

A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXAMINING THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS OF  
ASIAN INDIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

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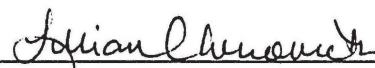
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To the Dean of the Graduate School:


I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Nirisha K. Garimella entitled "A Qualitative Study Examining the Acculturation Process of Asian Indians in the United States." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Family Sciences.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Mary Bold, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

  
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Accepted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dean of the Graduate School



## DEDICATION

To Thatha

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank my parents and sister who have always believed and encouragement me at every step of the way. My husband, Hari, has been my biggest champion despite my swinging moods and crazy schedule. My in-laws and sister-in-law have given me wonderful support throughout the process. My extended family and close dear friends have been a great source of encouragement, help, and sanity.

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## ABSTRACT

NIRISHA K. GARIMELLA

### A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXAMINING THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS OF ASIAN INDIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

MAY 2008

The purpose of this study was to describe, examine and analyze the life of Indians in the U.S. The study examined the process of adjustment that immigrants make in their new home in the U.S., based on immigrants' previous exposure to U.S. culture. Research questions that guided the current research were: (1) How do Indian immigrants describe their life in the U.S.?, (2) How do expectations of life in the U.S. align with actual experiences in the U.S.?, (3) What influences the expectations of life in the U.S.?, (4) How does immigrants' life in the U.S. compare to their life in their home country?, and (5) How do immigrants prepare for their life in the U.S.?

The researcher interviewed 15 adult immigrants from India, using a semi-structured interview format. All interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and analyzed. Multiple levels of analysis were used to triangulate the data.

The research found that the reason for immigration impacted the preparation, and initial adjustment to the U.S. Some of the participants who had immigrated upon getting married learnt about life in the U.S. from their husbands and many described their initial life in the U.S. as being lonely and boring. Most of the participants who came to the U.S. as graduate students described financial concerns as being one of their biggest

adjustments. Descriptions of current life in the U.S. and future life were similar to participants who came after getting married and those who came as graduate students. Advice to others differed based on the immigration experience.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Asian Indians (henceforth referred to as Indians) first came to the United States (U.S.) as laborers in 1904 with the dream of a better life (Takaki, 1989). But changing immigration legislation, especially the 1917 and 1924 Immigration Acts that levied restrictions, made entering the U.S. difficult. The passing of the 1965 Immigration Act reopened the doors for Indian immigrants to the U.S. (Segal, 1991; Takaki). The period following 1965, often described as the 'second wave', saw a new face of immigrants. According to Takaki, while the early immigrants were poor, illiterate and predominantly male, the later immigrants were educated, from cities and consisted of both men and women. The period of 1965-1990 saw a sharp rise in Indian immigrants. While only representing about 1% of the Asian population in 1965, Indians accounted for 10% of the Asian population in 1990 (Takaki). Within a span of 20 years the Indian population in the U.S. had grown from 10,000 in 1965 to 525,000 in 1985 (Takaki). In the mid-1980s, it was predicted that by year 2000, the Indian population in the U.S. would be over 1 million. As predicted, the population of Indian in the U.S. in 2000 was over 1.6 million (U.S. Census, 2002).

#### Statement of the Problem

Entering a new culture may entail modification of food, dressing, socialization, and daily habits. Adjustment to a new culture, though dynamic and long-term, does not

significantly change values and attitude of people (Saran, 1985). From a cultural pluralistic perspective, ethnicity prevails (Saran). Acculturation is a “developmental process towards adaptation and gaining competence within more than one cultural setting” (Oppedal, Roysamb, & Sam, 2004, p. 482). Many variables affect adjustment strategies and acculturation: (a) status and power play of immigrant, (b) educational and occupational level of immigrant, (c) ethnic and social class composition of the community of settlement, (d) proximity of co-ethnic cultural group, (e) previous exposure to urban and Western culture, (f) reason for immigration, and (g) structural and contextual factors in the receiving country (Gibson, 2001).

Research has been conducted on different aspects of life of Indians in the U.S.: parenting (Deepak, 2005; Farver, Bhadha & Narang, 2002; Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Jain & Belsky, 1997; Jambunathan and Counselman, 2002; Jambunathan and Counselman, 2004; Jensen, 1988; Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996; Saran, 1985; Segal, 1991), gender-roles (Dasgupta, 1992; Gupta, 2005; Reeves & Bennett, 2004; Saran) and older Indians (Gupta; Nandan, 2005; Pettys & Balagopal, 1998). While research has examined some of the factors and results of acculturation to the U.S. culture, little research has considered the actual process that immigrants experience as they make adjustments in their new home.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to describe, examine and analyze the life of Indians in the U.S. The study examined the process of adjustment that immigrants make in their

new home in the U.S., based on immigrants' previous exposure to U.S. culture. No previous studies have examined how pre-immigration exposure to the receiving culture impacts the life of the immigrant.

Healthcare, and education research has found a relationship between expectations and satisfactions; the researcher proposed to extend this body of knowledge to bridge the gap in the acculturation literature (Edwards, Courtney, & Spencer, 2003; Grewal, 1995; Jennings, Hemman, Heiner, Swanson, & Loan (2005); Li & Kaye, 1999; Menon & Christou, (2002) The current study examined the adjustments that Indians immigrants make in the U.S. The impact of previous exposure to the U.S. culture and expectations of life in the U.S. on acculturation was not examined.

### Research Questions

Research questions that guided the current research were:

1. How do Indian immigrants describe their life in the U.S.?
2. How do expectations of life in the U.S. align with actual experiences in the U.S.?
3. What influences the expectations of life in the U.S.?
4. How does immigrants' life in the U.S. compare to their life in their home country?
5. How do immigrants prepare for their life in the U.S.?

## Definition of Terms

According to Creswell (2003) definitions, operationalize terms that appear in the research question and purpose of the research. For the purpose of this research project some key definitions are listed below.

**Acculturation:** According to Oppedal, Roysamb, and Sam (2004), acculturation is a “developmental process towards adaptation and gaining competence within more than one cultural setting” (p. 482).

**Americanized or westernized:** According to the Asian American Scale of Identity and Acculturation (AASIA), the American Orientation Scale includes aspects of English language usage, cultural identity, relationships, values, and culture (Chang, Tracey, & Moore, 2005). For the sake of this study Americanized and Westernized were interchangeably used and defined by the participants, as was the term Indian.

**Assimilation:** According to Chang, Tracey, and Moore (2005); and Sue (1973), assimilation is one possible mode of acculturation wherein the individual rejects the home culture and completely accepts the host culture.

**Ethnicity:** According to Milton Gordon (1964), ethnicity refers to a common cultural heritage people share.

**Expectations:** Based on health research, Janzen et al. (2006) defined expectations as “associations between behaviour and resulting consequences, which then guide subsequent behaviours” (p. 39).



Indian immigrant: For the purpose of this study, an individual who is from India, 18 years or older, and had lived in the U.S. for at least 2 years and not currently a U.S. citizen were considered an Indian immigrant.

Transition: From a family development perspective, transition is a dynamic concept that moves an individual or family “from one qualitatively distinct stage to another stage” (Rodgers & White, 1993, p. 238). In this study the focal transition event was immigration from India to the U.S.

### Assumptions

Four assumptions guided the research process.

1. All immigrants make adaptations to their life in the U.S.
2. All individuals have expectations when they enter a new environment.
3. Change is inevitable and bidirectional.
4. Some individuals in the family unit may come from different backgrounds and hence may have different experiences.

### Delimitations

Delimitations clearly define the boundaries for the research process (Creswell, 2003). According to Wolcott (2001), having clearly written delimitations help construct a precise statement of purpose of the study. Delimitations spell out what this study entails and does not entail.

Only those individuals who are from India, 18 years or older, and had lived in the U.S. for at least 2 years, not currently a U.S. citizens, and currently residing in the north Texas area were considered as Indian immigrants for the current study. The current

research excluded all other immigrants except those from India. It also excluded recent immigrants with less than 2 years residency in the U.S., and those who have become U.S. citizens. The study excluded those Indian immigrants who are younger than 18 years of age and Indian immigrants outside of the north Texas area.

### Summary

Indians are one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the U.S. A change as major as migration to a new culture is accompanied with adjustments. Borrowing from consumer, healthcare, and education research, the current research examined the expectations of life in the U.S. and the process of acculturation of Indians to the U.S.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The rationale for examining Indians in the U.S. and the theoretical perspectives in the field of acculturation are examined in this chapter. The review of literature highlights research on Indian families in India and the U.S., with special focus on family life and gender roles. In addition, it focuses on acculturation of Indians, and different aspects of parenting that Indian parents and children face in the U.S. Finally research in the field of business and healthcare examining the association between expectation and satisfaction was examined.

#### Rationale for Selected Population

According to Farver, Narang, and Bhadha (2002) the recent immigrants to the U.S. strive to preserve their cultural heritage rather adapting the American lifestyle. This lends itself to the cultural pluralism rather than the melting pot ideology (Farver et al; Gordon, 1964). Owing to the predicted shift in population composition of the U.S. there is a greater need to understand acculturation to the U.S. (Farver et al.)

Asian Americans are a diverse group originating from 20 different ethnic groups, speaking over 30 languages (Bhattacharya, 2002; Takaki, 1989; Reeves & Bennett, 2003). The number of Asian immigrants in the U.S. in the year 2003 was 11.9 million,



which represented 4.2% of the U.S. population (Reeves & Bennett, 2003). Indians make up over 16% of the Asian population.

By year 2000, nearly 54% of foreign-born Indians in the U.S. had immigrated between 1990-2000, close to 28% between 1980-89, and the remaining 18% prior to 1980s. Between 1990-2000 the Indian population grew by 80.7%, the Chinese population by 53.4%, the Japanese population by 34.5 % and the Filipino population by 27.2 %. Of these highest four growing rates, the Indian population was the fastest growing Asian immigrant group (Bhattacharya, 2002; Takaki, 1989). With the tremendous growth of Asian immigrants in the U.S., the need for social scientists to understand the acculturation process of the Asian population is important. The rationale for a closer examination of the Indian culture was dictated by the rapid growth of this particular ethnic group.

### Theoretical Perspective

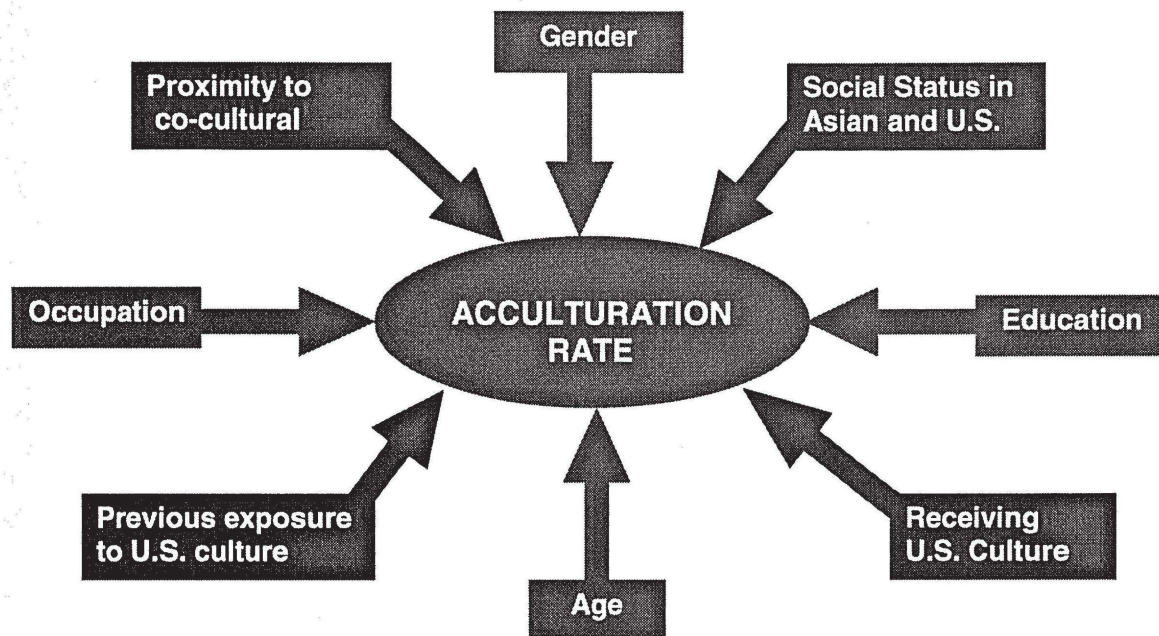
The dream of higher education, better employment opportunities, escaping a fascist regime, and alleviation from poverty are some of the impetus for leaving one's family and homeland (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999; Takaki, 1989). Entering a new culture may entail modification of food, dressing, socialization, and daily habits. Adjustment to a new culture, though dynamic and long-term, does not change values and attitude of people (Saran, 1985). The core values of the ethnicity always prevail (Saran).

One of the earliest works in the area of assimilation was by Milton Gordon (1964). His theoretical perspectives on assimilation were based on three ideologies: Anglo-conformity theory, the melting pot ideology, and the cultural pluralistic

perspective. The Anglo-conformity perspective assumes that the immigrants desired to emulate and replace their culture with the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. The melting pot ideology postulated a blending of cultures in order to create a unique culture. While the Anglo-conformity and melting pot perspectives emphasize a replacement of home culture for the immigrants; the cultural pluralism ideology highlights the maintenance of separate sub-cultures (Gordon).

