly speaking, we didn't expect that he would do this much for us.…..Our relation with him is very amicable. We invite him regularly to our house and he sends us a gift during Christmas."

Some immigrants believed that settling in neighborhoods dominated by co-ethnics hampers the assimilation chances of the second generations as well. They emphasized the importance of the assimilation of second generation Bengalis to the mainstream culture and considered that staying in a neighborhood dominated by co-ethnics will serve no purpose towards that end. As Asish Thakur explained:

"I don't want to stay in a Bengali neighborhood primarily because I want my children to assimilate in the United States. They can't survive in the United States only by knowing Bengali cultural traditions…..We are outside India and assimilating with the mainstream culture is therefore of utmost importance. It is our duty as parents to facilitate that process and not keep our children within the cocoon of Bengali culture and friends….Otherwise, what is the purpose of moving outside India?"

Interestingly, a few Bengali immigrants believed that residing in a Bengali-dominated neighborhood would put an extra burden of academic achievements on their children. Indian professionals typically overemphasize and celebrate the academic accomplishments of their children. Academic underperformance and mediocrity are looked down upon. Thus many parents believed that their children would face stiff academic competition from the children of neighbors in an ethnic neighborhood and that would make their life stressful. Angshuman Bakshi, a parent of two school-going children, elaborated:

"I don't feel like residing in a Bengali neighborhood because it puts too much pressure on your child. Most Bengalis in the United States are professional workers and they often overemphasize the academic achievement of their children. I am apprehensive that if we stayed in a Bengali neighborhood, my son would always have to compete with high-achieving Bengali children of the locality. Bengalis have the tendency to inquire about the grades, progress, and achievements of the children of their neighbors and compare it with their son's or daughter's."

Finally, Bengali professionals also contended that the presence of co-ethnics in the neighborhood also undermines privacy and increases the chance of misunderstanding and conflict. Indrani Karmakar explained:

"If you have a co-ethnic presence in your neighborhood, chances are high that they will get too much involved in your private life. The chances of conflict and misunderstanding increase when you stay too close to your own people. Additionally, though we (Bengalis) are not neighbors, we can reach each other within thirty minutes. Further, we meet every weekend at the Bengali parties and so I feel there is little reason for us to select a residential neighborhood based on the concentration of the Bengali population."

7. What is the nature and extent of the assimilation of Bengali professional immigrants to mainstream American society? What factors promote or inhibit their assimilation chances? As part of the assimilation process, do Bengali professionals view themselves as 'model minorities?'

The study revealed that most Bengali professionals considered themselves to be assimilated in the mainstream U.S. culture. It was found that Bengali professionals try to participate in the activities of their neighborhood and they felt that the United States offers ample opportunities for immigrants to assimilate. In the words of Rabindranath Ghoshal, a long-time resident of the United States:

"I consider myself to be assimilated in U.S. culture. U.S. culture is often described as a 'salad bowl' and I consider myself to be a part of the 'salad bowl'……Our neighborhood organizes social programs like breakfast clubs, Thanksgiving dinner, etc. so that the residents can mingle and socialize. We regularly participate in those events."

Many professionals appreciated the fact that immigrants are well-received in the United States and are not forced to forsake any aspects of their own culture. They believed that the accommodating nature of the host society contributes to the assimilation process. Dipak De noted:

"America is a nation of immigrants and so the warm welcome that immigrants receive in America is unexpected in any other country of the world. I believe the acceptance that immigrants enjoy in the host society makes their assimilation a smoother process. If someone is unable to assimilate it is mainly because of his or her own personal traits."

Sambit Basu reflected in a similar manner:

"I believe that America is the only country where immigrants can reside without forsaking any aspects of your culture….I have seen many Indian women buying groceries in Kansas City wearing a saree (a tradition dress of Indian women) without anybody bothering them."

Justifying the accommodating nature of U.S. culture, many professionals cited the examples of Easter and the St. Patrick's Day celebration as examples of the incorporation of immigrant

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festivals in the mainstream culture. Similarly, Somlata Bakshi narrated how the Indian festival of

'Holi' has manifested itself as 'Color Run' in the United States. She explained:

"The greatness of this country stems from the fact that it never forces immigrants to drop their culture and ethnic identity. That's why we still have customs like Easter and St. Patrick's Day being celebrated in this country….I believe that the Indian festival 'Holi' has manifested itself as 'Color Run' in the United States. Thus, this country often borrows aspects of immigrant cultures and over the years they get incorporated as integral parts of the mainstream culture. Interestingly, the occasion of "Color Run" is attended more by Americans than by Indians. This points out the openness of American society towards other cultures. Importantly, "Color Run" is observed not only in certain part of America, but is celebrated throughout the United States."

In this context, second-generation respondents shared their excitement of celebrating Indian

culture with their American friends. Thus Subrata Karmakar observed:

"Often our friends express their excitement about observing the Indian festival of 'Diwali'. In the bigger cities of the U.S., where Diwali is celebrated with great exuberance, Americans account for a substantial portion of the crowd celebrating the festival."

Immigrants were impressed about the accommodating nature of the American society and the

receptivity that Americans display toward immigrant groups. Prateek Karmakar, whose daughter

recently married an American man, described the enthusiasm and support of his daughter's in-

laws and friends for an Indian wedding. He shared this sense of appreciation:

"My eldest daughter is married to a White guy. Interestingly, her wedding took place in Calcutta though I wanted her marriage to take place in Kansas. This happened because my daughter and my son-in-law insisted on having their wedding in Calcutta…..When my daughter told me that many of her friends would attend the wedding, I did not believe. To my amazement, 50 Americans (comprised of her friends and her husband's relatives and friends) attended the wedding. They loved and participated in our culture to the fullest possible extent. Honestly, I didn't expect such a massive turnout and the enthusiasm of Americans about a traditional Indian wedding. More importantly, they paid for their own air tickets. This shows how open-minded and receptive educated Americans are about other cultures. Additionally, I received letters of gratitude from most of them for inviting them to the wedding."

Most professionals believed that Bengalis are able to easily assimilate to life in United States.

They attributed the easy assimilation of the Bengalis to their higher educational credentials,

English-speaking ability, and liberal mindset. As Kalyan Guha pointed out:

"We think that Bengalis can assimilate to U.S. culture more easily than any other ethnic Indian community. This can be attributed to the fact that the British made Calcutta their capital to rule over India and trained Bengalis in English education…Better education and English-speaking ability have definitely made the assimilation of the Bengalis easier."

Furthermore, in comparison to other ethnic groups from India, Bengalis are liberal in their attitude and observe fewer religious and ethnic restrictions. The liberal attitude of Bengalis makes them receptive towards members of other ethno-racial groups and contributes to their assimilation process. The open-minded nature of Bengalis and their encouragement of their children to assimilate could be evidenced from the fact that a Bengali family in Kansas City even allowed its daughters to have American names. Dipannita Acharya explained:

"My daughters always complained that none of their friends in their schools could pronounce their Indian names. So, we (I and my husband) asked them to choose their own names and they picked up American names for themselves. Now, they have their American first names, followed by their Indian middle and last names…..We allowed this considering that no matter what their names were, they will always remain our children. We wanted them to be comfortable with their names because it's something that they are going to use or called by throughout their lives."

Similarly, Rajat Dasgupta explained how the assimilation of Bengalis is facilitated by having fewer dietary restrictions:

"We (Bengalis) have few dietary restrictions (those that are religious based) compared to other Indian communities in the United States. People often interact when they are having food. So in that sense, a Bengali can interact with an American easily during lunch break, even if the latter is having non-vegetarian food (some ethnic Indian groups are vegetarians and they often avoid sharing the table with another person having non-vegetarian dish). Also, when Americans host a party at their house, it is easier for the Bengalis to attend and enjoy the dinner, which often has a variety of non-vegetarian dishes. For example, if someone is hosting a barbeque dinner, we don't have any problem in attending and enjoying the food…So, these small things take the Bengalis closer to American culture, makes interaction easier, and thus bonding happens over the years."

While all respondents believed that Bengalis are able to assimilate in the mainstream American society, most first generation respondents considered their assimilation to be segmental. Thus, they considered themselves to be fully assimilated in their office environment

but not in the social sphere. Bengali professionals argued that their hectic work schedule poses a

hindrance to their assimilation process. As Asish Thakur explained:

"I feel that my hectic work schedule is an important hindrance to my assimilation in the U.S. I would love to assimilate more but at the end of the day I am too exhausted to mingle with my American friends and neighbors."

Given their busy schedule, Bengali professionals believed that they could have assimilated

more if they had fewer family responsibilities and less attachment with Bengali associations in

Kansas City. Sujit Chatterjee reflected:

"I might add that I consider myself to be fully assimilated in my job environment but I am not assimilated in the social sphere. I believe that I could have assimilated more if I were single and was less associated with Bengali organizations in Kansas City. Now, because of the family responsibilities I hardly have time to assimilate outside of my office hours."

Though Asian-Indian professionals are often credited with having considerable English

proficiency, few Bengali professionals identified their lack of fluency in the language as an

important hurdle to the assimilation process. Prateek Karmakar explained:

"I feel that the language barrier is the biggest hurdle in the path of first generation Bengalis to assimilate in U.S. culture. Although we are well-educated and proficient in English, most of us feel more comfortable interacting in Bengali rather than in English. English is not our native tongue and so we are bound to have some handicaps and constraints about interacting in English. Often, we are unable to express ourselves adequately because we are interacting in a foreign language."

