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Sikhs in the Vancouver Region: A Descriptive Study of Certain Sikhs' Views of Education Since 1904

by

Baljeet Dhaliwal

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1976

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (Education) in the Department of Education

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Simon Fraser University

July, 1985

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VIEWS OF EDUCATION SINCE 1904

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(name)

date

July 30, 1985
ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the events which have led Sikhs in the Vancouver region to become involved in education. However, before it is possible to know what Sikh views and opinions of education are, it is necessary first to understand the Sikhs through an examination of their belief systems and historical background. Second, some of the reasons for their immigration to Canada must be examined; and third we must analyze how they adapted to the new ways of Canadian society. This thesis will provide research unavailable elsewhere into Sikh involvement in education, and as a result, may help educators and administrators develop greater tolerance towards Sikhs through an understanding of the problems they face in entering educational establishment.

The thesis begins by revealing how Sikhs have perceived education since the turn of the century. Four questions were asked of Sikh community members. These four questions centered on, first, the effects of religion and culture on the Sikhs' rate of assimilation into the dominant culture; second, discrimination as a phenomenon contributing to a greater or lesser involvement of Sikhs in the education system (whether it be at the schooling, teaching or administrative levels); third, the issues of the role of heritage language programs; and last, directions potentially open to Sikhs in education in the next five to ten years.
Inquiry into these issues has also unveiled information involving the dominant society and its views on multiculturalism. Specific ideas held by Sikhs indicate that they felt that many of the methods employed by the dominant society under the guise of multiculturalism perpetuated inequality rather than eliminating it.

The thesis further addresses the necessity of understanding the evolution of the Sikhs in terms of sub-societies in order to comprehend their views towards education systems. Five significant, distinctive time periods have been identified. These time periods provide convenient stages within which to study the ethnic and evolutionary patterns evident in the lifestyle choices and educational involvement by Sikhs since 1904.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

WHY STUDY SIKH PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION?

The Sikhs have struggled for centuries to preserve their culture. This period of struggle for identity provides useful information on the nature of Sikh perceptions of education. The consequences of their struggles forced the emergence of an ideology which continues to shape the Sikh's unique type of ethnic minority. I am not interested in describing their uniqueness, since all cultural groups are unique, but in showing that in the case of the Sikhs, their historical belief systems and ethnicity give insight into why they have not had direct input into education, in India or Canada. I propose to show how as immigrants they viewed education and how circumstances combined with ideology contributed to their views. From this information it should be possible to predict the Sikh community's involvement in education in the following five to ten years.

Four aspects therefore have been examined to determine the nature of perceptions of education in the Vancouver region since 1904. These aspects are the role of discrimination, ethnicity, history and language. Also provided as plausible considerations are the future directions of the Sikh communities involvement in education. These topics were selected as important areas of research. First I inquire to find out how important it is to the Sikhs to have Punjabi, their
heritage language, passed on to their children. Second, I consider whether or not the effects of having to assimilate, encouraged the Sikhs to retaliate, acculturate, or isolate themselves. Third, I analyze particular events in the evolution in contemporary society by the Sikhs into a useable context for further examination of their roles in education in the next five to ten years. And four, I develop the idea that Sikhs practice a particular kind of discrimination. This type of discrimination is called "reverse discrimination" and can be seen to be an outcome of their need to assert themselves as well as a reflection of their ideological doctrines. The intent is to unveil the variety of views and opinions offered by the interviewees significant to the understanding of Sikhs.

One of the main issues is the role of ethnicity and its significance with respect to the Sikhs. Ethnicity is a term used to identify how a cultural group values its world. As discussed by Glazer and Moynihan (1975), ethnicity is a new term, a term which has, over the years, evolved to take on different shades of meaning. They explain that the new word "ethnicity" reflects "a new reality" and "the new usage reflects a change in that reality." Ethnicity was originally a word used to define a cultural group in terms of norms adapted and adhered to. As the term developed, its meaning was extended to describe the evolution of "minorities and marginal subgroups at the edges of society--groups expected to assimilate, to disappear, to continue as survivors, exotic or troublesome--to major elements of society" (p. 5).

A look at the transition and evolution of an immigrant minority, as with
the Sikhs, provides insight about Sikh ethnicity and illuminates certain factors which help one understand the nature of Sikh perceptions of education.

To find out how Sikhs perceived education, I hypothesized that Sikhs would go to extremes to preserve their culture and heritage. I make a case for this by saying that in fact they practice a form of "discrimination." The type of discrimination practiced by Sikhs is not to be confused with "reverse discrimination" or "preferential treatment." It is a concept of discrimination identifiable with a minority group, such as the Sikhs, because of their minority status in their country of origin, India, and because of their history which is marked with constant struggles for survival as a cultural group.

Sikhs practice a form of discrimination to ensure their sense of cultural and individual identity. They form a relatively young religious group which is in the process of asserting itself as a cultural group and does so by emphasizing its identity through certain avenues of discrimination. Some of these are: not allowing any other group, whether a dominant or minority cultural group to rule them; exercising various kinds of visually observable expressions of distinction, such as the right to a self-rulled state in India, the right to continue to live out their belief in themselves as the warriors, the proud lions, and the undefeatable minority in India.

Furthermore, to understand why Sikhs would go to extremes to preserve their identity and how this affects their views of education, I have looked at their role with respect to education in India. Then a
careful study of their role as immigrants in Canada is needed to show that immigration policies and forms of discrimination have affected Sikh perspectives. Changes inherent to the Sikh community and changes resulting from social, political and economic matters contribute to perceptions and resultant patterns of education. These aspects need to be viewed and understood. Finally, a look at how significant ethnicity is to Sikhs and whether or not their history of struggle in attempts to preserve culture and identity, their ethnicity, continues to be an important phenomenon to the future involvement of Sikhs in education.
CHAPTER II

METHODS OF INQUIRY

This inquiry is primarily historical in nature. But to gain additional information I have used formal and informal interviews, review of both primary and secondary sources and conducted literature reviews in two areas of research. The first topic reviewed is the role of education in a Sikh's life and the second topic reviewed is Sikhism and what it means. Ethnicity, racism, discrimination, acculturation, ideology, and immigration are issues examined through literature.

The types of clients selected were all upper class professionals of whom eighty percent (80%) were male and twenty percent (20%) female. Although the majority of these clients were of the ages between thirty and sixty, I did manage to interview some who were of the ages between eighty and eighty-five years old.

The older individuals preferred to respond in Punjabi, hence the interview was conducted in Punjabi and in one case the interview was initiated by the grandson of the older man because the grandfather was hard of hearing and requested to have his grandson ask questions. All of the respondents spoke fluent English with the exception of those who were over the ages of eighty. The reason offered for their lack of fluency in the English language was insufficient English education during the earlier years in Canada.
Open Versus Closed Community Members

The majority of these individuals do not participate in the more closed Sikh community life style. For example, these people likely would not attend the regular temple functions and ceremonies in which members of the closed or more inner core "orthodox-type" Sikhs ritualistically participate. The subjects who participated in this study were not typical of the majority of Sikhs in the closed community. These people may occasionally attend a ceremonial wedding or funeral service at the temple but would not be found in attendance at Sikh festival celebrations such as the celebration of the full moon, the birthday celebrations of Guru Gobind (the founder of the Sikh religion), or other common ritualistic celebrations. Instead many of the clients selected, participated by gathering in homes of friends or family to carry out the aforementioned types of celebrations.

Another point which differentiates these, perhaps one could say "open" Sikh community individuals, is how they move in certain dominant society social events. Many of the clients interviewed socialize and conduct their business through similar organizations and societies used by the general population. The point to be made here is that they are functioning within the dominant society life style. Some examples of this type of participation are: they belong to the Vancouver Club, attend private meetings with the Royal family in England, have dinners with the Premier, are consultants on international organizations established to promote Indian poetry, science, and arts.

One major difference between Sikh background individuals and closed Sikh community members is revealed by their strategy to support
and maintain the Sikh community in Vancouver. Open society Sikhs contribute to the fight against racism, the maintenance of the Sikh culture and arts in a more private way. By their participation within the upper political, social and economic echelons of Canada's Anglo-Saxon society. On the other hand the closed society Sikh community might demonstrate publicly or circulate newsletters to target groups.

**Client Background**

Another point which will help clarify the nature of the responses provided by the clients during the interviews is to look at the backgrounds of the clients. This view allows for a better understanding of the characters of the clients in that though they are all upper class professionals with the exception of those over eighty, the nature of each respondent's perception is linked to his role as either a Sikh immigrant or a descendent of a Sikh immigrant. Naturally those who had immigrated to Canada during the 1920's had information to offer which was a direct result of their interaction as individuals belonging to a minority culture. Yet, information about the Sikhs prior to the 1920's came primarily as oral stories told to the interviewees by Sikhs who had immigrated as early as the late 1800's. That is, much of the information was first-hand knowledge or a result of oral stories told to the interviewees. The information obtained from older members of the Sikh community reflects their personal experiences. Since the interpretation of the younger members proved consistent with this
information, it would seem that the answers provide an accurate historical account.

**Research Questions**

This inquiry into the nature of Sikh perceptions of education ultimately showed that a variety of views exist on the role Sikhs had in education since 1904. Some common themes found were an outcome of the following four questions which were used during these interviews. Four questions asked during the taped interviews were:

1. How have Sikhs participated in education since the turn of the century? If you have specific views, would you provide them firstly from what you know about Sikhs from as early as 1904 and secondly from information on your own experiences during the time you have had anything to do with education?

2. "Language is a vehicle by which culture is transmitted, perpetuated, and maintained". If you accept this statement, do you agree or disagree that heritage language programs are essential in schools?

3. Do the following account for the change in Sikh perceptions in education? If yes, why? If not, why not?:
   - immigration policy
   - discrimination
   - ideology
   - immigrant/citizen status

4. How do you see Sikh participation in B.C. education in the next 5 to 10 years?
Each interview took a total of one to two hours. Each was conducted in the workplace except in the case of those who were retired or studying. All the interviewees were gracious with their time and expressed great interest in the nature of inquiry. The majority of these people gave additional time to express views on matters related to the Sikh community because of their interest in the study. Some concerns were expressed on matters such as racism, the future role of Sikhs, and the effects of today's economy on the future of higher education opportunities for Sikh children. These issues are described in the last chapter.

Four issues that I wish to pay particular attention to were adapted from Ogbu's study on minorities in the U.S. I was initially motivated to see if Sikhs, as a minority could be fitted in the tiered typology of: the immigrant, caste, or autonomous group. It became evident that Sikhs would not fit well into Ogbu's widely respected classification of minority groups. (see: Group Identity, Feature Matrix.)

As indicated by the Y's which are used to show that the minority does have a particular characteristic, Sikhs do not appear to fit into any one category, but rather possess characteristics typical of all three of the types. As a result I decided to inquire as to what characteristics are unique to Sikhs. I formulated a three stage approach: a preliminary study, a questionnaire, and formal interviews.

