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East Meets West: Perceptions of Sikh Women Living in Canada

by

Sukhjinder Mann

**A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
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in the Department of Family Studies
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EAST MEETS WEST: PERCEPTIONS OF SIKH WOMEN LIVING IN CANADA

BY

SUKHJINDER MANN

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
MASTER OF SCIENCE**

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Abstract

East Indians come from a culture that emphasizes familial obligations and gender segregation. It also maintains strict rules regarding marriage and dating procedures. On the other hand, Canadian culture is characterized by individualism, gender integration and an egalitarian social structure. The goal of this study was to understand the perceptions of East Indian Sikh mothers who immigrated to Canada as adults and their adult daughters raised in Canada, regarding these issues. Many of the conflicts that emerged were in accordance with the changes that first and second-generation immigrants experience when settling in a western country. Both mothers and daughters reported experiencing many conflicting values and behaviors. Mothers were struggling to hold on to traditions they felt were important in maintaining their culture. Daughters were trying to find a middle ground between maintaining respectful relationships with their parents and adopting a more liberal Canadian way of life.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Migrating from one's homeland to another country is a major life decision, sometimes involving unanticipated changes (Dyal, Ludmilla & Somers, 1987). A number of factors affect the ease with which immigrants settle in a new country. For instance similarities between cultures such as language and social customs have often been cited as factors that make the adjustment process easier for the immigrants (Herberg, 1989). However if both cultures hold significantly different, yet strong beliefs, immigrants struggle to maintain their culture of origin as well become a part of the mainstream culture in which they live.

Values such as individualism, gender integration and an egalitarian social structure dictate much of Canadian society (Herberg, 1989). Individuals, for the most part, are free to make important life decisions according to their own beliefs. Relationships between men and women outside of marriage, such as dating, are encouraged. Women are free to make decisions with respect to men and sexuality. The situation is quite different for individuals who have East Indian backgrounds with values which emphasize that familial obligations and actions carried out by family members affect the entire family (Derne, 1994; Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Freed & Freed, 1989; Thobani, 1991). Gender segregation is also characteristic of East Indian cultures. Daughters are usually expected to consider their family honor at all times and obey the demands of husbands, fathers, in-laws, and brothers (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Freed & Freed, 1989). Dating and friendships between men and women are forbidden.

Issues such as dating, arranged marriages, gender segregation, gender inequality, individualism, and familial obligations may cause serious family problems within East Indian communities in Canada (Kurian, 1986; Thobani, 1991; Vincent, 1995). As an increasing number of women with East Indian heritage living in Canada are becoming educated and financially independent, their loyalties to certain East Indian traditions seem to be decreasing. This trend has been identified in the literature and many researchers have suggested that it is an inevitable outcome of the adaptation process (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Kurian, 1986; Naidoo & Vaidyanathan, 1990; Vincent, 1996).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore cultural conflict among Sikhs, a religious group of East Indians. The goal was to understand the perceptions of mothers who immigrated to Canada as adults and their adult daughters who were raised in Canada regarding this conflict. Although this study focuses specifically on Sikhs much of the empirical literature on this topic does not separate Hindus and Sikhs. Thus, when referring to this literature the more general term East Indian will be used. A qualitative approach facilitated understanding the perceptions of mothers and daughters as it is well suited for research that seeks to uncover the nature of people's experiences.

Chapter Two provides a historical overview of Sikh culture and religion and discusses the present status of women in India and the issues facing Sikh women in Canada. Chapter Three presents a model of adaptation. Chapter Four explains the methodology. Chapter Five discusses the findings.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Sikh Traditions and Their Impact on Women

This chapter begins with a brief discussion about immigration and then considers Sikh traditions and the treatment of women in India. The chapter ends with a review of the issues facing Sikh immigrant mothers and their daughters in Canada.

Immigration

With a population of more than 900,000,000, India is the second most populated country in the world (Encarta, Microsoft Encyclopedia, 1997). The major religious groups are Hindus (83%), Muslims (11%), Christians (2%), and Sikhs (2%). This study focuses on the Sikhs. Their homeland is the province of Punjab in northern India, where the native language is Punjabi (Ames & Inglis, 1976).

A considerable number of Sikhs have migrated to Canada. For instance, in 1994, just over one percent of the Canadian population was Sikh (Singh, 1994). Most Sikhs arrived between 1965 and 1975 (Singh, 1994). However, the first Sikh immigrants to Canada arrived in British Columbia between 1903 and 1908. At that time 5,000 men came looking for employment (Singh, 1994). They were not well received however, and often experienced discrimination because of their appearance (Dhruvarajan, 1996; Singh, 1994). The newspapers in Vancouver and Victoria described them as undesirable, degraded, sick, and a menace to women and children. Shortly thereafter, the number of immigrants decreased because of restrictive legislation in India and Canada (Ames & Inglis,

1976). In 1947 India gained independence from Britain and 150 persons were allowed to enter Canada every year. The numbers steadily increased through the years, with the greatest influx of immigrants occurring between 1965 and 1975 (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Singh, 1994).

Sikh Religion and Cultural Traditions

To better understand the issues facing Sikhs in Canada, it is important to understand how their beliefs and practices differ from mainstream Canadians (Naidoo, 1985). It is often difficult to separate the religious and cultural components of beliefs held by particular ethnic groups. The components of ethnic identity may vary across groups but frequently include language, religious practices, friendships, dating and marriage patterns (Herberg, 1989 ; Driedger 1989). The ethnicity of Sikhs is tightly tied to both cultural and religious beliefs and practices.

The first Guru¹ began the teachings of Sikhism during the late 15th century and early 16th century AD (McLeod, 1975). Guru Nanak was the first of ten Gurus responsible for creating the teachings of Sikhism. Guru Nanak was born a Hindu and grew up surrounded by Hindu and Muslim beliefs and customs (McLeod, 1975; Singh, 1993).

Guru Nanak did not agree with certain ideas in the Hindu religion and by making some changes to it, he began Sikhism (Singh, 1993). Two of his beliefs included within Sikhism are: 1) an emphasis on monism instead of dependence on idol worship and exotic ritual practices which are common in Hinduism, and

2) a belief that people should live simple lives, work hard in order to take care of themselves and their families, and spend time giving their services to the temple (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Buchigani & Srivastiva, 1985). Guru Nanak consistently praised women, denounced their oppression and strongly rejected suggestions made by his followers that women were evil or unworthy. He refused to make additions to the holy book of the Sikhs, the *Adi Granth*², that would have reviled women (Singh, 1993).

However the majority of Guru Nanak's words fell on deaf ears and his ideas were interpreted quite differently (Singh, 1993). Many of the feminine symbols that Guru Nanak incorporated into scriptures were actually reversed to male symbols in the exegesis of Sikhism. The feminine principles that highlighted Guru Nanak's teachings were overlooked, neglected, and glossed over by Sikh and non-Sikh academics (Singh, 1993). Despite Guru Nanak's efforts, the low status of women and the limited possibility of women being granted their rightful place in society is a part of the Sikh religion and Indian culture that has for the most part remained (Singh, 1993). However it is important to acknowledge that there may be certain groups of Sikhs that have re-negotiated or 'bent' these particular codes of the culture. The literature states that families living in urban centers may be less rigid in their expression of the Sikh religion in terms of the secondary position of women than families coming from a strictly rural background (Kurian, 1986). Whereas rural habitants see very little of the Western culture in their everyday lives, urban residents are exposed

¹ A Guru is defined as one who takes people from darkness "gu", towards the light "ru", by delivering the message of God (Cole, 1984).

to greater degrees of Western influence on values and behavior. Time also can be considered a factor in 'this changing of the rules.' For instance, rules pertaining to the second class treatment of women may be re-negotiated by second generation East Indian women as a result of their education or exposure to other cultures (Dhruvarajan, 1996).

The Present Status of Women in India

It is important to understand how the parents of children raised in Canada were socialized about the role of women in East Indian cultures. Most parents (aged 40 to 70 years) spent the majority of their lives in India, where the cultures are quite distinct from the western culture in which they are raising their children.

Although Sikhs are the focus of this paper, most information does not separate Hindus and Sikhs and both groups hold many similar views about women (Deka, 1993). The following sections discuss three areas that are extremely influential in the lives of East Indian women: socialization of children, arranged marriages, and murder and death of women and girls.

Gender as a Factor in Socialization of Children

According to Devasia and Devasia (1991), females usually begin their lives in an environment filled with sadness. As children and adults they are exposed to considerable stress and anxiety. Although boys are free to play and interact with other children, girls are kept under strict watch by their parents. Girls are not allowed to speak to men other than immediate family members and

² The Adi "first" Granth "collection" is a book of teachings written by the ten Gurus (Cole, 1984).

are expected to exercise extreme caution in their presence. Above all they are taught to obey the demands of their parents, brothers, and husband meekly, without question (Devasia & Devasia, 1991). In this way females are socialized to consider men superior to themselves (Devasia & Devasia, 1991). Furthermore they are made aware that if they go against the rules, their family's honor will be threatened and their chances of making an acceptable marriage will be jeopardized. This is a difficult burden for a child to carry. For most females, it is easier to submit to the demands of the culture rather than risk their future and the future of their families by rebelling. Boys, on the other hand, are encouraged to be independent, active, and social (Devasia & Devasia, 1991). They are raised with plenty of warmth and affection and are given considerable power within the family system. As it is the son's responsibility to look after his parents in their old age, parents direct their love towards their son as an investment in their future (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Freed & Freed, 1989).

Young daughters are prepared for their eventual marriage, the only goal set for them by their parents (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Freed & Freed, 1989).

Girls are raised to be good daughters-in-law first and foremost, then good mothers and wives (Freed & Freed, 1989; Kakar, 1990; Singh, 1993).

Traditionally, once a girl is married her in-laws become her family and her own family ties are detached (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Dhruvarajan, 1996). This contrasts with Western customs, where it is common to assume that once a daughter is married, her parents "do not lose a daughter, but gain a son." In preparation for marriage young girls are taught to cook, clean, sew and take care

of their younger siblings. These are valued skills for good daughters-in-law, mothers and wives (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Dhruvarajan, 1996). Above all they are taught to respect their elders and to respect all men. Good East Indian women should remain virgins until marriage, thus maintaining their family's honor (Derne, 1994; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Kakar, 1990). Women are expected to subordinate their lives to the welfare and needs of their husband's family, their children and others (Derne, 1994; Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Kakar, 1979; Vincent, 1996). "In childhood, a woman must be subject to her father; in youth, to her husband; when her husband is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be free of subjugation "(Ramachandran, 1992, p. 62). These expectations become so ingrained in women from birth until marriage that it is not surprising that these ideas about appropriate conduct become a part of their ideology (Kakar, 1990).

Marriage Issues

Arranged marriages are an important and complex cultural tradition of the East Indian community. Historically marriages were arranged by families at the birth of their children (Ujimoto & Naidoo, 1988). If two families knew each other well, it was assumed that their children would make a good match; at birth the families would promise their children to each other. More recently marriages are arranged when the children are older and can live together as husband and wife soon after marriage. In India marriage unites two families (Dhruvarajan, 1996; Ujimoto & Naidoo, 1988). When parents decide that it is time for their son or

daughter to marry, they consider the reputation of the entire family of the potential mate. Whether the potential marriage partners like each other is never an issue. Unlike Western ideas, arranged marriages are not rooted in love. Rather, the love is expected to develop and grow after marriage. According to traditional Indian beliefs "one loves the man or woman one marries", whereas in Western tradition, "one marries the man or woman one loves" (Vaidyanathan & Naidoo, 1990, p.40).