The conceptual framework for the current study is based on previous research in the field of acculturation and the variable influencing acculturations. According to Oppedal, Roysamb, and Sam, (2004) acculturation is “a developmental process towards gaining competence within the sociocultural environment of one’s own ethnic group and that of the mainstream society” (p. 469). Many variables affect adjustment strategies and acculturation; (a) status and power play of immigrant; (b) educational and occupational level of immigrant; (c) ethnic and social class composition of the community of settlement; (d) proximity of others of the same ethnicity; (e) previous exposure to urban and Western culture; (f) reason for immigration; and (g) structural and contextual factors in receiving country (Gibson, 2001). According to the Suinn, Berry, and Sue models of acculturation (as cited in Chang, Tracey & Moore, 2005; Sue, 1973), there are four possible modes: the individual remains allied to the values of the culture of origin (separation); the individual becomes overly Westernized and rejects the Asian ways (assimilation); the individual attempts to integrate aspects of both cultures that he or she feels are most amenable to the development of self-esteem and self-identity (integration);

and individual does not value either culture (marginalization). Acculturation and its variables are depicted in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* Interpretation of Gibson's (2001) variables as outlined in "Immigration Adaptation and Patterns of Acculturation"

### Indian Traditions and the Indian Family

The review of relevant literature was divided into two sections: life of Indian families in India and life of Indians in the U.S. Family patterns and gender roles in India are discussed in this first section.

#### *Family Patterns in India*

India is a land of diverse religions, cultures, beliefs and system of living. The extent to which members in the family influence the child and are involved with the actual raising of the child depends upon the family system in which the child is being



brought up. In many parts of the country the joint or extended family system prevails (Medora, Larson, & Dave, 2000). In this system, not only are the biological parents responsible for raising the child, but also the grandparents and various other relatives who live together in a single household. The mother has the predominant role in child rearing, while the father's interaction with child is minimal (Medora, Larson, & Dave; Segal, 1991). Joint family systems are highly hierarchical, authoritarian and have strict child rearing practices (Segal). Even though the child is identified with reference to the parents, the whole family, and the elders in particular, have the obligation and duty of imparting social and religious values, culture and tradition in the child. There are many adult role models of the child brought up in a joint family. Indian culture values conformity and collective thinking. The joint family system places emphasis on compliance and de-emphasizes autonomous thinking (Medora, Larson, & Dave, 2000; Segal).

Families in the bigger towns and cities are mostly nuclear in nature, consisting of only the biological parents and their children. This places responsibility of child rearing on both parents. In the nuclear family system the major responsibility of raising the children with the right religious perspective, social values and cultural outlook lies with the parents. Nuclear parents tend to be less hierarchal, more permissive, and offer fewer role models to the child (Segal, 1991). However, nuclear parents are not completely alone in their child rearing. Often their social circle of family and friends are at hand to advise them and support them.

### *Gender Roles in India*

Gender roles are clearly defined in the Indian society (Medora, Larson, & Dave, 2000). The primary responsibility of the woman is to look after the household and raise the children. The husband is the breadwinner of the family and supervises the running of the family and makes decisions that play a vital role in the lives of the members of the family. Often the father makes decisions regarding education and employment of the children, financial matters, health care, and other major areas. With the increase of working mothers, the general perception was that of a more egalitarian household. From their research of nearly 200 parents of preschool children in New Delhi, India, Suppal and Roopnarine (1999) found that working mothers in India continued to be the primary caregiver for their children, with father spending little time in care-giving.

### *Life of Indians in the U.S.*

First generation and second generation Indian immigrants have been an area of research for over 2 decades. In this second section, research on initial reaction, gender roles of Indian, and parenting of Indian children in the U.S. are presented.

### *Initial Reaction to the U.S.*

The major changes in the U. S. immigration laws in 1965 saw a sharp rise in the arrival of immigrants from India (Saran, 1985; Segal, 1991). Many of the arriving Indians came to the U.S. for either higher education or employment. According to a U.S. Census report in 2000 (Reeves & Bennett, 2004), nearly 64% of Indians have earned a Bachelor's degree. Nearly 80% of Indian men and 54% of Indian women living in the

U.S. are part of the U.S. labor force. Close to 60% of Indians are in professional or managerial positions, when compared to nearly 34% of all workers. Indian men and women had the highest median income in the U.S. of all ethnic groups (Reeves & Bennett).

Due to the British *Raj* (rule) in India, the British system of education is inherent in the Indian system (Segal, 1991). Often Indians immigrating to the U.S. are fluent in English and are exposed to Western culture. According to Reeves and Bennett (2004), close to 80% of Indians in the U.S. spoke very good English in their households. Their language skills combined with their educational proficiency aids them tremendously as they encounter and adjust to the new Western culture.

Saran's (1985) in-depth interviews of 10 Indians living in New York metropolitan area examined their habits, preferences, and activities. Findings of his in-depth interviews were triangulated with a survey of a larger population of Indians and participant observations. Saran was interested in initial response to the U.S., adjustments immigrants had to make in terms of family, religion, food, activities, and language. He examined their desire to return to India, their aspirations for their children, and their association with the Indian community. Saran presented comments made by some Indian regarding arrival in the U.S.

"initial reaction after coming here was quite positive . . . found people quite friendly" (p. 58). [Male]

"All people living here are different, so we are also different but it does not mean that we are any more different than others" (p. 69). [Male]

“Everything was so different physically as well as emotionally. . . . I used to cry at night and had trouble sleeping for quite some time” (p. 72). [Male]

“A little shocked to see everything so big-..stayed in New York for a week . . . felt somewhat insecure and unsure..., but as soon as [I] moved to a small town to join a family [I had met in India], . . . felt quite comfortable” (p. 82). [Male]

“initial reaction to the United States was quite positive . . . already had some exposure to western style of life in India, so did experience no culture shock” (p. 79). [Female]

Upon immigration, the new immigrants realize that they will miss their close-knit kinship and social support of family and friends who were a very important part of their world. Williams and Butler (2003) discussed that international students in the U.S. have to deal with the issue of leaving parents, family and social network back home. These new immigrants experience a sense of isolation and face a lack of social network (Dasgupta, 1992). According to Tycho (1971), while immigrants grieve specific losses of community, friends, and personal network, their experiences of loss are often vague and pervasive because what they miss is not the particular lost friends but also the expected environment.

Eating habit, dressing style, interaction with spouse, and level of independence are some changes immigrants face. Immigrants go through a feeling of being lost and feel that they attract unnecessary attention due to their ethnicity (Takaki, 1989). They may try to camouflage this difference in an attempt to bridge the gap, by making changes in life style.



Sue (1973) described the identity crisis immigrants face; feeling alienated from both home and the American cultures. The stress resulting from the tug-of-war between cultures causes three possible reactions: (a) the immigrant remains amalgamated to the culture of origin, (b) the immigrants becomes allied with the Western ways and discards the culture of origin, and (c) the immigrant integrates aspects of the culture of origin and the American culture. Saran (1985) presented some comments made by Indian immigrants on acculturation to the U.S.

“You know it is not your country . . . . There is a vast difference and it is difficult to adapt” (p. 55). [Male]

“After living here you begin to appreciate Indian values and culture more and more, and realize how important they are. Of course, there are certain good things we must learn from this society, like hard work, etc” (p. 55). [Male]

“I have not changed at all. I remain as Indian as I was” (p. 79). [Female]

“Like most Indians, I see myself first as an Indian, but unlike many Indians I see things in [an] American framework” (p. 82). [Male]

#### *Gender Roles of Indians in the U.S.*

According to Saran (1985), nearly 80% of Indians were married prior to their immigration to the U.S. Every year many Indians come to the U.S. as a student for higher education. In 2004-05 over 80, 000 Indian students enrolled in educational institutions in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2004). Many single Indians start out by living in inexpensive living quarters with fellow Indians (Saran, 1985). They form a



kinship within their group. Often Indian men go back home, have an arranged marriage according to family traditions, and bring their new brides to the U.S. (Saran). According to Reeves and Bennett (2004), 67% of Indians are married compared to 54% of the total U.S. population.

According to Kim, O'Neil and Owen (1996) adjustment of gender roles is one aspect of immigrant adjustment. As women strive for higher education, employment, and independence, the two faces of the family seems heading towards a more egalitarian one. Based on a qualitative study, Saran (1985), found that husbands in the U.S. helped their working wives in household tasks, but remained the authority figure in the house. The acculturative gender role change is often difficult. The contradictory nature of the traditional gender roles and the more egalitarian gender roles in the U.S. are causes of stress in the marital relationship (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999).

Gupta (2005) used a case study method of an Asian Indian immigrant woman in the U.S. to illustrate the acculturation and adjustment process and the influence on marital relationship. Gupta used Sandhu's (1997) eco-cultural approach that emphasizes the impact of culture and ecological factors. The woman was going through a divorce after 27 years of marriage. Some of the problem was due to different pace of acculturation and adjustment of the wife and husband. The cultural aspects of the theoretical perspective considered the difference in environment of traditional Indian culture and the immigrant. Through a qualitative study of 25 Indian immigrant couples with children, Dasgupta (1992) found that absence of kin relationships in the U.S. compels couples to segregate and complement their roles in the family.

Partners in a marriage expect to receive support of a spouse, but may fail to recognize that the spouse is also experiencing a similar unsettled feeling in the new environment. In case of either newlyweds or new parents, the couple has other new role expectations to live up to, also. According to Carter and McGoldrick (1999), in the old environment, the couple was cushioned by many social supports. In the new environment, unmet needs tend to be interpreted as incompetence, betrayal, or abandonment by the partner. As each partner turns to the other, a vicious cycle of strain may develop, because the small context of one relationship probably cannot meet all the partner's needs. Bott (1971) stated that partners also miss the help provided by kin and relatives in childcare and household. Some couples expressed the view that the absence of kin and friends had caused strain in marital relations because the spouses are too dependent on each other for happiness and companionship and thus make excessive demands on each other.

"In India I always felt that I was totally responsible for her. I had to make all the decisions for her. Here I don't feel that way. I see her as a more independent person and I like it" (Saran, 1985, p. 62). [Male]

"After coming here you see women working and doing a lot of other things, and you tend to appreciate them more" (p. 69). [Male]

"Even though wife works, the household is traditional and the wife takes care of it" (p. 73). [Male]

“We have not changed at all, so the question of change in our relationship does not arise” (p. 79). [Female]

### *Parenting Indian Children in the U.S.*

Parenting of Indian children in the U.S. is the most researched topic among Indian immigrants. Research on the identity of Indian parents; identity of Indian children; child rearing; differential parental roles; parent-child communication; and education and occupation are discussed.

*Identity of parents.* Indians have been immigrating to the U.S. since the beginning of the century (Jensen, 1988). But the 1960s saw the first major influx of immigrant Indians (Takaki, 1989), as a result there are many different generations of Indians in the U.S. Many Indian immigrants come for higher education or for employment. As they adapt to the system and fast pace of life style prevalent in the U. S., they may decide to extend their stay indefinitely. Many do not return to their homeland; they remain and become U.S. residents or citizens. Some return to India to marry but then come back to the U.S. to set up family and raise their children.

Saran (1985) noted that Indian couples tended to be more westernized prior to the arrival of children into their lives. Having children changes their lifestyles, tending more towards Indian traditions and cultures. Many strategies are employed in maintaining Indian traditions. According to Saran performing rituals, going to temples, celebrating festivals, spending more time with Indian friends, and visiting India more often, are some

strategies parents employ to maintain a stronger bond with Indian culture. Saran's research reported these views:

"In India there is an Indian environment; therefore you take it for granted that children will learn these things. Here [U.S] you have to make conscious efforts so that your children learn some basic values of Indian culture" (p. 51). [Mother]

"They (children) are going to be more like Americans but as long as you can raise them in the right way it is okay" (p. 56). [Father]

"Like any other family, one child is more independent than another, but basically they are very much like Indian children" (p. 66). [Male]

*Identity of Indian children.* An Indian child born and raised in the U.S. is referred to as "ABCD- American Born Confused Desi". The word *Desi* means Indian in the *Hindi* language. Indian children in the U.S. may face identity confusion. They may find it difficult to assimilate completely to the American culture or integrate into the Indian system. Compounding this confusion is the fact that adolescence is a western concept, absent from Indian culture (Segal, 1991). Their parents, on their part, do not have a complete understanding of how to raise a child in a culture that they were not raised in. They do not have their own parents as role models to follow; they have to bring up their child with an ever-emerging dissimilarity and discrepancy between their own upbringing and that of their now growing child. According to Saran (1985) most Indians parent are unaware of the role conflict and role discrepancies that their children face and continue to exert pressure towards conformity.



Parents are faced with a predicament as to how much of their own culture they have to teach their children and how much of Americanization they are open to. Indian children are often confused about the degree of Americanization that is accepted by the Americans themselves and the degree of Indianization that is expected of them.

According to Sue (1979), immigrant children identified three themes in their quest for cultural identity. Immigrant children identified that with greater sense of belonging to the dominant American culture rather than from estrangement; an accommodation of American values within their traditional values; and harmonious peer and family relations helped in establishing a stronger self identity and greater self- esteem.

According to Segal (1991), Indian parents were brought up in a culture where interdependence among the family was expected and accepted. In this new American society in which they now bring up their children, they see the American parents granting more independence to their children. Also, their children exert more independent thinking and decision- making, than traditional Indian children. The issue about the right amount of freedom to be given to children is voiced in these Indian homes. As they grow older, some children demand more freedom and less parental involvement or intrusion into their privacy. Segal found that Indian parents fail to “recognize the ability of their children to make sound judgment and viewed their child’s desire for independent decision making as cultural contamination that would eventually result in deviant behavior” (p. 237).