Additionally, some immigrants believed their partial assimilation was attributable to the

aloofness of their American neighbors and friends. They felt that their American neighbors are

often hesitant to introduce themselves and collaborate on the civic activities of the neighborhood.

Therefore, Bengali professionals had to take the initial step of introducing themselves to their

neighbors and engaging in socializing activities of their neighborhood. Ranadeep Bhowmick

revealed:

"Sometimes Americans are hesitant to introduce themselves or to approach us about the civic activities in the neighborhood. I feel that it has to do with the fact that they are confused as to whether we would understand their language. So, I think that it is very important for Indians to take the initiative and get themselves and their family members introduced to their neighbors…..Besides, Americans have the peculiarity that they are not very inquisitive about others. Therefore, Indians should take the first step of introducing themselves to their neighbors."

Contrary to popular belief, some immigrants believed that their assimilation chances in U.S. society have increased in the post-9/11 period. After the attack, it was perceived that Americans made greater effort to know their neighbors to which they were previously oblivious. As Basabi Bhowmick commented:

"However things have changed a bit after the 9/11 attack…Americans are slowly taking the initiative to get to know the person who is residing the next door."

Bengali professionals acknowledged that it is not the sole responsibility of the mainstream society to accommodate and adjust to immigrant populations. Immigrants are also required to take their own initiatives to assimilate to the host society. Abhirup Saha stated:

"I feel that it is not the sole responsibility of the host society to accommodate everybody. Immigrants should also take their own responsibility to assimilate and adjust to the mainstream society. So, I have taken my own initiatives to assimilate in this country. When I came to United States, I found that most of my American friends love talking about basketball. Initially, I didn't know much about basketball because it's a sport which is not popular in India. Nevertheless, I started following the game and slowly got a hold of the rules and other game related information. Soon I got the feel of it and started interacting knowledgeably with my American friends about it. This was well-appreciated by them and our friendship grew. We started attending basketball games together. Now I am an avid follower of basketball and it has become easier for me to attend American parties."

Similarly, Saikat Ghosh reflected:

"I believe that cultural interchange is healthy for any society. Personally speaking, I am not rigid about adopting and accepting American values and norms as I consider myself to be a part of this society. For example, I like the custom of 'Thanksgiving' very much and every year I invite my American and Bengali friends to my house for dinner."

Most immigrants felt that their assimilation to the American society became self-perpetuating

once their children start attending school. Sagarika Mazumdar explained:

"I would say that children contribute a lot to the assimilation process of their parents. Whenever you have a child, you have to attend the PTA meetings, take him/her to his/her friend's house, invite his/her friends and their parents on his/her birthday to your house, and so on. Thus, assimilation becomes inevitable for immigrant parents with young kids."

Similarly, immigrants considered that their assimilation to the host society also depends on

the marital partner of their children. Interracial marriage of the second generation with their

American counterparts often facilitates the assimilation process of their parents and leads to

greater acceptance in the host society. Pullak Sanyal aptly noted:

"I don't consider myself to be 100% assimilated in U.S. culture. I will assimilate more if my son-in-laws are Americans. I believe that racial intermarriage hastens cultural interchange and understanding."

The study revealed that Bengali professionals had some reservations about assimilating to the

United States. Some felt that the liberal-minded nature of Bengalis often causes them to forget

their ethnic identity and cultural heritage. While the openness of Bengalis to other cultures

contributes to their assimilation in the host society, the trait is also responsible for making them

sacrifice their cultural affiliations. Nandita Sarkar argued:

"I believe that the liberal mindset of Bengalis often makes them easily forsake their cultural identity. I will give you several instances of their open-mindedness. Bengalis engage in inter-caste marriage more than any other ethnic groups in India. Upper class Bengalis in India converse with their children in English rather than in Bengali. Additionally, they are very unorthodox in terms of dietary habits. Beef consumption is not a great taboo among the Bengali-Hindus as it is with any other Hindu community. Besides, Bengalis are not as religious as Gujaratis and South Indians are. While this liberal mindset often makes them sacrifice their identity easily, it also helps them to assimilate easily. Personally, I feel that they should try and retain some aspects of their ethnic identity."

Several respondents lamented about their inability to engage in ethnic cultural practices in a

foreign country. Mita Sikdar noted:

"I believe that some aspects of the ethnic culture gets forsaken as one tries to assimilate in the host society. For instance, I can't wear traditional Indian dress and go to my office, I prefer not to use my hands to have food when in public (Indians typically use their hands to have food). Similarly, though we celebrate all the major Bengali festivals in Kansas City, we scale them down and our celebrations can never match the exuberance of festivals in Calcutta. It does not matter how hard you try to preserve your culture, you are forced to sacrifice some aspects of your culture in a foreign country."

Some immigrants believed that assimilation in the mainstream society is a function of the age of the migrant, the duration of stay in the host country, the time period of migration, and the presence of co-ethnics in the city of migration. They believed that younger immigrants have a greater chance of assimilation and that a longer duration of stay in the host country positively influences the assimilation process. Sunirmal Roychowdhury pointed out:

"I feel that age has an influence on the assimilation process. The immigrants who migrate at a younger age have a greater chance of assimilation…We came to the United States in our late 30s and hence it was difficult for us to absorb new traits of the culture. Had we migrated at a younger age, adjustment and assimilation in U.S. culture could have been easier. As you get older, the flexibility to adjust in the new culture is gone. For instance, my nephew who came to U.S. at a very young age, was well-adjusted to U.S. culture. Now he is working in India, but he misses life in the U.S. very badly."

Emphasizing the positive influence of duration of stay on the assimilation process, Partha Acharya commented:

"I would say that the duration of stay in the United States has an impact on assimilation chances. The people who have stayed here for 30-40 years are more assimilated than those who came 10-15 years back. One should remember, assimilation takes place only after the adjustment stage and that takes a substantial amount of time. Further, older immigrants' children are married to Americans and that also contributes to the assimilation process."

Recent and the past immigrants differed in their attitude about maintaining ties with India. While recent immigrants followed Indian newspapers and television new channels regularly, earlier immigrants had little information about the current events in India. The key source of information about India used by older immigrants was their friends and relatives residing in India. Many older immigrants revealed that their ties with India became weaker once their

parents expired and they do not feel the urge to be aware of the current events in India. Sujit

Chatterjee, a recent immigrant to United States, stated:

"Yes, I am very much aware of the current happenings in India and, I read 3-4 Indian newspapers and follow TV news channels regularly. Also, I should add that "Facebook" helps me to stay updated about happenings in India. My Indian friends post information about almost all important happenings in India and this also helps me to stay in touch. Often we exchange our views about important happenings in India on Facebook. I should say that staying aware of happenings in India is easier now than it was a few years ago."

In contrast, Pallab Sikdar, who migrated to United States in the 1960s, revealed:

"Honestly speaking, I don't read Indian newspapers. I previously used to follow the happenings in India and especially when my parents were alive. After they expired, my ties with India became weaker and I don't feel the urge to collect news about the country. I only get to know about India when I speak to my relatives over the phone. My present and future are linked to the United States and so I go through American newspapers regularly."

Similarly, 'the time-period of migration' and 'the presence of co-ethnics in the city' also were

perceived to influence the assimilation process. Respondents believed that earlier immigrants

were forced to assimilate because of the limited presence of co-ethnics in the United States.

Srabanti Roy reasoned:

"I feel that the 'period of migration' should be an important consideration for the assimilation process. For instance, Mrs. X (the oldest Bengali in Kansas City, who came here 45 years ago) was forced to assimilate because she was the only Indian in Kansas City. She had to mingle with Americans to have a social life."

Older immigrants argued that America has become more cosmopolitan and receptive over the

years and that aids in the assimilation process. As noted by Partha Acharya:

"When we came here forty years ago, Americans knew little about India. Now they know a lot about India and will reach out to you to know more. We have seen American society becoming more diverse and receptive towards other culture. For instance, I received an email from my American friend and he wanted to prepare some Indian appetizers for some Indian friends coming to their home. This was unexpected forty years back."

Interestingly, several respondents believed that the assimilation of immigrants to the mainstream culture is a function of the economic situation of the host country. They contended that the assimilation of immigrants in the United States is a challenge in the present situation of economic recession and will pose a greater issue in times of sharper economic stagnation and job shortages. In fact, they reasoned the acceptability of immigrants in the United States is a function of the country's economic affluence and prosperity relative to other nations in the world. As noted by Sudipto Samanta:

"I feel that it is challenging for immigrants to assimilate in the present situation of economic recession. This is so because there is a covert feeling among the Americans that immigrants are here to take away their jobs. I feel that it will pose a greater challenge if America faces sharper economic stagnation in the coming years. I believe immigrants are accepted and welcome in the United States only because poverty or the deprivation level is less in this country compared to other nations in the world. The moment natives start developing a sense of deprivation, immigrants will face issues about getting accepted in society."

Underlining the negative influence of 'greater presence of co-ethnics in the city' on the assimilation process, Sujit Chatterjee claimed:

"My level of assimilation with the Americans depended on the city I was in. For instance, when I was in Chicago, there were quite a few Bengali families and I preferred to stay confined within the circle of my Bengali friends. Conversely, when I was in Boise, Idaho, there was only one Bengali family and so my initiative of assimilating with the Americans increased substantially."

While Bengali professionals acknowledged the importance of associating with voluntary activities, only a few were found to be associated with charitable activities. Recognizing the importance of engaging in voluntary activities, Pallab Sikdar justified his lack of participation:

"I consider that it is very important to engage in voluntary activities. The more you engage in voluntary activities, the more acceptable you become to people of this culture and consequently assimilation becomes easier. Unfortunately, I can't participate in many owing to my hectic work schedule."