Dowries

Dowries play an important role in marriage arrangements. A dowry refers to the property the bride brings with her at the time of marriage to help the new young couple get established (Hooja, 1969). Originally the custom may have indicated parental affection towards a newlywed couple. Over time the dowry system turned marriage into a business transaction (Hooja, 1969; Kumari, 1989). Rather than the merits of the bride, the value of the dowry becomes the primary deciding factor in a marriage arrangement (Kumari, 1989). As an unspoken rule both families are aware of the serious ramifications of an inadequate dowry (Dhruvarajan, 1996; Kumari, 1989). If the prospective groom and his family decide that a bride and her dowry are inadequate they can refuse marriage without any explanation (Hooja, 1969; Kumari, 1989). Often the family of a bride takes any offer they receive for fear of having an unmarried daughter, which is worse than an unhappy bride. Parents with four or five daughters face extreme pressures when they are unable to afford adequate dowries for all of their daughters. In these situations it is accepted that the daughters will not marry the

preferred grooms because they cannot afford them (Hooja, 1969). Therefore these women settle for anyone willing to accept a small dowry.

According to Singh and Sharma (1980), Indian parliament passed a dowry prohibition act in 1961. The intent of the act was to prohibit individuals from giving or receiving dowries in the form of property or valuable security. However the act has had very little impact on the custom and many residents, particularly in rural areas, maintain the dowry system (Singh & Sharma, 1980).

Death and Murder of Women and Girls

Every census in India since the 19th century has shown an unequal proportion of males to females (Freed & Freed, 1989). In 1981 an Indian census reported 22.9 million more males than females (Freed & Freed, 1989). During the late 1800's Sikhs were reported as having the lowest proportion of females; in particular villages there were 100 boys to 31 girls (Freed & Freed, 1989). A number of cultural practices such as female infanticide, female feticide (femicide), dowry death and suicide are thought to be responsible for the sexual imbalance (Freed & Freed, 1989).

Dowry Death

According to Khan and Ray (1984), women account for only a small percentage of homicides in India; however the proportion of accidental deaths and suicides is considerably higher. The authors suggested that many of these deaths are dowry deaths. In many cases, they may be reported as accidents or suicides when they may actually be homicides in which young women are killed by their husbands or their husbands' families because of insufficient dowries. In

anticipation of receiving more dowries after the deaths of their young brides, the husbands are free to choose second wives (Dhruvarajan, 1996).

Female Infanticide

According to East Indian culture, male children are welcomed and indulged by friends and family, in the case of female children this is the exception rather than the rule (Deka, 1993; Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Freed & Freed, 1989; Kakar, 1979; Thobani, 1991). Furthermore, depending on the order in which the child is born, that child will be either received with joy or sadness (Kakar, 1979; Deka, 1993). For example, if a girl is the first child, her entrance into the world is met with joy and the hope that she will "bring" a male child in the next birth (Deka, 1993). If a woman continues to give birth to females, each will be met with increasing sadness and mourning (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Freed & Freed, 1989; Kakar, 1979; Thobani, 1991). In contrast, the birth of every son is met with great excitement and happiness (Freed & Freed, 1989; Kakar, 1979). In the eyes of the parents involved, daughters deplete the family of resources due to the expensive dowries necessary to marry them off, whereas sons receive dowries and take care of their parents till death.

Infanticide is one method that the people of Northern India use to deal with the problem of unwanted infant girls (Devasia & Devasia, 1991; Freed & Freed, 1989; Panigrahi, 1972). Infanticide is killing of an infant soon after birth. It has existed for hundreds of years in many countries around the world (Panigrahi, 1972). The Sikhs have practiced female infanticide extensively (Panigrahi, 1972). Religion has historically been used to justify this treatment of girls and

women (Devasia & Devasia, 1991). This attitude is rooted in a set of complex factors including religion, culture and socialization and is difficult to change (Devasia & Devasia, 1991). All actions in India are considered to be influenced by religious beliefs; it is considered blasphemous when certain actions are not carried out or expectations not met (Devasia & Devasia 1991; Shweder et. al., 1990).

Femicide

Femicide is the practice of aborting female fetuses and is a wide-spread practice in India (Thobani, 1991). Approximately 78,000 female fetuses were aborted in Northern India between 1978 and 1983 after their sex was determined (Devasia & Devasia, 1981). Advertisements stating an abortion now saves an expensive dowry twenty years down the road are used to convince expectant parents to undergo amniocentesis and an abortion if the tests indicate a female fetus (Devasia & Devasia, 1991).

It is expected that Indian women be naturally fertile and produce male children (Freed & Freed, 1989; Kakar, 1990; Thobani, 1991). Women are blamed for not producing a son when they have more than two female children in a row. The man's biological role in sex determination is overlooked or not accepted by some families; it is usually assumed that something is wrong with the woman. The desire for sons is so great that families will give old folk medicines to expectant mothers in hopes of ensuring the sex of the fetus, or have them checked repeatedly by doctors (Devasia & Devasia, 1991 ; Freed & Freed, 1989). A woman's happiness depends on her ability to bear a son

(Thobani, 1991). For instance, daughters-in-law who have produced sons are treated much better than daughters-in-law in the same family who have not had any sons (Thobani, 1991). This behavior often results in women accepting the devaluing of female children.

East Indian Women In Canada

Research by Ames and Inglis (1976) suggested that Canadian born Sikhs and Indian born Sikhs shared similar beliefs with respect to East Indian family ideals. However the researchers expected that the situation would change as their sample increased and matured; that is, cultural conflict between the generations would develop (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhruvarajan, 1996). Studies that examined adaptation patterns of East Indian immigrant families in the late 1970's and early 1980's confirmed this change (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Naidoo & Davis, 1988; Vaidyanathan & Naidoo, 1990).

Studies carried out in the late 1980's and early 1990's also identified increasing conflict between East Indian parents and children, particularly on the topics of gender-roles and familial obligations (Dhruvarajan, 1996; Kurian, 1986; Naidoo & Vaidyanathan, 1990; Vincent, 1996). Most studies suggested the conflict between parents and children had to do with double standards and the fact that sons were almost always given more freedom than daughters (Dhruvarajan, 1996; Kurian, 1986). The origin of this double standard can be traced to the gender role traditions described earlier in this paper.

Kurian (1986) studied East Indian families in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, regarding differences in raising boys and girls. He found that parents permitted

more freedom to sons than to daughters in areas such as choice of friends, dating and marriage (Kurian, 1986). Most problems were associated with lack of communication between the generations. Parents felt torn as they fought to keep their children away from Western influences, while at the same time their children were caught between two opposing cultures (Kurian, 1986).

The problems associated with intergenerational conflict in immigrant families are not confined to the adolescent age group as is generally assumed (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Kurian, 1986). Parents who immigrated to Canada in the early 1960's are faced with the reality of dealing with 20 -25 year old sons and daughters who have been raised in Canada and want to associate freely with the opposite sex (Kurian, 1986).

Many problems arise when parents attempt to control their children's lives as they were raised in India. According to Naidoo and Vaidyanathan (1980), dating and premarital relationships are the most controversial issues for East Indian families, and result in the greatest potential for conflict between generations. These researchers found that parents considered dating unacceptable unless the couple was committed to a permanent relationship. Dating in the Western sense (having more than one girl or boy friend at different times) was considered inappropriate by the parents. Their children, on the other hand, thought dating was a healthy part of growing up and should be encouraged. As a result of this conflict many children were cut off from their families for violating East Indian traditions (Ames & Inglis, 1976). This situation gets increasingly complicated as young women become self-sufficient and

independent (Dhruvarajan, 1996; Vincent, 1996). The most sensitive issue among young women is the culturally accepted belief that sex before marriage defiles their bodies; the same belief does not hold true for young men (Dhruvarajan, 1996). Second-generation East Indian men typically do not object to many of these patriarchal beliefs and social practices (Dhruvarajan, 1996).

An estranged husband in Vancouver, British Columbia, unwilling to accept divorce from his wife, shot and killed her and her entire family on her sister's wedding day. According to Vincent (1996) this extreme case illustrates the control and power of men over women in the East Indian community. This is an example of the violence that can erupt when men are raised with traditional values regarding the role of women. Although this extreme example cannot be explained simply on the basis of gender-role conflict, there are many instances noted by Vincent (1996) of marriages failing because East Indian men consider women subservient and dependent. Problems arise as young, independent women are expected to marry East Indian men who will not accept the assertion of their independence (Dhruvarajan, 1996). According to Sgt. Jamal Khan of the Toronto Police (as cited in Naidoo and Davis, 1988), although no accurate statistics exist on domestic violence and wife abuse in the East Indian community, community workers agree that the incidence is on the rise. Many conflicts arise because of male dominance and restrictions and demands placed on women. For instance, most women work outside the home (a Western value) and are expected to carry out all household and child care duties (an Indian practice).

East Indian women raised in Canada are exposed to Western customs that are not acceptable in Indian culture. Expectations for dating, marriage and familial obligations become serious areas of conflict when East Indian women raised in Canada perceive favorable alternatives. Although, parents and their first generation daughters may not share similar views, they seldom consider discussing problems having to do with cultural conflict (Vincent, 1995; Thobani, 1991). This may relate to the tradition of respect for elders and the expectation that children will accept their parents' position without question. There appears to be a lack of research that considers the perceptions of both mothers and daughters regarding this cultural conflict.

The ramifications of the above mentioned problems vary among individuals according to their acceptance of Western ideals (Buchigani et al., 1985). Many young East Indian women feel caught when they cannot strike a balance between Western and Indian values with their families (Buchigani et al., 1985; Dhruvarajan, 1996). Women often must choose between personal desires and those of their family (Ames & Inglis, 1976). Several examples of these situations have been reported in the media recently. For instance, in a Globe and Mail article Vincent (1995) reported that an increasing number of East Indian women in traditional marriages were seeking legal advice. The women in these marriages reported ill-treatment from in-laws because of insufficient dowries and constant pressure to conform to the role of submissive wife. In many cases both husband and wife had university degrees and, in fact, women with a university

education were sought in these arrangements (higher education being a valued quality in East Indian culture).

East Indian women face considerable stress while trying to find a place for themselves in two different cultures. When conflicts in values and beliefs of two cultures are perceived as incompatible, individuals are faced with the dilemma of choosing between the two (Kiefer, 1974). The outcome of this stress can lead to difficulties in maintaining a sense of self, when the daily continuity of behavior and thought is brought into question by the individual, her family and community (Kiefer, 1974).

Chapter 3:Adaptation

This chapter considers terms used in the literature to define the process of settling in a new cultural environment. The chapter ends by describing the model of adaptation used in this study.

Terminology

There are a number of terms in the literature used to explain immigrant adjustment and considerable ambiguity exists regarding their meanings (Herberg, 1969; Hutnik, 1986; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). For example, some studies refer to immigrant adjustment as one or more of the following: adaptation, assimilation, integration, ethnic separation, or acculturation.

Acculturation is sometimes used as an umbrella term under which the remaining terms are defined. Acculturation generally involves consistent first hand contact between two autonomous cultures, leading to a change in one of the two (Berry, 1980; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). La Fromboise et. al., (1993) described the relationship between the two cultures as one-way, implying that one culture gives up its identity while the second culture remains the same. In this way acculturation has been linked with assimilation. However some researchers maintain that acculturation is a reciprocal process, whereby both cultures experience changes in identity as a result of their influence on each other (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993).

There are four types of acculturation, each emphasizing a different level of adjustment (Berry, 1980). Integration occurs when a minority group manages to form a core part of both cultures at some level (Berry, 1980). While this minority

group makes some adjustments to become an “integral” part of the dominant society, its own cultural integrity is maintained. This situation implies the best of both worlds; individuals can maintain their own culture and simultaneously be part of the dominant culture. This level cannot be maintained if the two cultures are extremely different in their beliefs and values (Berry, 1980).