According to Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, and Buriel (1990), most of the ethnic minorities have adapted three adaptive strategies: (a) family extendedness and role flexibility, (b) biculturalism, and (c) teaching ancestral worldviews. Family extendedness and role flexibility refers to the pattern of extended family support and networks that usually serve as problem-solving and stress-relieving mechanisms. Biculturalism refers to the ability of a person to function effectively in more than one culture and also to switch roles back and forth as the situation changes. However, the degree of biculturalism varies from family to family. Ancestral worldviews taught to their children by minority parents include the beliefs of the family and community interwoven with those of the self. These three adaptive strategies and personal experiences are incorporated into childbearing practices of ethnic minority groups. Parents of ethnic minorities have certain goals for their children, which include positive attitudes toward their own culture, being interdependent with their kin, and flexibility of cognitive skills (Brooks, 1991; Harrison, et al., 1990).

*Child rearing.* According to Kakkar (1978, as cited in Jain & Belsky, 1997) Indian children are the primary responsibility of their mothers, and fathers play an authoritarian role. However, as the social support group has shrunk for Indians in America, families are forced to look for resources within the family (Jain & Belsky). Particularly the father of the household is forced to look at himself as a support to the family's emotional and personal needs rather than just playing a financial and authoritarian role. Jain and Belsky researched the relation between acculturation and

fathering among Indian fathers in the U.S. “Least acculturated fathers maintained traditionally both at the personal (e.g., religiosity, language) and parenting (low involvement with the child) levels” (p 881). From their naturalistic observations of father-child interactions, Jain and Belsky identified two other groups of fathers who were more involved in parenting their children. The engaged father was one who was involved in both teaching and disciplining the children, and the caretaker father was involved in the caretaking of their young child. They found that older fathers played with children less and educated fathers disciplined more. Fathers played more if they had a single child. Disengaged fathers were more traditional and non-acculturated. Wives of disengaged fathers were found to be more religious, homesick and traditional. They also reported more use of primary family language and maintained closer contact and ties with India.

Based on a survey of 57 mothers in India and U.S., Jambunathan and Counselman (2002) found that Indian mothers in India had lower age-appropriate expectation; lower empathetic awareness of their children’s needs and tended to reverse roles with their children than Indian immigrants mothers in the U.S. Jambunathan and Counselman (2004) investigated the self-competence of Asian Indian preschoolers between three and five year olds in India and the USA. There was a significant difference between the cognitive competence, peer acceptance and physical competence of preschoolers in India and the U.S. Indian preschoolers in the U.S. have higher competence than their counterparts in India. The authoritative parenting of the Indian parents in American versus the authoritarian parenting in India may have accounted for this significant



difference. According to Jambunathan and Counselman (2004), Indian preschooler in the U.S. had higher peer acceptance compared to peer acceptance in preschools in India. They attributed this difference in the parenting styles of the children.

Farver, Narang, and Bhadha (2002) examined adolescent identity, anxiety, and family conflict among 180 U.S.-born Indian adolescents and parents. Most adolescents and parents self-identified themselves as Indians, even though most adolescents were more assimilated than their integrated parents. Adolescents and their parents who were more integrated had higher ethnic identity, identity achievement, other-group orientation, less family conflict than marginalized or separated groups. Ethnic identity was not related to GPA, anxiety, and self-esteem; however acculturation gap lessened self-esteem and increased anxiety.

Based on their research on 85 U.S. born Indian adolescents, Farver, Bhadha and Narang (2002) found that while male Indian adolescents were more likely to be integrated, female Indian adolescents were more likely to be marginalized; however, there was no relationship between acculturation and self-identification. There was relationship between adolescents' and parents' acculturation styles and social class, religiosity and length of parents' residence in America. Adolescents who were integrated acculturation had higher GPA, scholastic competence, social competence, friendship, moral conduct and general self-worth.

*Differential parental roles.* Jambunathan and Counselman (2002) established that Indian mothers had lower appropriateness in parenting attitudes, by American standards. This research found that Indian mothers had lower empathetic awareness of their



children's needs and tended to reverse roles with their children. Indian mothers also had greater inappropriate expectations of their children than non-immigrant mothers and they supported the use of corporal punishment. From their qualitative research on 100 first generation Indian families, Patel, Power, and Bhavnagri (1996) found that the longer Indian-born mothers lived in the U.S., the more they valued their children becoming Americanized. In the same study, fathers were found to assert greater conformity to Indian traditions. One reason for this differential in parental attitudes toward acculturation and adjustment was attributed to the traditional role of women. Indian women identified with the role they played in the family and were more adept at adapting to changes. It was hypothesized that Indian women view adjustment as vital characteristics for children to develop.

*Parent-child communication.* Segal (1991) found the level of interaction and communication between Indian parents and children was one-sided; with parents talking and the child expected to listen. Personal problems are often not discussed with parents. Opposite gender, sex, and mating were often topics to be avoided.

Segal (1991) found that Indian teenagers' rebellious behavior stemmed from their parents' inability to recognize their capabilities and decision-making abilities. Teenagers reacted to control with rebellion, verbal fighting, and passive-aggressive behavior. Often this negative reaction to parental control was exercised outside the home, "reinforcing their parents' fears of adverse effects of independence" (Segal, p. 237).

*Education and occupation.* Indian culture is allocentric where self and family are intertwined and an integral part of an individual. Indian children are expected to be obedient, respectful and well behaved. They are expected to perform well academically and be career oriented (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002). In a longitudinal study of immigrant children, Kao (2004) studied the relationship between academic achievement and immigrant children. Kao found that children of immigrants performed better academically than native-born American children. The reason for this disparity was: immigrant parents had more decision-making control in the parent-child relationship, and immigrant parents talked about college more often than the comparative group.

Tsai and Pike (2000) studied acculturation and the effect on MMPI-2 (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2) standardized personality test. The mean length of residence in U.S. of the low acculturated group was 4.95 years, the bicultural group was 14.77 years, and the high-acculturated group was 19.09 years. The low and bicultural group scored differently from the Whites; however the highly acculturated group scored similar to the Whites. The low acculturated group scored reflected 'alienation and social estrangement" (Tsai & Pike, p. 222) and high morality and social desirability that was typical of the Asian culture. Park and Harrison (1995) found that low acculturated Asian men and women, who perceived low control in Personal and Interpersonal areas, were more likely to choose Investigative and Conventional vocations when compared to social vocations that their White counterparts choose. High-acculturated Asians showed more interest in the Social category.

Weiss and Garbanati (2004) found that adolescents, who were from low acculturation and high family functioning homes, had negative attitudes towards smoking. Fathers' smoking habits also predicted smoking among adolescents. Based on interview data collected from 200 participants, Bhattacharya (2002) found that Indian adolescents smoked, drank alcohol and experimented with marijuana 16.5 % of the Indian sample had smoked a cigarette when compared to 65.3 % of U.S. youth; 20.57 % drank alcohol compared to 81.4 %; and 2.5% has experimented with marijuana when compared to 49.1 % of comparative U.S. youth population. Parental communication of harmful affects of drugs, peer approval and importance of academic achievement influenced drug experimentation.

Saran (1985) noted that Indian parents had strong sentiments against dating, especially for their daughters. They also held the traditional views against premarital sex. While Indian children in America may not be allowed to date, they are often welcome to take part in school sports and other cultural activities. Parents may be unable to strike a balance between the divergent value systems or advise their offspring in aspects of peer relationships and socialization patterns. Segal (1991) studied Indian families in the U.S. and identified methods of coping with differences between Indian parents and their adolescents. Table 1 identifies many areas of non-integration.

Table 1

*Areas of Non-Integration of Indian Parents and their Adolescent Children*

Area	Parental preference	Family's coping strategy
Food	Indian, vegetarian	Two menus; Indian for parents; American for children
Clothing	Sari, salwar kameez	Parental: Western for professional activities Indian for social activities Teenage: Contemporary American
Language	Hindi or one of the other 15 or more Indian languages	Poor mastery of Indian language by children; English primary language at home
Friendship	Indian, preferably of the same region of India	Parental choice: Minimal social contact with Americans Teenagers: Significantly more friendship with Americans
Entertainment	Movies, eating out, dinner parties	Few Indian movies, restaurants available Primary form of entertainment is dinner parties with Indian guests Teenagers often isolate selves from other Indians.

Note: From "Cultural variables in Asian Indian families," by U. A. Segal, 1991, *The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 72(4), p. 238.



## Expectation and Satisfaction

Prior research on Indian immigrants has not examined the relationship between expectations of immigrants and their subsequent satisfaction with life in the U.S. In order to bridge the gap in literature, research in the fields of marketing, healthcare and education is examined.

Grewal (1995) discussed the emergence of product quality expectations in consumers. According to Grewal some of the influencers on the development of expectations in consumers are: brand name, cost, features, image as portrayed via advertisements, symbolic meaning of advertisements, word-of-mouth advertising, to name a few. The exposure that a consumer has towards a product influences the 'vision' and expectations that are established. In a qualitative research Jennings, Hemman, Heiner, Swanson, and Loan (2005) examined satisfaction of consumers of a new healthcare policy for military families. Based on focus group discussions and interviews, the overall finding was that consumers were satisfied when expectations were met. There was a clear decline in satisfaction of consumers when expectations were not met. According to Edwards, Courtney, and Spencer (2003), one of the conclusions based on a meta-analysis of research studies in the area of choice of aged care facilities was that, expectation of quality care was linked to quality of life by their consumers. Expectations in the context of elder care were multi-dimensional; and satisfaction was based on meeting expectations in these dimensions.

Researchers in the field of education have found a link between expectations and satisfaction. Li and Kaye (1999) examined the dynamic nature of consumer perception



with respect to expectations. The researchers found that perceptions and expectations of students changed over time. There was a mix of increased expectations as well as decreased expectations. In terms of perceptions, there seemed to be a decreased perception of services. The researchers suggested three possible reasons for this: a general decline in standard of services, possibly more discriminating/demanding students; and more demands because of increased personal and financial investment on part of the students.

### Summary

Indians coming from a traditional collective culture to the individualistic culture of the U.S. make adjustments in their new home. The adjustment to a new culture is a process that has many dimensions to it. Many factors influence acculturation and there are numerous responses to the process. This chapter presented research on family in India and different areas of research on Indian immigrants in the U.S. Since there is no previous research examining the expectation and adjustment of Indians to the U.S., research in the fields of marketing, healthcare, and education was also examined.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe, examine and analyze the life of Indians in the U.S. The study examined the process of acculturation based on immigrants' previous exposure to U.S. culture.

#### Research Design

Open-ended interviewing and participant observation go hand-in hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). While researchers collect planned information in structured interviews, they "attempt to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any prior categorization that may limit the field of inquiry" using semi- and unstructured interviews (p. 56).

#### Sample and Sample Selection

A sample of 15 adult immigrants from India was interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. Participants were recruited through key informants and snowball sampling. Respondents were all above 18 years, married, living in the U.S. for over 2 years and non-U.S. citizens. Burr (1992) postulated that recent immigrants to the U.S. were more likely to maintain close home cultural than less recent immigrants. Hence the research decided to include only those participants who had lived in the U.S.

for at least 2 years. All participants signed an informed consent form before proceeding with the study. Interviews were conducted primarily in English.

### Interview Procedure

In order to establish rapport with the participants, the researcher began each face-to-face interview with general conversation. The average time of the interviews was about 45 minutes. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) said that open-ended interview process builds rapport and gains the confidence, which are key to the success of the process. All participants were asked the following questions:

1. How do expectations of life in the U.S. measure up to your current life in the U.S.?
2. What influenced your expectations of life in the U.S.?
3. How would you describe your transition from India to the U.S.?

Appendix A details the interview protocol with the main questions, follow-up questions, and prompts used. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. In the face-to-face interviews, the researcher made field notes.

### Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher combed through the interview transcriptions to generate themes. In analyzing the interviews, the goal of the research was theme saturation. To add rigor to the method, a review of the findings was conducted using two readers who fit the same selection criteria as the participants. In addition, thick verbatim descriptions are presented in the written report. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), researchers who conduct

qualitative research from a grounded theory perspective should clearly present information regarding participants. Clarity is vital in interpreting themes emerging from the analysis. The researcher specified the handling of major and minor themes. Peer debriefing and input from readers added credibility to themes emerging from the content analysis.

### Trustworthiness

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) described triangulation as implementing various methods to increase the validity of findings, emphasizing the process of crystallization of ideas. The researcher sought assistance from the research advisory group and two readers. In addition the researcher clearly stated the complete procedure of the study and also provided rich verbatim description of identified themes in the report in an effort to increase the trustworthiness of the study.

### Researcher's Role

The researcher of this project is an Indian immigrant living in the U.S. for over 7 years. This particular research project is of personal importance to the researcher. The researcher attempted to bracket personal biases during the data collection and analysis phases and believed that transparency of the complete process will enhance trustworthiness. In addition, using two Indian readers who fit the participant requirements and were not part of the study helped establish more credibility to the research.

### Protection of Human Subjects

In order to protect the participants, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Texas Woman's University was sought prior to the commencement of the research study. The researcher identified six potential risks to participants. Potential risks to participants include loss of confidentiality, time, embarrassment, emotional distress, fatigue, and coercion. Every participant signed an informed consent form that listed all the risks of participation prior to the commencement of the interview. The researcher also provided participants with a list of mental health professionals that specialize in working with adjustment or related family issues. The role of the researcher included an ethical commitment to terminate the research study if the researcher perceives undue emotional or psychological distress in participants due to the study and to assist affected participants in seeking necessary assistance. Participants were assured of confidentiality and privacy of information. All interviews were coded by the researcher to avoid connection to the actual participant. All personal information was situated in a secure place that only the researcher will have access to. List of risks and steps to eliminate risks are detailed in the consent form (Appendix B)

### Summary

This research project was an exploration into the acculturation process of adult Indian immigrants to the U.S. Through open-ended interviews and multiple methods of data analysis the researcher triangulated the information. Trustworthiness in this research was achieved by transparency of methods, analysis, and rich description of data.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Acculturation is a “developmental process towards adaptation and gaining competence within more than one cultural setting” (Oppedal, Roysamb, & Sam, 2004, p. 482). Entering a new culture may entail modification of food, dressing, socialization, and daily habits. The purpose of this study was to describe, examine and analyze the life of Indians in the U.S.. The study examined the process of acculturation of Indian immigrants in the U.S. Fifteen adult immigrants from India were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. The following chapter briefly described each of the 15 participants, describes the process of analyses, and presents the emergent themes.