The preliminary study involved a review of primary and secondary sources, including books, letters, documents, and a set of informal interviews. This led to the design of a questionnaire. The objective
**FIGURE 1**

**THE GROUP IDENTITY FEATURE MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Identity Features</th>
<th>Mormons</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Burakumin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>Caste</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Mormons</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Size (population)</td>
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<td>Distinctiveness (group identity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. racially</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. ethnically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. linguistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>v. cultural</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographical localization</td>
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<td>Political localization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political participation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience prejudice</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are discriminated against</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discriminate against</td>
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<td>Inferiority ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superiority ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refute assimilation</td>
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<td>Intergroup community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instrumental towards host society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accept and anticipate prejudice in terms of goal achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong self identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic betterment</td>
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*Note: y = yes, n = no, < = less, > = more, some = variable.*

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--- depends on generation ---
at the second stage was to find out what kind of views were held about issues such as: assimilation, ideology, religion, values, race relations, immigration, intercultural communication, the schooling process, and the visible minority status, before selecting the topics which would be used in the final interview sessions.

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to familiarize, act as an introduction to the types of issues that were to be dealt with by the questions in the second part of the questionnaire. It was also used to get a sense of their particular concerns about and/or involvement in education. This was necessary before the four questions could be created for the final stage of this research. Provided next is Section A followed by Section B and C of the questionnaire. Each section reveals the care taken to research a wide spectrum of views before selecting a narrower focus. In Section C accompanying each question is the purpose for asking the question.

The questionnaire was essentially intended to do no more than provide useful guidance to formulating a number of perceptions and issues of interest to Sikhs themselves. It provided me with information that could help me in narrowing down and focussing the area of inquiry. Consequently I have not presented here a detailed breakdown or analysis of the responses obtained. The questionnaire was an heuristic device rather than an element in the research itself.
SECTION A

Directions:

Please indicate your answer by circling either Yes or No.

1. Are your children attending school?  YES  NO
2. Are you attending school?  YES  NO
3. Do you think you should have a say in what is done in education?  YES  NO
4. Are you satisfied with your school district's implementation of education policy?  YES  NO
5. Do you think education policies in B.C. reflect multicultural ideals?  YES  NO
6. Do you believe education policies can be improved?  YES  NO
7. Would you prefer to know more about the formulation of education policy?  YES  NO
8. Do you know who the members of the school board are in your district?  YES  NO
9. Do you know how education policy is formed?  YES  NO
10. Have you heard about the Canadian Council of Multicultural and Intercultural Education (CCMIE), the Vancouver School Board Race Relations Program or any other?  YES  NO
11. Do you think education policy makers should collaborate with CCMIE or any of the other multicultural or education committees to work towards the betterment of education?  YES  NO
12. Are you aware of the types of teacher training programs in B.C.?  YES  NO
SECTION B

Directions: Please circle A, B, or C.

1. What is the interior design of your home?
   - Indian
   - Canadian
   - Other

2. Which type of dress do you wear most often?
   - A
   - B
   - C

3. Which type of dress do you prefer?
   - A
   - B
   - C

4. Which kind of food do you eat at home most of the time?
   - A
   - B
   - C

5. What religion do you follow?
   - A
   - B
   - C

6. What language do you use most often in the home?
   - A
   - B
   - C

7. Of what ethnic origin are most of your friends?
   - A
   - B
   - C

8. With what group do you participate mainly in community activities?
   - A
   - B
   - C

9. Of what ethnic origin are your relatives/business contacts in India?
   - A
   - B
   - C

10. Do you prefer to be called?
    - A. Sikh
    - B. East Indian
    - C. Punjab
    - D. Canadian
    - E. Indo Canadian Sikh
    - F. Other

11. To what extent are you aware of the history of the Sikhs?
    1. The religious-political characteristics.
    2. The existence of the two types of Sikhs, the Akali Dal and the Khalsa.
    3. The role Sikhs have had to play as survivors.
    4. The struggle Sikhs had to go through in order to maintain their identity.
Q1. Where did you receive your formal education?

**Purpose:** to identify the educational background of individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers in %</th>
<th>Places of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Canada (other than B.C.), U.S., or England.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. What role should committees such as Canadian Council of Multicultural and Intercultural Education, Vancouver Multicultural Society, Vancouver School Board Race Relations of others take in B.C. Education?

**Purpose:** to get a general idea on what each persons awareness level of educational organizations was. Only 20% had some knowledge of these organizations: CCMIE, Vancouver Multicultural Society, VSGB Race Relations.

Q3. What would you suggest could be added to the present education programs in schools to better meet the multicultural needs of children?

**Purpose:** to gather information about the variety of views held of schooling in a multicultural setting. Only 60% responded in favor of multicultural schooling, and of the 60%, 20% gave definite examples of programs needed. The remainder were indifferent. Some expressed concern over the issue of multi-culturalism. The most interesting result of this question was the respondents expression of disapproval of the purpose of multiculturalism. It was interpreted as a means by which inequality was perpetuated.

Q4. What would you suggest Sikh community members could do to better the education for children of Sikh background?

**Purpose:** to find out Sikh views about cultural heritage.

The majority answered that it was the parents role to provide cultural education. For example heritage language program are best if provided privately in the home or community.
Q5. Who do you suggest are key individuals who would take interest or do something active with respect to bettering the educational system of Sikh children, and why?

Purpose: To locate key community members. It was of interest to note the pattern of responses. In most cases, if the individual interviewed was a teacher he or she would identify other teachers, if a lawyer, other lawyers, etc.

Questions six and seven were designed to find out what individuals views, concerns, perspectives, or opinions were on the topics of assimilation, discrimination, nationalism, and Indianism or Sikhism.

Q6. Why do you think the term Indo-Canadian has emerged as an identifying term for the people of Indian origin living in Vancouver?

Purpose: to see if the term had a significant meaning. The majority were indifferent because they viewed themselves as Canadian. Although they related to being Sikh the emphasis was to identify as a Canadian. 20% said that they wished to be identified only as a Sikh. 10% responded to the question without making reference to themself. They stated that the term was a sociological construct to categorize all peoples of "brown skin color" as one.

Q7. If you agree that Sikhs are discriminated against, to what degree?

1 mild 2 3 4 5 strong

Q8. Do you think Sikhs are proud to be Sikhs? Why?

All answered "yes." Reasons most often related to the role of Sikhs in religion or as soldiers in the British army.
CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN A SIKH'S LIFE

Dr. Muthanna (1982) suggests in his book People of India in North America (and his view was endorsed by one of the interviewees, who completed a Master's degree on The History of Sikhs in India), that the most critical thing to understand about a minority group is to know why they emigrate. The reasons why Sikhs left Punjab are presented below and, although to understand these causes is not the focus of this inquiry, they do help to give insight into the nature of Sikh perceptions of education.

Education to a Sikh has always been important but not always for its own sake. Instead, it has been viewed as a means to a better life. Education was seldom encouraged as an academic pursuit or for the sake of wisdom, but instead was encouraged for the sake of social progress, prestige, and social independence. Education was vital to become a practicing religious person since it was necessary to acquire language skills which would enable one not only to read the scriptures but also to teach.

While that emphasis has been consistent over the years, during the 1930's an awareness of the value of education for its own sake began to increase. As a climate for an independent India developed, Indians became increasingly aware of the need to have more of their people educated. In particular, Sikhs who had spent most of their lives as farmers and land owners realized that if they were to prepare
for the future of an independent India they would need to become educated.

As early as the 1500's, the time of the second guru, a written form of the Punjabi language was developed. In these times much respect was offered to a learned man since most educated people were also religious. Education was promoted in conjunction with the religion. In an effort to teach the people about the Sikh religion a basic alphabet and elementary sentence patterns were taught in Sikh temples. Religion and education were seen as being mutually inseparable. Initially people received education to give them an opportunity to learn about their culture through religion.

Originally, the Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs was only read by a handful of Sikhs due to the sophistication of the language. As late as 1700's, as pointed out by Metcauliffe, "only twenty-five scholars were qualified and capable to read the Granth." The simpler Sikh language called Punjabi was developed to meet the needs of the vast majority of the uneducated population. The uneducated had to become educated, in order that they should be able to use Punjabi as a basic language.

Later, in 1845, while Raja Ranjit Singh ruled the state of Punjab, a tremendous effort was made to educate Sikhs. Schools were built in all major towns and districts, as well as in many of the larger villages. In smaller communities schooling was offered in temples, under trees, or in village centres. Some of the wealthier landowners had private religious schools built in their villages or districts.
However, the progress which had begun under Raja Ranjit Singh was interfered with when the British colonized.

The nature of education changed during the colonization. The English language became compulsory in the schools. And, since Sikhism was still only a few hundred years old, the efforts to promote Sikh ideological concepts had not rooted themselves in the minds and actions of Sikhs. Perhaps one could conclude that colonization brought disruption and interfered with the nurturing years of Sikhism.

Education lost its significance, except among those who were directing their life towards a religion. Also, during this time Sikhs developed into a cultural group composed primarily of farmers and landowners. This change towards an agrarian nature and the loss of power caused a shift in their outlook on the meaning of education. Education became viewed as a social necessity because with education came better opportunities.

The English offered employment to those who had particular levels of education. Most of the social service positions required someone who spoke English. As a result many of the well to do families had their children placed in English language schools in an attempt to secure future opportunity for the children. Others, having recognized their plight, sought an alternative and ventured to places abroad for employment. Yet others registered in the army. The importance of education became more apparent with the result that most families sent at least one child to school.

The Sikhs, though a relatively young cultural group, possessed an
aggressive and proud nature. Their pride strengthened as religion developed a style of militancy different from its pre-existing passive, highly Buddhist, philosophical character. An expression of their pride and aggressive character is revealed in their conduct while serving as army recruits. Though subservient, Sikhs demanded their rights. Having recognized the need for education, they demanded from the British that education be provided to them during their service in the army. In response to the educational demand, the British developed a specialized alphabet which consisted of English letters but with Indian pronunciation and vocabulary items.

The growing awareness of the benefits of education caused the Sikhs to reevaluate their views. Interviewees frequently mentioned that Sikhs became increasingly aware of the importance of being educated, because with an education they would have a better chance in their economic, social, and political status. As a result they began to seek higher levels of education. The consequence of this changed attitude towards education led to a greater sense of self-sufficiency. Eventually, Sikhs became prominent agriculturalists, formed the majority in the army, and were considered the prime movers towards India's future independence. Education once again was recognized as a means to a better future.

In Sikh families the eldest son was encouraged to become educated. This education would assist him in finding employment which would help support the family. Furthermore, when there were many sons and not enough land, the eldest was encouraged to travel abroad to apply for work as a clerk under British rule, or to seek further education. He
would gain security for both himself and his family. Many of the initial immigrants who came to Vancouver were the educated eldest sons.