Interestingly, some Bengalis were reluctant to designate themselves as a "model minority" because of their limited contribution to charitable causes. While all agreed that Bengali

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immigrants in the United States have high educational credentials, enjoy high occupational

status, and are law-abiding residents, few believed that they need to contribute more to the host

society in order to earn the tag of "model minority." Judhajit Sen provided his justification for

designating Bengalis as "model minorities" in the following words:

"Most Asian Indians are highly educated, have higher per capita income, and hold better jobs compared to any other immigrant communities in the United States. They have also contributed a lot to the growth and prosperity of the United States. You will hardly find a Bengali in the United States engaged in a blue-collar job. So I feel that it is apt to identify them as "model minorities."

Sayantika Moitra echoed this sentiment:

"Apart from the fact that Bengali professionals enjoy distinguished careers in the United States, Bengali children are often spelling-bee champions….The fact that Indians are mostly professional workers and that they are doing very well is looked upon and appreciated by Americans. In a company, if you say that you are from India, you will be well-received and regarded. Also, they have the stereotype that Indians are peaceful, law-abiding people who are not trouble makers."

On the other hand, some respondents had reservations about calling Bengalis "model

minorities." They reasoned that Bengalis have a limited presence in voluntary and charitable

activities directed towards the host society and so cannot fit the "ideal-type" minority image.

Ranadeep Bhowmick pointed out:

"We Bengali-Indians have a bad reputation that we look only after the welfare of our community. In other words, our community services and welfare schemes do not extend to the host society. For instances, Indians contribute generously to raise funds for their temples. Sadly, such contributions are not made towards charitable organizations that work for the society as a whole. I would thus hesitate to use the tag of model minorities for Bengalis...However, the situation is changing fast and hopefully Bengali-Indians will move out of their parochial niche and start contributing more to the causes of the host society."

Similarly, Somlata Bakshi opined:

"I am hesitant to refer to Bengalis as model minorities. I feel that most Bengalis stay too much confined within their own culture. When you are becoming a citizen of the United States, you are

not just to take the benefits of being an 'American,' it is also your duty to pay back to the community. Ideally, I would want to see the Bengalis be more active in terms of civic participation and voluntary activities…We hardly find any donations from Bengalis in the political campaigns. I would want this to change."

Finally, Indrani Karmakar claimed:

"I have reservations about calling Bengalis "model minorities." I feel that Bengalis remain too confined within their own niche and do not make an active effort to assimilate. I will use this tag for them only when they start showing concern for the mainstream society."

8. What are some of the issues of intergenerational dissonance in the families of Bengali professionals? Do Bengali parents allow the assimilation of their sons and daughters to American culture?

The study revealed that although the Bengali-Indian professionals preferred not to impose any career choices on their children, they wanted their children to choose a career that offers financial security. They wished for a decent lifestyle for their children and urged them to pick up a career that provided sufficient remuneration to live comfortably. Ranadeep Bhowmick pointed out:

"I won't force my son to choose any particular career. However, he should have sufficient money to live comfortably."

Similarly, Pamela Chakraborty wanted her son to make a realistic career choice so that he will be able to afford at least a middle-class lifestyle. She observed:

"I always tell my son to make realistic career choices so that he has enough money for at least a middle class living. If doesn't makes a realistic choice, and chooses a career solely out of emotion, he will suffer."

Thus, Bengali parents preferred to set some guidelines for their children about choosing a career. They believed that they have more experience about the economic situation in the United States and hence, their children will benefit if they follow the given guidelines. Parents revealed that they regularly discuss various career opportunities with their children and make them

understand the prospects and drawbacks associated with a particular career. Akash Banerjee stated:

"We always discussed career options with our son. I think that it is our duty as parents to guide them towards a bright future. Based on our guidance and his interest, he decided to study computer science. Today he is very successful and is satisfied with his career."

In the words of Sunirmal Roychowdhury:

"We gave my daughter some broad guidelines about choosing her career. For instance, when she wanted to be a graphic artist we cautioned her about the income associated with the profession and whether she would earn enough to support herself. Though we never forced her, she realized and ultimately choose to become computer engineer."

Another reason why Bengali professionals want their children to join monetarily lucrative careers is the expensive system of undergraduate education in United States. Typically, undergraduate students take out bank loans to pursue their education. Hence, the Bengali-Indian professionals urged their children to choose a sufficiently remunerative career that will allow them to pay back their loan. Sudipto Samanta elucidated on this logic:

"I think that the stereotypical mentality of Indians to impose the monetarily lucrative careers of physicians and engineers on their children has to do with the high cost involved in pursuing undergraduate education in the United States. The economy is down in the United States and the amount of loans that we took for their education is very high. So our concern was that if they don't get good jobs how can they pay back the loan? Therefore, unless they get a well-paid job, the duration of loan repayment will be long and they will always remain anxious about paying the money back. So, we just suggested them to pick an occupation that will pay them enough."

Arnab Roy, a second-generation immigrant, discussed the anxiety of his parents when he chose to pursue the "unconventional profession" of a designer. He stated:

"At first my parents did not approve of me becoming a designer. They were concerned about the future of the profession and the pay associated with it. I had to convince and persuade them in order to gain their approval. I still feel that I have made the right choice and believe that I have a bright future in the profession."

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Respondents also discussed the hassle involved in changing a college major, apart from the waste of time and money associated with the process. Therefore, parents wanted their children to decide wisely about choosing a career and wished that they stick to their choice. Akash Banerjee described this concern:

"Education in the United States is an investment and it involves substantial cost. It's not like in India where education is highly subsidized and government sponsored. Changing a major in college involves a substantial amount of hassle. More importantly, it involves a substantial waste of time and money....My son wants to be a civil engineer and I discouraged him because it does not have many openings. I encouraged him to take up mechanical engineering because it offers multiple avenues and scopes. Now this is just my guidance and the ultimate choice is his. I wish that he makes a wise decision and doesn't have to regret his choice."

It was also found that most Bengali parents wanted their children to choose a career that they are passionate about. They wanted their children to excel in the field that they choose and thus considered that it is essential that their children have some aptitude and attachment to their profession. Probha Ghoshal observed:

"I have always advised my children to choose a career about which they are passionate and they can pursue whole-heartedly throughout their lives. If they do so, I am confident that they will be successful."

Sambit Basu echoed this sentiment:

"I would not select careers for my daughters. But I want them to choose a career that they are passionate about and that offers financial security. I would never want them to choose a career because it's easy, but would definitely encourage them to pursue their interests. At the end of the day, I want my daughters to excel in the fields that they choose."

Contextually, Deepti Sanyal explained the downside involved in choosing a career solely based on monetary consideration:

"We never forced our daughter to choose a particular career. However, there are parents who force their children to become doctors and engineers. Often, people used to join such professions solely because they were monetarily lucrative and not because they had passion for such careers. Then they struggle to be successful because they hardly have any dedication or interest in their profession. Considering this we never forced any career choices on our daughter."

Bengali professionals tried hard to ensure that their children have a successful career. They were very much involved in the education of their children and often encouraged them to excel in school. Most respondents revealed that they regularly monitor the academic progress of their children in school and are quick to address issues of underperformance. Sayantika Moitra elaborated:

"I regularly monitor the educational progress of my son at school. I check his grades and meet with his teachers to ensure that he is not underperforming in any subject. I believe that such supervision and guidance is necessary for a bright career."

Few second generation respondents complained about the disappointment of their parents when their academic performance was average or when they did not get admitted to the Ivy League schools. Sumana Acharya tacitly observed:

"While the Bengalis often like the schooling system in United States because it exerts less pressure on the child, they are very disappointed if their children do not make it to Harvard."

Sugata Bhowmick shared in a similar vein:

"I know that some of my Indian friends do not have any social life. Their parents would make them study hard, pressure them to do well in school, and prohibit them from making random friends….I am lucky that my parents are more laid-back and never pressured me on anything. When I was in school, I had a fair amount of academic accomplishments and so my parents never had to force me to study. The fact that I was a 4.0 student made my parents relaxed and they never interfered with my studies or social life. I wonder if it would have been the situation if I had fared badly in school. I am pretty sure that then my parents would have intervened and pressured me to do well."

While some second generation children admitted that their parents never forced them to choose a career or to study hard, they recognized the existence of 'community pressure' in this regard. Arnab Roy, and his sister, pointed out that in Bengali social gatherings, people discuss the academic accomplishments of their children, which often creates pressure on the children to

achieve something worthwhile. Furthermore, they complained that Bengalis often are curious about the academic accomplishments of their friend's children to have a comparative understanding of their children's standing. Such a competitive mentality creates pressure not only on their own children, but also on those children about whom they are curious. Arnab Roy stated:

"Our conscience appealed to us. We felt that our parents won't be happy if we don't choose certain careers or professions, though they never told us to pursue a profession. We always thought of making our parents proud. This I believe could be attributed to societal pressure. Because other Bengali parents bragged about the academic achievements of their children in Bengali gatherings or parties, we felt that we need to do something that will make our parents proud. Besides, we were regularly asked about our academic grades and school progress by other Bengali parents. Such a competitive mentality not only hurts their own children but also those of other's. We were literally scared to do badly in school with the prospect of disclosing our grades in front of the whole community."