#### Sample Description

Of the 15 participants, 4 were male and the remaining 11 were female. All participants were married, a necessary criteria for being included in the study. Participant ages ranged from one female participant in her late-20s to another female participant in her early 40s. All other participants were in their early- to late-30s. Six participants had one child and two participants had two children each. Two of the female participants were pregnant with their first child during the time of the interview. All male participants were professionally employed. Of the 11 female participants, 3 were professionally employed, 3 were full-time students, and the remaining 5 stayed at home.

Of the 11 female participants, 8 came to the U.S. after marriage. Many of the other participants who came after marriage, were engaged anywhere between a few months to a few days prior to the wedding and came to the U.S. shortly after. All their husbands lived in the U.S. prior to getting married and their wives joined them after the wedding. Five participants came to the U.S. as graduate students. All participants who came to the U.S. as students were single prior to the immigration. One female participant immigrated to the U.S. along with her husband and children. One male participant immigrated to the U.S. for work. Brief description of participants is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Description of Participants*

Number of Participants	Participants With Children
15 married Indians	6 participants had one child
11F	2 participants had 2 children each
4 M	2 F participants pregnant with their first child

Age of Participants	Reason for Immigrating
Range between late 20 and early 40	8 F came after marriage
Most participants in 30s	5 (3M and 2 F) graduate students.
	1 F with family
	1 single M for work

### Data Collection Process

All interviews were conducted by the researcher only. Eleven interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. One interview was conducted in a university cafeteria and one was conducted in the office of the participant. Two interviews were conducted in the researcher's home. The average time of each interview was 45 minutes. One couple was interviewed together; and the remaining interviews comprised of only one participant. Two participants of the study were a married couple who were interviewed in separate sessions. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

### Participant Description

A brief description of all 15 participants is presented. This is to give the readers a clearer picture of participants of this research.

#### *Participant 1 (P1- Female, Came After Marriage)*

P1 came to the U.S. as a new bride 4 years ago. She had an arranged marriage and was engaged for 3 months prior to the wedding. When she first came she was a housewife. P1 started graduate school a few months after coming to the U.S., and upon graduation started working in a Fortune 500 company. P1 has a few cousins in the U.S., with whom she does not have much contact. Since coming to the U.S., she has been to India only once. Her family and her husband's family have visited for extended periods a few times. She and her husband have a toddler girl. She has close Indian friends but is not part of any Indian organization.

Interview with P1 was conducted in the participant's home, with the husband and daughter walking in and out of the interview location. P1 is a close friend of the researcher. P1 was dressed in a skirt and t-shirt and traditional Indian chain, earrings, and rings. The participant spoke to her husband and daughter in their native tongue. At the end of the interview P1 expressed the fact that she liked the opportunity to talk about her experiences and agreed to recommend another friend for the study.

*Participant 2 (P2- Female; Came with Husband and Children)*

P2 came to the U.S. along with her husband and two daughters 8 years ago. She is a stay-at-home mother of one daughter in elementary school and another in high school. The family immigrated because her husband's company posted him to the U.S. Prior to coming to the U.S., P2 worked full-time in the same company as her husband.

P2 and her family moved from a cosmopolitan Indian city to New Jersey, where they had a lot of company friends who had come before them. They lived in New Jersey for 2 years and eventually settled in the suburbs of North Texas. The family speaks the Indian languages of the mother and father at home. The family visits India on a regular basis and grandparents from India have visited them as well. The family is a part of a local Hindu organization, where the children participate in religious education and cultural activities during weekends. The parents were part of a similar organization in India prior to immigrating to the U.S.

The researcher was acquainted with P2 prior to the interview. The interview was conducted in P2's home. The home has a mix of Indian and other artifacts. P2 and her daughters were dressed in traditional Indian clothes, in preparation for an outing



following the interview. Both daughters were polite and hospitable to the researcher, bringing water and snacks, without any prompting from the mother. The researcher commented on this to P2 at the end of the interview. P2 mentioned that they were following her example of playing a hospitable hostess.

*Participant 3 (P3- Female; Came for Graduate School)*

P3 came to the U.S. as a graduate student 7 years ago. She had an arranged marriage 2 years ago and had moved to the north Texas area. She has been a homemaker since her marriage and was expecting her first child at the time of the interview. P3 had some relatives in the U.S. when she first came and had more relatives close by upon getting married. While she is currently not part of any Indian organization, P3 has connections with some Indian cultural group.

The families of the researcher and P3 are close friends back in India. P3 and the researcher had met in India a few years ago and had recently renewed their contact and friendship. The interview was conducted in P3's home. P3's in-laws were visiting her at the time of the interview. While the interview was conducted in English, P3's responses included some words of her native tongue, which is the same as the researcher.

*Participant 4 (P4- Female; Came After Marriage)*

P4 came to the U.S. upon getting married 8 years ago. She and her husband have a 4-year old daughter. P4 worked in India prior to immigrating to the U.S. Upon coming to the U.S. she stayed at home for 2 years and then started working in a Fortune 500 company. She had lived abroad with her parents for a few years prior to getting married and had visited the U.S. during that time. P4 has always had close relatives near her



current home. Her parents and in-laws have visited her and she has also visited India on a regular basis. P4 and family had recently joined a social organization bringing people of their community together.

The interview was conducted in P4's home. P4's and the researcher's families have known each other in India, having lived in the same community. In the U.S., they have maintained little contact with each other and meet only for special occasions.

*Participant 5 (P5- Male; Came for Work)*

P5 came abruptly to the U.S. approximately 10 years ago for work. His company gave him about 2 weeks' notice before sending him abroad. On his third visit home in 2001, he married. His wife and he now have a toddler girl. He works in a Fortune 500 company and also attends part-time business school at a mid western university, to which he commutes weekly. P5 and his wife have no immediate relatives in the U.S. P5 volunteers for an Indian non-profit organization focused on raising funds for the education of under-privileged children in India. P5's family visited from India for an extended period of time around the birth of their daughter.

The interview was conducted in P5's home. P5 and the researcher's families are long time friends from India and grew up within the same community. In the U.S., the families are very close friends. P5's mother was visiting the family from India at the time of the interview. The researcher's family was visiting P5's home for a religious function after which the one-on-one interview was conducted.

*Participant 6 (P6- Female; Came After Marriage)*

P6 came to the U.S. as a new bride 4 years ago. Within a span of a month, she got engaged, had an arranged marriage, and moved to the U.S. to join her new husband. For the first 10 months in the U.S. she stayed at home. She then started working for an IT company. She and her husband have a toddler. The family has some distant relatives in the U.S. with whom they do not maintain much contact. Since coming to the U.S., she has visited India twice. Her mother-in-law visited them on an extended stay. P6 could not have her parents or in-laws come to help her during the birth of her toddler daughter, due to denial of their U.S. visa. At the time of the interview she was waiting for her parents to receive U.S. visa and visit her.

The interview was conducted in P6's home. P6 is an acquaintance of the researcher.

*Participant 7 (P7- Female; Came After Marriage)*

P7 came to the U.S. a little more than 10 years ago after getting married. She is a stay-at-home mother of a toddler girl and an elementary age boy. She worked in New Mexico, where she and her husband first lived, and quit work 6 years ago to raise her family. She visits India frequently and also has parents and in-laws visit often for long stays. She has a lot of family and relatives in the U.S. She and her family are members of a regional Indian social organization.

At the time of the interview, P7's in-laws were visiting her family on an extended stay. The researcher met P7 for the first time at the time of the interview. P7 is a friend of the researcher's cousin.

*Participant 8 (P8-Male; Came for Graduate School)*

P8 came to the U.S. as a graduate student almost 9 years ago. He works for a Fortune 500 company. He had an arranged marriage few years ago. P8 has a few close relatives in the U.S. He has visited India frequently in these 9 years.

The interview was conducted in the researcher's home. P8 and the researcher lived in the same community in India. In the U.S., they have maintained little contact with each other and meet only for special occasions.

*Participant 9 (P9-Male; Came for Graduate School)*

P9 came to the U.S. as a graduate student almost 10 years ago. He works for a Fortune 500 company. He had an arranged marriage almost 3 years ago to P10. P9 has a few close relatives in the U.S. He has visited India almost every year since coming to the U.S. 9 years ago.

P9 and his wife (P10) were interviewed together in their home. Unlike most Indians, who live in suburbs, this couple lives in Downtown. Their house is decorated in a mix of Indian and contemporary décor. P9 and the researcher's family are close friends and lived in the same community in India. In the U.S., they have maintained little contact with each other and meet only for special occasions.

*Participant 10 (P10-Female; Came After Marriage)*

P10 came to the U.S. almost 3 years ago after her arranged marriage with P9. She stayed at home when she first arrived and planned to enter film school a month following the interview. She has some older relatives in the U.S. She has visited India frequently in the past 3 years.

*Participant 11(P11- Female; Came for Graduate School)*

P11 came to the U.S. as a graduate student 6 years ago. She had an arranged marriage almost 4 years ago and transferred to a university in the area to be closer to her husband. P11's uncle and aunt live in the U.S.; they encouraged her to move to the U.S. to pursue higher education. P11 visited India frequently except for the past 3 years, due to visa constraints. Even though she is very active within the community, P11 is not a part of any social organizations in the Indian community.

The researcher conducted the interview with P11 in her university cafeteria. P11 and the researcher had met through a mutual acquaintance.

*Participant 12 (P12- Female; Came After Marriage)*

P12 came to the U.S. about 3 years ago. She communicated with her fiancée prior to the wedding, but actually met him on the day of their registered marriage. She came to the U.S. after the wedding to join her husband. When she first came, she was a housewife and after a year joined graduate school to pursue her doctoral degree. P12 and her husband are part of a social organization bringing people of their community together. They do not have any close relatives in the U.S. They were expecting their first child at the time of the interview. She was expecting her in-laws to come help with the birth of their first baby. Her parents could not come over due to health concerns.

The interview with P12 was conducted at her laboratory break room in the university. The researcher met P12 for the first time for the interview. They met through a mutual acquaintance.



*Participant 13 (P13- Female; Came After Marriage)*

P13 came to the U.S. about 5 years ago. Within a span of a month, she got engaged, had an arranged marriage, and moved to the U.S. to join her new husband. She worked prior to coming to the U.S.; here, she stays at home. She volunteered for a company for some time prior to having her baby about a year ago. She has traveled to India for extended stays and also has had family visit her on long stays. She has a few cousins in the U.S.

The interview with P12 was conducted at her home. The researcher met P12 for the first time for the interview. They met through a mutual acquaintance.

*Participant 14 (P14- Female; Came After Marriage)*

P14 came to the U.S. almost 7 years ago. She married a relative whom she had known for many years. However, the wedding was fixed with short notice and she arrived in the U.S. soon after. When she first came, she stayed at home, had a baby about 4 years ago, and started an Associate's degree a few years ago. She expects to complete the degree next year. She also prepared traditional Indian food in a local grocery store during the weekends to keep busy. Her family is a member of a social organization bringing Indians together and P14 is also active in social organizations. She has visited India a few time in these 7 years and her mother visited the U.S. twice on extended stays to help with baby.

The interview with P14 was conducted at her home. The researcher met P14 for the first time at the time of the interview. They met through a mutual acquaintance.



### *Participant 15 (P15- Male; Came for Graduate School)*

P15 has been in the U.S. for over 12 years. After attending graduate school, he had trouble finding his first job. After a few months, he landed a lucrative employment with a Fortune 500 company. He had an arranged marriage 2 years ago (with P3) and they were expecting their first child at the time of the interview. Since coming from India, P15 has immediate family living in close proximity. His parents and in-laws visit on extended stays.

The interview with P15 was conducted at the researcher's home. The families of the researcher and P15's wife (P3) are very close in India. P15's parents were visiting at the time of the interview.

### *Method of Analysis*

All interviews were audio taped and all recordings were transcribed verbatim. The first round of analysis began after the researcher transcribed six interviews. The researcher started reading each transcription and separated parts of the transcribed conversations and categorized them into different headings that were generated as she read them. The categories were based on first reaction of where she felt they were meant to be. Subsequently four remaining interviews were categorized in a similar manner, with new categories generated when they did not fit into existing ones. With consensus from two members of her research advisory committee on the emergent themes, the remaining four interviews were transcribed in a similar manner. From this round of analyses, 35 categories emerged. Upon completing analysis of all 15 interviews, the researcher compiled the 35 categories and grouped them based on similar themes.

The researcher then started another round of analysis of all 15 interviews and re-categorized interview pieces into 10 themes. The researcher asked her sister and sister-in-law to act as readers. Both of them met the criteria for the study: married, lived in the U.S. for more than 2 years, and non-U.S. citizens. Neither had been interviewed for the study. They examined every pile of interview pieces to ensure that quotes from the participants fit the category name. Some discrepancies emerged, which were resolved based on mutual consensus. Upon completing the examination of all 10 categories, the readers were told the research questions that guided the semi-structured interviews of the 15 participants and asked if the study answered them. Research questions that guided the current research were:

1. How do Indian immigrants describe their life in the U.S.?
2. How do expectations of life in the U.S. align with actual experiences in the U.S.?
3. What influences the expectations of life in the U.S.?
4. How does immigrants' life in the U.S. compare to their life in their home country?
5. How do immigrants prepare for their life in the U.S.?