**Reasons for Sikh Emigration**

Two events may be considered as having accounted for Sikh's emigration to places outside of India. The first is the Sikh concept of dividing land among sons and the second is the British system of administration which led to an increase in employment both in India and abroad to places such as Hong Kong, Fiji, the Middle East, Uganda, and later to North America, England, and many other countries. British colonial policy tended to cultivate buffer systems between themselves and the inhabitants of a colonized country. For instance in India, the Parsies from Iran were used as a buffer between the British and the Indians. And the Indians, primarily Sikhs, were used as a buffer between the peoples of Fiji, China, the Middle East, and some parts of Uganda. The positions offered in these countries were primarily clerical, and sixty to seventy percent of the posts were held by Sikhs.

The majority of Sikhs who immigrated to Canada in 1904 were placed in clerical posts in banks, the police force, or business. So, it is evident that education has always been significant to the Sikh as a means to security and livelihood.

Another historical event sheds light on Sikhs and the nature of their thinking. Integral to Sikhism is the brotherhood idea of unity. Intrinsic support exists for members of the Sikh culture. This loyalty stems from their wars with the Moslems in an attempt to secure their
religion. Later, because their identity was threatened under British Raj, again they reaffirmed their internal brotherhood values. As a minority and as a subjugated class of people under British Raj, Sikhs were forced to change their beliefs towards more dogmatic values. Yet education remained important because it became evident that should Indian culture survive, the learned Sikhs had to promote schooling for the uneducated masses. The positive outcome of the British Raj was that Sikhs recognized, as did other Indians, that personal and national freedom was dependent upon education.

The British selected Sikhs as the Indians most suited to hold social positions and to enter the army and navy. The values and characteristics inherent to their ideology, their mental hardiness, combined with their strong, robust physical stature, made Sikhs the obvious candidates. Although many recognized the importance of becoming educated, equally many were content in their role as the 'chosen ones.' Though discriminated against, Sikhs, like other peoples who were colonized by the British, subconsciously accepted their position. Some of the Sikhs were unaware of the degree to which the colonized "victimized" mentality had scarred their sense of identification with culture and a sense of self.

It was not until the 1940's that more respect was given to nations who allowed less powerful nations their own identity and freedom. It became evident that to subjugate people was not a sign of power. Lindberg in (1906) had written, "A new consciousness of the dignity and rights of an individual, regardless of race, creed, class, or sex. A
new consciousness and questioning of the materialistic values of the western world. Perhaps the greatest progress, humanly speaking, in the past twenty years, for both women and men, is in the growth of consciousness” p. 136. During this period Sikhs began to question their status. No longer did they wish to be dominated and subjugated by the British. As Sikhs gained more awareness of their situation, again their demand to be educated increased. They realized that if they were to manage their own country more time had to be devoted to becoming educated.

Sikhs in Canada came to this awareness of the value of education sooner than those in India because it became evident that to be successful in countries abroad, education was essential. The overt cases of mistreatment and discrimination at point of entry and afterwards made Sikhs aware that their status as British subjects meant very little. Sikhs, (then called Hindoos (Sic) or East Indians), were categorized at that time along with the Orientals. In Canada, Orientals were legally viewed as inferior to the white people. Because the national intent of the Canadian government was to keep Canada “white,” the Orientals, a term then used to refer to the Sikhs, were prohibited from voting or holding any legal rights. Orientals and Sikhs because they were a racially visible minority were discriminated against as unsuitable to the Canadian way of life.

As late as the 1960’s under the guise of multiculturalism the term Indo Canadian was created as a replacement to the terms East Indian and Hindu. Prior to this in the Vancouver region, the term East Indian had
been used to identify people of Indian origin. Today both terms are used conveniently as a classification of all immigrants from India into one category. The physiological characteristic 'brown skin' provided a convenient measure. Racial discrimination was used in what was considered a just manner to keep Canada "white." This idea that they could perpetuate racial discrimination on the basis of what was socially and legally acceptable reveals the lack of proper identification of racially visible minorities and the lack of intercultural understanding. Although this point is simple, it is important to this study because the issue of discrimination has been an integral part of the history of Sikhs in Canada.

**Discrimination**

A brief overview of the role of discrimination, and its relation to human relations, is offered in the definition from "The Official Memorandum of the United Nations." Among the forms of discrimination officially practiced in various parts of the world, the United Nations lists the following:

Unequal recognition before the law (general denial rights to particular groups).

Inequality of personal security (interference, arrest, disparagement because of group membership).

Inequality in freedom of movement and residence (ghettos, forbidden travel, prohibited areas, curfew restrictions).

Inequality in protection of freedom of thought, conscience, religion.

Inequality in the enjoyment of free communication.

Inequality in the right of peaceful association.
Inequality in treatment of those born out of wedlock.

Inequality in the enjoyment of the right to marry and found a family.

Inequality in the enjoyment of free choice of employment.

Inequality in the regulation and treatment of ownership.

Inequality in the protection of authorship.

Inequality of opportunity for education or the development of ability or talent.

Inequality of opportunity for sharing the benefits of culture.

Inequality in services rendered (health protection, recreational facilities, housing).

Inequality in the enjoyment of the right to nationality.

Inequality in the right to participate in government.

Inequality in access to public office.

Forced labour, slavery, special taxes, the forced wearing of distinguishing marks; sumptuary laws and public libel of groups.

Discrimination plays a crucial role with respect to human interaction, communication, perception, and survival patterns. In today's world, the practice and acceptance of discrimination seems to be a contentious issue depending upon the social and political climate. As the climate alters with respect to the waxing and waning of implementation of discriminatory laws, minority status groups must cope with instability.

Newspaper articles, dated as early as 1920, show that the groups who initially immigrated to Canada were called Hindoos (Sic). Evidence of the use of this term in slanderous ways is found in newspapers and
official documents of those times. The term was indicative of the way Sikhs were viewed and treated. The press misspelt and misused this term. Failure to use specific titles for cultural groups may be seen as one example of the subtle forms of discrimination. The use of the collective term Hindus or East Indians in the press, provides evidence of how immigrants of India were not understood for who they were. Instead they were treated with racial, social, and political prejudice. They were for almost 30 years not identified by their ethnic name.

Today's use of the term Indo-Canadian implies both a positive and negative change. It is negative because it does not tell us to which ethnic Indian background a cultural group belongs and positive because people of Indian origin are considered Canadian. The fact that a majority (99%) of the original East Indian immigrants to come to British Columbia were Sikhs has not been given much consideration. Sikhs have had but one identity, a racial identity. This type of discrimination, in which immigrants are treated or mistreated without any kind of cultural awareness, aids in the perpetration of the desire to have immigrants assimilate into the dominant life ways. The situation, however, forced the immigrant groups to strengthen their group cultural identity by binding closer together as they began the process of acculturation or assimilation.

**Indo-Canadians**

The term "Indo Canadian" has two connotations. It publicizes the dual identity and role as Canadian citizens with a differing ethnic,
racial background. And, it is suggestive of a change of perception in both the Indian and Canadian societies. Discrimination can be viewed as a catalyst for these changes. It has brought the younger generation of differing Indian backgrounds into uniting as Indo Canadians to combat racism, political, social, and economic hardships. The purpose of this union is to align forces for support and for the future progress of "brown-skinned" peoples. Patterson (1975) believes:

"where a plurality of allegiances involves a conflict between class interests and other interests, individuals in the long run will choose class allegiance over all other allegiances, including ethnic allegiance. I say "in the long run," because this takes account of those special situations in which individuals face severe survival risks on bases other than class."

Although this merging of differing ethnicities exists to protect mutual rights, each of the individual communities continue to adhere to its norms and values. Hence the emergence of the term "Indo-Canadian" is suggestive of the emergence of a different and a new social process by peoples of Indian origin who have differing ethnic and religious beliefs from other Canadian citizenship.

The term suggests the rise of a collective thought, perhaps a new ideology. A collective allegiance among a series of cultural groups provides a base from which they can voice their concerns. History reveals that Indo-Canadians are concerned and have fought against the way in which they have been discriminated against both racially and in terms of 'class' and access to equal opportunity.
More recently, Indo-Canadians have become involved in the direction of education. Today only a limited amount of information is available on the role of Sikhs in education but it has been suggested by the interviewees that should Sikhs not have had to continually be in battle for citizen rights, they would have been more involved both in their own community as well as in the dominant society schooling processes. It was not until March 3rd, 1948 that the municipal franchise was granted to East Indians in British Columbia.

An Act relating to an Act to make better provision for the Qualification and Registration of Voters. [Assented to 22nd April, 1875.]

1. No Chinaman or Indian shall have his name placed on the Register of Voters for any Electoral District, or be entitled to vote at any election of a Member to serve in the Legislative Assembly of this Province. Any Collector of any Electoral District or Polling Division thereof, who shall insert the name of any Chinaman or Indian in any such Register, shall, upon conviction thereof before any Justice of the Peace, be liable to be punished by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars, or to be imprisoned for any period not exceeding one month.

2. In every Electoral District of Polling Division thereof, the Collector therefor shall, on or before the first day of June, 1875, strike off the name of every Chinaman now on the List of Voters for his District or Polling Division thereof; and any Collector who shall neglect or refuse to strike off any such name, or shall insert the name of any Chinaman or Indian in any such Register, shall upon conviction thereof before any Justice of the Peace, be liable to be punished by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars, or to be imprisoned for any period not exceeding one month.

Many interviewees said that the example of the high degree of economic assimilation among Sikhs into the British Columbian economy is proof that had there been proper schooling to assist them in the acculturation process, many of the earlier Sikhs would have become
educated. This opinion is similar to the views of Italian immigrants, many of whom were placed with slow learners or learning disabled classes because they could not speak English. They indicated that had they received non-discriminatory education, they would have pursued careers in professions other than the types selected. Furthermore they might not have dropped out of school and indeed, might have gone on to higher education.

In comparison to other Indo-Canadians, the Sikhs have had a longer presence in Canada and have been participants in the education process since the early 1900's. However due to the socio political status, because Sikhs were not permitted to vote, they did not have any means by which to directly influence the education process. Up to as late as 1950, Sikhs did not become involved in education in any direct manner other than to attend schools. Prior to this, Sikhs had been primarily involved with attaining political and economic sanction rights.
CHAPTER IV

HISTORY REVEALS SIKH IDEOLOGY

As a minority in India, Iyer (1984) gives a population figure of fifteen million, which is but 2% of the total Indian population of 475 million. Sikhs have had an arduous task to maintain their identity and to survive. Ancestrally, all Sikhs are of either Hindu or Moslem descent. They are a young culture, founded during the mid-fifteenth century. This situation has made it difficult for Sikh leaders and the educated to keep alive a pure Sikh belief system. The uneducated or illiterate confuse the teaching with Hinduism. A minority of Sikhs have had to work hard to maintain the Sikh religious culture.