Similarly, Kabita Sanyal described how her choice of becoming a Peace Corp worker in Rwanda was frowned upon and questioned by Bengalis in the community. She criticized the fact that Bengalis are overprotective of their children and emphasize occupational achievement over participation in charitable causes. She noted:

"Tension arises when children don't pick the preferred occupations of Bengalis like physicians, engineers, or professors. When I joined Peace Corp, many Bengalis frowned at my choice. As a matter of fact, the organizers themselves were apprehensive about my participation because of my Indian origin. This is so because Indian families typically emphasize occupational accomplishment of their children over participation in charitable causes. Moreover, Indian parents are 'overprotective' of the children and do not want them to choose a career that involves uncertainty and hardship."

Nonetheless, second generation Bengalis felt that their parents have a very valid reason to push them to achieve academic accomplishments and a successful career. They conceded that their parents have struggled hard to accomplish themselves in a foreign country and offer their families a sound economic foundation. Therefore, it is reasonable for them to expect that their children build on such a foundation. Dinesh Moitra clarified:

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"I think that parents play an important role in the life of a child. Our parents are immigrants and they worked very hard to come to United States and get themselves established here. Thus, I feel that they have a very valid reason when they push their children to study hard or to accomplish themselves."

The study revealed that the majority of Bengali professionals considered it their duty to pay for the education of their children. However, some of the second-generation children opted to pay for their own college education and believed that it is an essential process of becoming self-reliant. Subrata Karmakar reasoned:

"I think that it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are well educated. However, I don't think that the parents should pay for the education of their kids because it puts the child at an unfair advantage. When the entire country struggles to pay for a college education, I think that Indian children should also go through this struggle to understand the value of money. The struggle also trains kids to manage their own finances and grow as a person. I don't think that Indian kids understand the value of money and they are completely lost when they have to manage their own finances."

Most Bengali parents did not have any problem with their children selecting their own marital partners and also had no inhibition about interracial marriage. As Ranjita Sen observed in a subtle way:

"My daughter's marriage decision is entirely hers. I won't have any problem if my daughter has an interracial marriage. If she is happy, I am okay with it."

Similarly, Srabanti Roy reflected:

"I believe that marriage happens between two souls and not between people of two racial groups. So, it does not matter to me if my son has interracial marriage. I only want him to be happy."

Some Bengali parents were very much against the system of arranged marriage and believed that they would not have chosen marital partners for their children even if they stayed in India. Rajat Dasgupta pointed out:

"Society is changing very fast and hardly will you see educated Indians preferring arranged marriages for their children. I would not have conducted arranged marriages for my children even if I stayed in India. I feel that arranged marriages rob youngsters of their basic liberty."

The study found that most second generation Bengalis in Kansas City had interracial marriages and parents very much accepted it. Probha Ghoshal, whose daughter-in-law is an American, commented:

"My son's fiancé is White and she is very good. They have been together for long and we are very fond of her. Recently, she accompanied us to India and she enjoyed the trip very much. She was so enthralled by the Indian culture and heritage that now she insists on having an Indian wedding. My son's wedding will be interesting and we see it as the coming together of two cultures."

Nonetheless, all parents wished that their children choose their partner wisely and select someone with good values. Most parents emphasized having a son or daughter-in-law who is culturally tolerant and receptive to Indian culture and values. Interestingly, none of the Bengali parents showed any particular preference about the occupation or income of their son or daughter-in-law. Pullak Sanyal elaborated:

"I will definitely allow my daughter complete freedom to choose her spouse and her career….If she chooses an interracial marriage partner, I would caution her about things to watch out for. Like I would want her to make sure that her would-be husband is culturally tolerant. I don't care what my son-in-law does for a living. As long as he is earning enough money by honest means and keeping my daughter happy, I will be okay with the marriage."

Elaborating upon the downside of selecting a son or daughter-in-law using occupation or income as selection criteria, Akash Banerjee stated:

"I typically don't like the fact that Indians focus too much on the income of a person in selecting him as their son-in-law rather than ensuring whether their daughter would be happy by the marriage. They will readily accept an interracial alliance if the prospective groom or bride enjoys high occupational status. Indians typically overemphasize the income side in selecting their son-in-law which often leads to marital discordance. This is unacceptable to me and I feel that they should prioritize the quality of a person more than anything else."

Considering the compatibility issue in marriage, most Bengali parents wished that their

children be married to someone of Indian origin. Yet, it was just a preference and not an

imposition for most parents. As Ranadeep Bhowmick noted:

"We won't choose our daughter-in-law. We will allow our son complete liberty about choosing his marital partner. Yet, we always tell him that marriage is a long-term commitment and one should choose his/her partner carefully….Ideally we would prefer an Indian daughter-in-law solely because compatibility comes easier between people of the same ethnic group. However, it's his call."

Purnendu Roy explained the potential incompatibility of values in an interracial marriage with an

example:

"I often try to convince myself that my wish of my son marrying someone of Indian origin may not be feasible….I will have to understand that if my daughter-in-law calls me by my first name, it's not out of disrespect but out of the culture she is brought up in….I feel that interracial marriage often involves such dissonance issues."

However, most parents agreed that it is difficult to find marital partners of Indian origin in

United States and hence did not have any objection about their children dating someone of a

different racial origin. Kushal Sarkar explained:

"I don't think that arranged marriage is ever a possibility for second-generation Indians in the United States. There are two reasons behind this. First, they are socialized in American culture and values and will never accept the Indian custom of arranged marriage. Secondly, they interact with their American peers more often than their Indian peers and that makes the probability of interracial marriage even higher."

Bengali parents openly discussed issues of dating and marriage with their children and wanted

their children to reach a certain age and maturity before they start dating. For instance, Deepti

Sanyal reasoned:

"Yes, we openly discuss issues of dating and marriage with our daughter. We allowed our daughter to date when she was in college….Before that they (children) don't develop the maturity to pick the right marriage partner for themselves."

Interviews with the second-generation respondents revealed that they were skeptical about the compatibility issue in an arranged marriage and, they preferred to select their own marriage partners. Arnab Roy noted:

"I feel that the risk of divorce is higher an arranged marriage. I see my parents arguing all the time. I wonder that if this would have happened if they knew each other before marriage?"

Given a situation where they could choose between a second-generation marital partner of Indian origin living in the U.S. or someone directly from India, all second generation respondents preferred the first option based on the compatibility issue. They argued that a marital partner directly from India will possess a contrasting set of values and hence would likely involve difficult adjustment issues. Sumana Acharya noted:

"I believe that if I marry someone directly from India there would definitely be cultural incongruence. Though this is a globalized world, I consider that some of my American values stand in complete contrast to Indian culture and traditions. So, I would chose a second generation marital partner of Indian origin in the U.S. over someone directly from India."

The research revealed that though there were very few areas of disagreements between Bengali professionals and their children, several nonetheless existed. Some second generation children shared instances of disagreement with their parents about choosing a career option about which their parents were apprehensive. Arnab Roy shared:

"My parents disapproved the choice of my major (designing) in college. I had to do a lot of convincing before I was allowed to pursue it. They were not sure about the employment prospect of the career."

Some of the second generation children expressed their dissatisfaction about their overprotective upbringing and restricted independence that they enjoy in life. They believed that their overprotective upbringing often interferes with the development of a responsible self. Kabita Sanyal elaborated:

"Indian parents never allow their children to grow. They are overprotective of their children and the only thing that they are concerned about is the academic grades of their children. They never realize that life has varied dimensions and their children will score very poorly on all other areas. The 'independence' and the 'sense of responsibility' that an American teenager displays is very commendable and something that Indian parents should try to inculcate in their kids."

Some children complained about the interference of their parents with their choice of friends.

Sugata Bhowmick noted:

"The main issue of discordance between me and my parents is about the choice of friends. They also don't like the fact that some of my friends do drugs or are lawbreakers. Though I personally don't take drugs or have had any problems with the law, they still have an issue about it."

Dinesh Moitra had similar experiences to share:

"I feel that at times parents over-interfere in the life of their children. In my school days the 'curfew time' for going to bed was 10:30 pm, which was early compared to when my friends went to bed. Though I had significant academic achievement in school, I didn't understand why such restrictions were imposed on me."

Some second generation children confessed to maintaining the "innocent boy or girl" image

for the fear of being reprimanded. The overprotective nature of Indian parents often makes their

children hesitant to share their true selves with them. In the words of Sumana Acharya:

"Indian children are very much "image conscious" and strive to maintain the "innocent boy/girl" image before their parents. Some of them are over 25 years old but still they are afraid to reveal to their parents that they went to a bar or went for a date."

The parental restrictions imposed on the children hinder free communication and lead to

situations where parents know very little about the life and problems of their children. Kabita

Sanyal commented:

"Bengali parents often overemphasize disciplining kids and maintaining 'Indian values' within the family. This often leads to situations where kids fail to communicate freely with their parents. I know for a fact that many Indian parents know very little about the lives of their children."

Criticizing the upbringing of children in an Indian family where they are not allowed to grow up, Subrata Karmakar, a 26 year-old second-generation immigrant, shared:

"Even at this age, I am frowned at when I pick up a beer at a Bengali party. Additionally, I am served dinner with other kids (below 15 years of age) before anyone else, because I am still considered "kids" by Bengali standards."

Some parents resented that their children had become too "Americanized" in their attitudes and values. Basabi Bhowmick posited:

"I regret to say that my son has deviated too much from Indian traditions and values. He is too "Americanized" in his attitude and this has created some distance between us. ...This is one of the heavy prices that you pay for deciding to spend your life in the United States."

Sayantika Moitra also lamented:

"We had some dissonance issue with our son when he turned out to be agnostic. He did not believe in the existence of God and that was an issue of disagreement within the family."