Assimilation was commonly used in early studies of immigrant adjustment (Gordon, 1964; Herberg, 1989). This term implies that the subordinate ethnic group abandons its cultural heritage and becomes completely immersed in the dominant culture (Gordon, 1964; Herberg, 1989; Hutnik, 1993; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). It is a unidirectional process suggesting a hierarchical relationship between the two cultures (LaFromboise et. al., 1993). Berry (1980) uses the term “melting pot” synonymously with assimilation. Melting pot theory suggests that many groups amalgamate to form a new group with a new culture, whereas assimilation usually means that only the minority takes on a new identity (Herberg, 1989).

The third type of acculturation is referred to as ethnic separation. In this case a group maintains both social and physical distance from the dominant group (Berry, 1980; Herberg, 1989). If this distance is maintained voluntarily it is called separation. When the dominant group imposes the boundaries the situation is referred to as segregation (Berry, 1980; Herberg, 1989). Minority groups use ethnic functions, such as within group marriages, to maintain their boundaries (Herberg, 1989).

Finally, marginality occurs when individuals do not fit in their old cultural environment, but at the same time are not completely accepted by the dominant society (Berry, 1980; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). In other words, they are on the margins of both cultures.

In this study adaptation will be used to describe the process of learning to live in a new culture. According to Hutnik (1986) adaptation refers to the changes in values and behaviors made by the immigrant in order to fit in better with the environment and includes changes in attitude as well as behavior. The goal of this study was to understand the process of possible changing values and behaviors that is taking place with East Indian women, and to explain some problems associated with those changes.

Adaptation Model

Herberg (1989) developed a comprehensive model of adaptation that includes pre-migration, immigration, and post-migration phases. Her model is useful in understanding the experience of East Indian immigrants in Canada.

According to Herberg (1989) knowledge about the origin of the immigrant culture is crucial in understanding the present and future situation of the immigrant group. Therefore, if we are to investigate current problems associated with cultural differences between the first and second generations, we must understand the traditions that have shaped the attitudes of first generation East Indians living in Canada. Family and social functions also play important roles in the adaptation process. Immigrating to another country can be an overwhelming experience, especially if one neither speaks the language nor understands the

customs of the new land. To maintain a sense of home and continuity immigrants try very hard to hold on to valued traditions (Herberg, 1989).

The adaptation process is influenced by contextual differences between the culture of origin and the culture of resettlement. Contexting refers to the degree to which kinship structures and values govern everyday life (Herberg, 1989). Herberg differentiates between high and low context cultures. East Indian culture, involving extended family relations, gender segregation, interdependence and unquestioned acceptance of cultural beliefs and traditions, is one example of a high context culture. Canadian culture with its emphasis on nuclear family values, individualism and gender equality, is an example of a low context one. Families or individuals may have a difficult time incorporating high and low context values, especially if the high context immigrating group holds strong beliefs. According to Herberg's theory, as the children of first generation East Indian immigrants grow up in a low context society, they will question the strong beliefs and traditions of their high context culture of origin. If parents and children cannot find a middle ground between the two cultures the conflict may contribute to an unstable family situation.

Another component of Herberg's model is the adaptation framework (Herberg, 1989). A timeline is used to signify stages that immigrants experience from the time they leave their country of origin until they are resettled in the new country. Each stage of the timeline is defined in terms of death and rebirth. For example, when immigrants leave their home country, they experience a death-like separation, in the sense that the individuals are leaving a life to which they

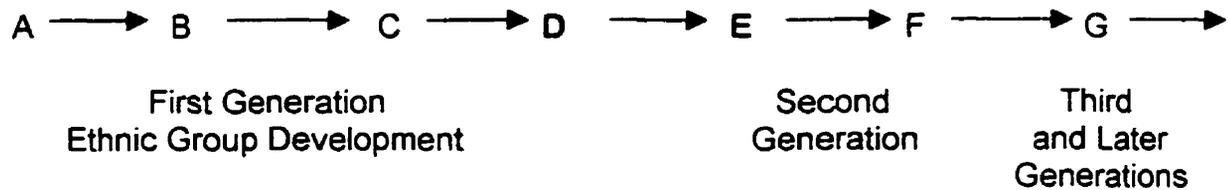
have been accustomed. When they settle in the new country, feelings of being at home eventually return, and Herberg calls this a rebirth. At each stage rebirth results from a combination of historic events that brought the immigrants to where they are now, and their present situation in the new setting. This death-rebirth process occurs at various points on the timeline. The framework is a one-way process; once individuals start going through the stages they cannot go back.

The stages of death and rebirth along the timeline are represented by specific points or benchmarks (see Figure 1). The focal point of this study is the transition from benchmark D to E, when inter-generational conflicts between immigrants and their children begin to occur (Herberg, 1989). For some this period passes with relatively little conflict or friction. For example the Scandinavians, Germans, and Dutch who emigrated from northern Europe adapted very easily to Canadian culture because they shared many commonalities (Herberg, 1989). In contrast, groups that are quite different from the host society, encounter more difficulties throughout the adaptation process (Berry, 1980; Herberg, 1989). Along with physical differences such as skin color and dress, cultural traditions can be strong barriers between the immigrant group and the host society. This is the case with East Indian immigrants. Not only are East Indians visibly different from mainstream Canadians, their traditions related to family and social structure set them apart (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Vincent, 1996). Community ties are very important, forcing individuals to behave according to the rules of the culture. If women are seen socializing with male

Figure 1

The Adaptation Framework

Benchmarks A-G



A = PLACE OF ORIGIN

B = SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL SHIFT
- break from original culture is initiated

C = SETTLEMENT PHASE
- follows emigration and initiates phase of developing ethno-cultural communities in Canada

D – E = ETHNIC COMMUNITIES AND IDENTITIES
- the development of ethnic community institutions through adaptation of cultural ideas from place of origin to the situation in Canada

F = THE SECOND GENERATION
- people born into immigrant homes, whose identity is laid down in the context of often conflicting loyalties

G = THE THIRD GENERATION AND BEYOND

Figure 1: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TIME-LINE

From "An adaptation framework for ethnic communities" by
D. Herberg 1989 p. 260.

friends they are no longer considered innocent and virtuous, according to the East Indian community (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Devasia & Devasia, 1991). This presents serious problems when families start investigating possible marriage partners from the community. Marriages outside the community are usually strictly prohibited (Dhruvarajan, 1996).

According to one study done with immigrants from India living in Calgary, AB, parents who were willing to accept their children's choices of friends (males or females) were those who had been exposed to urban influences in India as they grew up (Kurian, 1986). These parents tended to be less authoritarian and described their relationships with their children as being less formal than the traditional East Indian parent-child relationships. Therefore differences in exposure to urban versus rural influences while living in India may be factors in intergenerational relationships between East Indian immigrants and their children.

Women from traditional cultures such as East Indian are increasingly participating in mainstream society and are beginning to gain small measures of independence (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Herberg, 1989; Kurian, 1986; Naidoo & Vaidyanathan, 1990; Vincent, 1996). However female independence has no place in East Indian culture and is a factor in intergenerational conflict. As women gain financial independence they begin to question the components of their culture that have prevented them from achieving independence (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhruvarajan, 1996; Vincent, 1996). Although parents maintain a strong commitment to the traditional culture,

children, especially daughters, may not share that same commitment (Dhruvarajan, 1996). By questioning cultural beliefs many contentious issues regarding gender-roles and social behaviors (dating, friendships between men and women) are raised. These conflicts can lead to daily battles and prove to be stressful on the family system (Herberg, 1989). Clearly the transition period that Herberg (1989) identifies as D to E, when inter-generational conflicts emerge, fits the situation of many East Indian parents and their children. According to the death-rebirth metaphor immigrant parents experience the death of their cultural traditions through their children, while the children are experiencing a rebirth of mixed beliefs from both the Indian and Canadian cultures.

Chapter 4: Research Strategy

The purpose of this study was to explore cultural conflict between Sikh immigrant women and their daughters raised in Canada. Unlike Canadian culture, strict familial obligations and gender segregation highlight Sikh culture. As immigrants and their children become a part of the Canadian way of life, Canadian ideas about individualism and equality between the sexes can become a source of family problems. In this study I spoke with mothers and daughters about the expectations for male and female children, and familial expectations of the Sikh as well as the Canadian culture. The objectives were: 1) to identify and investigate the areas where mothers and daughters do not agree; 2) to explore the seriousness of the disagreements and possible effects on the family system; and 3) to consider whether and how communication between mothers and daughters may affect conflict in these areas.

A qualitative approach was used to achieve these objectives. Qualitative research is based on the premise that the context in which social phenomena occur influences and shapes the situation (Chapman & Maclean, 1991). Importantly, qualitative research facilitates understanding people's experiences from their own perspectives. By using in-depth interviews the ideas and meanings held by Sikh women about gender-roles and familial obligations were explored. The experiences that may have shaped the lives of each generation differently were examined.

The experiences of the participants were considered from an interpretive perspective (Kasper, 1994). Two distinct meanings that govern an interpretive

approach are useful in understanding conflict in the lives of Sikh women. The first refers to culturally-given meanings, that is, those ideas, beliefs, and values received from the culture (Kasper, 1994). The second refers to ideas, beliefs, and values that we extract through everyday lived experience (Kasper, 1994). According to feminist theorists, women repeatedly experience times in their lives where distinctions between these two sets of meanings manifest themselves. For example, women may have desires that do not coincide with culturally imposed meanings; therefore they may be forced to either become passive about their own needs, or follow their desires and face possible negative consequences (Kasper, 1994). To gain a better understanding of the conflicts that the Sikh women in this study faced, this rupture between two sets of meanings must be acknowledged.

Method

Data for this study were generated through in-depth interviews with Sikh immigrant women and their adult daughters. Participants were located through the temple, youth groups, East Indian student organizations at the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg, and East Indian dance classes. To facilitate the process of finding participants, the help of a female key informant within the Sikh community was enlisted. The role of the key informant was to locate potential participants. She was not informed as to which potential participants agreed or disagreed to be a part of the project. The criteria for participants were: Sikh immigrant mothers who had been living in Canada for at least 15-20 years with daughters who were single, in their 20's or older, had been

born and raised in Canada, or arrived by an early age (between 1-5 years of age). The number of participants was determined as the interviews progressed; however I expected that five or six mother-daughter pairs would be interviewed.

A semi-structured format was used for the interviews. Participants were asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix B). A topical guideline helped to keep the discussion focused (see Appendix A).

Mothers and daughters were interviewed separately and their answers were kept confidential from one another. I first interviewed the mothers and then their daughters. Both mothers and daughters had access to the topical guideline that was used, allowing mothers to see the topics to be discussed with the daughters and vice versa.

As some mothers may have felt more comfortable speaking in Punjabi (the native language of the Sikhs) I was prepared, if necessary, to carry out interviews in Punjabi. The interviews took place at locations agreed upon by both parties. I took brief notes during the interviews, and with permission of participants, audio-taped the conversations.

Each interview began with a brief introduction. The purpose of the study was explained and participants were assured that their identity would remain confidential, that they could refuse to answer any questions and that they could end the interview at any time. In addition, during the interview the participant's comfort level was taken into consideration; periodically the interviewer asked the participant if she was feeling comfortable with the questions and if it was all right to proceed with additional questions. If the participant was not feeling

comfortable, she was free to either not answer certain questions or terminate the interview. Upon completion of the project all notes and audio-tapes of the interviews will be destroyed. As a final note, participants were informed that if they disclosed any information regarding illegal parent-child relations, I would be obligated to report that information to the appropriate authorities.

Before I began the topical guideline issues, I spent time establishing rapport with the participants. I asked some general questions to help them feel comfortable. Demographic information including current occupations of parents, number of children in family (males and females), education level of children and parents, birth order, age of daughters, age of the mothers, frequency of temple attendance, and frequency of participation in cultural festivities (Diwali, Basaki) was sought.