A comparison of the Akali Dal Sikhs and the Khalsa Sikhs provides evidence on how the Sikh culture is based on a religious political ideology. Akali Dal Sikhs are dedicated to religious practices; the Khalsa Sikhs represent religious beliefs couched in political doctrines. These two types of Sikhs are evidence of the religious-political basis of the culture and of the strong cultural bond among Sikhs which perhaps contributes to their current (ethnic) ideological perspectives.

A Dual Ideology

Macauliffe (1958) provides a detailed description of the Sikh people, their history, their ethnicity and their culture in How The Sikhs Became A Militant Race. The founder of the Sikh faith is Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He established the moral code upon which the religion
developed. Later changes were made to the code because of the need to protect themselves from becoming overpowered and in some cases abolished.

"The basic teachings of Guru Nanak were" as Macauliffe (1958) writes "that there was but one God the Creator, who was unborn and self-existent, that the wearing of religious garbs, and praying and practicing penance to be seen of men only produced hypocrisy, and those that went on pilgrimages to sacred streams, thought, they might cleanse their bodies, only increased their mental impurity."

Guru Nanak professed passivity during a period of history when dishonesty seemed to prevail and religion was at question. Macauliffe (1958) continues "The Guru taught in opposition to such belief that it was the man who turned away from God whose mouth was impure." The eight gurus to succeed Guru Nanak did their best to nurture the faith. However, by the time of the last four gurus it was becoming evident that Sikhs would have to change their procedures for defense if they wished to avoid being overthrown by the Moslems. The struggles and threats placed upon them by the Moslems to convert to the Islamic faith made it difficult for these gurus to continue in the passive codes of Guru Nanak.

The ninth guru, Guru Gobind, who was the leader during the period from 1666 to 1708, decided after many defeats to, "evolve a community which would not only fight against all shams and taboos of caste, and status, but being worshippers of the One Supreme Being, would look upon all humanity as one." In reply to the further demands that he embrace Islam, the Guru sent the following message:
"I will not accept thy law or thy religion, and I will not abandon my faith. The glory of the Turkish power is now at an end, since thou art forcibly depriving men of their religion. I will dig up the roots of the Turks, and throw them into the briny ocean, and since what is melted with salt shall never revive, the descendants shall not long hold sway in Hindusthan.'

In AD 1675 Guru Gobind's father Guru Arjundev was beheaded by a Moslem named Aurangzeb. The task of avenging his death and freeing his country from its oppressors was left to his son, Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh prepared himself with great diligence for his warlike mission. He who vowed that he would make his Sikhs such that one of them could hold his ground against one hundred thousand others.

Guru Gobind is responsible for the militant character adopted by the Sikhs. Though many of his predecessors contributed to the development of Sikh identity, Guru Gobind has provided some of the strongest aspects. The social organization process was long and arduous. Teja (1970) informs us,

"Gradually the Sikh congregations gatherings round the Guru began to acquire great sanctity, until the whole spiritual authority was transferred to them. This happened after Guru Gobind Singh, when the Sikhs organized as the Panth came to assume the personality of the Guru, although the signs of this authority had begun to appear much earlier."

Again the religious political relationship becomes apparent in the initiation of the Panth at which time as Teja points out out,

"The Guru enjoined upon the Sikhs to elect five Beloved Ones from among themselves for an executive work, and he promised to be present among them. The whole commonwealth of the Sikhs was called the Sarbat Khalsa, in whose name all prayers were offered and all public decisions made. Questions of Panthic interests were discussed in the plenary gatherings at the Akal Takht, to which all Sikhs had access. Questions of local interest were discussed in
local conclaves, called *sangats*, which existed everywhere. Even ordinary breaches of the rules of conduct were punished in such representative meetings, and no person, however highly placed, was above the jurisdiction of these conclaves.

The fact that the Sikhs found it necessary to unite and make themselves apparent as a visible minority points to an important issue. By making themselves distinctive they were also creating a vulnerability. This distinctiveness may account for such values as pride, aggressiveness and determinism becoming characteristics of their culture. Sikh symbols of identifications [the five kakis, long hair (kas), undergarment (kaucha), sword (karpan), symbol (kundakripan), and the steel bracelet (kaudau)] and their structural social organizations were means by which the emotional, physical and rational natures of the individuals were committed. The symbolism evident in these items relates to two ideas. The kundakripan represents the brotherhood concept of unity and the spiritual adherence to the concept of truth. The kas, karpan, and the kandau reflects the notions of strength, determination, and hardiness. And, the kaucha revokes chastity as a reminder of the pervasiveness of Sikhism. As Teja (1970) expresses it,

"It was the self-contained organization of the Sikhs that turned the Mogul Government against them, and it was their organization that saved them in times of persecution (1716-1763), when prices were put on their heads, when to grow long hair was held a crime, their presence in cities was banned ...."

The social organization served to fulfill many of the survival needs as they continue to do so for the closed Sikh community members in Vancouver.
These organizations today are represented by the temples, as a place of social organization, and serve as political, social and religious centres. Temples provide Sikhs with the necessary social systems to support and strengthen their sense of identity.

Both the civil and religious institutions of the Sikhs exemplify their ethnic ideological principles. The prime factor to consider is the relationship between the political and religious nature of the social structure of community life. Within this relationship lies the foundation for Sikh cultural perceptions. The 'guru-mata or great national council' of the Sikhs is the house of power. Malcolm (1958) says:

"When a Guru-mata, or great national council, is called, as it always is, or ought to be, when any imminent danger threatens the country, or any large expedition is to be undertaken, all the Sikh chiefs assemble at Amristsar. The assembly which is called the Guru-mata, is convened by the Akalis; and when the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings, at the shrine of the general good; and actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion, and commonwealth, to which he belongs."

In this brief outline on how the Sikh religion changed from being passive to militant, we can see the religious-political character of the faith. It is critical to make a distinction between the two types of Sikhs, the Khalsa and the Akali Dal. These types represent the militant and passive forms of the religion giving the Sikhs a stake in a dual ideology. Such important issues provide details about the characteristics common to the Sikh community.
Two factors in particular have been looked at with respect to understanding Sikh views and opinions. First, there is a look at Sikh attitude towards education both in India and Canada. The British Raj and consequential forms of discrimination have inevitably caused specific kinds of changes to Sikh perceptions of education. Second, there is a brief account of the history of Sikhism in terms of the shift from a passive to a more militant form of religion. Another factor which has surfaced because of the various kinds of discrimination confronted by Sikhs is the shift in their ideological views.

The Sikh ideology promoted a strong sense of identity both in India under British control and as a minority in Canada. According to the views of those interviewed, in Vancouver at least, discrimination aided in the promotion of a stronger Sikh identity and a stronger desire for an autonomous community. The following is example of discrimination: During the 1930's, Sikhs, Chinese, and Japanese who were mill workers were allocated separate days on which they could bath, cook, sleep, and socialize. As a result minority groups rather than mixing, stuck together thus reinforcing their isolation. And because these three minority groups were not considered citizens of Canada they therefore did not have citizenship rights and were paid below minimum wage.

Discrimination has played an important role in how minorities were, to some extent, prevented from integrating with Canadian society. A look at the Sikh communities in the Panama, United States, Mexico, and Jamaica proves that where discrimination existed to a lesser degree, Sikhs have assimilated and do not bear the marks of a closed community. Furthermore, discrimination has caused the Sikh community to tighten
its boundaries. This is seen in the ways the contemporary Sikh community members now provide education in the Punjabi language. The temples have become more than political and religious centres. They are used to promote Sikh culture, to strengthen ties through the teaching of language and translating Granth Sahib. Newsletters are published to promote the political, social and economic state of affairs.

The Sikh community, during its adaptation to the dominant culture has moved through numerous acculturation and assimilation stages. Moving from one period of adjustment to another they strengthened their ideological beliefs from the more passive to the militant. The start of the shift from a passive belief system to a more militant type began as early as the 1500's when the Moslems made their first approach to over throw the Sikhs. At this time because the threats to the Sikhs continued over several centuries a gradual move towards self-defense grew to include the taking up of arms. Yet the Sikhs never forgot Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, a man who professed peace and nurtured passive values. The Sikhs have worshipped the ten gurus, of which the tenth is the Granth Sahib, the holy book. Throughout the past hundreds of years Sikhs have portrayed themselves as proud, hardworking, aggressive people. Their ideological beliefs aid in sustaining this attitude. The passive qualities encourage an individual to work hard and to live a life of honesty, and the militant quality of their belief system gives them the right to fight to death if what is in question requires giving up their cultural identity. As a result the majority of Sikhs take to the latter course when threatened.

Evidence of this aggressiveness can be found in the actions of
Sikhs in contemporary times. For example, there is the Kalistan movement in India in which Sikhs are claiming a right to govern the state of Punjab, their home state. In this case thousands have died in attempts to secure their goal. Further evidence of this spirit is in how the members of the Sikh community in Canada are providing assistance to those in Punjab. Again the concept of brotherhood and unity prevails. The current battles against discrimination continues to strengthen the boundaries of the closed Sikh community.

**Ideology or Education**

The members of the closed society are less concerned with their own or their children's future role in terms of education. Their primary concern is to instill the basics of what it means to be a Sikh due to their fears of losing their identity. Instead they attempt, by the use of propaganda and fanaticism, to indoctrinate their children in the militant Sikh ideology. On the other hand, those Sikhs usually less committed to the Sikh religion, and in some instances more acculturated, rather than clinging to Sikh ideological concepts, see that education is a necessary resource.

This situation does not imply that those Sikhs who belong to or those who identify with the closed community do not seek educational betterment for their children. Instead, it is a question of priorities. The members of the closed community are more concerned with the maintenance of their cultural heritage through the practice of their religious codes and ethics. Education, though considered of value, is seen secondary to the cultural values.
A review of historical events and pertinent ethno-cultural factors reveals discrimination against British Columbia Sikhs. Further information on multiculturalism and race relations is provided from material presented by researchers and educators in sociology, linguistics, and multiculturalism.

The term discrimination requires some preliminary explanation in terms of the British Columbia Sikh community. Although Sikhs have been discriminated against by the dominant society, the type of discrimination with which I am concerned with may be termed "reverse discrimination."

**Sikhs and Their Form of Discrimination**

The kind of discrimination practiced by Sikhs is a direct result of their history and ethnicity. It identifies an attitude or character possessed by a minority group to ensure their survival.