Some Bengali-Indian professionals were concerned about the fact that their children take things for granted and do not adequately realize the value of money. The professionals contested that their children hardly understand the challenges they encountered in establishing themselves in life. Hence, they never realize the true worth of a privileged childhood. Their privileged position often makes them take things for granted. Kalyan Guha elaborated:

"We absolutely think that our child is happier than we were at their age. When we were young, we used to consider ourselves fortunate when we received a candy....They don't have to face the struggle which we experienced during our childhood. For example, I didn't have the money to buy marker pens during my school days. The poverty we experienced made us tougher and better equipped to adjust to scarcity. Because we encountered so many struggles in our childhood, the challenges in our adult lives don't bother us much. However, our child takes everything for granted and they get disappointed at the slightest possible reason."

Sujit Chatterjee also noted:

"What I don't like is that my daughter buys toys for the sake of buying. After coming home, within 15 minutes, she loses interest in the toy. When we were kids, we had to wait to get our cherished toy and we used to play all the time with it after getting it."

While Bengali parents wanted their children to assimilate to U.S. culture, they also strongly emphasized the maintenance of ethnic roots. They felt that even if their children considered themselves to be assimilated, their ethnic features will always stand out in the U.S. Hence, it is better to maintain an attachment and be proud of their ethnic identity. Ideally, their children should maintain a balance between assimilating to U.S. culture and identifying themselves with their ethnic Indian heritage. Further, they should pick the best of both the worlds. Pulak Sanyal elaborated:

"I feel that because our children are born here, it is important for them to assimilate and accommodate American culture. However, I am not advocating that Bengali children should forget their roots. Maintaining their ethnic identity is equally important. Even if they believe that they are Americans, the rest of America is not going to say that. Because their ethnic features will always stand out, it is better to know and identify with their ethnic heritage. Look at the Irish population in the United States, they migrated much before the Indians to the United States and yet are maintaining their ethnic roots by celebrating occasions like St. Patrick's Day. Similarly, second generation children should assimilate to U.S. culture, but at the same time should maintain their identity by celebrating our festivals like Holi, Durga Puja, Diwali, etc. Ideally, there should be a balance between assimilation and retaining one's ethnic heritage. I would want my daughter to pick the best of both the worlds. For instance, I would want my daughter to be independent like an American kid and also have Indian values like 'respecting the elderly'."

Bengali parents emphasized that their children should not blindly adopt all aspects of American culture. They proposed that their children should use their judgment and accept the better aspects of both the American and Indian culture. Samata Saha argued:

"I think that it is important for the second generation to assimilate U.S. culture. However, their acceptance of American culture should not be blind. They should use their judgment and accept the good aspects of both the American and Indian culture."

For instance, Bengali parents were wary of the fact that American children are sometimes negligent of their parents and the society is characterized by individualism. They wished that

they are not treated the same way by their children and fend for themselves in their old age.

Samata Saha observed:

"One thing that I don't like about American culture is that the children often don't care about their aged parents and they often are forced to find shelter in old-age homes. I feel bad about the fact that parents who sacrifice so much for their kids have to spent their last days in old-age homes. I don't expect that my children will do the same with me."

Subir Mazumdar felt that some of the American values stand in complete contrast to their Indian counterparts and he wished that his children would not pick up such American traits. For example, he shared that he was very disturbed to find out how younger people address elderly persons by their first name. He stated:

"It seems awkward to us when my daughter's friend (7 years old) calls me by my first name. It seemed very weird to me....Yet, I don't teach my daughter to do the same to elderly people and encourage them to use prefixes before their name. Respecting the elderly is one of the values that I would like my daughter to inculcate."

While Bengali parents believed that the assimilation of their children to U.S. society is inevitable, they acknowledged that parents have a crucial role to play in the inculcation of Indian values in their children. Piya Basu explained:

"I feel that assimilation of second generation children is inevitable. Parents don't need to urge their children for that. Children spend five days a week in the school and hence their accent, food habits, values, etc. automatically change as they grow up in America. They feel more comfortable that way. But I would say that parents play an important role in inculcating Indian values among their children. Whether a second-generation kid learns Bengali culture or not depends a lot on their parents. The initiative of the parents in making their children learn ethnic culture counts a lot."

Parents argued that inculcating Indian values among the second-generation is easier if their children migrated to United States at an older age and have some recollection of their ethnic identity. Deepti Sanyal contended:

"My daughter was born in India and spent the first few years of her life in India. So, she very well knows who she is and where she comes from. So, in a way she is different from other second-generation children growing up in United States, who have no memory about India. I feel

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that it is easier to inculcate Indian values among the second generation children who have migrated to United States at an older age."

The inculcation of Indian values among second-generation children also depends on the city of settlement. Respondents believed that a greater presence of co-ethnics in the city positively influences the acculturation chances of the second-generation children to traditional Indian values. Asish Thakur explained:

"I believe that the acculturation of Indian values among the children depends on the city of settlement and the period of migration. For instance, my daughter understands Bengali but she can't read and write the language. A reason for that is when we arrived Kansas City in 1981 there were only a few Bengalis and so she grew up among the Americans. Had she grown up in New Jersey or New York, she probably would have had more Indian friends, frequently attended community events, availed the training facilities in traditional Indian dance and music and hence could have been more attached to Indian cultural traditions."

It was found that Bengali professionals actively try to inculcate elements of Indian cultural traditions by sending their children to Bengali language training classes, Indian music and dance classes, urging their children participate in Bengali cultural events, and taking them to visit India. Rachana Dasgupta pointed out:

"We have tried our best to inculcate elements of Indian cultural tradition in our children. For example we used to send our daughter to Bengali language training classes, Indian music and dance classes, take her to Bengali events and get-togethers, and visited India together. We understand that in a foreign country it's not feasible to completely socialize children in Indian cultural traditions….At least, we have the satisfaction that we tried to inculcate some elements of our native culture in our children."

Nonetheless, Bengali professionals revealed that they have never forced their children to adopt Indian culture and traditions. Respondents emphasized that they never went against the wishes of their children to inculcate Indian values in them. Pallab Sikdar noted:

"Since we decided to migrate to United States without consulting our children, I thoroughly believe that we have no right to impose our 'Indianness' on them. Therefore I have tried but never forced my son to take Bengali language classes or accompany me to the cultural events and festivals. We have not done anything against his wish……I feel that after migrating to United States, people often have the 'guilt' feeling about leaving their country of origin. They

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often try to counter such feelings by sending their children to classes that trains them about their ethnic roots and cultural heritage."

Interestingly, some Bengali-Indian professionals felt that children automatically pick up elements of Indian cultural traditions when they reach college-going age or when they attain the maturity to understand that they are different from their American peers. Prateek Karmakar, a long-time resident of Kansas City, observed:

"Generally we see that when second-generation children are in middle or high school, they are more into American culture. However, when they start going to college, they develop the maturity to understand that they are different from their American peers, and show initiative in learning about their ethnic and cultural background."

Generally speaking, it was found that Bengali-Indian professionals were happy with their children's level of adoption and adherence to Indian traditions and values. For instance, Somlata Bakshi shared:

"My daughter loves Indian food. I can't believe that she is learning 'Kathak' (a traditional form of Indian dance) on her own initiative."

Similarly, Mita Sikdar appreciated:

"I don't think that my daughter is not close to the Indian cultural traditions. She loves wearing Indian attire and she literally waits for an Indian event so that she can wear her saree (traditional Indian dress for women). She loves watching Indian movies. Additionally, she plays Indian songs on her flute."

Interestingly, Purnendu Roy posited that one does not need to speak Bengali or attend Indian events to prove his or her attachment to Indian culture and tradition. The expression of attachment to the Indian culture differs from one person to the next. For example, he believes that his son's (who is majoring in visual arts) attachment to Indian values is reflected through his art. Roy stated:

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"My son is an undergraduate in visual arts. It does not matter if he can't speak Bengali fluently or does not attend Indian events. His adherence and respect for Indian tradition comes out through his art. He loves painting pictures from Indian scriptures and other traditional art forms."

In discussing the attachment of second generations Bengalis to the Indian cultural traditions, Prateek Karmakar described how his daughter, Subrata, insisted on having an Indian wedding over an American wedding. Karmakar shared how his daughter convinced her American fiancé to have the wedding performed in India. Furthermore, Karmakar showed the wedding pictures to evidence that assimilation and maintaining ethnic identity are not mutually exclusionary phenomenon but can be simultaneous. Karmakar stated:

"I think though my daughter is assimilated to U.S. culture, she has not forgotten her Indian roots. Otherwise she wouldn't have preferred to have an Indian wedding. Honestly, we (I and my wife) wanted the wedding to take place in the United States as it would have been easier for us. However, we gave in to our daughter's wish seeing her enthusiasm and insistence. She convinced her American fiancé and you won't believe that the wedding followed all the Bengali rituals and customs. Her friends and the groom's entire family attended the wedding and they all had a wonderful time….They are so enthused by Indian heritage that my daughter and her husband are planning for a trip in Kerala this December."

It was found that most second-generation Bengalis could understand the Bengali language though they could not speak the language fluently or write it. Parents observed that teaching Bengali to children becomes increasingly difficult as they reach school-going age. One reason is that children don't have Bengali friends in school and so they don't understand the purpose of learning the language. Rachana Dasgupta said:

"My sons can understand Bengali though they can't speak or write the language. Teaching Bengali becomes difficult, because none of their friends are Bengalis and they don't really understand the purpose of learning the language."