Participants

Interviews were carried out with a total of five mother-daughter pairs. All of the women were from Winnipeg. Participants were contacted through the help of a key informant, a well respected woman in the Sikh community who contacted potential participants on behalf of the researcher. A list of potential participants was then given to the researcher, who called the individuals, explained the study in more detail and asked for their participation. All but one mother-daughter pair agreed to participate. The daughter thought the issues were too sensitive to discuss and did not want to participate.

Daughters ranged in age from 22 to 27 years. Ages of the mothers ranged from 45 to 70 years. The time living in Canada ranged from 15 to 25

years. Participants' families ranged in size; one family had two children (one son, one daughter), two families had three children (one son, two daughters), and two families had four children (one son, three daughters). Among the daughters interviewed, two were the youngest children in the family, two were the second oldest, and one was the oldest. One daughter said she went to temple every Sunday, while the remaining four daughters indicated they went once every few months or not at all. All of the daughters stated they participated very little in cultural activities and only at home with their families. Three mothers said they went to temple every Sunday; two said they went every few months. Most mothers indicated that they participated in cultural activities at home with their children.

Occupations of mothers ranged from blue collar jobs, clerical work, jobs in the food industry, to business owners and retirees. All mothers reported family incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000. The daughters all lived at home with their parents. Three of the daughters were university students while two were holding full time jobs after graduating from university.

All interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants and were recorded by audiotape. The 4 interviews that were conducted in Punjabi were transcribed into English directly from the audiotapes. Interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes in length. I interviewed the mothers first in a separate quiet room and then interviewed each of the daughters in the same manner. Each pair was interviewed during one visit; I did not return to interview the daughter or mother

on a separate occasion. The mothers and daughters were all very cooperative in giving each other privacy to carry out the interview.

The topical guideline (Appendix A) was followed closely during all interviews. Only the order of questions and probes differed according to the answers provided by the women. Probes were used when the women answered the questions with one word. For instance when I asked one mother if she thought arranged marriages could work in Canada, she said 'yes' and appeared to be finished with that question. At that point I asked her if she could tell me more, and she did. I was very flexible in applying the guide. If a participant began the interview by discussing how she felt about these issues, I let her speak without interruption. For these cases I felt it would be beneficial to allow the women to speak and then begin my questions. The questions were then asked in a different order because some may have been answered without being asked. I added the following question after my first interview; 'do you think women should be able to live alone before marriage?' During the first interview this seemed to be a contentious issue between the mother and daughter. It seemed to be an important question because living independently links closely with issues of freedom for women and obligations to family. I did not ask about the mothers' lives as they grew up in India because I was more concerned with current issues between mothers and daughters. For this reason the issue of urban versus rural backgrounds was never raised. Since this was pointed out in the literature as one factor related to differing parenting styles, it would have been interesting to see the differences with these mothers according to their

backgrounds. I felt that all of the participants spoke about their own experiences openly and honestly. All of the participants stayed on topic and answered the questions without hesitation.

As a young Sikh woman myself, I had to be a good listener and neutral so as not to influence the participants in any way. Many of the issues the daughters presented were very close to my own experiences, and at times I had to stop myself from giving my opinion on the topic. I continually checked myself during the interviews to reduce my effect on the participants. All of the daughters asked about my circumstances and experiences related to these issues once the interviews were completed. I then spoke openly with them. I felt that after the daughters had been open with me, I owed them the same consideration and felt comfortable talking with each of them for a short time after the interview ended.

Although some of the daughters appeared to be experiencing difficult periods in their lives, there was no mention of consulting external resources such as counseling. One daughter briefly mentioned having a Sikh psychiatrist friend who offered her counseling because she was depressed as a result of these issues. The daughter chose not to pursue the offer but did not explain why.

Analysis

Huberman and Miles's approach to data analysis (as cited in Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) was applied. This approach breaks the analytic process into three subprocesses (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The first subprocess, referred to as data reduction, involves dividing the data into themes, clusters and categories.

This was carried out by coding the data and noting keywords and phrases in the margins. These keywords and phrases were then compiled and organized according to their similarities and differences. The second subprocess involves displaying the reduced data from the subprocess in a visual, pictorial or diagrammatic form (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). This was carried out by plotting a diagram of traditional versus non-traditional choices made by mothers and daughters. The diagram illustrates some of the strongly opposed choices of the two generations, as well as some non-traditional choices made by both mothers and daughters. The third subprocess is conclusion drawing and verification. This was accomplished by highlighting important patterns and themes and comparing certain cases. In this section the most notable themes, such as community expectations and individual freedom, were explained and the effect of communication between generations was explored.

As a young Sikh woman myself I was challenged during data analysis to recognize my own biases. I did this by reading and re-reading the analysis to ensure that any value-laden comments were omitted. For instance I found that I drew conclusions from some of the young women's' actions based on my own experiences. When re-reading these sections I omitted these conclusions, especially where the daughters did not give reasons for some of their actions.

Chapter 5: Results

The first sub-process involves data reduction and the division of data into categories and clusters. This section describes the categories and themes that emerged from the data during data reduction.

The mothers and daughters who participated in this study openly discussed issues of dating, arranged marriage and familial obligations. The main themes developed relate to issues of freedom, control, and pressures to conform for the daughters and community expectations for the mothers. Both groups of women experienced a pull from two directions which forced them to choose one side or the other in dealing with important issues.

Cultural Identity

Information regarding temple attendance and participation in cultural activities was gathered at the beginning of each interview. Although three mothers attended temple every Sunday, only one mother expected her children to attend. The others left the choice to their daughters and only one daughter attended regularly. In a traditional culture such as Sikh, it is possible that frequency of temple attendance may be related to cultural connectedness. It would be reasonable to assume that temple attendance is affected by one's level of cultural connectedness. These daughters had problems with certain beliefs and values of the culture and chose not to attend temple on a regular basis. All of the mothers identified more with East Indian culture than their daughters in many ways including temple attendance. This can be seen as a basis for the

different ideas between mothers and daughters regarding issues of marriage and familial obligations.

Issues in Intergenerational Conflict

The issues covered in the interviews were complex and many of the participants were dealing with serious dilemmas associated with these topics in their personal lives at this time. As discussed earlier in this paper, women of this culture are raised to be submissive, non-assertive and timid. They are expected to be respectful to elders, especially men. Many of the dilemmas identified in the discussions seemed to relate to this expectation.

Community Norms and Expectations

Community expectations and norms appeared to be common threads connecting many issues for participants. Both mothers and daughters felt that doing what was right for the sake of the community out-weighed their personal preferences in some instances. However the picture is not as clear cut as it seems. Throughout the interviews the women seemed to be caught between what they thought they were supposed to do according to tradition, and what they wanted to do. For the mothers this translated into choosing to go against rules that they were raised with in order to maintain open and close relationships with their children. For the daughters the expectations translated into a constant need for freedom in all facets of their lives, while at the same time maintaining a respectful relationship with their parents. Clearly both groups of women appeared to be experiencing a pull from two opposite directions. The mothers felt a need to remain loyal to traditions while at the same time they wanted to

give their children a happy upbringing in a society very different from theirs. The daughters wanted to live in this Western society as young, free and independent women without sacrificing their relationships with their families.

Dating and Marriage Promises

Dating was an issue that seemed to cause considerable uneasiness for the mothers. Some of them stated that they did not agree with dating and did not like it because it caused too many problems. They often felt caught; one mother said, "I allow my daughter to go out with boys but not happily." This is one example of feeling caught between two sets of values; on one hand this mother believed that dating was wrong according to traditions, but she allowed her daughter to date because that was what her daughter wanted. The other mothers chose to handle dating quite differently. For instance, two mothers said that they were absolutely not in favor of dating and would not allow it. As one of them stated;

"I don't like it, it causes too many problems for the children and they don't know anything about these kinds of things; they only care about feelings, but it is not that easy and it doesn't look nice if one day a girl is with one boy and the next day she is with someone else."

It is interesting to note that all of the daughters indicated that they had dated or planned to date. According to one daughter;

"I think I should be allowed to date, because they [parents] do ask me if I've met anyone from school, because I'm at that age. The

expectation they have is if I have someone I can't change my mind and say I want to see someone else now.The only thing you can do, I hate to say it is not tell them unless you are sure this is the one you are going to marry."

The difference between these mothers and the mother who allowed dating, even though she did not like it, was the openness of the relationships with the daughters. It seems the mothers who chose to stay with the traditions were in fact decreasing the chances of maintaining open relationships with their daughters by forcing the daughters to date secretly.

Dating was not a simple issue. Discussions about choosing a marriage partner arose; all of the mothers said that their daughters would be allowed to "date" their potential spouse. Potential spouse refers to a Sikh man chosen either by friends and family or a man that the daughter has met on her own and introduced to her family as someone she would like to marry. Once again the dilemma of cultural expectations versus personal choice surfaced. The mothers defined dating very specifically as a short period of time when the two individuals get to know each other within the family setting. During this dating phase all of the mothers stated that their daughters would not be allowed to go out alone at night with their potential spouse in case they were seen by anyone in the community. As one mother put it;

"We don't like them going out alone, its okay if they sit with the family or with their friends, but we don't like them going out alone,

then our Indian people start to talk and make something out of nothing.”

Another mother said;

“I think going to the movies should be okay and never staying out late at night where people will see them out together. We will mostly have them in the house, sitting and watching movies or playing games rather than being out....because it doesn't look nice.”

Once the couple was engaged and the engagement was announced they would be given more freedom to go out alone and get to know each other. Every mother stated that it was important for her daughter to know the man she was planning to marry very well; for example it was important that their ideas about life matched. While the mothers wanted their daughters to marry men of their daughters' choice, they were not willing to give them the freedom necessary to carry this out. The reasoning behind the restrictive dating relates to community norms. If a young woman is seen frequently “dating” a potential spouse with whom she later decides she does not want a relationship she will lose the respect of the community if she is seen with a different man. All of the daughters stated that they wanted complete freedom to get to know the men before they made any decisions about marriage. For instance, they said they wanted to date them openly whether that meant at night or during the day and that they wanted very little family involvement. According to one daughter;

“Basically I want total freedom to get to know them in any way possible. You can't really know someone if your parents tell you

that you can only do this and this but don't do this and don't go there. Either they're letting me be with him or they are not.... if you're restricting us from the start it's not going to work."

Another daughter said;

"I think family should not be interfering in anything when it comes to marriage issues. I really believe that once your child is an adult you should leave the marriage aspect of how they spend time and what they do with it up to them, but it's ok to be a guide to them, but don't make decisions for them, let them do their own thing."

According to this daughter;

"Well I think it would be nice to get to know somebody and maybe live with each other for awhile. I believe you should live together and see if you can handle each other in terms of those circumstances then I think you can carry on. I know it will not be accepted in the community it certainly will not. My family will hate it, they won't approve at all ...but eventually they accept things."

The daughters stated that this issue was too important to compromise: if their parents did not agree with how they wanted to find a spouse they would definitely go against their parents' wishes. These daughters also admitted that making their parents unhappy in this way was not an easy decision. The daughters felt caught between their personal desires for dating and maintaining acceptable relationships with their parents. It is important to note that only one of the daughters had taken a stand with her parents on the issue of dating; she had

been open with her parents about her non-Indian boyfriend. Although the remaining four believed strongly that they should have the freedom to date men openly, they spoke of actually doing it sometime in the future. These daughters dealt with this particular dilemma by compromising their choices in order to maintain parental acceptance.

The one daughter who took a stand with her parents regarding her choice to openly date a man from outside the culture spoke of the guilt she felt before she told her parents about her boyfriend. She said;

"When I was with my boyfriend and the two years they [her parents] didn't know about it was complete hell for me cause the guilt is amazing, when I told them it was like this great burden had been lifted off from my shoulders, and yes they were angry and upset, but they got over it and now things are good."