Samuel (1980) provides a theoretical framework. "I believe that any historical experience, however grim it might be, can be discussed objectively as long as one keeps in mind what Herbert Butterfield calls man's universal sin.' 3 Man's universal sin must be defined as self-regarding or self-orientedness, which is the dominant instinct of nature." Discrimination may be interpreted to imply that a superior
group or class, view another group or class as lesser humans. Two examples illustrate this: first the protective discrimination policy in India is used by the dominant caste members as a means by which they demonstrate their power position. Second, the changes made to immigration policy by the Canadian government are an attempt to keep Sikhs from citizenship rights. As is evident in both these examples, power can be viewed synonymous with discrimination. Dostoyevsky writes "'father,' he asked 'are the rich people stronger than any one else on earth?' 'Yes, Illusha,' I said, 'there are no people stronger on earth stronger than the rich.'"

Ogbu's discusses the question of how implementation of equal rights depends upon the degree of its enforcement, such that the policies are only as strong as the non-dominant group members permit them to be. Thus, again, we see that discrimination perhaps is understood best in terms of power. For instance when policies are made by the dominant society to protect or control non-dominant group members, often the policies are an expression of self-protection. That is, the policies are used to assure themselves of an unthreatening power position.

Ogbu further discusses discrimination as evident in the quota system in India. Ogbu (1982) says "the quota system gives preferential treatment to identifiable members of cast minorities in matters of employment, housing, scholarships, and the like." Similarly in Canada the affirmative action programs are used by the dominant group to provide assistance to minorities. In both cases it appears that the
minorities are receivers of preferential treatment. However, a look at two reasons why policies are implemented by the dominant group reveals other motives. One, due to other political, economic, or social necessities there is a sincere, humanitarian effort on the part of the dominant group to assist minority groups; two, the dominant group members are "pressured" to assist and acknowledge members of the minority groups as being equal citizens and do so to give the appearance that they are helping in the elimination of discrimination. This fact is critical to the study of the type of discrimination exercised by Sikhs because it is the minority group who then discriminates against the dominant majority.

In spite of the multitude of discriminatory blocks put up in the way of Sikhs, they have overcome many of the difficulties commonly faced by minority groups. To describe how the situation of the Sikhs differs from that of other minorities, a look at Ogbu's tiered caste distinction of minority groups in the United States gives useful criterion. Ogbu's (1982) typology "(a) indicates the distinct quality of majority-minority relations, (b) permits an analysis of historical changes in the relationship and (c) has cross-cultural applicability. Applying these criteria, minority groups are categorized into three ideal types; autonomous, caste (pariah), and immigrant minorities." It is important to keep in mind that Ogbu's divisions were based on the American experience. It is my belief that the typology utilized to demark groups in the States would need to be altered if a similar demarcation were to be applied to minorities in Canada because the Sikhs do not fit
in any one category but have features characteristic of the three categories. I believe the reason for this is inherent in their practice of discrimination. The Sikh people's implementation of their peculiar form of discrimination characterizes them as identifying themselves as being superior, dominant, and powerful to the members of the dominant class. Ogbu (1982) says

"members of autonomous minorities do not necessarily regard the majority group as their reference group, nor do they necessarily want to be assimilated... the Jews and the Mormons probably best represent this type of minority group at the present. Cast minorities are the polar opposite. The dominant group usually regards them as inherently inferior in all respects... Immigrant minorities fall between autonomous and caste minorities. These people who have moved into a host society more or less voluntarily..."

Sikhs immigrated because of the pressure of population, poor conditions at home and the hope of prosperity which would enable them to relieve the poor conditions of their families in India. As a cultural group Sikhs have lived an arduous life of struggle which helped to sharpen their sense of cultural pride. Imagine immigration into an alien environment! Imagine believing yourself to be British subjects and then to have to accept treatment which belittled your role as a dignified human. Imagine being victims of British Raj in your own country and then due to economic, political and social conditions emigrating abroad only to begin to discover that your human worth was devalued because of racial and ethnic differences, (despite being esteemed for your courage and strength and called to serve in the army and navy).
This contradictory state left some Sikhs with very unsettled and resentful feelings. Interviewees mentioned how they could not believe the long lasting effects of the power of British domination. Some said that it was not until they had lived in Vancouver for a few years that they became conscious that they viewed themselves to be inferior to the whites, that is, having the colonized mentality of a subjugated class of people.

Sikhs, faced with the perils of discrimination, have gone through a major perceptual shift. Though a once colonized people, hence victims of power, they were valued also for their capabilities as warriors, disciplinarians, and hard working people. As a result of having two distinctive roles, one resulting from being a colonized people, the other stemming from their ideology, Sikhs have dealt with a unique construct of reality, that is a peculiar perception.

They have always maintained a strong identity in India both before and during the British Raj. Prior to the Raj they had to strengthen their identity because of their struggles for existence with the Moslems. During the Raj, they were selected as the preferred Indians and were used in many of the political, economic, and social services. As a result, the Sikhs gradually learned to oblige the British and their lifestyle. These two points are important because as mentioned by the Sikhs interviewed, when Sikhs acculturated to the Canadian life ways this dichotomy between being a colonized people and having their own ideology, encouraged the development of an unusual character. For instance, in dealing with discrimination in Canada, their commitment to
their ideology surfaces as the most dominant force. By working as a collective, lobbying to establish themselves as a powerful immigrant group, they fought inequality and mistreatment in the workplace and attempted to change immigration laws to rectify non-citizen status of over thirty years standing. They sought to correct the lack of educational support services and intercultural counselling. Their values, commitments, and hard work allowed them to successfully adapt to the dominant culture. The uniqueness of Sikhism permitted them to overcome the internal psychological and external emotional struggles of having once been a colonized people.

The only reward for their status as British subjects was the right to enter Canada as students. However what this implied was that only those with an education or desire to become educated could enter. However, those who chose to enter as students, had to have enough funds to support their education during their stay. This situation caused problems because those who were immigrating were primarily from low income backgrounds. These people were from villages in which wealth was uncommon in the first place, and they were learning to improve their economic situation.

Though the Sikhs were constantly in battle against various kinds of racial and cultural discrimination such as deportation and socio-psychological abuse, they managed to sustain themselves as a strong cultural group because of their determination and the channel opened to them through education. Though they had hard times in India under British rule, they could immigrate to Canada on a student visa.
When it became possible to enter Canada for the purpose of furthering one's education many Sikhs took advantage of the opportunity. However, there were others who used their student visas only as a means of entry into Canada. Yet though many of the men who came to Canada were not interested in furthering their education, they were compelled to acquire the appropriate educational level in India before they could apply for a student visa.

Once in Canada they attended schools, yet were handicapped in their studies because they did not receive proper training in terms of North American culture. Furthermore they lacked English language skills and were less motivated. Besides, they were less able to see the value of education since once in Canada their primary interest then was to earn a living. Many illegally sought to find jobs and attempted to dodge the immigration officers so they would not have to continue their education. Discontinuing their education meant deportation. These Sikhs battled their way between schools and jobs until either they managed to secure jobs under alien names or became educated.

Later, other Sikhs began to enter Canada to study at Universities. These men came with a level of education and continued in higher studies. Many of these ended up making Vancouver their home and since have contributed to the economy and social life of British Columbia. For instances after the war, theatres and restaurants were opening up for East Indians. Changes in the nature of discrimination towards Sikhs had started. The public began to recognize Sikhs as useful members of society since many Sikhs had been steadily becoming more an integral part of the dominant society.
Subsequent to the Second World War the increased demand for lumber provided an opportunity for Sikhs. The Sikhs took advantage of the demand for lumber and soon owned many of the mills on Vancouver Island and on the mainland. The economic changes in Canada meant prosperity for the Sikh community. Also, in 1947 the Canadian Citizenship Act was passed which allowed the settlement of an annual quota of 150 Sikhs and also gave legal status to those who had entered secretly and illegally in previous years. Now that the Sikhs had the right to vote they began to establish themselves economically. Soon thereafter changes in their views on education started to take place.

When the first East Indians came to Canada they soon realized that lack of education was one of their big handicaps. Therefore, they were determined that their relatives in India would not have to experience the same burden when and if they decided to come to Canada. Many of the Sikhs who emigrated had relatives in Canada, who informed them of the importance of good educational standards. Hence, since Sikhs had consciously worked at maintaining higher educational standards they were the more suitable candidates for student visas. Thus, by 1923 they had sent $193,000 dollars to further Sikh education in the Punjab. In addition to these official grants, individual Sikhs also sent money to put their own relatives through school. Thus, when the time came to fill the non-preference quota, a large number of Sikhs were able to compete due to their educational standards. This resulted in yet more Sikhs immigrating to Canada and an increase in the number of Sikhs becoming educated in India.
Education was the ticket to Canada. Originally Sikhs immigrated to secure a better life. In pursuit of this goal, they have adopted education as a means to that better life. An increased awareness of the benefits of education made Indians realize that a higher level of education could result in a self-governed India. It also meant greater wealth within Punjab, (for example the Agricultural University of Punjab) and a ticket to countries abroad. All of these are examples of freedom. The discrimination once so severe became an obstacle to overcome. The more recent blocks perhaps are not so easily challengeable because of the growing division in the Sikh community. The current Sikh community differs remarkably from the past one. In fact it is apparent that since 1904 there have been five distinct Sikh communities. Evidence of these communities can be found from an analysis of how changes to the immigration policy directly effected the character, growth, and structure of the Sikh community.
CHAPTER VI
EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT SINCE 1904

Five Generations in the Sikh Community

The gradual acculturation of the Sikh community into the dominant society can be understood by dividing the population into five generations. Each community generation is distinguishable because of specific events which influenced how and to what degree Sikhs could assimilate or acculturate into the dominant society. These five begin from 1904 to 1920, 1921 to 1935, 1936 to 1968, 1969 to 1980 and 1980 to 1985. Each of these periods is marked by significant events. Provided are events and documentation of other related matters which contributed in disrupting the acculturation process of Sikhs in Canada.

The First Generation of Sikhs Dates from 1904 to 1920

In 1914 laws were changed in order to prevent immigration of East Indians into Canada. A look at the Historical Overview of Canadian Immigration policy formulation, its purpose, and its effects on the Sikhs in British Columbia provides background details to supplement views offered during interviews. As early as 1794 Canada controlled the process of individuals entering from the American border through the implementation of the Act Respecting Aliens. At this point in time immigrants were welcomed. The aim of the 'Act' was to ensure that assistance was provided to those entering into Canada from the United States. Taylor (1976) stated that an immigration officer was appointed
to assist immigrant placement and adaptation. However, this position later developed into a screening facility. The period from 1794 to 1850 marks a phase during which the Canadian government was primarily concerned with controlling the flow of immigrants from the U.S. and not from other countries. As a result, for almost half a century the immigration laws were lax, in that they were non-discriminatory and more concerned with assistance and care for incoming immigrants.

