# THE ROLE OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN SKILLED INDIAN IMMIGRANT UNDEREMPLOYMENT IN GREATER VANCOUVER AREA

by

Vikas Mathur
Bachelor of Engineering, University of Roorkee, India, 1991

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

In the
Faculty
of
Business Administration

International Business

© Vikas Mathur 2006

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2006

# APPROVAL

**Name:**                          **Vikas Mathur**

**Degree:**                        **Master of Business Administration**

**Title of Project:**              **The Role of Cultural Differences in Skilled Indian Immigrant Underemployment in Greater Vancouver Area**

**Supervisory Committee:**

---

**Dr. Mila B. Lazarova**
Senior Supervisor
Assistant Professor of International Business
Faculty of Business Administration
Simon Fraser University

---

**Dr. Jennifer C. Chang**
Second Reader
Assistant Professor of Marketing
Faculty of Business Administration
Simon Fraser University

**Date Approved:**        August 1, 2006

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY library**

# DECLARATION OF
# PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENCE

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY library**

# STATEMENT OF
# ETHICS APPROVAL

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

(a) Human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

(b) Advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

(c) as a co-investigator, in a research project approved in advance,

or

(d) as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, BC, Canada

# ABSTRACT

This paper approaches the problem of underemployment of skilled Indian immigrants living in Greater Vancouver Area. The perceptions of a sample of 36 immigrants and their level of integration or separation were measured. The perceived barriers to gaining Canadian credentials were also examined. Two main barriers to gaining Canadian credentials were discovered. These were the cost of educational programs and the time required for gaining Canadian credentials. These two barriers were found to be equally important for all immigrants irrespective of their category of immigration. In addition to the above, family commitment was also an important barrier in getting Canadian credentials. The level of integration of the Indian immigrants was found to be unrelated to finding work in the desired field of specialization. On the other hand, separation was found to be inversely related to finding work in the desired field of specialization.

**Keywords**: Acculturation, Canada, Indian immigrants, integration, separation, underemployment, workplace diversity

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The cultural profile of Vancouver has changed drastically over the years. The percentage of foreign-born residents in the Greater Vancouver Area has increased significantly. With the aging population and the decrease in fertility rate in Canada, the main source of human capital will have to come from the skilled immigrants staying in the region. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business research (2006) has indicated that there is a persistent shortage of qualified labour in Canada, which has challenged small business owners and hindered their potential to grow. Canadian Federation of Independent Business found that employers in BC have approximately 23,000 vacant positions, yet they are not being filled. Immigrants from different parts of the world are having a hard time finding jobs related to their field of specialization and they end up jobs not related to their profession. According to Canadian HR reporter, the skilled immigrants are available but they are not being used. It has been reported that the economic cost of underemployment for Canada is between $4.1 and $5.9 billion annually because of lack of appropriate recognition of immigrant's qualifications and skills.

Studies have been done to understand the reasons for the underemployment of immigrants in Canada. The present study is aimed at understanding the reasons for the underemployment of skilled Indian immigrants in the Greater Vancouver Area. The level of integration and separation of the Indian immigrants would be ascertained to get a better understanding of acculturation by the Indian immigrants in Canada. It was also felt necessary to understand the perceived barriers in obtaining the required Canadian credentials.

This paper finds that level of integration is unrelated to finding job in one's field of specialization, but separation is inversely related to finding job in the field of specialization. It

was found that Indian immigrants believe that there is a lack of cultural understanding between the Indian immigrants and Canadian HR managers. Therefore, cross-cultural training programs would help the Indian immigrants in finding employment in their field of specialization. It was discovered that the high cost of the educational programs and the length of the related educational program were the main barriers in achieving the desired credentials. As such, it is proposed that educational program fees be reduced and the duration of the various courses be shortened. Financial institutions are also urged to offer loans at nominal rates to new immigrants after a few months of arrival in Canada.