This relationship did not result in marriage and the daughter seemed to have changed her mind about dating. She said;

"At the point in my life where I am now I don't agree with dating, two months ago if you had asked me I would say yes.....I was dating someone for four years and we were engaged....he found someone else two months ago. I told my parents about him because I thought he was going to be my husband. I don't think dating is right because in Western society this is normal stuff, its normal to get together with someone, to break up and move on, but for us it's

completely different where we get into a relationship.....and say this is the one I'm going to marry."

When discussing her future plans for finding a husband she wanted "to get it over with" by having her parents find her a husband and arrange a marriage. This daughter lived with the guilt of dating someone behind her parents' backs, faced them with her choice, gained their acceptance and then chose to come back to tradition after a negative experience. She returned to what she felt was a safe place. She considered her failed relationship to be a consequence of dating someone non-Indian. This example illustrates a very important point. This daughter chose to face her parents with her non-traditional choice and by doing so actually strengthened her relationship with her parents. The other four daughters kept their desires to themselves in order to maintain what they believed to be acceptable relationships with their parents.

From these examples, it seemed difficult for these young women to maintain a healthy balance between personal choice and tradition. As the Sikh tradition is extremely strict, there is little room for compromise and parents seemed to pressure their daughters to conform. Although the daughters were unhappy with the situation as it stood, they were not prepared to go against their parents wishes. These women felt the cultural pull but also wanted more freedom in their lives. They appeared to have resolved the dilemma of two worlds by choosing to stay with tradition and follow parental wishes, thus compromising their own desires to date.

Arranged Marriage and Set Ups

Ideas about arranged marriages varied among the mothers and daughters. All of the women felt that the traditional arranged marriage where the bride and groom meet for the first time on their wedding day, would definitely not work in Canada. The mothers believed in a modified arrangement. They felt that family involvement was an important part of a marriage process. Two mothers felt that family involvement was very important and that parents should play a large role in choosing a spouse. One suggested;

"It could work [an arranged marriage] because I've seen my nephews having their set ups by their parents and it's worked for them, very well. If the children are willing to listen to their parents these can work, cause usually mom and dad know what the children need, especially the daughters."

According to the other mother;

"Actually you are married to one person, you are married to the whole family, we think if they find [each other] themselves it's [ok], but the families have to agree with each other, they have to accept it, then it's wonderful."

The other mothers were somewhat more liberal in their ideas about finding husbands for their daughters. The main difference between the positions was the realization that finding a spouse is not as easy as it used to be. One mother said;

“We want arranged marriages for our children, but now their ideas don’t always match. Before if ideas didn’t match one person, usually the woman, would change her ideas to make them match. These days young people don’t try to match ideas or won’t change their ideas to make them fit with someone else’s. We would like our kids to meet nice Sikh children through school then tell us to introduce the families in a formal way, then the boy and girl can get to know each other from there, with everyone knowing what they are doing.”

Some mothers left the task of finding a potential spouse in the hands of their daughters, and expected the daughters to be open with them about the men they met. Some daughters were told they were free to meet men through school or work as long as they told the families that they were planning on seeing each other. As one mother said; “If she meets someone, likes him, always she knows she can tell us and she can get married.” Although this may be a compromise, daughters considered the issue to be more complicated than the mothers did.

Most daughters were concerned about family involvement. They wanted the chance to get to know these men well before agreeing to marry them. However, once parents were aware of their daughter’s interest in a potential husband, the young couple was expected to get to know each other under strict conditions. As one daughter suggested;

“The new form of arranged marriage which I still think is an arranged marriage can work, that is where I tell you about a person,

you get to know them and you get to say whether you want to marry them or not, but if you say no, and I've had friends who have said no to people chosen for them, they get all the pressure. For example 'why don't you like him, what's wrong with him', which is the same as saying you have to marry him. I have a lot of expectations of what I want for my life partner, one of them is that his and my mind have to match really well and in an arranged marriage it's a hit and miss type of thing, because you don't have much of a choice or chance to really see who you are going to marry."

Another daughter said;

"For me personally it [arranged marriage] could not work at all, because we have a hard time getting along with our own family members, never mind a person from the outside that we hardly know, I have no idea how I will be able to live with them, how they are going to accept me and how I will accept them it's difficult. ... It could never work for me.....I think family should not be interfering in anything when it comes to marriage issues...once your child is an adult you should leave the marriage aspect of how much time they spend and what they do with it up to them."

One daughter spoke of how her older sister handled the situation when she met a man through university;

“My older sister just happened to meet a guy that was Sikh, and they dated for four years before they got married, and they only told the families about each other the year they got married.”

It seems that arranged marriages are not simple. Most daughters wanted to know their potential husbands very well before marriage whereas their mothers were more concerned about keeping the entire process respectable according to the community. One way young women compromise is illustrated in the above quote. By keeping knowledge of the relationship from parents, the daughter was free to get to know her boyfriend without any family involvement until both individuals were ready for a lifetime commitment. Although this is secretive, in a system allowing very few compromises, this is one way young people maintain a balance between their own desires and community expectations.

Marriage Outside of the Community

The mothers and daughters gave mixed answers to the issue of marriage outside of the community. Most daughters were not concerned about marrying Sikh men. They wanted to marry men they loved; “I know that if I meet a non-Sikh and fall in love with him and want to marry him, I will.” “Race and religion do not matter, the person matters, a peaceful person would be nice.” However, the daughter who had been dating a non-Sikh for four years said that she just wanted her parents to find her a nice Sikh man and get it over with. Two of the mothers were very open about this issue. When asked if it was important for their daughters to marry Sikh men one responded, “no, [it’s not important] she can marry who ever she wants.” The second mother stated;

“First I used to think this way, but now I don’t believe that the man she chooses has to be Sikh, he can be from any race or religion as long as he makes my daughter happy I will accept him completely, my daughter knows she has total freedom in this area.”

Others responded quite differently. One mother wanted her daughter to marry a Sikh even though she knew that was not what her daughter wanted. She said;

“Our choice, me and my husband, we just want a Sikh boy for our daughter, whoever she likes. She doesn’t care about religion, but I know inside she is very religious minded even though she doesn’t show it. She tells me she’s not ready yet. If she brings home somebody who is not Sikh to us, we have to agree in spite of her ruining her life and our life.”

It seems that the mothers are aware that their daughters may not marry Sikh men. However, as neither the daughters nor the mothers had dealt directly with this issue yet, it was not an area of conflict at the time of the interview.

Interestingly none of the mothers suggested that if their daughters married outside the community that they would not be accepted by their families. This may indicate a slight shift in attitude resulting from years of exposure to Western culture. However, it is difficult to predict as these mothers and daughters had not yet faced the selection of marriage partners.

Roles of Men and Women in Marriage

When considering the roles of men and women in marriage according to the mothers, it became clearer why issues of dating and marriage were causes of

conflict in these women's' lives. All but two of the mothers felt it was the wife's responsibility to look after her husband. One mother said;

"Naturally the woman is kind hearted, you pay more attention to your husband, you look after him like a baby because you have to look after his clothes, what he's eating, his shoes, how he dresses and how and what he needs...you try to make him happy....I feel if I'm married to this person his character is my responsibility and he should always be happy, if his friends or family come to the house the wife is supposed to look after them too, because they come to his house, nobody knows the woman, everybody knows the man."

Another mother said;

"Women should be able to look after her house, she should have a duty towards the family, she has to raise the children, she should make meals for them and look after their clothes and the house, this is how I was brought up. I look at cooking and cleaning as my jobs, but my daughter she thinks the man should be cooking, the man should be washing and I'm sure it's hard to find Indian men like that. I haven't seen any Indian boys cooking and washing clothes, we teach boys other things, moms take care of sons by doing these things for them until their wives will do it."

The daughters felt quite differently about the role of women in marriage.

One daughter said;

“That’s the part where I’m different from the majority of this culture, I think both individuals should be partners in the marriage rather than the woman doing all of the housework, even though women have careers they are still expected to take care of all those things, I think it should be equal with the man rather than the woman being inferior in the family.”

Another daughter suggested;

“I think a marriage is like a partnership, I think its totally 50/50 and I expect that, I don’t believe that the man is the only breadwinner. I think I have a very Western idea of marriage.”

Contrary to traditional male-female relationships, daughters seemed to favour equality in their relationships. Some of the mothers indicated that they followed a certain role because that was how they were raised. Women and men got married to fulfill certain obligations and proscribed roles; women as housekeepers and men as breadwinners. Therefore, if we apply these role expectations to the process of finding suitable mates, it is clear why the two generations may clash. For the mothers of these daughters, finding husbands simply involves choosing good breadwinners. While the daughters expect to marry men who will act as their equals.

When parents and daughters are considering suitable mates, they are looking for two different things. When the mothers were questioned about the role of a man in marriage they gave the following answers. According to one mother;

"I guess he [husband] feels more responsible because I've got somebody with me, to look after her and he starts building up the house, thinking my wife should be comfortable where she is and how can I make her happy and how many comforts can I give, and physically if she needs help in the house, they are supposed to help with the heavy work, a woman cannot do it, every woman is delicate in her own way."

Another mother said;

"See for myself my husband looks after all the financial end of it, his job is the paper work. He looks after the paperwork for the house and the banks, I don't know anything about it. He does gardening and outside work. I think he does more than most Indian men would do, he does help me with the cleaning sometimes."

All of the daughters answered this question quite differently. For example one daughter suggested;

"He should be my friend. I'm very idealistic, I say he should be complimentary to the woman, again in terms of a partner I want a man who is comfortable being on equal ground with me in all areas of the relationship."

It is important to note that two of the mothers shared this view. As one said;

"Her job is the same as the man's, they both have to work at everything together. He has to help her and she has to help him. If their ideas match from the beginning then this will be ok."

According to another mother;

“In this day and age everyone thinks the woman is the same as the man, we think this way too.”

Familial Obligations

Living with one's in-laws after marriage is a tradition for daughters in East Indian culture. As discussed, sons stay and care for their parents in old age. When they marry, their wives are expected to live with the husband's family. Two of the mothers expected that their daughters would live with their in-laws after marriage. According to one mother;

“We're thinking that when our son gets married we'll stay with him, it's every parents dream. In this day and age we can't really say, unless the parents are modern the kids won't want to live with them and there also has to be love between them.”

Another mother said;

“I tell my children that when you are married and you have mother in-laws living with you, you have to understand them first, give them enough love so they feel that you have brought happiness and love in to the house. If they make suggestions, you must listen to them....you should try to agree with them if there are differences...if something comes up you tell them that this is not right, we have to adjust and if things still aren't good let your husband decide what is best.”

According to this mother;

"I feel it's important for my daughter to live with her in-laws, if they don't have anyone else, only son and no daughters, where else will they go, their son is a part of them, how could they ever leave their son, how will I ever leave my son!"

The daughters considered the situation quite differently. They all stated they did not want to live with their husband's family unless a parent needed help for health reasons. This comes back to the issue of family involvement, and the fact that the daughters frequently mentioned the importance of independence from family. They all wanted a chance to live alone with their husbands without the parental rules that they had spent their lives trying to escape. From this example and the examples from previous issues, the theme of wanting to break away continues to surface in the daughters' answers.

On one hand, some of the mothers emphasized the importance of keeping traditions and families together, while the daughters stated repeatedly that they want freedom in all areas of their lives. Clearly many of the traditions do not favor freedom of choice and independence for women, goals that appear to be important for the daughters. Therefore it is understandable that mothers and daughters would not always agree on these issues. When daughters were questioned about living with in-laws they answered in the following way;

"I think it would make things very difficult for a couple starting out, in some ways they have the financial support there if they need it, but on the other hand they don't get the same privacy and sometimes

the wife gets caught in the middle between her husband and her mother in-law if there are problems.”