As the numbers of immigrants increased, it became necessary to designate special status by placing controls as to who would be acceptable immigrants. The Immigration Act began to change and then the 'prohibition clause,' was passed. This addition prohibited certain classes of people, "criminals and other vicious classes of immigrants" from entering Canada. This addition to the act became the law used to regulate and permit only the type of individuals most suitable to the socio-political needs and to meet the goals of the dominant society in their attempt to keep Canada "a white man's country" (Buchignani, 1977, p. 88). The immigration laws were discriminatory in that they were changed to suit the "desires" of the dominant society.

During 1850 to 1860, due to an influx of Chinese into Canada, further developments towards tightening controls were instigated. The year 1867, when Canada became a member of the confederation, marked the start of a compulsory application of the immigration laws and this was supplemented with a prohibition categories section. The role of the immigration officer had shifted by 1897. Rather than aiding and monitoring, he controlled and selected. East Indians now wer-
immigrating to a country where the immigration policies were designed to allow for a selective process. The purpose of the process was to choose individuals who were most suitable to the terms of the dominant Anglo Saxon society's views to keep Canada 'white'. Hence, due to the racial "brown skin" Sikhs had great difficulty in the selection process. Ferguson (1975) writes, "The fears of a massive influx of East Indians, Chinese, and Japanese newcomers led to the birth of the Asiatic Exclusion League, a racist organization whose membership was an odd blend of jobless workers and some of the province's most prominent business, religious and military leaders (p. 2)." As a result, Sikhs began to fight for their rights. Due to the small population of Sikhs at this time, there was pressure from the dominant society to have them assimilate. To some extent acculturation and assimilation did occur but the opposing pressures resulting from the various kinds of discrimination encouraged Sikhs to strengthen their ethnic community bonds.

Subsequent to World War I East Indians were prohibited from entering Canada. And when immigration was allowed again the laws were discriminatory to all Orientals. Since no separate laws existed for East Indians in particular, they were denied by these very laws.

A riot on September 8, 1907, initiated by the Asiatic Exclusion League, was instrumental in prodding the government to take action. Finally in 1910, they passed several Orders-in-Council, of which the second stated that the only East Indians permitted to immigrate to Canada were those who came from India without any stopovers on the journey.
The second order was termed "continuous journey." The idea was to make it as difficult as possible for people from India to immigrate to Canada. According to Ferguson (1975) "In 1913, 36 East Indians turning up in Vancouver aboard a freighter from Singapore were served deportation notices by an Immigration official. The East Indians took their case to court. ... Mr. Justice Dennis Murphy dismissed their application ..." The people of India "applied to a second judge, Chief Justice Hunter ..." he "not only ordered the East Indians to be released, but said the 1910 orders-in-council were 'ultra vires' (beyond the legal powers of the court to make) (p. 4). These events led to the July, 1914 Komagata Maru incident.

"On May 23, 1914, the Japanese steamer Komagata Maru arrived in Vancouver. Aboard the steamer were 376 East Indian men who wanted to immigrate to Canada. The immigration department refused to allow passengers to leave the ship, and it lay at anchor in Burrard Inlet for two months. During this time, a tense drama was taking place in the courtroom, on the pages of Vancouver's newspapers, and on board the ship. For two long months, the men were confined to the ship while they awaited the final decision of the immigration department. When the Komagata Maru finally left Vancouver on July 23 to return to India, it was under the escort of HMCS Rainbow, a cruiser of the Canadian Navy.

The prevailing attitudes of the white population of B.C. at that time were profoundly anti-Asian, and white workingmen in particular felt threatened by the pool of cheap labour formed by Chinese, Japanese and East Indian immigrants. The Canadian government had already passed restrictions against Chinese immigration, but in order to do the same concerning East Indians, it had to circumvent the fact that East Indians were British subjects restricting their immigration would cause a strain in relations between the two Commonwealth countries. Therefore, two Orders in Council were passed in 1908: one required that each Asian immigrant had to have $200 in his possession upon landing in Canada,
and the other required that all immigrants must come to Canada directly from their country of birth or citizenship. Since there was no direct steamship service between Canada and India at that time, the order proved to be quite effective.

After examining the passengers and allowing 20 to land who had been to Canada previously, the immigration department issued a deportation order which was based upon the Orders-in-Council. The local Indian community secured legal help to fight the deportation order, and this became a lengthy court battle. It ended in defeat for the Indians, as the order was upheld by a Court of Appeal on July 9.

During this period, the passengers had run out of food and water, and threatened to hold an immigration official as hostage unless they were given some food. The immigration dept. complied refused to give them further provisions until the ship was ready to sail.

The passengers eventually mutinied against the Japanese captain and crew, and refused to allow them to fire up the ship's engines in preparation for departure. The immigration dept. and local police, with a force of 150 men, tried to quell the riot and board the ship from a tugboat, the Sea Lion, but they were repelled by the passengers, who threw lumps of coal and sticks at them. At this point, the Member of Parliament for Vancouver, H.H. Stevens, who had been aboard the Sea Lion, secured the use of the Canadian Navy cruiser Rainbow. It was rushed to the scene, equipped with eight guns and a detachment of militia, and was used to escort the Komagata Maru out of Vancouver harbour. The departure of the ship was observed from the shore by a force of troops on the docks, and thousands of Vancouver residents.

When the men landed back in India, their frustration at having been refused entrance to Canada, and having been on board the ship continuously for six months reached the breaking point. A riot ensued in which 26 men were killed and over 200 arrested. Many disturbances thereafter were attributed to these men, whose experience on the Komagata Maru had indeed caused them to be further disaffected.

In his book A History of the Sikhs, Khushwant Singh writes:

"In Vancouver, a trail of violence followed the departure. . . The Immigration Dept. had engaged the services of a Eurasian policeman, William Hopkinson to break up the Ghadr organization [a Sikh political party]. Hopkinson's chief aide was one Bela Singh. Two of Bela Singh's henchmen were
found murdered. At the post-funeral service of these murdered men in the gurdwara, Bela Singh killed two and wounded six other men. William Hopkinson volunteered to appear as a witness for the defence in the trial of Bela Singh. On October 21, 1914, Hopkinson was shot and killed by Mewa Singh, the priest of a gurdwara. Mewa Singh was sentenced to death. Prior to his execution he made a confessional statement. . . . "My religion does not teach me to bear enmity with anybody, no matter what class, creed or order he belongs to, nor had I any enmity with Hopkin. I heard that he was oppressing my poor people very much . . . I — being a Sikh — could no longer bear to see the wrong done both my innocent 'countrymen and the Dominion of Canada. . . ." Mewa Singh was hanged on January 11, 1915. The anniversary of Mewa Singh's martyrdom is celebrated every year by the Sikhs of Canada, and the USA."

Following the death of the Komagata Maru voyagers in Calcutta a battalion of Indian soldiers in Singapore mutinied, and released the German prisoners of war they were holding out of contempt for British authority. They were all shot before a firing squad. Indian settlers from the Vancouver area returned to India to take part in the so-called Lahore Incident, one of the first overt acts of rebellion against British rule leading up to the country's independence more than three decades later." Adams (1976)

In this case the men on the boat were given deportation slips by Justice Hunter. A consequence of the Komagata Maru incident was the cessation of all immigration. There was a law passed which prohibited Sikhs from entering Canada. The passing of this law had significant consequences for the Sikh community. By 1913 the Sikhs in Canada were males, of whom the majority were labourers who had come during 1911 and 1912, the two years when Canada accepted immigrant labor. As a result between 1914 and the early 1920's few Sikhs immigrated to Canada. Later the laws were relaxed and by 1923 the Sikhs were first admitted to Canadian schools and by 1926, the first Sikhs went to the University of British Columbia for higher levels of education. These Sikhs were indirectly
involved with the independence movement in India. They were getting their education because they knew that if India was to become free then it would be up to them to rule their country. They realized the need to be administratively self-sufficient should they one day rule their country.

In fact during the span of approximately twenty years, from 1906 to 1926, only forty-five Sikh women and forty-one children are known to have resided in Canada. And the majority of these women and children came after 1920. The men who had come to Canada before the 1914 ban on immigration were cut off from their home country, India. There were approximately seventy Sikhs and because their ties with their families in India were cutoff it became difficult to sustain their commitments. As a result some of these men began to marry non-Sikh women.

Intermarriage became an inevitable consequence and a means of greater assimilation of Sikhs into Canadian lifestyle. In British Columbia, many of these men became entrepreneurs and can be viewed as forming the first Sikh community.

The Second Generation of Sikhs 1921 - 1935: Acculturation

In 1913 the depression changed the assimilatory process. Sikhs were sought out as scapegoats. Racism grew and the Sikhs once again tightened their boundaries. The Sikh temple in Paldi (near Duncan, B.C.) built in 1908 became a political refuge. Sikhs congregated at the temple to discuss strategies on how to get citizenship rights. By 1922 the racial tension against Asians was very high. Ashworth (1979) stated "During the 1920's and 1930's the size of the East Indian
community remained virtually static (p. 187)." In fact there were only 100 Sikhs living in Canada up until 1927. The immigration controls managed to prevent other Sikhs from entering. This in a sense acted as an encouragement to resident Sikhs to reinforce their cultural value of brotherhood and community support. This marks the first community of Sikhs who pioneered a future home for the development of new directions within the Sikh community. Since many of these men were not fluent in English, they worked together to find an educated Indian who could be their representative.

In the early 1930's, shortly after the depression, a lawyer named D. Pandia was asked by the British Columbian Sikhs to act on their behalf. As emphasized by the interviewees, without Mr. Pandia the Sikhs would have had yet a more arduous struggle for rights. An example of one letter written by D.P. Pandia illustrates his efforts. In this letter he makes a point about the degree of assimilation undergone by Sikhs. To further substantiate his claim a survey of East Indians in Canada (following the letter) indicates that Sikhs had successfully assimilated.

Pursuant to my talk with you and Mr. Jolliffe on the 18th instant regarding the immigration problems of the Hindu community in Canada, I wish to bring to your attention the following facts:

You will no doubt recall that Hindu immigrants first came to Canada in 1904. However, on January 8, 1908, an Order-in-Council was passed in effect, prohibited any further immigration on the part of the Hindus.

According to the census figures of 1911, the Hindu population consisted of 5,438 persons, but despite the fact that the wives and unmarried children under 18 of legal entrants were permitted to enter the country, the population
has steadily declined, so that at the time of 1941 census there were only 1465 Hindus listed. It is interesting to note also that at present a large number of the original immigrants are well-advanced in years.

Whatever reasons prompted the Canadian Government to Hindu immigration forty years ago, I believe that in the interest of Canadian citizens of East Indian origin and the larger interest of our two sister Dominions, Canada and India, it is desirable and to the benefit of all concerned, for the Canadian Government to consider a change in the existing policy regarding Hindu immigration.

The record of the Hindu community since their first settlement in Canada is good and compares favourably with that of other immigrant groups of whatever origin now domiciled in Canada and forming part of the Canadian nation.