#### Generated Themes

The emergent themes were re-categorized and conceptualized as five timeline-based themes with sub-themes. The categories of the timeline described different transition points beginning with their description of life in home country to what they envision for their future lives.

1. Life in home country
2. Preparation for life in the U.S.
3. Newcomer life in the U.S.: (a) loneliness and boredom, (b) financial issues, (c) support systems, and (d) expectations
4. Current life in the U.S.: (a) adjustments to living in the U.S., (b) change in person, (c) children, (d) missing family in India, and (e) support systems
5. Life in Future: (a) values of family and (b) advice to others

### *Life in Home Country*

The first major theme in the timeline was a description of life in India prior of the participant's immigration to the U.S. Participants talked about not having any responsibilities at home in India and not having to do any chores. According to participants, they were focused more on their own tasks such as studying or working, and did not have any responsibilities at home. Most of them lived with their parents and family prior to moving to the U.S. Participants also talked about the strong social support from family and others while living in India.

P1: When I was in India, before I was married, I did not have to do anything.

Nothing. Period.

P3: Never really worked, just studied. I did nothing, but to enjoy life.

Everything was very comfortable, never had to really worry.

P11: When I was in India, life was very good. I stayed in hostel, so I had a lot

of friends. It was fun. We would go together, we would come back, we didn't have any chores. That was the best part.

P2: There I had help to cook, to do other household work, which I never bothered to do. I had lot of support at home, in terms of maids and something. So, I could trust them that things will all be in place, my kids will not sit idle at food time.

P8: Relatively stress-free. [I] had a lot of friends. [I had] lot of people around. And I was really close to my relatives, so. A very, very strong social life.

Some participants talked about life in India being busy and fast paced. Most of these participants were those who came to the U.S. after getting married. Participants later compared this busy schedule in India with the relatively solitary and slow pace of initial life at home in the U.S.

P6: Always very very busy. I never had any free time in between. I was always in the study mode when I was in India. So, I probably never got a breathing time to think about other things, it was all study mode.

P7: But in India, I was always very busy. That is probably the one word to you know, all the time. Like I was in high school till I got married, it was always very busy. So yeah, that sums it up, busy.

Some participants talked about loving and enjoying their life in India. They described their life in India as being fulfilling and free.



P14: I am very active. And I like to do all kinds of stuff. I never was sitting, I was restless. Enjoyed my life, I loved my college life better because I love freedom.

P5: I was away from home right from when I was in college. So I was a free bird. I went all over India. I enjoyed my life. I got to see India as a great country.

P10: Really full. I mean, it was work. Weekdays would go by, weekend would be going out with friends, movies and stuff. My parents enjoy going out a lot, we would like go out for movies together, dinners and stuff. And yeah, I have friends all over India, because I have lived in a lot of cities, so we would plan vacation; just friends and go out.

P15: It was really awesome. I just cannot tell you how good.

### *Preparation for Life in the U.S.*

The second major theme that emerged was on the topic of preparing for life in the U.S. When asked about their desire to come and live in the U.S. participants mentioned a range of answers from eagerness to come to having no desire to move to the U.S. While some of the participants who came after getting married were open to coming to the U.S., others did not want to get married to someone from the U.S. Some came to the U.S. to please family, while others were swept up in the trend to move to the U.S.

P1: Whatever proposals I got, they were all from the U.S. [That] was really sorry thing about the whole arranged marriage part, because I and one of my best



friends, both of us had planned that we did not want to marry a person from the U.S. No, in fact I did not want to come to the U.S. at all.

P5: I came for work. I think there was no need for me to come here. And I came here solely to please my parents. I was never interested in going out of India. It was a great environment, everything I had, I had great connection there.

P10: One thing I was very sure about was I wouldn't want to get married to somebody living in the U.S., just purely because I just didn't want to move at all. That just was not even on the cards. Well, since the foundation was tied into being married, it literally was easy. I knew who I wanted to get married to.

P14: I never even thought that I was going to marry my husband and come here. If I had an option, if he would have asked me, I would have always said no. But the thing is at that time he never asked me [about coming and living in the U.S.] and I never thought about it. But I would never want to come here.

P3: One of my friend's brother's was the one who was already here. We came to know through him how life was going to be and all that. I remember him sending photos of him, his school, car, and these kinds of things and we were all students then and we would see all these snaps and that's when I and this friend of mine, we [decided] we are going to go and write our GRE, and TOEFL and go to U.S. That's it. This was sometime in second year [of undergraduate studies].

P15: Right from my high school I was kind of interested in coming. In my neighborhood, back home, pretty much everyone was going to U.S. and it as just ingrained into that.

Participants were asked whether they were prepared for life in the U.S. and how they went about this preparation. Some participants talked about steps they had taken to be prepared for life in the U.S., and where they learned information about living in the U.S. Many of them had talked to family and friends prior to coming to the U.S. Some of the female participants who came after getting married learned about life in the U.S. from their husband.

P1: Whatever I knew, he [husband] told.

P6: I kind of knew it from [husband]. He gave an idea when we were talking about getting married and coming here. He has been telling me but, I think it's still different to really experience it than just knowing it. He was really the first hand information for me because I have no other family, relatives or anyone living in the U.S.

P13: Actually my husband used to tell me, how life is here. We exchanged a couple of emails, so he used to tell everything; his lifestyle, his friends and everything. So, I knew pretty much, it will be all alone by me.

P2: I had people, friends from our own company, from the same company my husband was, they gave me points. They really told me these are the things. I was quite prepared.

P3: I guess, really it was my friends, more than my family. I was going to be there to lead the kind of life that they [friends] were already leading. My family was not involved in any way.

P8: Those were my cousins and my friends and my predecessors from college.

Yeah, these were the people I spoke to.

Some participants learned about the U.S. from media. Print media and visual media were some sources of images of life in the U.S.

P4: You learn so many things through that [Archie comics]

P11: I think [expectation] is mostly from TV and cinema. You know, like when they show, even in India when they show news, they either show [Washington] D.C. or New York.

### *Newcomer Life in the U.S.*

The third major timeline that participants described was their initial life in the U.S. Initial life in the U.S. was what the participants defined as living style when they first came to the U.S., versus current life. Participants came to the U.S. between 3 and 12 years back. They were asked to recollect their life in the U.S. when they first came. Four sub-themes emerged from the interviews regarding this phase of immigrant life: loneliness and boredom; financial issues; support systems; and expectations.

### *Loneliness and Boredom*

When talking about the initial adjustment to the U.S. upon arrival, some participants talked about the boredom and loneliness they faced. This was a recurring theme for those female participants who came to the U.S. after getting married. These participants described a busy life in India and having to stay at home upon arriving in the U.S. lead to boredom and loneliness. Most of them did not know anyone in the city they

had moved to, except for friends of the spouses. Many described their loneliness of not having anyone to interact with for most parts of the day and craving for some human contact during the day. They also described being dependent of their husband not only to relieve this boredom but also to take them around because many didn't have a driving license upon arrival. The participant who came as a single male for work described boredom with work and a disappointing lack of challenges at work. Participant described some time to find a circle of friends to share common interests.

P14: Oh, so boring. I couldn't see people. I came in Feb[urary]. When I came, it was very cold . I was the only one sitting in the patio or going out for a walk. I couldn't see no one. I used to usually wait till my husband got back from work or just call him and talk to him or just call him.

P12: Oh, it is pretty boring. Not pretty, it is very boring. Since I worked in India, I am completely busy from morning to evening. [Here] I am so dependent on my husband. You cannot go to any place. Not even a grocery store close by. It's very boring and there is no one to talk to. And, you have to talk to the same people everyday. A couple of days they may be very anxious to meet you and talk to you and [are] happy to receive you. Third day, even they have their own things.

P1: I used to be like [husband] tail all the time. Where ever he goes, I go, otherwise I don't go at all. I would be pretty bad sitting alone or crying to myself because I want to go to India. So those first 6 months were really bad, but after I got into school, I developed my own relationships.



P6: I think it was more difficult to get adjusted, being away from the family and not talking to anyone the whole day. It was much difficult that what I had thought. It was pretty dry because in India we are always talking to people all the time. And suddenly you come here and you are looking at the walls the whole day. I didn't have my driver's license immediately that I could just go out and hang out with friends and even I had some limited contacts initially.

P12: Yeah, in the beginning, the whole life it changed. Because I was so much dependent on my husband to do anything.

P10: I mean your lifestyles are different. Your, the kinds of friends you have are different. You immediately miss the lack of family. So, all that hits you.

P7: It was just boring because I had never stayed at home till then. So suddenly [you are] home bound. You have to start sort of all over again. Make a new set of friends, get used to life here. All that took a little getting used to.

P5: But, what was different was the work culture. Here it was not big challenge to get work done. I earned a lot of money in comparison to the same task in India. So, I really didn't like it because the work was pretty easy and not challenging, but the same time, well, you can't give it up because of the money.

### *Financial Issues*

Some participants who came as graduate students talked about issues regarding finances, the need to take up those jobs otherwise considered undesirable, and a lack of financial security as a student. This theme was only mentioned by participants who came



as graduate students and not those who came to join their spouses, with family or for a job. These participants explained the fact that coming to the U.S. was their first experience of managing finances. They enjoyed financial freedom in India and depended on their family for financial needs. One of the first things many graduate students did upon arrival in the U.S. was to find a job to help support them. They took up jobs that would have been considered menial and unthinkable in India. But the need to have financial stability was more important. Also many had not worked in India and having to juggle school and work was not an easy task.

P8: When I first came I did not have any financial assistance. So, the first thing I had to do was to find a student worker job. Certain thing which I considered back home, were not respectable things to do, [were acceptable]. I went to the book store, and I was ready to [take a job at the] bag drop place. I was even ready to do that. Just not something I would even consider doing in India.

P15: Finances were a major issue for me because I had to make my own decisions and like. Till 21 [years of age] you are always like sheltered under your parents and [then] you are thrown into a new country and everything is new. And so that was pretty tough for me.

P15: When I was back home I had absolutely no financial responsibilities. And, if I wanted to buy something all I used to do was [ask my dad] and dad used to provide me the money. So in the beginning one month, one and half months I had some money in my pocket, it was not bad. But when that thing dried out, I

had to find a job to keep myself. When it is a hand-to-mouth kind of a situation, there are so many times you have to sacrifice.

P3: Initially, I was mentally prepared to do any kind of a job. I was in constant touch with my friends, friends who were working, doing all menial jobs, like working in cafeteria, and doing these kinds of things. Yes, I felt it was pretty odd, working in cafeterias and doing all those kinds of things, but at the end of the day it really didn't bother me that much. But it took me a while to adjust to work hours, and class hours, and study hours and these kinds of things.

P3: I lived all by myself in a single bedroom apartment one whole semester, I had no assistantship that time. Such a miserable state, I swear, I crashed my credit card like anything at that time. I had to buy groceries then I had to use the card. I went nuts.

### *Support Systems*

Participants talked about the support they received from spouse and friends during their initial transition to life in the U.S. These people helped reassure them and to adjust to life in the U.S.

P6: He [husband] used to take me to friend's houses, people who have been here longer than me. There were a couple of friends [who] got married at the same time and had their wives here. So, we were good friends with them from right [from] when I got here.

P12: My husband is very supportive, so I didn't have to really make any adjustments.

P11: My roommate was exceptional. She was also a student, but she was here for almost a year. So she was like a little advanced, evolved in the chain than me. So, it was, it was nice having [her].

### *Expectations of Life in the U.S.*

When asked, participants talked about their expectations of life in the U.S. and the sources of these expectations. This was a major question in the research study, examining if expectations of participants impacted their adjusted. Some participants created their expectations from hearing friends and family talk about life in the U.S. Some others explained how their expectations were impacted by media, mostly movies and also comics. Participants discussed whether these expectations were actually met or not.

P2: I had a lot of friends here who I used to talk to them regularly, email with me on a regular basis. They used to tell me their day to day life stories. So I was quite aware of the fact where I am going to go. So I was much prepared, right from day one, from the moment I land up. So that's how I was prepared. It was not kind of a shock to me.

P4: You learn so many things through that [Archie comics] but I realized that that was not all of it, or that it was just a part of it. I used to think of U.S. being the same of how I have seen in the movies, and it's not, to a certain extent.

P9: Being in India was so competitive with everything. Here I was expecting a little more freedom, little more time to do what you want to do. And that, in every way, what I expected, I was able to in some way or another, find.

P15: One of the expectations was M.S. was going to be a pretty smooth sailing, I mean, everyone I knew told me "It should not be a really tough time for you to complete your M.S." But honestly I felt it was a little tough for me to get through M.S. That was some of the false expectations that I set myself up to.

P10: Expectations. It's hard for me to answer because I came fresh after the wedding. Expectations for your marriage are closely tied to expectations of the place. So, after 3 years I can separate the two. Life here and even in general, the lifestyle the easy access to everything that you need and to do. I expected that. Pretty true to what I expected.

P11: I think [expectation] is mostly from TV and cinema. You know, like when they show, even in India when they show news, they either show [Washington] D.C. or New York. All though they might show news about other states, but they are not familiar to you, so you don't care as much. And I think most of it is from movies.

Most of the male participants mentioned some expectations regarding women in the U.S. They came to the U.S. with a negative image of American women and often times found these to be false images. Many of these images were formed from talking to other men who had been to the U.S. or the media.