Similarly;

“If I marry someone my parents find then I would be expected to live with my in-laws, but I tell you I wouldn’t last a week, I would hate it so much, I would rather live the life of a divorcee rather than live with people I don’t like. This is hard to explain, I would rather live alone than live in someone else’s house under their rules when I’ve had this family situation going on with my own parents, like I want out! My parents always say that when my brother gets married his wife will have the run of this great big house, that kind of thinking is not for me. I don’t ever want to live in someone else’s house, I would never feel like it’s mine where I can do whatever I want.”

Some mothers did not expect their daughters to follow this tradition because they had not been expected to live with their in-laws. For instance, one mother stated that her husband’s parents chose to live with another son instead of the son she married. Another stated that her husband was independent of his parents from a young age due to his schooling and remained separate from his parents after marriage except for yearly visits, lasting up to three months.

Women Living Alone and Issues of Freedom of Choice

One area of discussion where all of the daughters clearly felt a need for freedom was the issue of living alone before marriage. Although all of the

daughters lived at home with their parents, they wanted to live on their own at some time. However, a woman living on her own in the same city as her parents before marriage is unacceptable in the East Indian community. Once again this comes back to the issue of community norms and expectations. Women are expected to go from their parents home to their husband's home. This allows no time for unacceptable behavior, such as dating and premarital sex. All of the mothers believed that it was impractical or not safe for their daughters to live alone, unless they had to relocate for school or work. One mother who disagreed strongly with women living on their own suggested that;

“They [daughters] have to live with their parents, that is our respectable way, our way of our culture...if you are in the same town and living in an apartment and your parents are in the same city society doesn't look at that as acceptable, respectable behavior, people would talk, at least I would.”

Another mother stated;

“Its ok if they have to live that way because of school or work, but not if their parents live in the same city. People will start talking about them and it doesn't look nice in the community.”

For this particular situation community expectations had a significant impact on the choices made by the daughters. All of the daughters were living at home with their parents even though they all indicated wanting to be on their own.

According to one daughter;

“That is another problem I have discussed with so many people, if you want to move out of the house you have to get a job out of town. If you move out of the house in the same city people talk, ‘why did she move out, is it because she wants freedom to do other things, like have men over’ , even when I do move to another city, I want to make sure that I don’t have very many relatives there because they will expect me to live with them or spy on me a lot.”

Another daughter who had a full-time career said;

“The reason I’m still living with them [her parents] is because of the cultural obligations, I don’t want people in the community to say anything to my parents that your daughter is not living with you, what’s going on in your family. For that reason and that reason alone I’m still here.”

This daughter appeared to compromise her desire for freedom so as to protect her family from negative comments, even though from her comments it was apparent that she considered herself an independent woman. She said, “I don’t consider myself a girl just because I’m not married, I can basically support myself even though I live at home, I’m an independent woman.” This statement clearly illustrates conflicting feelings and actions in this woman’s life. She sees herself as independent and able to make decisions yet continues to live according to rules that make her unhappy. This can be attributed to wanting to maintain a

respectful relationship with her parents for the sake of community expectations.

She characterized her relationship with her parents in the following way;

“My relationship at this point is conflicting, it’s changing because of the transition, this is that period when you become a teenager, that breaking away, it just hasn’t stopped yet and I don’t think it is going to stop until they are gone. It has been dragging on for so many years, it has become routine like numbing pain, in the sense that it is there underneath the surface, it hurts but I try to ignore it.”

This woman was certainly unhappy with her life. However, she did not feel she had the freedom to live as she chose because what she wanted contravened with what her parents and her community expected.

An underlying theme of control is quite apparent in these situations. The parents maintain a certain level of control over their daughters lives to insure that their daughters are recognized as acceptable members of the community. Three of the five daughters spoke of wanting to go overseas to study or work and how their parents had discouraged their choices or not allowed them to go. The mothers’ reasons for not allowing their daughters to fulfill their dreams ranged from safety issues in a foreign country to the negative appearance of young, single East Indian women traveling on their own. One daughter who wanted to study in India said she “chickened out” when her parents absolutely would not consider the idea of letting her go. “My parents got so angry at me I didn’t even know how to respond. At that time I chickened out. I always chicken out. I don’t have any control over my own life.” Another daughter who wanted to study

overseas said her father was absolutely against it. As she said, " it made me really angry, but I had no choice, I couldn't exactly walk out the door." Again these woman chose to accept their parents rules instead of following through with their own wishes. There remains a conflict, while they want their freedom they also feel pressure to conform to traditions and once again choose to resolve the situation by sacrificing their wants. One daughter was an exception here, she said that she wanted to work overseas and she already had her mother's support "I've told mom and I'm going to get her to talk to dad and I know I'm going to win!" This was the same daughter who told her parents about her boyfriend. There was a level of openness in this mother-daughter relationship that was not apparent with the other pairs. This may be attributed to the fact that she set a precedent for herself by making her wants very clear to her parents.

One of the older mothers offered the most non-traditional answer to the issue of freedom of choice for her daughter. She said;

"I think that it's important to listen to my children and that they listen to me. Sure sometimes I may not agree with their choices, but they will explain things to me and I try to understand them and they do the same with me. Until today I have always listened to my children because they know more about this country and culture and because I think they are good kids."

This mother was one of two non-traditional thinkers. It is interesting to note that she was in her 70's; therefore one would expect that she might be more traditional and set in her ways. She spoke of her children as individuals with their

own ideas, and not so much as children she wanted to control. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this project to learn more about her experiences that may have influenced her non-traditional ideas.

For some families money was also used as a control tactic. One mother said that even though her children worked when they were younger the money they earned was all put away. This is a common practice in East Indian families. As one mother described it, "for my kids whenever they have worked, we have put their money aside, it's not that we want them to work and earn money, until they are married it's our responsibility as parents." Obviously it is extremely difficult to have control over one's life when the individual as an adult does not even have control over her finances. The daughter who was working full time said "even my work my parents control, because the pay cheque goes straight into the bank into a joint account and I never see my money, my dad has it". The mother in this situation spoke of keeping her daughter's earnings as a way of helping her. She said;

"We give our daughter a ride to work everyday. She's earning money and living in the house, we always tell her that she doesn't need to spend the money, it all goes to the bank. If we ever need a lump sum we can use it because this is our money, otherwise we are keeping it for you and your wedding....we don't need her money, but if we need it we will use it because this is our family money now."

These parents may have considered that if their daughter had control over her finances she could move out and do all of the things that she is not allowed to do. By convincing her that this money is for her marriage they have kept her where tradition dictates.

Education and Financial Independence

Education was very important to all of the women interviewed; they all felt that women should go to university, enter a good field and develop a career. The mothers were strongly in favor of their daughters receiving a good education.

According to one mother;

“I have always told all of my children that education is the most important thing they have to do because it is something that they can always have, no one can ever take it from them and they will have good standing in the community. I believe in Canada it is important for both men and women.”

The daughters thought that education was a good way to be on equal ground with men as well as a way to have more freedom in their lives. As one daughter stated, “I think that if you are educated you know that you don’t have to take the roads that are given to you, you can decide for yourself.” However, education does not always guarantee freedom. According to one daughter who had completed her education and was working in her career of choice;

“I’m expected at work to be an adult, to make decisions for thousands of people: when I get home I’m expected to be the kid, I’m not allowed to make any choices for myself, like what I do with

my free time....my way of unwinding is sitting at my computer checking my E-mail, I don't want to sit with my parents, they think it's selfish, our Indian culture is very other oriented, being Western we're more self oriented. I know my parents think that if we can't control our kids twenty four hours a day, we'll try to control them at home where we control the environment, which is irritating because it's hard to jump between two roles of being adult decision maker to kid no decision maker."

Mothers wanted their daughters to participate in the work world successfully while at the same time maintain strict traditions. This poses a dilemma for both children and their parents. Once an individual is exposed to new ideas that may be more appealing than old ideas then that individual is likely to change. This results in a questioning of rules regarding personal freedom imposed by parents and community. As one daughter describes education,

"it is a really good way of getting out of a single minded way of thinking...as a woman if you don't have an education..especially in our culture you would be more oppressed, you would likely be married off at a younger age, and you would be more adjusting."

Mothers wanted their daughters to have a good standing in the community with reference to higher education. However, the mothers realized that their educated daughters may not be willing to accept traditional expectations often placed upon Indian women.

Financial Independence

Financial independence after marriage was viewed differently by mothers and daughters. Most of the mothers thought it was important only if a second income was required in the family. Some thought it would also be extremely important if there were marital problems and their daughter had to support herself and her children. The daughters believed it was important in the case of emergencies as well. They also stated that financial independence was important for a woman's self confidence in knowing that she did not have to be dependent on a man for financial support.

Sons and Daughters

A discussion on differences between sons and daughters is useful in pointing out how strong traditions regarding this issue have been maintained. When the mothers were asked if they treated their sons differently than their daughters in terms of freedom one mother gave the following response;

"I never felt that I was treating them any different, but when you ask my daughter she says I'm more lenient with her brother, that he can do things that she can't, like he can go out at night and she is not allowed to go out at night. She doesn't know this is for her own safety and security, it is not because I'm favoring him and not favoring her, to me it seems like the boy can protect himself more than a girl, the girl is always in more danger. I feel more safer with him going out at night than my daughter going out, also you have to

think about what others will see and think if they see young unmarried girls out at night.”

This mother made a strong case for the security of her daughter, however she was also concerned about community expectations with reference to her daughter’s freedom. Other mothers were not as concerned. One said, “I allow my son and daughters to go out the same.”

According to the daughters, sons were more often than not allowed more freedom in terms of household responsibilities and going out. One daughter said;

“If I had a boy and a girl, I would treat them the same, let’s say if my daughter has to vacuum, then so does my son, he has to help out with the chores. It’s not like in our house where the guy doesn’t help out because he’s the only son. One value I would like to teach my son is to respect women cause I don’t think a lot of Indian men respect women as the gender women, I mean they know of us but they don’t really know us.”

According to another daughter;

“Girls are usually taught to be more adjusting and to put up with what is put in front of you, for guys it’s ok not to put up with everything and to have an opinion. I am not allowed to show my anger, they (my parents) always say what are your in-laws going to think if they hear you talking that way. My brother can get away with murder till two in the morning, no problem. I’ve never been to

a bar, ever. Mostly because I can't and secondly I don't have any interest."

The daughters appeared to see more differences between themselves and their brothers than the mothers did. This could be due to the fact that these daughters were trying very hard to gain freedom and independence for themselves whereas the mothers had been raised in a culture that automatically allowed men more freedom than women. Therefore the mothers may not have been consciously aware of how differently they were treating their sons and daughters.

Themes from the Data in Relation to Literature on East Indian Women

Community expectations and norms seemed to guide some of the answers given by these mothers and daughters. Many of the mothers chose to impose certain rules on their daughters because they wanted their daughters to live up to the expectations of the community. Interestingly, the majority of the daughters were complying with the rules, not happily but nevertheless they believed their family relationships with their parents were more important than their personal non-family relationships. These daughters were not resigned to these decisions; they each spoke of following their dreams for the future including dating, living on their own, and choosing their own husbands according to their expectations not those of their parents. However strong pressures to conform to their parents' wishes and the daughters' need for the familial support appeared to be guiding many of their decisions.

This study provides evidence supporting the findings of a small number of studies on intergenerational conflict (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhurvarajan, 1996; Kurian, 1986; Naidoo & Vaidyanathan, 1990). Discussions concerning issues of dating, arranged marriage, familial obligations and independence for women revealed that second generation women want more freedom than they have now in their lives. A noticeable theme was the strong desire by second generation women to have increased control in all facets of their lives. As cited in the literature, one explanation for this finding may be years of exposure to Western culture in which personal independence plays a large role (Ames & Inglis, 1976; Dhurvarajan, 1996; Herberg, 1989; Kurian, 1986; Naidoo & Vaidyanathan, 1990). In this sample the families interviewed had been living in Canada for at least 15 years and the oldest daughter was 27 years old; therefore these young women had spent the majority of their lives in Canada. It is possible that these second generation women had taken on many Western values and behaviors through peer relations. Further, the daughters interviewed were all university students or pursuing careers, implying a certain level of independence that may not be present in another setting. University education gives one the opportunity to explore new ideas and question old ones, thus providing a means to a lifestyle of choice.