In the first place, one of their greatest contributions has been in the development, as pioneers, of the two basic industries of British Columbia, namely lumbering and agriculture. They have not only supplied capable and skilled labour, but they have invested millions of dollars in these two industries. Their success as primary producers has been generally acknowledged. Therefore, from the economic point of view their service has been of great value to the country.

In regard to their assimilation into the life and progress of Canada, it is a well-known fact that, although they come from a different cultural environment, they have adjusted themselves to their new surroundings successfully. They all speak English, although the barrier of language was even more difficult for them to overcome than for many of the European immigrants. Their children have become completely Canadianised and take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by Canada. As a matter of fact in comparing the various immigrant groups the following information is worthy of note.

The 1941 Dominion Census Report shows the population of British Columbia and the number of persons who have had thirteen years, or more, of schooling by racial origin. It is instructive to compare three sections of Canada's population in relation to this criterion to cultural advancement. The first group, for convenience, can be called the "British" group comprising those of English, Irish, Scotch and other of British origin; the second, the "European" group, including those of French, Austrian, Belgian, Czech, Slovak, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish,
Russian and others of European origin; the third, the "Oriental," embracing those of Chinese, Japanese, Hindu and others of such origin.

Of the British Columbia residents of British origin, 7.17 per cent had thirteen, or more, years of schooling, 2.11 per cent of those of European origin had thirteen, or more, years of schooling, as did 2.18 per cent of those of Oriental origin. Judged by this standard, the British group is more than three times as well educated as the European. Having regard to the lingual, cultural and economic handicap which the European group must overcome, that disparity is not in the least surprising. What is surprising, in the sense of figures, is that the Oriental group, particularly the Hindus, should have reached the same level — indeed, a slightly higher level than the European group. Therefore, culturally their ability to become assimilated has been proved beyond a doubt.

As regards their standards of citizenship, the Hindu community has proved its worthiness insofar as they have been law-abiding and peaceable. The report of the Commissioner of Police of British Columbia will amply demonstrate that, of the various groups having inmates in the penitentiary for major crimes, the Hindus show a smaller ratio of the population than other racial groups. A similar situation exists in the matter of juvenile delinquency. Added to this is the fact that they are thrifty, hard-working, reliable and steadfast at their work. Not a single Hindu is in receipt of public aid.

The Hindus not only played a part in the economic development of the country, but they have also contributed to the social welfare of the community at large. Their contributions to hospitals, the Red Cross and other community activities are well-known. Not only in peacetime have they obeyed the laws of their adopted land as becomes good citizens, but in the first and second world wars they volunteered to serve in the armed forces, particularly in the last war. A number of their young men joined the air force and army and many of them worked in the various war industries. Despite their small number, they contributed generously to the various war loans, particularly Victory Loan VI, to which they subscribed half a million dollars. These facts show that the Hindus have fully identified themselves with Canada in its progress and development and have proved their worth as good citizens.

The people and government of British Columbia, where almost all of the Hindus are domiciled, at one time viewed them with a prejudiced outlook. However, in later years, because of their undoubted contributions to the welfare of
the country, public opinion, and through it the attitude of the government, has completely changed as is shown by the significant events of 1947.

On April 2, 1947, the Legislature of British Columbia unanimously granted the provincial franchise to the Hindus. In the same year, on September 15, the Convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities also unanimously recommended to the government that the municipal franchise be extended to the Hindus. Moreover Vancouver, which operates under a separate charter, and where many Hindus live, also made a similar unanimous recommendation.

The legal status of the Hindu community has been further strengthened by the passing of the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1946, which confers upon them, as upon others, full Canadian citizenship. The original members of the Hindu community are British subjects by birth, are now full Canadian citizens, and with the establishment of India as a Dominion on August 15, 1947 they have their origin in a sister Dominion.

The present position of these 1,400 Hindus in regard to immigration is anomalous in the respect that, although they are Canadian citizens, they did not enjoy the same rights as fellow Canadian citizens of other racial origins who are privileged to bring in their relations other than their immediate families. P.C. 2115 gives them the right to bring in their wives and unmarried children under 18, but no provision is made for the entry of the other relations of these Canadian citizens of Indian origin legally resident in Canada who are in a position to receive and care for such relations and who would be able to absorb them in their various occupations, mainly lumbering and agriculture, where there is a steady demand for help.

I may add that there are also a few members of the Hindu community who have established themselves as successful farmers and lumbermen but who have no children or near relations in Canada to carry on their concerns now that they are approaching old age, or in case of their demise. Therefore, if permission is given, it would allow them to adopt and bring to Canada, relations from India as their heirs or successors. The applicants for relations will be able to satisfy your department in regard to their ability to supply the newcomers with work, housing and adequate financial backing. I can assure you the number involved will be very small.

Therefore I am writing this letter on behalf of the Hindu community in Canada in the hope that your government will
seriously consider the changing of your existing immigration policy towards these fellow British subjects from the sister Dominion of India where there is no discrimination against Canadians domiciled there.

Such a forward step will be greatly appreciated by these Canadian citizens of Indian origin and will also serve to strengthen the evergrowing ties between the two great Dominions of India and Canada.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank you for your courtesy and kindness to me during my several interviews with you, and for the sympathetic consideration you have always shown towards the Hindu community, representing the smallest minority in Canada.

Yours sincerely,

D.P. Pandia
### FIGURE 2

**SCHEDULE B**

**Survey of East Indians in Canada**

*(From D.P. Pandia's File)*

*(1944 October, November)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population in Canada</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population in B.C.</td>
<td>1,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21 years of age</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 21 years of age</td>
<td>1,142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>191</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literates</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills (Saw)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms: (Dairy, truck, Gardening, Greenhouses, General Farming, Grain)</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logging</td>
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<td>Self-owned Homes</td>
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<td>Insurance of all kinds</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee Membership in Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>On Relief</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory Bonds (at the time of the Sixth Loan)</td>
<td>$446,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-supported Charitable Institutions in B.C.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of &quot;East Indians&quot; supporting Red Cross</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
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Due to significant changes in the immigration laws by 1935 the predominately male society of Sikhs in Canada were granted the right to bring their families to join them in Canada. However, evident in the fact that the total number of female compared with males was still low. Nonetheless the increase in the number of women meant some family units were created. Although this made it possible for the start of Sikh families times were difficult for all, following the worldwide market crash of the 1929's. Nonetheless Canadian schools began to see more and more Sikh children attending. By the second World War the emphasis on education by Sikhs had decreased and not until directly following the granting of independence to India, (1947) did Sikhs once again renew their interest in education. The independence of India brought with it greater involvement in education in countries abroad because India now was part of the commonwealth which meant more dialogue between themselves, and Canada.

Though not many Sikhs are aware of the efforts and generous work of Mr. Pandia, it is probable that without him the history of Sikhs in British Columbia would be markedly different. Mr. Pandia has been a key force in the establishment of the Sikhs in not only Canada, but in the Panama, Jamaica, United States and Fiji. Samuel (1980) writes,

Demands for political equality became increasingly loud after the Indians obtained seats at the Imperial Conference. The Indian representatives had the habit of reproving their Canadian Colleagues for their failure to live up to imperial responsibilities. The plight of the East-Indians also invited criticism from successive
distinguished Indian visitors to Canada, which was always an embarrassment to their hosts. But Ottawa unfailingly pleaded provincial autonomy. Some British Columbian politicians, in private, admitted the unreasonableness of denying the franchise to the East Indians, but no one dared to propose it in public until the C.C.F. came forward in the 1930s. Among the academics, H.F. Angus, professor at the University of British Columbia, pleaded the cause of the East Indians and other Asians, pointing out that British Columbia's treatment of them was both unjust and unwise. In general, the East Indians themselves had become quite disillusioned with the futility of protests and appeals, yet the lamp of hope was kept alive by people like Kartar Singh, the Hundel Brothers, and Dr. D.P. Pandia.

The Third Generation of Sikhs 1936 - 1968: Franchise Granted

The first forty years of life in Canada for the Sikhs has been one of arduous combat for survival as a community. Even when they finally were granted the franchise in 1948 only part of the battle was won. They continued to establish themselves but always had to deal with the common problems of acculturation and discrimination. Yet, the one relief provided to them through the changes in rights was that they had more time to spend on education. As late as 1942 a total of fifty-one Sikhs were reported to be "in the city schools representing .1 percent of the school population." The gradual increase in population naturally meant more children and students were attending the schools and universities.

As late as 1951-1956 approximately one-hundred and fifty Sikhs immigrated and another three hundred entered between the years 1957 and 1967. In 1967 new immigration laws were passed making it easier for Sikhs to enter Canada. By 1977 as reported in Buchignani (1977) "approximately 150,000 East Indians were in Canada of which 1/4 were in
B.C." The increasing level of economic assimilation undergone by Sikhs in the 1950's led to a decrease in racist attitudes toward the Sikh community. Some had become owners of sawmills and others ran successful businesses. From 1945 to 1960 there appears to have been a less intensive period of racism towards Sikhs and other Indians. Indra (1977) indicated through her studies that during the latter years the press wrote in more favourable terms when reporting about the Sikh community.

This fact was due partially to the fact that Canada after World War II was in a better economic position and the majority of the immigrants had to some extent acculturated into the dominant society life ways. By 1950 there was a total of 2,000 Sikhs residing in Canada. Only about 150 Sikhs were permitted to enter Canada during that year apart from those who wished to come to Canada to study. The latter if they wished to study abroad had to apply through the commonwealth for an educational program called the Colombo Plan.

The Colombo Plan was an outcome of the commonwealth's decision that certain countries would benefit should their citizens have the opportunity to study abroad. The basis of the plan was that should one decide to study abroad and return to their home country then the government would pay all tuition fees. However, if one decided to stay in the country abroad, then the government was to be reimbursed by the individual. As a result of this plan, by 1952, ten to twelve students had entered Canadian universities. By 1960, approximately 80 students were funded by the Colombo Plan. However, this situation did not last.
During 1950-52 most who entered during these years had to have a background in education. The population of Sikhs in Canadian universities neared 300 students and in American universities as many as 5,000 students. The reason why more Sikhs enrolled in American Universities was that enrollment was limited in Canadian universities. No doubt also the climate and the fact many of them had their relatives in the U.S. made it more appealing.

In 1963-1964 the Trudeau government changed its immigration laws to an open door policy. Immigrants could come as visitors and then apply for citizen status. Also, at this time Canada was seeking teachers from abroad, hence many of the Sikhs who came during this period were teachers, or came to attend university to get teaching certificates. For example, in Alberta more than 400 Sikh teachers came to settle. The 1960's Sikhs became more involved in the field of education partially due to the fact that the demand for teachers was great. Many Sikh teachers immigrated to fill teaching posts. Other Sikhs who were in Canadian universities now chose teaching as a career because it promised a secure future. Some of these people decided to get two degrees, the second in education because of the assurance it provided in securing employment.