P5: The fast cars [are] pretty well-known. Strip bars more [from] English movies. Yeah, basically all negative images of the U.S., I have are from images of bars and stuff. Also from other people who came here and came back to India and whom I spoke to.

P8: You get a certain perception by watching movies, about people, dating for example. The girls, they are so easy. Those were some of the perceptions you had from watching some of these American movies. Some of those are really misconceptions and but otherwise, I think, its again you realize that movies are far from reality.

P15: I expected a lot of pretty girls. I got to be honest. And it didn't turn out that way. And, expectations-wise, it's just that, I knew quite a lot of stuff about the U.S. So, when I came over to the U.S., I knew, what to expect, what not to expect. So, did U.S. fall short of my expectations, or it exceeded my expectations, I was at pretty much at level.

#### *Current Life in the U.S.*

The next major theme that emerged was a description of current life in the U.S. A majority of the interviews were centered on this time in their life and discussions are separated into five sub-themes: adjustments to living in the U.S., change in person, children, missing family in India, and support systems.



### *Adjustments to Living in the U.S.*

Participants described adjustments they made upon immigrating to the U.S. The discussions largely fell into two categories: language, and chores.

*Language.* Some of the participants were not comfortable and fluent in English. Even those who were English had learned the different usage of words and pronunciations. One participant mentioned the fact that learning a common Indian language spoken among friends in her social circle was important. This participant had grown up in a different part of India than her friends in the U.S. While it was her native tongue at home, she had never learned the language. She found herself learning her native language after she came to the U.S., because it was a common element between her social circle. It made for easier Indian movie watching.

P4: First thing would probably [be] in the way you speak. You realize that the British pronunciation and sounds are different than the American. So, I think that's the first change.

P6: Adjust meaning, if you are going out shopping, you got to know what you talk basically. You are going to the cashier desk and you don't know what to talk, you want to check out some items, there are like certain things people do here. So, basically understanding the whole system. You know, it's the small things that count, but it's a new environment, totally a new environment.

P14: Yeah, the initial friends I had, they did not know Hindi. I had to somehow manage to talk to them in Telugu and because they were not very good in Hindi . I

had to manage in Telugu and my Telugu was so worse that. So for a one whole year, I learned.

*Chores.* Many of the participants talked about their lack of experience in doing chores in India. For most of them, having to do chores was an adjustment. Many of them talked about having the luxury of having hired help in India to help take care of chores. The lack of experience and practice was something they had to learn upon immigrating.

P2: Royalties we used to have in India, that was missing here. You have your helpers there and everything; here you are self made.

P4: The first thing I had to learn after coming was cooking. I would cook back home, but not too much. Maybe it would have helped me, if I had already learned to cook.

P9: When I was in India, we had pretty much everything done for you. Your clothes would be washed, your clothes would be ironed, food would be on the table and groceries would already have been done. So, when I came here, having to do all that by myself, initially it seemed like a chore.

P10: Initially I really missed a maid. You know, the dishes and clothes and stuff like that. So, adjustments at a very basic level. Just like housekeeping.

P12: When you compare to the Indian concept and all, I have to do everything at home. Right from cleaning and right from scratch if I want to cook, anything from scratch. In India, you had the advantage of hiring people, who can work for you.

P13: You have to do your own dishwashing, your own laundry, so all those things. I never did in my life. Those are the adjustment I can saw.

### *Change in Person*

When asked about any change in their personality, many of the participants talked about changing for the better. Female participants particularly talked about how independent they had become since coming from India, or a change in their dressing style. Most participants, except one, saw their change in personality in positive light.

P13: The only thing is my attire has changed and the rest of the things are the same. Because we have all the religious things done at our home, for all occasions, so I wear salwars, and sarees. Only the thing attire I started wearing [after coming here are] jeans and tops. I never used to wear when I was in India. That is the only thing changed here.

P10: I know I have am being very repetitive, but for me independence is such a big deal, especially for a woman in India and everything. Yeah, I really value that here.

P12: I became more independent and more confident.

P4: Growing up I was very averse to anybody who would smoke or drink or anything, I really had my preconceived notions about them, but then I have opened up a lot more. Though I am still not Ok with it, but at least, I am not against those who do it.

P1: I stand up more for myself. I wasn't like that [back in India].

P7: You know that is a hard question because I think, I changed from when I came here. But I think I have changed a lot after I have had kids. I think you get more responsible.

P5: I like myself a lot more now.

P8: Back in India I can't imagine being alone for almost half a day. [Here] I can be alone for a whole week without seeing anybody. I can do with not too many people around. I can do without a lot of help.

P13: Probably I started being more independent and without any fear. I am more independent now rather than when I was in India.

One participant described how she had changed for the worse. This was the only participant in this group who seemed to have had a tough transition. She had described how lonely she was at the time of the interview and her strong desire to return back to India.

P15: I am in a situation where I can't solve my own issue. So, I don't know what to do. I was never this much indecisive ever. And even when I was in college I used to solve people's big issues. [But now] I can't get any situation under control.

### *Children*

Participants described some rules that they followed at home with regard to their children. Some of them talked about how they teach and reinforce their native language

and culture at home, in order to ensure that their children learn the language and traditions.

P1: [I talk to my daughter in mother tongue]. That's my goal because I know she's going to learn English in school anyway; might as well learn our language right now.

P2: One grandparent in Hindi, one grandparent in Bengali. So they make it a point to talk to them in their languages.

P2: My primary reason [to send them to a religious school in north Texas area] was to, induce our religion from India.

P4: She [daughter] understands and talks a little bit but not too much. Because in school they talk only in English, [I] am trying to force myself to talk more Telugu.

### *Missing Family in India*

One sub-theme that emerged regarding current life in the U.S. was that many participants described missing family in India. Participants missed family, including extended family. They expressed a desire to return to India to support them as they grow older.

P3: I'm very close to my family. It's not just my mom and dad. I have a long extended [family]. They're all now grouped and gathered together in [hometown]. So that way I do miss out on all those things.

P11: I miss my parents and grandparents. That's the only part I really miss.



P13: I want to come to U.S., but only for a few years. You know, just to, save enough and go back to your home country and live happily with your parents.

That's the only think I had in my mind. I know my parents and in-laws they don't want to live in the U.S. so I don't want to stay all alone throughout my life. My in-laws are pretty old and they are like 65+ and probably they want us at this time, and they want to enjoy with their grandkid. And have fun with them.

P2: I definitely want to go back, thinking on terms of my mom-in-law who is staying alone. She is staying there with my sister-in-law's house. I would want to go back and support her. I would like her to come and stay with me.

P14: I miss my family even today. I just want to go back.

### *Support Systems*

Participants described family and friends as being a strong support system. One participant described having siblings and immediate family in close proximity gave a great sense of help. Spouse and friends were some source great support in clearing their self-doubt.

P15: I have been pretty close to my family for a long time. Having family close by [a few miles away] really helps you out. It certainly helps a lot. Having my entire family here, it just doesn't even cross my mind that I got to go back to India.

P11: My uncle and my aunt. I'm really close to them. Even before I came here, and after I came here. They are my only family here. I go spend time with them every year or they come.

P13: [I am] all alone, boring, no one to talk to. I feel like I am useless. I am fit for nothing here. I really had those thoughts in my mind but my husband, he said, "Don't have all those thoughts." He cleared everything.

P14: [At spouse's company outing] I met so many [Indian] people and then I got all their contact numbers. That's how we started meeting and talking. That's how I made friends.

P2: Since I came from a company and two of my friends were already there, it was not difficult. Because you are in a place, when you already have some known people, I was never left alone.

P12: Friends were like very supportive. They are housewives only but I wanted to study. Sometimes I used to get depressed, you know. In the beginning, they used to say, "No, you can do it". My friends were supportive; everybody was supportive.

### *Life in the Future*

In the course of the interview, participants were asked to describe expectations they had for the future. Participants had aspirations for their children and also had advise them for those who may be moving to the U.S.

### *Values of Family*

While talking about their future, the participants with children or those pregnant at the time of the interview had some definite dreams, expectations, and rules for their children in the future. They described the fact that education was a definite aspiration they had for their children and the expectation for their children to complete a college education. Some described the fact that they did not want their children to date and marry outside the Indian culture when they grow up.

P1: My expectations are just go to college. Period. I don't want you to earn, because I did not. So, I wasn't even allowed to speak about money. College, that is the very basic [expectation].

P2: My expectations, for my children, first of all, they should be good human beings. They should do well in their career, whatever they want to do. I don't want them to become doctors or engineers, it is their own choice. So my expectation for them; whatever you do, be a good human being, you pursue it, and you excel in it.

P7: I think we are not comparable to what other Indian parents have of their children. All the Indian parents that I know seem to want their children to excel, especially in academics. But I have no expectations in that [he will] have a professional degree. So long as he uses his potential, and he is finally good at what he does, whatever he does is OK with me.

P12: Right now, we are excited to have the baby for sure. I am going to teach her my language.

P13: I want her to study well and definitely not to marry anyone of the other communities. I don't like dating before marriage with any other guys, with other communities frankly speaking. These are the expectations as of now. Basically I don't want her to get married with [an] American guy or an African guy or someone. So, that is also one of the reasons why I want to go back India.

#### *Advice to Others*

Based on their personal experiences in adjusting to U.S. culture, participants were asked as to what advice they may have for others planning to come to the U.S. Their advice ranged from asking future immigrants to be open minded to being more pro-active to learn the U.S. culture. Participants stressed the need to learn to drive, practice English, work harder in school, learn to manage finances, and to be less dependent of other people.

P8: Just don't take anything for granted. People are so into their privacy and they don't want to feel violated and so, I would just ask them to keep a distance and don't talk to people.

P13: Definitely I will ask them to bring all their educational things if they want to work. Then they are helpful right. They need to get their credentials and all those things. I will ask them to be prepared to work. I will encourage them to

work for a while so that they will get to know the environment here. That is the best way to get away from all the unnecessary thoughts that are all in your mind.

P12: I will tell her [sister who is likely to come to the U.S.], don't panic in the beginning. The very first thing is to be independent. Start driving. It is very necessary.

P9: Since I came as a student, most people I know either come as students or come to work. In India there is a sense of casualness when you work. I ask people to be a little more careful when they come here, as to what they say, how they dress and what they speak. The first impression is really everything here, in many ways. Plus, having some IT skills before you come here. Be more aware of what's out there in terms of software and everything; because no matter what area you work in, or what field you come in here, there is a lot of IT interaction. And social networking is what, is very critical here for you to be successful in whatever you do. And my telling them that is not something that is immediately going to have an effect on them to prepare for it. But just making them aware of it is something that you should do, just so that it can make their transition easier

P10: If I were, like two of my friends had got married and came here after I was already here. And only thing that I would probably, just ask them to be better prepared to deal with the initial,[is that] you have to totally adopt your husband's friends and life as your own; till you find your own. So you have to be extremely self sufficient and be OK to doing stuff by yourself.



P7: I think, just that they have to be self sufficient in every respect. Like back home people are used to having their family network, support, which many times you don't have here. So you have to be a little tough and self reliant and learn to do and take decisions on your own and do things on your own essentially.

P3: For someone who is coming for the first time I would definitely tell them to come here with an open mind. Don't expect everything is going to be easy.

P15: Just hang in there, it's just going to get better, because every immigrant who has come to the U.S. have a tough time in the beginning.

### Summary

Sample for the study comprised of 15 Indians who were married, lived in the U.S. for at least 2 years and were non-U.S. citizens. Of the 15 interviews, 13 participants were interviewed in a one-on-one basis by the researcher. The couple was interviewed in a common sitting. The average time for the interviews was 45 minutes. A semi-structured interview format was used and all conversations were audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher.

Transcribed conversations were analyzed at multiple levels by the researcher and the final level of analysis was reviewed by two readers. The results were presented in a time-line format for better understanding. Implication of the present results will be discussed on Chapter V along with relevant empirical support.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research was designed to study the acculturation process of Asian Indians in the U.S. The study examined the process of acculturation based on immigrants' previous exposure to U.S. culture. The growth of Indian immigrants to the U.S. led the researcher to investigate this topic. A qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews was employed to describe, analyze, and examine the life of Indians in the U.S.

Chapter IV presented information on the 15 adult Indian participants and detailed results of the interviews. The chapter details the themes and sub-themes that emerged through multiple levels of analysis. The current chapter discusses and interprets the emergent themes in relation to previous literature, highlight limitations, and suggest recommendations for future research. The discussions are presented with reference to the research questions that guided the study:

1. How do Indian immigrants describe their life in the U.S.?
2. How do expectations of life in the U.S. align with actual experiences in the U.S.?
3. What influences the expectations of life in the U.S.?
4. How does immigrants' life in the U.S. compare to their life in their home country?
5. How do immigrants prepare for their life in the U.S.?

### Description of Participants

For this research, 15 married Indian immigrants were interviewed. Of the 15 participants, 4 were male and the remaining 11 female. Of the 11 female participants, 8 came to the U.S. after getting married, 2 were single graduate students, and 1 came with family. Three male participants came for graduate school and 1 for work. Most of participants lived with their parents and family prior to moving to the U.S. Six participants had one child, two participants had two children each, and two female participants were pregnant with their first child during the time of the interview.

### Discussion of Results

Based on multiple levels of analysis to increase triangulation of data, five major themes emerged. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), during the process of analysis recurring themes may emerge from the interview transcriptions, which begin to form patterns or clusters. The researcher noticed clustering of themes and decided to discuss the emerged themes rather than organize the chapter based on research questions. The researcher synthesized the research question and emergent themes from the study in Table 2. The themes were organized based on a timeline beginning with their description of life in home country to what they envision for in future.