Additionally, Bengali parents did not seem to be too concerned about the fact that their children were not fluent in their native tongue. As Saikat Ghosh reasoned:

"I don't regret the fact that my children speak in English and not in Bengali. Last year when I was in Calcutta, I found the kids frequently using English words while conversing in Bengali. I feel that it's more of a global trend and soon English will be the global language."

Piya Basu expressed a different viewpoint:

"I think that by the third and fourth generation our ethnic identity will automatically be lost. So, I don't see the point why parents should pressure their kids too much about learning the Bengali language. They are born in America and so they need to learn English more than Bengali."

The interviews with the second-generation Bengalis revealed that most of them considered themselves to be "Americans with Indian roots." They were proud of their Indian heritage and thus planned on inculcating Indian cultural traditions among their children. Kabita Sanyal commented:

"When I grow up I don't want to forget Bengali cultural roots and identity. If I am born in a Bengali family, I think that it's my duty to preserve my ethnic identity and transmit some of the cultural heritage to my children."

All second-generation Bengalis interviewed visited India at least once in their lifetime and shared their wonderful experiences in visiting the country. Nonetheless, they preferred not to visit India during the summer months and appreciated the growing number of American restaurants in the country. While all of them relished Indian cuisine, they admitted that they can't solely survive on Indian food for a month. Dinesh Moitra explained:

"I like visiting India except for the fact that I don't enjoy visiting during the summer months. Apart from the scorching heat of the summer, power disruptions and mosquitos make life difficult. I like that fact that Calcutta has most of America's fast food joints like McDonalds, Pizza Hut, KFC, etc. This is so because I can't survive on Indian food for a month."

Subrata Karmakar, a second-generation woman in her late twenties and a mother of two, expressed her desire to take her children to India for a visit. However, she admitted that maintaining and recognizing ethnic roots beyond the second generation is very challenging and it depends a lot on the second-generation parent in question. She clarified:

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"I feel that identification with one's ethnic identity becomes increasingly difficult beyond the second generation because the responsibility of transmitting ethnic cultural traditions is dependent on one parent (because most second generations have interracial marriage), who is more than often born in the United States....I definitely want to socialize my kids about Indian cultural traditions and it will involve taking them to visit India."

Chapter 6 - Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the research and discusses them in light of existing theories. The conclusions of the study will then be discussed under the following topics: the reasons for the migration and settlement of Bengali creative workers; reasons for migrating to Kansas City and urban amenity preferences among the Bengali creative workers; purpose of ethnic associations; residential preferences among the Bengali creative workers; assimilation of Bengal creative workers in U.S. society; and, intergenerational relations among the Bengali creative workers. Finally, issues for further research are discussed.

The Reasons for the Migration and Settlement of Bengali Creative Workers

This study found that the reasons for the migration of Bengali creative workers in the sample to the United States differed widely according to the time and context of their migration. Bengali creative workers who migrated to the United States before the 1990s came largely because of "push" factors, while those migrating after the 1990s moved mainly because of the "pull" exerted by the lifestyle amenities in the United States. These findings run counter to those of theorists like Bhardwaj and Rao (1990) who observed that the immigration of Indian professional workers to the United States has to do with American "pull" rather than Indian "push." This study found that Bengali creative workers in the sample who migrated to the United States before the 1990s came mainly because of the poor salary structure and limited opportunities for career advancement in India. On the other hand, those who migrated in the post-1990 period were lured by the prospect of a better income and lifestyle in the United States. Notwithstanding the fact that the economic situation had improved considerably in India with the

implementation of the liberalization policy in the 1990s, many creative workers were drawn by the job openings created by the IT sector boom in the United States. This supports Piore's (1979) contention that migration may be shaped by demand-side factors in the host society.

The Bengali-Indian creative workers who were interviewed revealed that they have settled in the United States, despite encountering economic fluctuations and job insecurity over the years. They reasoned that the salary, career advancement opportunities, and lifestyle amenities that they enjoy in the United States are incomparable to those in India. The immigrants in the sample also underlined the importance of technological advancement in shaping their decision to remain in the United States. For example, advances in communications technology have allowed them to maintain ties with their relatives thousands of miles away.

The findings of the study support several of the propositions made by Human Capital Theory and the New Economics of Migration. Bengali creative workers in the sample migrated to the United States either because of their aspiration to attain a better income and career advancement opportunities in the United States or due to the barriers to economic advancement in India. One of the key arguments made by the Human Capital Theory is that workers in developing countries are exposed to modes of production and consumption practices of the advanced Western world, yet their employment is short-lived and too poorly paid to realize their desired consumption aspirations (Portes, 1995). This argument is particularly applicable to the sampled Bengali creative workers who migrated to U.S. after 1990. For instance, interviews revealed that some of them decided to settle in United States in order to realize their desired living standards exposed to them by their colleagues or by virtue of working in the country. Thus, these findings are in line with Portes' (1995) argument that people often migrate to attain higher incomes and realize their desired standard of living.

Consistent with Portes' (1995) criticism that Human Capital theory does not take note of the contextual factors of migration, this study found that the reasons for the migration of the sampled Bengali creative workers differed by the time of their migration. As noted above, Bengali creative workers who migrated to the United States before the 1990s came largely because of "push" factors while those migrating after the 1990s were drawn by the "pull" exerted by the lifestyle amenities in the United States. Therefore, this study lends support to the argument that Human Capital theory broadly overlooks the importance of migration context.

Similarly, consistent with a key proposition made by the New Economics of Migration, the findings indicated that migration is often the result of limited career advancement opportunities in the sending country. Again, the Bengali-Indian creative workers in the sample who migrated to the United States prior to 1990 did so because of the limited career advancement opportunities and political corruption prevalent in India. Moreover, respondents complained about Indian jobs being too bureaucratic and allowing little freedom to explore and use innovative ideas.

It is important to point out, however, that other findings challenge assumptions made by the New Economics of Migration. First, it was found that most Bengali-Indian creative workers in the sample were not from economically challenged families. Rather, they were mainly from middle class or upper-middle class families who came to the United States to realize their career aspirations. Second, the findings also suggest that the push factor of limited career advancement opportunities in the sending country may be time sensitive and become less relevant if economic conditions in the sending country improve.

It was found that Social Network Theory had limited applicability in understanding the migration of Bengali creative workers to United States. The study revealed that most Bengali creative workers in the sample ventured to United States having few or no contacts with other

Bengalis in the country. This finding, coupled with the economic characteristics of the migrants in the sample, suggests that class background or the socioeconomic status of the migrant may be an important variable influencing the applicability of Social Network Theory. In effect, if migrants have sufficient economic resources and educational credentials, cross-national social networks with other migrants in the host country may not play an important role in the migration decision and the decision of where to locate.

The study findings suggest, however, that once located in the U.S., the formation of social networks with other co-ethnics becomes an important 'place amenity' promoting the lifestyle satisfaction and retention of immigrants in a metropolitan area. The findings indicated that Bengali creative workers in the sample oriented their social lives around networks formed with other Bengalis that were developed through participation in Bengali Associations and informal leisure-time gatherings at their homes. Further, these networks (which represent "bonding" social capital) were recognized to be an important amenity which influences lifestyle satisfaction and the decision to remain in the Kansas City metropolitan areas. It was found that one cost of having strong ties with other co-ethnics is that it often interfered and limited the development of bridging social capital with White Americans and other social groups.

It was found that the desire of Bengali creative workers in the sample to return to India declined after the death of their parents. This finding could be interpreted as illuminating the role of Social Network Theory in explaining return migration to the sending country. The existence of cross-national familial networks can be viewed as a factor influencing the desirability of return migration. However, the death of family members and relatives can be interpreted as the dissolution of such social networks and ties, thereby inhibiting the desirability of returning to the sending country.

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Reasons for Migrating to Kansas City & Urban Amenity Preferences Among the Bengali Creative Workers

In addressing the debate of whether creative workers follow jobs or jobs follow creative workers, the findings support Storper and Scott's (1999) contention that workers choose specific locations because of the availability of employment opportunities. The findings indicated that the decision of Bengali-Indian creative workers in the sample to locate in the Kansas City metropolitan area was primarily influenced by the availability of job opportunities and had little to do with available amenities. The Bengali creative workers who were interviewed placed greater priority on job security, job satisfaction, and higher income over the availability of urban amenities in influencing their decision to locate in Kansas City. Nevertheless, all Bengali-Indian creative workers acknowledged that the chance of realizing better career opportunities in another city would become considerably less important once their children attained school going age. Additionally, Bengali creative workers in the sample did not always migrate to Kansas City voluntarily; some moved there when they faced job lay-offs in another city.

While amenities were not found to be critical to the migration decisions of Bengali creative workers in the sample, they were found to be important in influencing the quality of life enjoyed by these workers once they had already migrated to the city. This suggests that amenities are important in influencing the retention of these creative workers. A key finding, however, was that 'social' amenities were more important to this process rather than urban amenities offered through the marketplace or other forms of amenities such as aesthetic features of the urban landscape. In particular, the formation of social networks with other Bengalis residing in the Kansas City metropolitan area was the most important social amenity promoting satisfaction with their urban lifestyle.

Another key finding from this study is that the presence of local amenities central to the lifestyles of American professional workers was more important to Bengali creative workers than the availability of ethnic Indian amenities such as Indian grocery stores, restaurants, temples, and the screening of Bollywood movies in local theaters. It was found that the interviewed Bengali-Indian creative workers prioritized the presence of an Indian grocery store in town over other ethnic Indian amenities, yet the amenity was not considered indispensable because Indian-specific grocery products could be accessed via online sites.