Although the second generation women were independent in their thinking on issues of dating, marriage and familial obligations, they were less independent in their behavior. Clearly experiencing conflict, these women wanted to date, live on their own and travel overseas alone yet most had not done so. One

explanation may be that certain traditions related to cultural identity were firmly implanted in these women's' psyche (Naidoo & Davis, 1988). The East Indian culture places great emphasis on respect for elders, especially parents. In addition, according to tradition, family needs are met before and most often instead of individual needs. Therefore even though these women expressed some Western aspirations, they chose not to live them out because of their obligations to their families. There was a clear dual nature to the ideas of the second generation women. This finding is supported in the literature which suggests that inherent in a dualistic outlook resulting from consistent conflicting demands is strong pressure (Naidoo & Davis, 1988). Some of the daughters stated that they felt pressure to live up to the demands of East Indian culture because of family attachment, while at the same time craved to fulfill their own desires for new experiences and independence. Time will tell how these women fair in the midst of strongly conflicting values and behaviors regarding important life decisions such as marriage and personal independence. Considering the evolutionary characteristic of adaptation it is likely that the lives of these families with reference to dating, arranged marriage, and familial obligations will reflect Western norms as new generations grow up in Canada.

Community expectations and norms were a very important part of this study. This was seen clearly among the first generation mothers who were trying to maintain traditions. One issue that stood out was that of women living alone before marriage. The mothers all agreed that women should never live alone in the same city as their parents. Community norms and expectations guided these

answers since traditionally daughters went from their parents' homes to the homes of their husbands' and in-laws. This topic was not directly addressed in the literature; however, if related to the issue of personal freedom, this supports the findings that women want more freedom. While all of the daughters wanted to live on their own someday, the mothers were very concerned about how this sort of behavior would look in the community. Community expectations appeared to be strong motivating factors for mothers; in some cases importance of appearance in the community outweighed the importance of their daughters' happiness. The issues in question are undeniably sensitive issues in a culture that is extremely conservative in the area of sexual behavior, especially sexual behavior of women. As with respect for parents (mentioned above), maintaining certain community norms may be considered integral parts of this cultural identity and therefore remain firmly anchored in these women's' psyche (Naidoo & Davis, 1988). Additional values based on community norms and expectations that emerged related to differential freedom given to sons and daughters, living with the husband's parents after marriage and roles of husbands and wives. These issues supported literature findings in that daughters often complained of brothers having more freedom (Kurian, 1986). When mothers were asked this question they often answered that they treated their sons and daughters equally, whereas their daughters felt quite different. Community norms may be guiding the mothers as they may not see the differences between sons and daughters as deliberate unequal treatment but may be doing what has always been done. On

the other hand, the daughters have been exposed mainly to Western culture where these differences may appear more obvious to them.

According to Kurian (1986), who spoke with East Indian families in Saskatoon, SK most problems were associated with lack of communication between generations. When considering the present sample, lack of communication appears to be one component. The daughters appear to be complying with their parents traditional wishes although they often do not agree with them. If these daughters communicated their wishes to their parents they may have a greater chance of carrying them (their wishes) out, instead of following the non-traditional demands placed upon them. When discussing issues of marriage and family, the daughters' values are quite different from those of their parents. One instance in which there was open communication between the daughter and her parents resulted in a positive experience for both parents and child. The daughter stated that "they (her parents) are accepting, but with great difficulty, it took a lot of time and effort but they eventually accepted me for what I am." This example suggests that communication can have a positive effect during this time of conflict between the generations. After this daughter's exposure of her boyfriend to her parents, they became very open with one another about the daughters' choice of her marriage partner, as well as her friendships with men. A further example of the positive effect of communication is a second older mother who was somewhat non-traditional thinking. She suggested her reason for the good relationship between herself and her daughter was the fact that she listened to her daughter instead of always

expecting her daughter to listen to her without questioning anything. She stated that because of her age she did not always understand everything about Western culture and she trusted her children to teach her and listened to their suggestions. She felt she had a good daughter and therefore it was to her advantage to learn from her. This was another effective way of dealing with issues of contention between the generations. An interesting form of communication between daughters and fathers was also mentioned by at least two daughters. If there was ever a situation where the daughters needed their fathers' approval they would go through their mothers. One daughter stated;

“Right now I’m trying to do something... I want to work in a third world country for a year, so I’m trying to talk them [parents] into it. I’ve told my mom and I’m going to get her to talk to dad and I know I’m going to win!”

Another daughter said;

“My relationship with my dad isn’t great ... basically he tells his opinion and I’m supposed to listen. The thing is when I do try and voice my opinion he always tried not to welcome it so I stopped voicing my opinion to him I always just say ok, and that’s about it. He knows that it’s not open so he always talks to me through my mom, she’s the mediator.”

Essentially the mothers acted as the middle people between the fathers and the daughters. The daughters said that this was the best way to keep peace in the family, because often if the girls approached their fathers they would end up

fighting. However, by having their mothers convince their fathers, fights were avoided and the daughters often received the approval they wanted. Fathers were often seen by daughters as more dominant and over-protective of females and these daughters found their fathers difficult to reason with. Although the mothers did not comment on this form of communication, from the daughters' accounts it seemed to work well in avoiding fights and allowing the daughters to get what they wanted some of the time. Being a member of this community, I can say that this type of three-way communication between fathers, mothers and daughters is very common. Daughters often share a closer bond with their mothers because mothers devote considerable effort toward raising good future daughters in-law, by teaching them to cook and clean at an early age. During this time together, mothers and daughters become closer, while fathers often remain as the authority figure. Therefore since daughters and mothers have developed close relationships, daughters often feel more comfortable asking their mothers to approach their fathers.

Overall, some important themes emerged from the present study. In some ways these participants appear to be at a stage of many conflicting values and behaviors. When considering the sociological perspective of adaptation this group is in the midst of change from traditional ways of the first generation to Western norms of the second generation. Considering the pattern of immigrant evolution according to Herberg (1989), the themes that emerged from the study were characteristic of a highly traditional culture settling in a less traditional host country. Many of the conflicts the daughters felt were in accordance with the

changes that second generation immigrants often experience when settling in the host country.

Culture and Typical Parent-Child Conflicts

It has been said that adolescence is a time when individuals begin the process of breaking away from the family in order to establish independent identities apart from their parents (Wortman & Loftus, 1988). The young women in this study were at a similar stage of many adolescents as they were striving to find an identity for themselves. Although the women in this study were older than adolescents and thus facing some major life decisions such as marriage and career, they had yet to develop identities independent of their parents and culture.

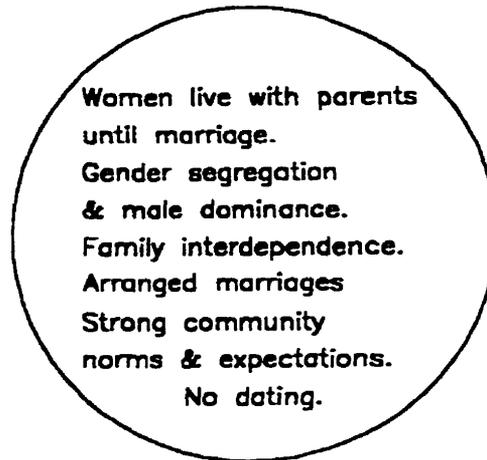
In a study considering acculturation of Asian adolescents into British society, the conflicting demands of the British and Asian cultures caused more anxiety and tension in the lives of Asian teenagers, during an already unstable and insecure period of their lives (Ghuman, 1991). Problems in addition to development of an identity arise when children acquire values, attitudes and sex-roles different from those of their parents (Torres-Matrullo, 1980). In a study with Puerto Rican immigrants the second generation youth often learned English and behaviors of American society before their parents thus causing conflicts between the two generations. For immigrant youth during this time of self reflection they must decide not only who they are within their birth culture, but they must also decide who they are among mainstream culture: this is made especially difficult when the two cultures have opposing belief systems.

The second subprocess according to Miles and Huberman (1994) is referred to a data display. This involves a schematic display of the data in a compressed form in order for the reader to be able to view the entire data set and draw conclusions (see Figure 2). The diagram illustrates how the mothers were divided in their responses to the questions whereas the daughters answered all of the questioned about tradition similarly. Two of the mothers were very non-traditional in their responses, these mothers had very open relationships as well as good communication with their daughters. The majority of the mothers were traditional in their thinking ;since their daughters were non-traditional in their thinking, these mother-daughter relationships were not as open and the lines of communication were not as good as the above mentioned pairs.

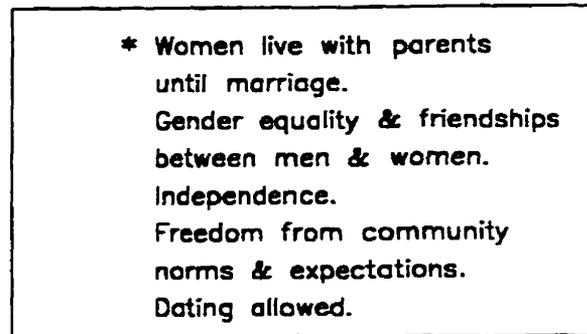
Figure 2.

Second Subprocess According to Miles & Huberman (1994):

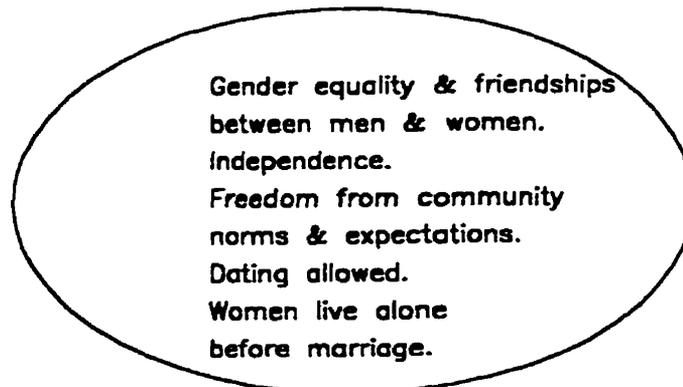
Mothers 1-3
Traditional Values



Mothers 4 & 5



Daughters 1-5
Non-Traditional Values



• This was the only traditional value held by mothers 4 & 5.

Chapter 6: Discussion

East Meets West

The third and final subprocess involves conclusion drawing and verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This is carried out by comparing and contrasting cases, noting and exploring themes and patterns.

The most notable theme that emerged from this study was the strong desires of the daughters for freedom from East Indian traditions. For the mothers, the main desires were quite the opposite, they wanted their daughters to conform to East Indian culture and traditions. By exploring the reasons behind these contrasting desires we see that the first generation women came from a very conservative upbringing. As they were all raised in India, they were raised in a society where men and women remain virtually segregated until marriage, and men dominate women in all aspects of life (Devasia & Devasia, 1991). Furthermore these women were raised to obey the demands of their parents without question. From a very young age they were quite aware of what was expected of them as they became young women; they would be married to a man of their family's choice and then devote the remainder of their lives to taking care of their husband, children and their husband's family. Most women of the first generation followed this pattern without question. This was accepted in part, because other young girls in their community shared the same expectations (Freed & Freed, 1989; Kakar, 1990; Singh, 1993). The mothers in this sample were raised in a host culture that supported the views of their parents, whereas the daughters were raised in a host culture with views opposite to those of their parents thus creating tension between the two generations.