1. Life in home country
2. Preparation for life in the U.S.
3. Newcomer life in the U.S.: (a) loneliness and boredom, (b) financial issues, (c) support systems, and (d) expectations

4. Current life in the U.S.: (a) adjustments to living in the U.S., (b) change in person, (c) children, (d) missing family in India, and (e) support systems
5. Life in Future: (a) values of family and (b) advice to others

### *Life in Home Country*

The first major theme that emerged was a description of life in home country prior of the participant's immigration to the U.S. Participants described not having any responsibilities and chores at home in India. They focused more on their own tasks such as studying or working. The pattern of hiring someone to do chores around the house is common in some Asian countries (Treas & Mazumdar, 2004). From a survey of over 200 college students Medora, Larson, and Dave (2000) discussed that children in India are dependent on their family, having no financial responsibility until they are married or employed. Some participants of the current research described their life in India as busy yet fulfilling and loving. They were close to their immediate family and spent much time with parents and siblings. Most of the participants came from nuclear families in India, rather than the traditional joint family. While joint families are frequently characterized as strict and authoritarian, nuclear families are more permissive and less hierarchical (Segal, 1991). Some participant comments were:

P1: When I was in India, before I was married, I did not have to do anything.  
Nothing. Period.

P3: Never really worked, just studied. I did nothing, but to enjoy life.  
Everything was very comfortable, never had to really worry.



### *Preparation for Life in the U.S.*

The second major theme that emerged was on the topic of preparing for life in the U.S. Among the female participants of the study, 8 of the 11 came to the U.S. after getting married to their husbands, who were already living in the U.S. According to Saran (1985), it is not uncommon for Indian single men who immigrate to the U.S. to go home to have an arranged marriage and bring back their new brides to the U.S. When asked about their desire to come and live in the U.S., participants mentioned a range of answers from eagerness to come to having no desire to move to the U.S. Settles's (2001) Model of Mobility described push and pull factors being reasons to immigrate and impacting the adjustment process. While some of the participants who came after getting married were open to coming to the U.S., others did not want to get married to someone from the U.S. Some came to the U.S. to please family and others were swept up in the trend to move to the U.S. Excerpts of participant's comments from the research include:

P14: I never even thought that I was going to marry my husband and come here. If I had an option, if he would have asked me, I would have always said no. But the thing is at that time he never asked me [about coming and living in the U.S.] and I never thought about it. But I would never want to come here.

P15: Right from my high school I was kind of interested in coming. In my neighborhood, back home, pretty much everyone was going to U.S. and it as just ingrained into that.



Participants were asked whether they were prepared for life in the U.S. and how they went about this preparation. Some of the female participants who immigrated to the U.S. following their marriage had learned about life in the U.S. from their husbands. Some other participants talked to other family and friends prior to coming to the U.S.

P6: I kind of knew it from [husband]. He gave an idea when we were talking about getting married and coming here.

Some participants had formed their images and expectations from media and literary portrayal of U.S. Grewal's (1995) research on the emergence of product quality expectations in consumers found that media and word-of-mouth advertising were some ways that consumers formed vision of products. For example, 2 participants made these comments about media-inspired perceptions of the U.S.

P4: You learn so many things through that [Archie comics]

P8: You get a certain perception by watching movies, about people, dating for example. The girls, they are so easy. Those were some of the perceptions you had from watching some of these American movies. Some of those are really misconceptions and but otherwise, I think, it's again you realize that movies are far from reality.

#### *Newcomer Life in the U.S.*

The third major timeline that participants described was their initial life in the U.S. Initial life in the U.S. was what the participants defined as living style when they first came to the U.S., versus current life. Participants came to the U.S. between 3 and 12

years prior to the time of the interview. They were asked to recollect their life in the U.S. when they first came. Four sub-themes emerged from the interviews regarding this phase of immigrant life: (a) loneliness and boredom, (b) financial issues, (c) support systems, and (d) expectations.

### *Loneliness and Boredom*

Many of the female participants who immigrated upon marriage described a period of loneliness and boredom. Some had a smoother initial adjustment. In his in-depth interviews of 10 Indian immigrants, Saran's (1985) participants mentioned a range of feeling, from being depressed upon arriving in the country to positive adjustments. Tycho (1971) stated that immigrants face a loss and void of network and social support. In their article discussing the concerns of newly arriving students to the U.S., Williams and Butler (2003) discussed that leaving parents, family and social network back home is an issue. Upon arriving in the U.S. these individuals feel a sense of isolation and lack of social network. Participant comments from the research reflected the cited research.

P10: You immediately miss the lack of family. So, all that hits you.

Gibson (2001) postulated that proximity of other immigrants sharing the same ethnicity may aid the adjustment process. While the presence of other Indians, in particular Indian friends, made the adjustment smoother for some participants of the current study, some comments contradicted the suggestion that social group from the same ethnicity may help in immigrant adjustment.

P12: Oh, it is pretty boring. Not pretty, it is very boring. [Here] I am so dependent on my husband. It's very boring and there is no one to talk to. And, you have to talk to the same people everyday. A couple of days they may be very anxious to meet you and talk to you and [are] happy to receive you. Third day, even they have their own things.

### *Financial Issues*

Many of the participants who had immigrated to the U.S. as graduate students described financial stress while in school. They had no financial management experience while in India and were financially dependent on their family. Having to be financial independent, working menial jobs, and balancing work-school proved challenging for some participants. According to Medora, Larson, and Dave (2000), Indian children are socially and financially dependent on parents until they are married or employed. This comment from a participant confirms Medora et al.

P15: Finances were a major issue for me because I had to make my own decisions and like. Till 21 [years of age] you are always like sheltered under your parents and [then] you are thrown into a new country and everything is new. And so that was pretty tough for me.

### *Support Systems*

Participants talked about the support they received from spouse and friends during their initial transition to life in the U.S. These support people helped to reassure participants and to adjust to life in the U.S. Indian immigrants form close social

networks that support each other in times of need such as childbirth and illness (Dasgupta, 1992). While friends are a source of support, it is the spouse and actual kin that lend the family emotional support and help. Female participants of Dasgupta's qualitative study described their husband as lending household support and emotional support. In the current study, this statement confirms Dasgupta's findings:

P12: My husband is very supportive, so I didn't have to really make any adjustments.

#### *Expectations of Life in the U.S.*

The second research question relating to how expectations matched to actual experience of life in the U.S. was unique to this research study. No previous research on acculturation of immigrants to the U.S. had examined the alignment of expectations and experience. Research in the field of healthcare, and education has examined similar aspects of expectations and are used in the current research to address impact of expectations on actual adjustment. Research on elementary school teachers by Menon and Christou (2002) found that future elementary teachers were less satisfied with different aspects of school administration and organization than current teachers; and proposed that the dissatisfaction may stem from cognitive dissonance due to lack of real experience. In a literature review examining the coping strategies of family and child with chronic cardiac problems, Mussatto (2006) highlights the importance of realistic expectations in adapting to the stress of chronic illness in the family. Mussatto also stated that successful adaptation was achieved through a reduction of discrepancies between



expectations and actual reality. Mixed method research by Grzywacz, Quandt, Arcury, and Marín (2005) on work-life balance of Mexican immigrants found that those immigrants whose reality matched expectations had lower mental stress. Many participants in the current research discussed the fact that they received realistic expectation of life in the U.S. from spouses, family and friends. Overall, most participants of the study were described being satisfied with life in the U.S.

P2: I had a lot of friends here who I used to talk to them regularly, email with me on a regular basis. They used to tell me their day to day life stories. So I was quite aware of the fact where I am going to go. So I was much prepared, right from day one, from the moment I land up. So that's how I was prepared. It was not kind of a shock to me.

#### *Current Life in the U.S.*

The next major theme that emerged was a description of current life in the U.S. A majority of the interviews were centered on this time in their life and discussions are separated into five sub-themes: (a) adjustments to living in the U.S., (b) change in person, (c) children, (d) missing family in India and (e) support systems.

#### *Adjustments to Living in the U.S.*

When asked to describe their adjustment to life in the U.S., participant discussions largely fell into two categories: language and chores.

*Language.* One of the adjustments that some immigrants described was language skills. Some were not comfortable and fluent in English. Even those who were fluent in

English had learned different usage of words and pronunciations. According to U.S. Census report by Reeves and Bennett (2004), over 75% of Indian immigrants either spoke only English at home or spoke English very well. While Indians have a higher English skill than most other Asian immigrants (Reeves & Bennett), some participants in this study described language issues upon first immigrating to the U.S. Williams and Butler (2003) discussed that language skills were one concern for newly arriving immigrant students to the U.S.

P4: First thing would probably [be] in the way you speak. You realize that the British pronunciation and sounds are different than the American. So, I think that's the first change.

*Chores.* Many of the participants talked about their lack of experience in doing chores in India. For most of them, having to do chores was an adjustment. Many of them talked about having the luxury of hired help in India to help take care of chores. The lack of experience and practice was something they had to learn upon coming to the U.S.

P10: Initially I really missed a maid. You know, the dishes and clothes and stuff like that. So, adjustments at a very basic level. Just like housekeeping.

P2: Royalties we used to have in India, that was missing here. You have your helpers there and everything; here you are self made.

Comments by participants of current research confirmed Treas and Mazumdar (2004), who found that it was common to have hired help to do household chores in many Asian countries. Findings were also confirmed by Dasgupta's (1992) research

which found that immigrant families missed the assistance they received from family and kin in India.

### *Change in Person*

In the current study, many of the female participants who came to the U.S. upon getting married talked about growing more independent, self-reliant, and self-confident since immigrating. They valued this independence and discussed the difficulty in being as independent while in India.

P10: I know I have am being very repetitive, but for me independence is such a big deal, especially for a woman in India and everything. I really value that here.

According to Mullatti (1995) Indian women are traditionally expected to be more self-sacrificing than men. India is a collectivist culture (Sinha, Sinha, Verma, & Sinha, 2001); however, Sinha et al.'s research on nearly 300 respondents from predominantly middle-class family background found that Indian women in urban settings and with higher education exhibited a mixture of collectivist and individualist behavior. Participants in Segal's (1985) research also described being more responsible and yet remaining Indians in their values. Segal (1991) described parental dressing preference being more Indian for cultural and social occasions, while they dressed in western attire for other activities. Comment by one participant reflected one area; dressing.

P13: The only thing is my attire has changed and the rest of the things are the same. Because we have all the religious things done at our home, for all occasions, so I wear salwars, and sarees. Only the thing attire I started wearing

[after coming here are] jeans and tops. I never used to wear when I was in India.

That is the only thing changed here.

### *Children*

Participants described some rules that they follow at home with regard to their children. Some of them talked about how they teach and reinforce their native language and culture at home, in order to ensure that their children learn the language and traditions. Talking to their children in the native language was one way that many participants were carrying on their cultural traditions. Kohli (1998) discussed that speaking a native language versus English at home was an indicator of cultural retention. Parents of ethnic minorities have certain goals for their children, which include positive attitudes toward their own culture, being interdependent with their kin, and flexibility of cognitive skills (Brooks, 1991; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990). Jain and Belsky (1997) and Segal (1991) reported that Indian families use primary family language and maintain closer ties with India. Comments by some participants in this research confirm earlier findings.

P1: [Talking to daughter in mother tongue] is my goal because I know she's going to learn English in school anyway; might as well learn our language right now.

### *Missing Family in Home Country*

One sub-theme that emerged regarding current life in the U.S. was that many participants described missing family in India. Participants missed family, including



extended family. They expressed a desire to return to India to support them as they grow older. Dasgupta's (1992) research found that immigrant families missed the assistance they would have received from family and kin in India. Having a large social network of friends and close acquaintances in the U.S. does not compensate for lack of family and kin in the U.S. Comments by participants confirm earlier findings by Dasgupta.

P3: I'm very close to my family. It's not just my mom and dad. I have a long extended [family]. They're all now grouped and gathered together in [hometown]. So that way I do miss out on all those things.

P14: I miss my family even today. I just want to go back.

According to Gibson (2001), having others of the same ethnicity close by may impact acculturation. The current research found that while a social group of Indian immigrants helped alleviate some of the boredom, it was immediate family in close proximity that made life in the U.S. more satisfying. One participant expressed that the close physical proximity of siblings made life in the U.S. more satisfying.

P15: I have been pretty close to my family for a long time. Having family close by [few miles away] really helps you out. Having my entire family here, it just doesn't even cross my mind that I got to go back to India.

### *Support Systems*

Participants described family and friends as being a strong support system. One participant described having siblings and immediate family in close proximity gave a great sense of help. Spouse and friends were some source great support in clearing their

self-doubt. According to Dasgupta (1992) Indian immigrants have close friends and acquaintances in the U.S., who support each other in times of need. However, immigrant couples depend on each other for emotional support and help. Unlike their counterparts in India, Indian husbands in the U.S. lent a helping hand to their wives and helped them fill the emotional void of missing family in India.

P13: [I am] all alone, boring, no one to talk to. I feel like I am useless. I am fit for nothing here. I really had those thoughts in my mind but my husband, he said, "Don't have all those thoughts." He cleared everything.

### *Life in the Future*

In the course of the interview, participants were asked to describe expectations they had for the future. Participants had aspirations for their children and also had advice for future immigrants to the U.S.

### *Values of Family*

In discussing their expectations and dreams for their children, some participants stressed the need for higher education for their children. Indian immigrants placed high importance on higher education and achievement and often determined their children's career (Bhattacharya, 2002; Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996). Some described the fact that they did not want their children to date and marry outside the Indian culture when they grow up. Saran (1985) and Segal (1991) found that Indian parents had strong sentiments against dating, especially for their daughters. Comments by some participants of the current study confirm earlier findings.