Purpose of Ethnic Associations

Among Bengali creative workers in the sample, participation in ethnic Indian associations provided an important means for the establishment of social networks with other Bengalis residing in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Thus, participation in a voluntary association was the primary means of accessing this key urban amenity. This study therefore extends Florida's (2002a) proposition about the importance of urban amenities in attracting creative workers by highlighting the role of "social" amenities. Interestingly, elderly professionals (those above the age of 55) in the sample attributed their reluctance to move from Kansas City to their familiarity with the city's physical environment and layout and the potential loss of social relationships that they have developed over time.

Residential Preferences Among Bengali Creative Workers

Unlike Alba and Logan (1993) and Khandelwal's (1995) proposition that immigrants do not initially settle in the suburban areas of a city, this study found that most Bengali creative workers in the sample did, in fact, settle in suburban residences when they first migrated to Kansas City. Further, Bengali professionals preferred residing in suburbs over inner city neighborhoods because of the presence of better schooling opportunities for their children. While "distance from

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work" and "safety of the neighborhood" were other amenity considerations shaping the settlement decisions of Bengali creative workers in the sample, the presence of co-ethnics in the neighborhood was not an influential factor. Thus, this finding replicates the findings of Nee and Sanders (1985) and Alba and Nee's (1999) that Asian Indians typically settle in the suburban neighborhoods dominated by the White majority and, residential clustering is not observed among Asian Indians. In turn, this would suggest that social class considerations outweigh ethnic considerations in choosing a residential location. However, as noted above, the formation of social networks (bonding social capital) with other Bengalis was a key amenity preference among Bengali professionals in the sample. Their lack of residential clustering implies that the formation and maintenance of such networks does not require close propinquity and it is sufficient that such networks are spatially dispersed across the metropolitan area.

The Assimilation of Bengali Creative Workers in U.S. Society

The study revealed that most Bengali creative workers in the sample considered themselves to be assimilated in the mainstream American society. Most interviewees participated in the activities of their neighborhood and felt that the United States offers immigrants considerable assimilation opportunities. Importantly, they emphasized the fact that they are not forced to forsake any aspects of their culture in the United States. Respondents believed that the receptive nature of the host society makes assimilation an easier process and appreciated the openness of Americans to know and participate in less familiar cultures. Additionally, Bengali creative workers in the sample credited their educational credentials, English-speaking ability, and liberal mindset in facilitating their assimilation process in the United States. These findings concur with those of Sherrie Kossoudji (1988) and Marilyn Fernandez (1998) who found that English-speaking ability aids the assimilation process.

Nonetheless, a few respondents considered their assimilation to American society to be segmental. While they considered themselves to be fully assimilated in their job environment, they did not believe this to be true in the social sphere. They reasoned that their hectic work schedule, family responsibilities, and involvement with the ethnic Bengali associations in the city left them with little time to mingle with Americans outside work. These findings deviate from the arguments made by Piore (1979) and Massey (1981) that assimilation follows social mobility, suggesting this proposition cannot necessarily be generalized.

In identifying the factors responsible for their assimilation in the United States, Bengali creative workers who were interviewed underlined the influences of the migrant's age, duration of stay in the United States, the time period of migration, and the presence of co-ethnics in the city. While being younger at the time of migration and having a longer duration of stay in the U.S. positively influenced the extent of assimilation, a greater presence of co-ethnics in the city was found to exert a negative influence. In highlighting the importance of the time period of migration, respondents believed that recent immigrants face an easier assimilation process because the United States has become increasingly cosmopolitan and receptive to other cultures over the years. Interestingly, some reasoned that the greater acceptability of foreign cultures in the United States was a function of economic affluence and the prosperity of the country relative to other nations of the world.

Second generation children were recognized as important contributors to the assimilation of their parents in the United States. The assimilation of parents became more-or-less self-perpetuating once their children started attending school. Parents then begin to attend school-related events such as PTA meetings, mingle with the parents of their child's American friends, invite them to their house on their child's birthday, etc. Further, interracial marriages of the

second generations contribute substantially to the assimilation and acceptance of their parents in the mainstream society.

These findings support the propositions made by Gordon (1964) and Gans and Sandberg's (1973) concerning their conception of "straight-line assimilation." This conceptualization portrays the assimilation process as an unfolding of a series of generational steps. Each new generation represents a new state of adjustment to the host society that is a step further removed from ethnic "ground zero" (community and culture of the immigrants) and a step nearer to assimilation (Lieberson, 1973; Alba and Nee, 1999). The findings from this study add to this literature by pointing out that the new generation may also facilitate the assimilation and adjustment of the previous generation to the host society.

Finally, though the sampled Bengali creative workers considered themselves to be occupationally successful and well-adjusted in the United States, they were reluctant to use the label "model minorities" for themselves. They believed that they need to more actively contribute to the charitable causes of the host society in order to earn this label. Thus, in contrast to the prevalent definition of model minorities, i.e., minority groups having high education credentials and economic accomplishments, respondents supported Dhingra's (2003) conception that the term should be revised and used to refer to the educationally and economically successful immigrants who contribute to social causes of the host society.

Intergenerational Relations within the Families of Bengali Creative Workers

The patterns of the intergenerational relations among Bengali creative workers and their children in the sample were discussed under the following sections: career choices of the second generation, dating and marriage by the second generation, identifying with Indian cultural traditions, and other issues of dissonance. Each of these issues is addressed in turn.

Career Choices of the Second Generation

The study revealed that although the Bengali creative workers in the sample preferred not to impose any career choices on their children, they wanted their children to choose a financially stable occupation. Confirming Dasgupta's (1989) findings, the study found that parents preferred to offer advice and set broader guidelines for their children to choose a career. Given the high cost of education in United States, parents wished that their children wisely choose their careers so that they don't have later regrets.

Nonetheless, Bengali professionals considered it of utmost importance that their children exhibit passion and an aptitude for their career choices. They believed that having passion for a field is essential for excelling in it. Deviating from Rangaswamy's (2000) findings about Asian-Indian parents, most Bengali respondents preferred not to impose any specific career choices on their children.

Bengali parents in the sample typically emphasized the academic achievement of their children at school and, they regularly monitored their children's academic progress. However, the second generation respondents complained of too much parental involvement in their education and feared the disappointment of their parents when they fail to live up to their expectations. Second generation interviewees also recognized the existence of community pressure and expectations about their academic accomplishments. They shared that at Bengali social gatherings, parents discuss and compare the academic accomplishments of their children. This creates anxiety and a psychosis of fear among the second generation to achieve something worthwhile. Finally, most members of the second generation acknowledged the fact that because their parents have struggled hard to establish themselves in the United States, they have a very valid reason behind encouraging their children to excel academically and build upon the solid economic foundation they have been provided.

Dating and Marriage by the Second Generation

Most of the Bengali parents who were interviewed did not have any inhibitions about their children marrying interracially or selecting their own spouse. In fact, some Bengali parents were very much against the system of arranged marriage and believed that they would not have chosen marital partners for their children even if they had stayed in India. Nevertheless, they wished that their children wisely choose their partner and select someone with good values. For instance, they emphasized the importance of having a son or daughter-in-law who is culturally tolerant and receptive toward Indian traditions and values. Interestingly, none of the Bengali parents had any particular preference about the occupation or income of a son or daughter-in-law. They prioritized the character of the person over their income or level of occupational attainment.

Taking into consideration the compatibility issue in marriage, Bengali parents preferred that their children marry someone of Indian origin. This finding is in line with Agarwal's (1991) contention that Indian parents believe that having Indian values in common provides a stronger foundation for marriage. Yet, it was just a preference and not an imposition for most Bengali parents.

The study further revealed that most Bengali parents openly discussed issues of dating and marriage with their children. Ideally, they wanted their children to attain a certain level of maturity before they choose a spouse for themselves.

Members of the second generation respondents were skeptical about the compatibility issue in arranged marriage and they preferred to choose their own marriage partners. Supporting Agarwal's (1991) research, this study found that given a situation where their marriage is arranged and they are allowed to choose between a second-generation marital partner of Indian origin in the U.S. or someone directly from India, all second-generation members preferred

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marrying someone raised in the U.S. Partners from India were viewed as posing compatibility problems.

Identifying with Indian Cultural Traditions

Though Bengali parents in the sample wanted their children to assimilate U.S. culture, they considered it equally important to maintain Indian roots. Consistent with Dasgupta's (1989) findings, they reasoned that because their ethnic features will always stand out, it is better to be proud of them. Ideally, Bengali parents wanted their children to maintain a balance between assimilating U.S. culture and acculturating and maintaining Indian values. They wanted their children to use good judgment and selectively pick the best of both worlds.

Parents acknowledged their role in inculcating Indian values in their children and they tried to meet the expectation by sending their children to Bengali language training classes and Indian music and dance classes, urging their children to participate in Bengali cultural events, and taking them to visit India. Nonetheless, they emphasized that they never went against the wishes of their children to instill them with Indian values.

Most second generation respondents considered themselves to be "Americans with Indian roots." They were proud of their identity and planned on inculcating Indian cultural traditions in their children. Yet, they recognized the challenge of maintaining an ethnic identity beyond the second generation. They reasoned that members of the second generation generally have interracial marriages. Therefore, transmitting Indian values to the children depends on the single-handed effort of the second generation parent in question.

Other Issues of Dissonance

The research revealed that although there were not many issues of disagreement between Bengali professionals and their children in the sample, they nonetheless existed. For instance, some second generation children expressed dissatisfaction about their overprotective upbringing and the infringement on their freedom by their parents. They rightly observed that their overprotective upbringing often stands in the way of their development of responsibility. Even worse, such a restricted upbringing makes the children hesitant to disclose their true selves and problems to their parents.