Many of these women immigrated to Canada with their husbands while their daughters who participated in this study were between the ages of 2-5 years. The daughters were raised in a society where the above mentioned norms are almost non-existent. As well, the daughters reported having had very few East Indian friends as they grew up in Canada, thus leaving them even more isolated from their culture in a foreign country. The daughters were raised in a society where young boys and girls are encouraged to interact, and dating is common during the teenage years. This is in sharp contrast to East Indian families, where young boys and girls are generally separated to avoid situations such as dating. These East Indian parents expected to raise their children as they had been raised, even in a different country with a different belief system. Using this explanation, it is understandable that the daughters' desires were quite different from their mothers'. Finding a balance between these two sets of beliefs would make the adaptation process for these two generations of women easier. However, as we have seen in this study, finding a balance between two opposite belief systems can be extremely difficult.

Independence versus interdependence related to familial obligations was a significant issue. Once again, mothers believed that major life decisions such as marriage should be carried out as a family unit. Daughters wanted to make their own life decisions, without consulting or seeking approval from family members. These decisions were in reference to dating potential marriage partners, living with in-laws after marriage, roles of men and women in marriage, and finally the issue of living alone. Once again we can tie this situation back to

how the mothers of these young women were raised in India. Inherent in East Indian society are laws that everyone is expected to follow. The issues that the daughters felt they needed independence from were those very rules. Women simply do not live on their own and they are expected to take care of their in-laws etc.. These are extremely important milestones and are taken very much for granted among the first generation women. For instance, the fact that they all agreed that young women should never live alone in the same city as family illustrated this point. The mothers were less concerned with what their daughters wanted than with what was the right choice according to community rules, as was done in India. This is a very difficult hurdle for East Indian immigrants because interdependence is central to East Indian culture and, in fact, characterizes it whereas independence and individualism characterize Western society. The struggles based on this difference are clear, however finding ways to overcome them or finding a balance between them is a difficult task.

The issue of communication was a key component during this research. The two mother-daughters pairs that appeared to have the most open and honest relationships with reference to the above issues were the ones that admitted to having good communication. Both pairs of women also admitted that it had not been an easy process. Importantly, these were the only mothers who spoke of wanting their daughters' happiness even if that meant not following community expectations. This is noteworthy because in order to move forward during this process of adaptation the rules or beliefs of one society may have to be chosen over the other because of the opposing nature of many of the beliefs.

Therefore, first generation parents may have to leave some traditions from India behind in order to adapt to this society and maintain close relationships with their children. The two sets of mothers did just that; they gave their daughters the same freedom as their sons, allowed their daughters to have male friends and to date, and kept the lines of communication open. This appeared to work well for both the daughters and the mothers. Neither felt pressure to live up to community expectations. This was an example of two mother-daughter pairs who found a balance between East and West.

In some ways this sample appears to be at a stage of many conflicting values and behaviors. When considering the sociological perspective of adaptation this group is in the midst of change from traditional ways of the first generation, to Western ways to which the second generation has been exposed. Considering the pattern of immigrant evolution according to Herberg (1989), the themes that emerged from the study were characteristic of a highly traditional culture settling in a less traditional host society. Many of the conflicts the daughters felt were in accordance with the changes that second generation immigrants experience when settling in the host country. If we consider the next step of the evolutionary process according to this adaptation framework, the second generation will have fewer conflicts related to traditional issues with their third generation children. At this time, both generations appear to be in transition. First generation immigrants are struggling to hold on to traditions they feel are important for maintaining their culture, while second generation immigrants are trying to find a middle ground of maintaining respectful

relationships with their parents as well as gaining some measures of happiness through freedom and independence from the rules of the culture.

Implications

This study answered a few questions and created others. Future studies might consider attitudes, values and behaviors of men from the second generation. It would be helpful to understand where young men stand on issues that are extremely troublesome for young women and if there are possibilities of working through issues together. It would also be useful to speak with young couples who have gone through the dating and arranged marriage obstacles to learn what is working in terms of family expectations and personal goals.

This study can be applied to members of other cultures experiencing this transition between generations. Many of the issues that were raised in this study are common in the Eastern cultures. As the immigrant population in Canada increases, studies such as this are useful in dealing with families and children caught between two opposing cultures. Issues such as friendships between boys and girls, dating and individual freedom that are often taken for granted in Western society can cause great stress in the lives of immigrant families, making awareness of these issues important. Also, front line workers in the social service field need to be aware of subtle rules of the culture when carrying out their duties. For instance, it is common to encourage individuals in troubled situations to express their anger or frustration towards the cause of their problems. However an East Indian woman may have an extremely difficult time with this suggestion as it goes against everything she was raised to believe. In

this instance knowledge about the culture would help the workers find ways of dealing with the situation without suggesting that the women disrespect their traditions.

Further research in the areas of femicide and female infanticide would also be an interesting follow-up to this study. These issues were briefly covered, however there could be much more work carried out related to whether this is carried out in Canada and if this is still an important issue to the second and third generations of East Indians.

Finally, this study can be a helpful source for young women experiencing a conflict between two cultures and not knowing if they are alone in their feelings. This study can offer suggestions as to how others are handling the situation. Also, this may be one way to get these issues out in the open so that individuals might accept that the immigration process has unexpected obstacles that need to be worked through for both generations.

Appendix A Topical Guideline

Topics to be discussed with both mothers and daughters:

(marriage)

- ideas about friendships between boys and girls, men and women
- expectations about dating, how does it vary for men and women
- arranged marriages, can they work in this society
- how long should potential partners be allowed to “date” before promising marriage
- what is the role of women in marriage
- what is the role of men in marriage
- how do parents view the process of arranged marriage
- are you (or is your daughter) expected to live with her in-laws

(familial obligations)

- values girls and boys should be raised with
- relationship with parents, obligations
- importance of sons in your family, to you personally
- importance of education for men and women
- importance of financial independence for women, what does it entail?
- ideas about parental acceptance of choices made by adult children
- ideas about freedom of choice for women in terms of going out, participating in activities, traveling etc.

- importance of community ties
- what do your parents (children) want for your (their) future

Topics for daughters only:

- what should potential mates be told about previous relationships
- what are mother's ideas about daughter's duties regarding marriage
- experiences growing up in Canada, certain activities not allowed, why
- how important and plausible is it to maintain an open, honest relationship with your parents regarding your expectations for the future
- what do you want for your future

Topics for mothers only:

- how does life in Canada differ from life in India
- perception of daughter's thoughts regarding mother's view on issues of marriage and family

Appendix B
Consent Form

Project Title: _____

Principle Investigator Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

**PLEASE CHECK EITHER YES OR NO IN RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE
FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study? Yes ___ No___
2. Have you read the information sheet or heard the verbal explanation of the investigator? Yes ___ No___
3. Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in the research study? Yes ___ No___
4. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study? Yes ___ No___
5. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason and without detriment to any ongoing association with the University of Manitoba? Yes ___ No___
6. Do you understand that you can refuse to answer any questions or provide information during your participation in the study? Yes ___ No___

7. Has the issue of confidentiality been described to you and do you understand : a) who will have access to the information you provide, b) that no reports will identify you as an individual? Yes ___ No___

I understand that if I disclose any information regarding illegal parent - child relations, that the researcher, Sukhy Mann, is obligated to report the information to the appropriate authorities.

I agree to take part in this study Yes ___ No ___

Signature of participant

Printed name of participant

Date

I may be contacted again if necessary.

Two copies of this form are provided for you to complete, one which is for you to keep and the other is for the principal investigator.

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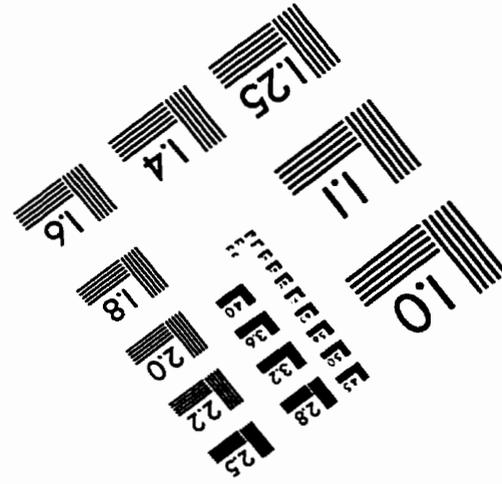
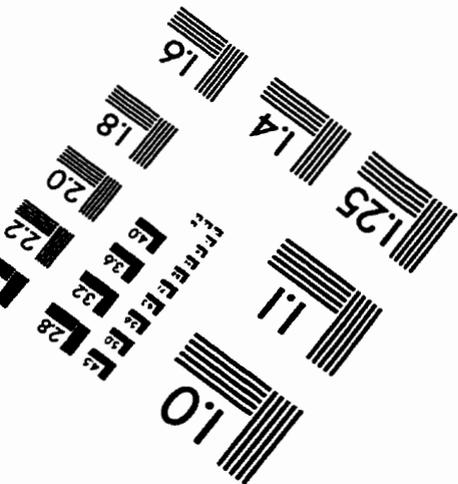
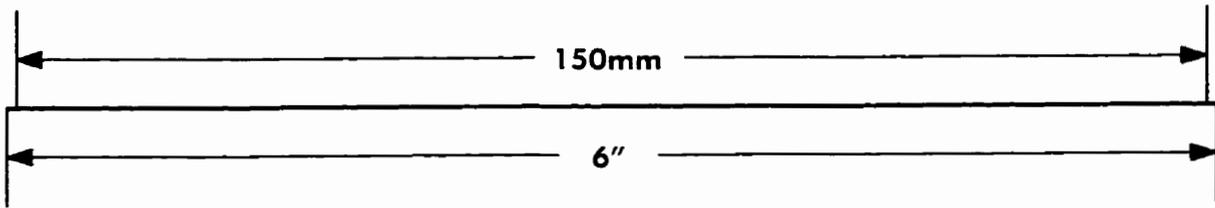
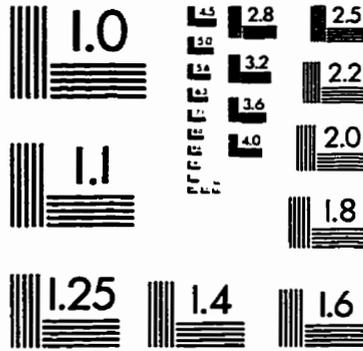
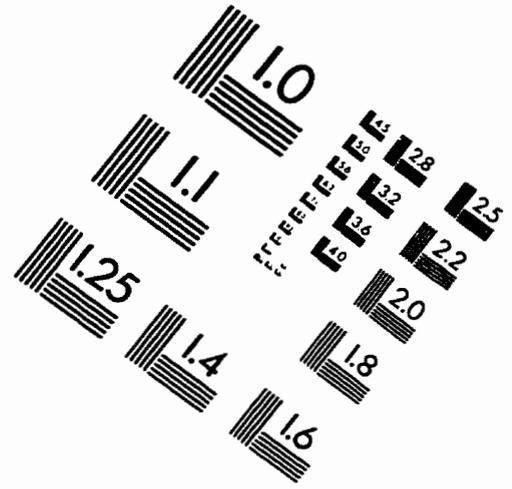
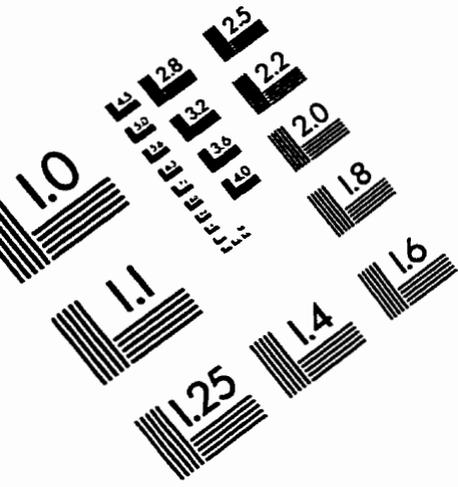
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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