P1: My expectations are just go to college. Period. I don't want you to earn, because I did not. So, I wasn't even allowed to speak about money. College, that is the very basic [expectation].

P13: I want her to study well and definitely not to marry anyone of the other communities. I don't like dating before marriage with any other guys, with other communities frankly speaking. These are the expectations as of now.

### *Advice to Others*

Based on their personal experiences in adjusting to U.S. culture, participants were asked what advice they may have for others planning to come to the U.S. Their advice ranged from asking future immigrants to be open minded to being more pro-active to learn the U.S. culture. Participants stressed the need to learn to drive, practice English, work harder in school, learn to manage finances, and to be less dependent on other people. Some participants of the study talked about difference in work culture between India and the U.S. They talked about how it impacted their work life in the U.S. and also how this may be a piece of advice for potential immigrants. In their article Williams and Butler (2003) drew attention to the fact that different cultural scripts of host culture and home may be a challenge for immigrant students. Comments by some participants reflect some aspects of cultural scripts.

P9: Since I came as a student, most people I know either come as students or come to work. In India there is a sense of casualness when you work. I ask people

to be a little more careful when they come here, as to what they say, how they dress and what they speak.

### Conclusions

The findings of the research answered the research questions that guided the study. Table 3 details the themes of the results in terms of the research questions.

Table 3

#### *Themes Addressing Research Questions*

Research question	Emergent themes addressing the research question
1. How do Indian immigrants describe their life in the U.S.?	Subthemes 3 (a, b, c) Theme 4
2. How do expectations of life in the U.S. align with actual experiences in the U.S.?	Subtheme 3(d)
3. What influences the expectations of life in the U.S.?	Subtheme 3(d)
4. How does immigrants' life in the U.S. compare to their life in the home country?	Theme 1
5. How do immigrants prepare for their life in the U.S.?	Theme 2



The main purpose of the current study was to describe, examine and analyze the life of Indians in the U.S. Some conclusions were drawn from the study.

1. Of the 8 female participants who immigrated upon getting married, 4 of them learned about life in the U.S. primarily from their husbands.
2. Of the 8 female participants who came after getting married, 7 described their initial life in the U.S. as being lonely and boring.
3. Three of the 4 participants who came as graduate students described financial concerns as being one of their biggest adjustments.
4. Settles's (2001) Model of Mobility described 'push' such as wars and economic problems; and 'pull' factors such as recruitment and perceived opportunities as reasons to immigrate and impacting the adjustment process. While the pull factor of the research sample fell into the categorization of Settles, the push factors did not. However the actual reason for immigration (marriage or graduate school) impacted the initial experience of immigrants. The main difference was the boredom and dependency of married female immigrants on their husband for social contact; while the graduate students were busy adjusting to with school and their independent life.
5. The study also found that, while having new Indian friends and acquaintances in close proximity helped in adjustment to the U.S, the support from family and old

friends made adjustment smoother. Gibson's (2001) postulated that proximity to co-cultural group was a variable in the acculturation rate of immigrants.

6. While the initial adjustments seemed to be dictated by the reason for immigration, descriptions of current life in the U.S. and future life were similar to participants who came after getting married or as graduate students. Advice to others differed based on the immigration experience.
7. Based on the research it can be concluded that in the process of acculturation, the stage is set in the home country itself. The life the immigrants lead prior to moving to U.S. and how they learn and prepare for life in the U.S. are an integral part of the acculturation process.

Research by Dasgupta (1992); Gibson (2001); Grewal (1995); Medora, Larson and Dave (2000); Saran (1985); Tycho (1971); and Williams and Butler (2003) supported these major findings.

The other purpose of the study examined the process of acculturation based on immigrants' previous exposure to U.S. culture. The study concluded the following.

1. Of the 5 participants 9 learned about the U.S. from first-hand sources of information such as spouse, family, and friends. About 4 of the participants formed some expectations about the U.S. from second-hand information sources such as print and visual media.

2. Participants described having both positive and negative expectations and images of life in the U.S.
3. While the initial transition was more lonely and tough than some expected, they did not describe being very unsatisfied with life in. Only one participant clearly expressed being unsatisfied with overall life in the U.S.

Research by Edwards, Courtney, and Spencer (2003); Grewal (1995); Grzywacz, Quandt, Arcury, and Marín, (2005); Jennings, Hemman, Heiner, Swanson, and Loan (2005); and Mussatto (2006) supported these conclusions.

#### Limitations

Some limitations were identified in this study. Only adult Indian immigrants, who had lived in the U.S. for at least 2 years, not currently U.S. citizens, and residing in the north Texas area were part of the study. There was a large range of the number of years of residence in the U.S.; and there was a mix of those participants with children and those without. Direct input from children of immigrant families was not collected, rather only the parent's perspectives were explored. Also only input for married Indian couples was collected, with no input from single Indian immigrants. In case of couples, in most cases, only the perspective of one spouse was collected. While the research achieved triangulation from multiple levels of analysis, contribution from research advisory committee, and outside readers; other methods of data collection and analysis could have added credibility. Also only one-time interviews were used to collect data.

## Implications

Implications of this research study are wide ranging. With the research generating information from different phases of the immigration process, from life in home country to current life in the U.S., data can serve the needs of multiple stakeholders.

1. Training modules in home country: Information from this research can help inform training modules targeted at prospective immigrants from India to the U.S. Based on their reason for immigration, different strategies for preparation for immigration and subsequent smoother adjustment after immigration can be highlighted during the training. As found in the study, first-hand information from family and friends who lived in the U.S. was useful and important to learn about life in the U.S. Training programs should be encouraged to have Indian immigrants to the U.S. who visit India for vacation talk to prospective and immigrants to give them first-hand information. This would be especially useful to those who may not already have family or friends in the U.S.
2. New and veteran immigrants: Spouses and family members can be made aware of findings of this research which may help them assist the new immigrant. To reduce possible boredom and loneliness as found in this research, new immigrants may need to find strategies to keep good communication links to family in India, make connections in their new community, and learn skills such as driving to become more independent in their new home. Findings from this research also inform veteran immigrants about possible adjustments they may face. Local



Indian community organizations can pioneer programs in assisting new and veteran immigrants especially in bridging the gap due to loss of family support.

3. Professionals: Findings from this research can help assist mental health professionals, counselors and family life educators as they assist Indian immigrants. They can have a better grasp of the lifestyle of their clients may have had in their home country and possible adjustment issues they may be experiencing such as loss of family support, loneliness, and financial issues.
4. International educators: Based on the research findings educational institutions who cater to international students can teach new students skills to better manage their finances and balance their school-work life.
5. Corporate human resource departments: Corporate human resource departments can be better informed to help immigrant and guest employees and their families deal with the new environment. Corporate HR can develop modules addressing needs of families of their employees who migrate to the U.S. and include information on community resources and strategies to make new connections in the U.S. Also encouraging new immigrant to earn a drivers license may help them become more independent.
6. Participants of the current research shared their experience of the transition from India to the U.S. and the ensuing adjustment process. Profiles and life experiences of participants of current research can act as stories that can enhance the development and content of learning modules that can be created for potential, new and veteran immigrants in the U.S.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Addressing the limitations of this study, future research can examine different populations of Indian immigrants; with respect to marital status, length of time in the U.S., age, reason for immigration, and immigration status. Also this study can be replicated in different geographic locations in the U.S. to look for similarity or additional theme generation. Additional methods such as multiple interviews, focus groups, and participant observations can be used.

Future research can help answer other questions: Do men and women describe similar processes of acculturation? How do current changes in Indian lifestyle, with more exposure to Western life and increase access to Western products and lifestyle, impact future Indian immigrants to the U.S.? How does increased exposure to Western lifestyle impact expectations of life in the U.S.? How does this expectation translate to adjustment and satisfaction to life in the U.S.?

### Summary

This study described the acculturation process of 15 Indian immigrants to the U.S., who were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. It also examined the impact of expectations and exposure of life in the U.S. to actual experience of life in the U.S. From the analyzed interview transcripts, 5 major themes emerged: life in home country, preparation for life in the U.S., newcomer life in the U.S., current life in the U.S., and future life. The reason for immigration was found to be a factor in the adjustment process of immigrants. The findings have implications on potential, current, and veteran immigrants.

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## APPENDIX A

### Demographic and Interview Questions

## Demographic and Interview Questions

1. Length of time in the U.S.
2. Primary reason for immigration
3. Other relatives/ family members in the U.S.
4. Frequency of visits to India and/or family from India
5. Formal/ informal connection with Indian community in the U.S.
6. Number and age of children
7. Numbers of years of marriage
8. Who came to U.S. first- Wife/ husband/ both together
9. Immigration Status

Research Questions	Possible Follow-up Questions	Prompts
1. How do expectations of life in the U.S. measure up to your current life in the U.S.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your life in the India prior to coming to the U.S.?</li> <li>- How would you describe your life in the U.S. when you first came from India?</li> <li>- How would you describe your current life in the U.S.?</li> <li>- What are some adjustments you have had to make in your life in the U.S.?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your relationship (if married)?</li> <li>House work?</li> <li>Work/school/home life?</li> <li>Help from others?</li> <li>Yes?</li> <li>Tell me about it.</li> <li>Can you tell me more?</li> <li>Can you elaborate more on ...?</li> <li>Can you clarify what you meant by ...?</li> <li>Anything else?</li> </ul>

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>2. What influenced you expectations of life in the U.S?</p>           | <p>- How did you form your expectations of life in the U.S.?</p> <p>- What were some sources of your image of the U.S.?</p>   | <p>Media?</p> <p>Family, friends?</p> <p>Books?</p> <p>Yes?</p> <p>Tell me about it.</p> <p>Can you tell me more?</p> <p>Can you elaborate more on ...?</p> <p>Can you clarify what you meant by ...?</p> <p>Anything else?</p>   |
| <p>3. How would you describe your transition from India to the U.S.?</p> | <p>- How could you have been more prepared for life in the U.S.?</p> <p>- What help did you get/would you have liked to have had when you first moved to the U.S.?</p> <p>- What help did you get/would you have liked to have now?</p> | <p>Family, friends?</p> <p>Neighbors?</p> <p>Peer group?</p> <p>Work/ school acquaintances?</p> <p>Yes?</p> <p>Tell me about it.</p> <p>Can you tell me more?</p> <p>Can you elaborate more on ...?</p> <p>Can you clarify what you meant by ...?</p> <p>Anything else?</p> |



**APPENDIX B**  
**Consent Form to Participants**

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title:

A Qualitative Study to Examine the Acculturation Process of Asian Indians in the United States

Researcher: Nirisha K. Garimella, M.Sc. M.S.....

Advisor: Mary Bold, Ph.D.....

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Ms. Nirisha K. Garimella's dissertation at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of this study is to describe, analyze and examine the life of Indians in the United States. The qualitative study will examine the process of acculturation based on immigrants' previous exposure to U.S. culture.

Research Procedures

For the proposed research project a sample of approximately 20 adult immigrants from India will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. Participants will be above 18 years of age, would have lived in the U.S. for at least two years, and residing in the North Texas area. The primary respondent in a family will be a non-U.S. citizens.

Each participant will have the opportunity to decide whether to participate in the interview process. At the end of each interview the researcher will ask the participants if they can identify other potential participants for the study. The researcher will give the participant the option to give the researcher the contact information of the potential participant or have the participant contact the potential participant with the study details.

Each interview will be a maximum of two hours. All interviews will be audio taped. All interviews will consist of collecting demographic information and the interview questions. All interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Audio taping is done to minimize loss of data during note-taking and to verify data during analysis. Interviews transcribes notes and researcher notes are collected and analyzed for themes on acculturation.

Potential Risks

Potential risks will include loss of confidentiality of information, loss of time, embarrassment and emotional distress. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law.

No outsider other than the primary researcher will be present during the interview. During data analysis, the names of the participants will be masked and a special coded

will be used to identify the participants. Only the primary researcher will have access to the code key. Confidentiality will be maintained on the tapes and transcriptions by using the code number assigned to each participant. Code numbers will be used to label the tapes and transcribed notes of participants. The code and corresponding names of participants will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's house.

There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions. Care will be taken to minimize the access to data by people other than the primary researcher.

The interview sessions will be kept to a manageable time frame, i. e. not extended very long or cut-short. A maximum of two hours will be allocated for the total interview session.

Parts or whole of the steps of the data collection procedures can cause embarrassment to the participants. Participants may decide not to answer any of the questions that cause embarrassment at any time during the interview session. At any stage of the research, participants are free to stop or withdraw from the study without any penalty. Researcher will provide participants with a referral list of counseling services that they can use.

#### Participation and Benefits

Your participation is voluntary and there is always an option to withdraw from the study at any time. The direct benefit to participants in the study will be a copy of the abstract of the findings of the study after its completion.

The research will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this study. Any kind of inconvenience in participating may be expressed and it will be honored. However, the University does not provide any financial or medical services that might happen because of your participation in the study.

#### Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study, please feel free to ask the researcher; their phone numbers are listed at the top of this page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study or the procedure of the study, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via email [IRB@twu.edu](mailto:IRB@twu.edu).

If you choose to participate in the study, please sign and return this form to the researcher. You can ask for a copy of this form, If you would like to receive a copy of results of the study, please complete the form on the next page.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
First and Last Name of Participant

The above consent form was read, discussed, and signed in my presence. To my knowledge, the person signing the said consent form did so freely and with full knowledge and understanding of its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you would like to receive the results of the study, please fill in the information below and return it to the researcher. Results will be mailed at the completion of the study. Complete confidentiality will be maintained with regards to your mailing address and/or email address and will not be shared with any other individuals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Apt/ PO Box #, Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address