In congruence with Zhou's (1997) findings, parents complained about their children becoming too "Americanized," displaying agnostic behavior, and not realizing the value of money. Moreover, they observed that their children often take things for granted and thus become frustrated at the slightest possible inconvenience.

Issues for Further Research

One key limitation of this study is that it was conducted on Bengali creative workers who are employed and reside in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Kansas City represents a tier four city in the United States. Different insights about the urban amenity and settlement preferences of Bengali creative workers would likely be obtained if this study is replicated in a tier one U.S. city like New York, Chicago or San Jose. In the near future, I plan to extend my research in this direction.

It would also be interesting to do a comparative analysis of the assimilation and urban amenity preferences of Bengali-Indian professional workers compared to professional workers of a different Indian ethnicity who have migrated to the United States. In a similar vein, it would be worthwhile to look at the assimilation patterns and urban amenity preferences among the

Chinese professional workforce, who also constitute a substantial portion of the skilled

immigrant workforce in the United States. Finally, this research should also be extended to study

assimilation patterns and amenity preferences among unskilled Indian immigrant workers in the

United States.

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Appendix A - Interview Schedule

(A) For the Bengali Professionals and their Spouses

(I) General Information

1. What is your age and education?

2. What is your current employment in United States? Have you ever been employed in India? Describe your previous employment, if any, in India and United States?

3. What is your annual income: (a) Below $20,000; (b) $20,000-$50,000; (c) $50,000-$100,000; (d) $100,000-$200,000; (e) $200,000 and above.

(II) Reasons and Context of Immigration and Post-Immigration Experience in United States

1. Describe the socio-demographic profile of your family in India? Which part of West Bengal or India do you come from?

2. Describe the factors that contributed to your migration to United States? Were there any hindrances on the way of your immigration? If yes, what were they?

3. When did you come to United States? Describe the socio-economic context in India and United States at the time of your migration?

4. Did you have any expectation about life in United States? What were those expectations? Has those expectations been met?

5. How long have you been to United States? Have you ever visited India after coming to United States? What was/were the purpose(s) of the trip(s)? Who accompanied you on such trips? Do you plan on visiting India in near future?

6. Compare your social status in India and United Status? Do you think of it as an upward or downward social mobility?

7. Have you ever considered returning to India? Please justify your plans for staying in United States or returning to India? What do you think of the programs offered by the Indian government to attract the NRIs (Non Resident Indians) back to the country?

8. What are the factors that have contributed to your professional success? Have the same factors contributed to the success of the non-Indians that you work with?

9. Are you satisfied with your current professional status? Please justify your answer.

10. Are you aware of the current happenings in India? How do you keep yourself updated about the happenings in India?

(III) Bengali Immigrants and Urban Amenities

1. What are the factors that made you to choose Kansas City over any other city as your place of settlement?

2. What are some of the ethnic amenities/facilities, if any, that you use in Kansas City?

3. What are your contributions, if any, towards setting up such amenities in Kansas City? What ethnic amenities would you ideally prefer to have in Kansas City?

4. How important are these ethnic amenities for you? Do you consider any of them to be indispensable?

(IV) Ethnic Associations and their Purpose

1. Are you affiliated to any Bengali or Indian associations in Kansas City? Describe your attachment to such associations?

2. What is your viewpoint on ethnic associations of Bengalis in United States? What purpose(s), if any, do you think that they serve?

3. Do you attend Bengali parties and get-togethers? What is the frequency of such parties? What are your reasons for attendance or non-attendance.

(V) Assimilation in American Society

1. Is this your first residence in United States? If not, where did you settle initially? How long were you there? What made you to change your residence?

2. Do you prefer residing in a Bengali neighborhood? Please justify your answer.

3. Do you prefer having a suburban over metropolitan residence? Please justify your answer?

4. What is your marital status? If single, would you prefer having an interracial marriage? Please justify your answer.

5. Describe the socio-economic profiles of your friends? To what racial or ethnic group does most of your friends in United States belong?

6. Are you involved in any pan-American organizations in U.S.? If yes, in what capacity?

7. Do you participate or any activity of your neighborhood? If yes, in what capacity?

8. How do you spend your weekends? What is your favorite pastime during the weekends?

9. Do you consider yourself to be assimilated in American society? Tell us about the persons who have contributed to your professional success in United States?

10. Do you think that most Bengalis are able to assimilate in American society? What are the factors that contribute and hinder their assimilation process?

11. Do you think that Bengalis can assimilate in American society without forsaking their culture? If yes, how is this possible?

12. Considering all aspects of Bengali culture, which aspects do you feel strongly about retaining? What aspects do you feel least strongly about retaining?

13. What is your viewpoint on the stereotype that Asians are "model minorities"? Do you feel that such stereotypes can/should be applied to Bengalis as well?

14. Do you think that it is more important for the second generation Indians to identify themselves with the Indian background or assimilate in the U.S. society?

15. If you are given the option to reconsider your decision to migrate to United States, what would you choose?

16. What do you feel about the future of Bengalis in United States?

(VI) Intergenerational Relations

1. To what racial and ethnic group does most of your son/daughter's friends belong? Do you think that they are more comfortable with Indian or non-Indian peers?

2. Have your children ever visited India? How did they react? How do your family and friends in India reacted to them?

3. Does your son/daughter attend events organized by Bengali associations in Kansas City? Do they feel associated or involved in such events?

4. Do you think that your children are "happier" or privileged than you were at their age in India? Do you foresee them having a brighter career than yours.

5. Does your son/daughter able to speak, understand and write Bengali? What language do you use to converse with them at home? Do they know and understand our Bengali culture.

6. Discuss your views on dating and arranged marriage? Do you intend to conduct arranged marriage for your son or daughter. If yes, what are the criterions that you would use in selecting marriage partners for your children?

7. Does your children ever discuss issues like dating and marriage with you? What are your views on getting them married with partners from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?

8. Is there any particular occupation that your son or daughter wants to pursue? Do you approve of such choices? Why or Why not?

Some questions are borrowed from Priya Agarwal's (1991) interview schedule in her book "Passage from India: Post-1965 Indian Immigrants and their Children."

(B) For the Second Generation

(I) General Information

1. Were you born in United States? If not, at what age did you immigrate to United States?

2. What is your age and educational qualification?

3. What is your annual income: (a) Below $20,000; (b) $20,000-$50,000; (c) $50,000-$100,000; (d) $100,000-$200,000; (e) $200,000 and above.

4. Do you speak or understand or write Bengali? With whom do you speak the language?

5. Have you ever visited India? What did you like and dislike about the visit?

6. Do you know and understand the Bengali customs and traditions? What do you feel about India in general?

7. Are you aware of the current happenings in India? How do you keep yourself updated about the happenings in India?

(II) Second Generation and Urban Amenities

1. What are some of the ethnic amenities/facilities, if any, that you use in Kansas City?

2. What are your contributions, if any, towards setting up such amenities in Kansas City? What ethnic amenities would you ideally prefer to have in Kansas City?

3. How important are these ethnic amenities for you? Do you consider any of them to be indispensable?

(III) Ethnic Associations and their Purpose

1. Are you affiliated to any Bengali or Indian associations in Kansas City? Describe your attachment to such associations?

2. What is your viewpoint about ethnic associations of Bengalis in United States? What purpose(s), if any, do they serve?

3. What kinds of associations would you like to join when you become financially independent?

4. Do you have Bengali parties or get-togethers? Do you attend those? What are the reasons for your attendance or non-attendance.

(IV) Assimilation in American Culture

1. Discuss the socio-economic profiles of your friends. To what racial and ethnic group does most of your friends belong?

2. Are you involved in any pan-American organizations in U.S.? If yes, in what capacity?

3. Do you participate in any activity of your neighborhood? If yes, in what capacity?

4. How do you spend your weekends? What is your favorite pastime during the weekends?

5. Do you consider yourself to be assimilated in the American society?

6. Do you think that it is important for you to retain your ethnic identity or to assimilate with the American culture?

7. Do you consider that Bengalis at large are assimilated to the American society? What are the factors that contribute and hinder their assimilation process?

8. Do you think that Bengalis can assimilate in American society without forsaking their culture? If yes, how is this possible?

9. Considering all aspects of Bengali culture, which aspects do you feel strongly about retaining? What aspects do you feel least strongly about retaining?

10. What is your viewpoint on the stereotype that Asians are "model minorities"? Do you feel that such stereotypes can/should be applied to Bengalis as well?

11. If your parents are given the option to reconsider their decision to migrate to United States, what would you want them to choose?

12. What do you feel about the future of Bengalis in United States?

(V) Intergenerational Relations

1. What, if any, are some of the concerns of second generation Indians in United States? What do you most like about United States.

2. What career would you like to pursue in future? Do your parents support such choice.

3. Will you consider a career that is not of your parent's choice? Do you think that you can be successful in such a career?

4. Do you consider that it is your parent's responsibility to ensure that you are well-educated and settled in life?

5. What is your marital status? What type of marriage (arranged or romantic) would you ideally prefer? What is/are the reason(s) behind your preference?

6. What are your views on dating and arranged marriage? Does your view differ from that of your parents.

7. What are some of the issues of agreement and disagreement between you and your parents?

8. Do you plan on transmitting some of the Bengali cultural traditions to your children when you become parent?

Some questions are borrowed from Priya Agarwal's (1991) interview schedule in her book

"Passage from India: Post-1965 Indian Immigrants and their Children."