The Fourth Sikh Community Generation 1969 to 1980

Between 1960 and 1980, Sikhs once again experienced racism in various social strata. As the Sikh population grew, schools too had to learn how to accommodate "immigrants." The education system for the
first time was being forced to take into account the multicultural composition of Canadians. It became necessary to acknowledge and address the language and cultural needs of these people.

Up until the early 1970's ninety percent of people of Indian descent were Sikhs. Canada was becoming a second home country for Sikhs. By 1970, with the influx of Fijians, Hindus, Ishmalis, and others of Indian origin, the composition of groups of Indian descent in Vancouver, changed. The impact these people had on the Canadian population was felt in the field of employment and education. For example, the majority of the Ishmalies came in the 70's with expertise in business and the Fijians, primarily, came as labourers. Consequently, the Ishmalis have found their way into the business sectors of society and their children have been encouraged to attend higher educational institutions, whereas the Fijians have sought work in restaurants as cooks, cleaners, etc. The increase in population of Indian origin in Canadian society brought both greater acceptance of Indians as Canadians but as apparent in certain social classes greater discrimination has yielded. However, the impact of more Indian origin people has given more support to the Sikh community members.

The Fifth Sikh Community Generation 1981 - 1985

Sikhs may be viewed as having paved the way for these Indian people of different origins. Yet, because Sikhs had to struggle hard, and because there were many waves in the community immigration pattern, they learned to survive both in a closed society and as independent
individuals. They have, in effect, created mini Sikh societies, some more integrated into the dominant society ways, some less so. Since mini societies are distinguished by the fact that the people composing them are from specific immigration time periods, five community patterns developed. As a result, many of the young Sikhs who attend the schools and universities vary in the degree of their alliance with other Sikh-Canadians.

The influence of the Ishmals, Fijians, and more recently the Hindus concept of unity and integration gives support to the nurturing aspects of culture and the value of identification with one's ethnicity. This realization of the value of community allegiance is what the earlier Sikhs or Sikh community generations in a sense had to give up during the earlier years. Although in other ways it caused them to strengthen their sense of community. It has been restored through the influences of these other groups and by the increase in their own populations. The more recent changes in how Sikhs participate in education are therefore the result of several factors. These are: the diversified backgrounds of Sikhs, the increase in their population, the influence of Canadian born Sikhs as well as the role models of the Ishmals, Hindus and Fijian people. Finally, the economy of the times has had an impact on their involvement in education.

Education has had a significant impact on the Sikhs because without this avenue many would not have found the way from their farms and homes in India into Canadian schools. Though the changes to immigration laws have prevented the Sikhs from greater participation in education, and to
the awareness of the value of education itself. Education became a major force in the adaptation of Sikhs to their places in countries abroad. Education was the only way to secure a place in a country abroad. It was a means to an end, in that to have self government in India required its people to attain proficient levels of educational expertise; education provided security in employment which allowed for the development of inter community support systems. Education abroad helped alleviate the problems at home, caused by the pressures of population. It provided the community with teachers to teach both religious and cultural values to youngsters and to the uneducated. Therefore, education meant success, independence, and progress.

The changing pattern of Sikh immigration was seen by interviewees as significant in terms of important changes that took place in the Sikh community. During the years from 1904 to 1914 there were approximately three to four thousand Sikh immigrants most of whom had served in the British Army before coming to Canada. During these years they began to establish themselves in Canada by calling for relatives and family to join them. The majority of these Sikhs had come with a primary purpose to secure a better life. Education was not always the primary goal. Many of the earlier immigrants (1904-1907) were already educated, because they were usually the eldest sons who had to fulfill their role to help support the family and property. However, the majority of those who entered between the years of 1908 and 1914 had low levels of schooling background. Many of these men came for the benefits Canada offered to them.
Sikh Community Patterns in Education

Five waves of Sikh immigration provide useful time periods to view how Sikhs participated in education. The changing pattern of immigration laws directly affected how Sikhs involved themselves in education. Education has become valued more and more over the years by Sikhs. The change in the Sikhs community from a struggling minority to a more independent community has brought with it a change in how they value education.

The multiplicity of perceptions, as provided in the following, correspond to the five community patterns or Sikh mini societies. It is apparent that to understand or study the Sikhs in Vancouver it becomes important to acknowledge the distinctive characteristics of each of the five societies if one wishes to understand the nature of perceptions held by Sikhs on the issue of education. Provided below the graph are brief summaries on Sikh community patterns and their relationships in education.

Multiplicity of Perceptions

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Sikh Community Patterns in Education
Since 1980, with the influx of other Indians such as Hindus, Africans, Moslems, Fijians, Ishmalis, etc., who are racially of the same background, more emphasis has been placed on the nature of schooling for immigrants.

Sikhs are directly influencing the role of education in Canada. Evidence of this is in the operation of Punjabi language schools, the teaching of religious stories in the temples, the formation of organizations to promote multicultural education, and an increase in the number of Sikh teachers in the Public School System.

Sikh have economically assimilated into the dominant society and have begun to recognize the need to nurture Sikhism. Evidence of this is in their provision of private schooling in the Punjabi language.

Sikhs are primarily concerned with survival. Evidence of this is in their struggles for identity as Canadians and the discrimination experienced.

Sikh men either passed through Canada as members of the Queen Victoria Jubilee or entered with the intention to return to India, hence, they showed no interest in Canada's education system.
I have examined four aspects of Sikh culture which have a bearing on Sikh attitudes towards education in Canada. In the first place there is the influence of Sikh history and ideology. Secondly, there is an evaluation of the ways in which Sikhs have participated in education in India. Thirdly, there is consideration of various types of discrimination, in this country and their effects on the Sikh community role in education. Fourthly, there is discussion of how immigration policies have affected Sikh participation in education and in fact have created five distinctive Sikh community patterns. Now I shall look at some factors which, in all probability, will have an impact on the future role of Sikhs in education in Canada. Although ways in which Sikhs view education vary in many respects, two issues emerge as important and are commonly identified by interviewees. These are the reasons for immigration and the process of acculturation.

Future Directions

Interviewees found it best to contemplate the future directions of Sikh community participation in, and relationships with, education from two angles. They anticipate a continuation in the development of two Sikh community sects, the closed and the open. The closed community
members would continue to value the teaching of Sikh ideological concepts as a priority in the education of their children, rather than to value education for its own sake. Conversely, the members of the open Sikh community would emphasize public education betterment as a priority and in some instances at the expense of Sikh ideological principles. Also suggested was the notion that since it is a natural human desire to maintain a connection with one's ethnicity for the sake of identity that even those who may be seen as members of the more open community would nonetheless participate in Sikh affairs. The difference in their allegiance would be that they would be more rational rather than religious, spiritual or fanatical.

Religion, an integral part of the closed community has much impact on the acculturation process of its members. The closed community members do not have as much a need to assimilate as do those who do not choose to stay within such religious parameters. In fact it is observed that the more recent Sikh immigrants do not have the same needs as earlier members to assimilate with the dominant society ways. They find refuge within the greater Sikh world of religion. Furthermore, the dominant society has come to accept the fact that minority groups can exist happily in their ethnic enclaves. However, it is felt that many of the children in today's Sikh communities may have a difficult future. Interviewees anticipate psychological hardship in attempting to come to terms with the two worlds, the Sikh ideological world and compared with that of the dominant society. In Sikhism, the idea of brotherhood, the extended family and other ideas promote the desire for
a cohesive society. This outlook contrasts with that of the western world which is primarily concerned with the notion of individualism. No matter how strong the indoctrinization efforts of the closed community might be, the value differentiation between individualism and collectivism is anticipated to play a significant role in how Sikhs participate in education.

**Multicultural Education**

Furthermore, multicultural education is valued for its potential in influencing how the Sikhs may become involved in education in the future. Though aspects of multiculturalism, such as heritage language programs were considered counterproductive, it is felt that the promotion of multiculturalism not only in schools, but in society in general, would allow Canada to be viewed as a country made up of a blend of peoples rather than "white" people only. This situation would promote the idea of minority groups participating in levels of society which at present are out of reach for them. For example, there is a noticeable lack of participation of minority members on local boards, such as School Boards. In the case of the Sikhs, their history in Canada reveals them to be involved with forestry, farming and professions such as teaching, accounting, engineering, and medicine. It is suggested that as Sikhs have greater participation in the dominant society, they will begin to enter into areas of society commonly viewed as unconventional for them. Such opportunity for freedom of choice would filter into their more orthodox views as perpetuated by the Sikh religion and culture.
As career choices increase, and horizons broaden, the Sikh outlook will inevitably change. In contrast with the earlier immigrants, today's Sikhs more and more view Canada as their home rather than India. The results of this feeling is a psychological shift in their view of education. Education has always been viewed as a road to good employment but an increasing number of the Sikhs, who are no longer "caught between the two worlds," are able to pursue education for its own sake rather than only as a means to become successful. And it is with respect to this view of how today's Sikhs will participate in tomorrow's schools that the views on the role of heritage language programs, using standard Punjabi, and other acculturation and multicultural issues were discussed with interviewees.

Multiculturalism is primarily viewed as a mechanism to perpetuate the differences and expand the division between the dominant society and immigrant societies. Although acknowledgement is given to the idea that multicultural education assists in alleviating racial tensions and in promoting cultural understanding, it is viewed primarily as a means of preventing immigrant background children from being educated with skills equivalent to the dominant society. Also, programs which encourage an individual to develop and maintain strong ties with his ethnic background were thought to be entirely the responsibility of the minority community. The idea being that, as in most autonomous groups, the immigrant group takes on as one of its goals the educational process of ethnic cultural awareness. The immigrant group must attempt to keep individuals in touch with their cultural origin.
Heritage Language Programs

With respect to heritage language programs, the majority of the interviewees, having recognized the difficulties commonly faced by non-English speaking children, feel it is more important to educate Sikh children proficiently in French and English. The purpose is to provide the minority child with an education similar to those of the dominant society. It was the view that minority children were not receiving an education which would prepare them to participate equally in future education.

In addition, two other points were made with respect to the Sikh's role in future education. The present state of economics is seen to inhibit some individuals from pursuing an education. For example, Sikh individuals would have difficulty securing part-time work while attending school because of racial prejudice or bad economic times. The second point involves the importance of the role of women in shaping how the Sikhs will participate in future education.

If the women continue, as many undoubtedly would in the closed community, to fulfill the more traditional female role, then the chances of an overall change in the children's outlook or the community attitude towards higher education or lifelong education would be limited. Whereas, should women become leaders, they would have the potential to alter attitudes towards education. As more women receive an education or find employment, and become increasingly exposed to alternative ways, value change will inevitably begin. As a consequence there is a potential for the emergence of yet a new Sikh culture.


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