It is suggested that immigration agencies and consultants offer information regarding the culture of Canada to the immigrants. Similarly, it is suggested that educational institutions can also help in bridging the culture gap of new immigrants by providing programs that give insight to the history, culture, and traditions of Canada. It is further suggested that educational institutions offer programs to managers (and HR managers in particular) that provide information about the socio-political history, geography, stage of economic development and culture of India. This would help by increasing empathy and facilitating intercultural relationships. Social service organizations, non-profit agencies, and religious institutions present in the Greater Vancouver Area should have more cultural exchange sessions so that both immigrants and hosts get a deeper understanding each other culture.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES

# LIST OF TABLES

# 1  INTRODUCTION

Vancouver is among the most culturally diverse cities Canada. It is gradually turning into the Gateway to Asia. Immigrants from different parts of the world have made Vancouver their home. With the globalization of businesses, the booming economy of British Columbia, and the looming of the Winter Olympic Games in 2010, it becomes prudent for Vancouver to utilize the skills of its immigrant population for the continued growth of its economy.

According to the Census 2001, the overall ratio of foreign–born residents in Greater Vancouver region was 37.5 percent, which was just second to Toronto at 43.7 percent. According to Census 2001, Asia was the most common origin of immigrants for the Greater Vancouver Area between 1996 and 2001. People's Republic of China contributed 20 percent of the regions foreign-based residents followed by Taiwan at 13 percent and India at 9 percent (2001 Census Bulletin #6-Immigration, February, 2003).

Despite the large number of immigrants, it is very difficult for the immigrant population to find jobs in their field of specialization (Canadian HR Reporter, May 3, 2004). As a result, many of the immigrants are left with jobs not related to their field of specialization and often work less than 30 hours per week (Canadian HR Reporter, Jan 31, 2005). This situation is faced by numerous immigrants of Indian origin in the Greater Vancouver Area. In view of the needs for utilizing the immigrant population, a number of perplexing questions arise regarding why so many immigrants are unemployed or underemployed and how this can be avoided. The paper explores the role of cultural differences between India and Canada in explaining the problem and proposes solutions to overcome many of the employment related challenges immigrants face.

We begin by examining the immigration to Canada, and the different classes of immigrants. Next, we look at the demographic projections for Canada and the long term vacancies in Canadian small and medium businesses. We then look at the importance of India and its trade potential with Canada. Concepts related to underemployment, workplace diversity, culture, and the process of acculturation are studied. The cultures of Canada and India are also compared based on Hofstede scores for various countries.

A series of hypotheses regarding the factors that influence immigrant employment are proposed based on our literature review. An online study was conducted. Thirty six people responded to the survey. The finding suggests that employment in one's desired occupational field is related to acceptance of previous work experience, taking education from Canada, and length of stay in Canada. It was also found that people who are separated are less likely to get employment in their desired occupational field.

# 2  IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

In order to explain the underemployment problem facing the immigrants in Canada, it is important to understand the immigration policy of Canada and the different categories of immigrants. The Canadian government encourages immigration into Canada (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, 2002). It has adopted the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), which is an expression of the overall tolerance of cultural diversity in the country. According to the act, all Canadians are granted the freedom to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage. The act ensures that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law while valuing their diversity. The act further ensures that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in all federal institutions.

## 2.1  Immigrant types

According to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002), there are three broad classes of immigrants namely - economic class, family class, and refugees class. Economic immigrants include skilled workers, business immigrants, assisted relatives, provincial or territorial nominees, and live-in caregivers

Family class of immigrants are those who are sponsored by close relatives or family members who are already Canadian citizens or permanent residents living in Canada. Sponsors have to promise to support the relative or family member and their accompanying family members for a period of three to 10 years to help them settle in Canada. Refugee immigrants are those persons who need protection, and who fear returning to their home country. Of all the immigrant classes, the immigration of economic immigrants to Canada is the highest (Figure 2.1)

3

**Figure 2.1: Immigration by class**



**Immigration by class in Canada**

Legend:
- ☐ Family class
- ▦ Economic immigrants
- ⊟ Refugees
- ■ Other immigrants

(Years: 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005)
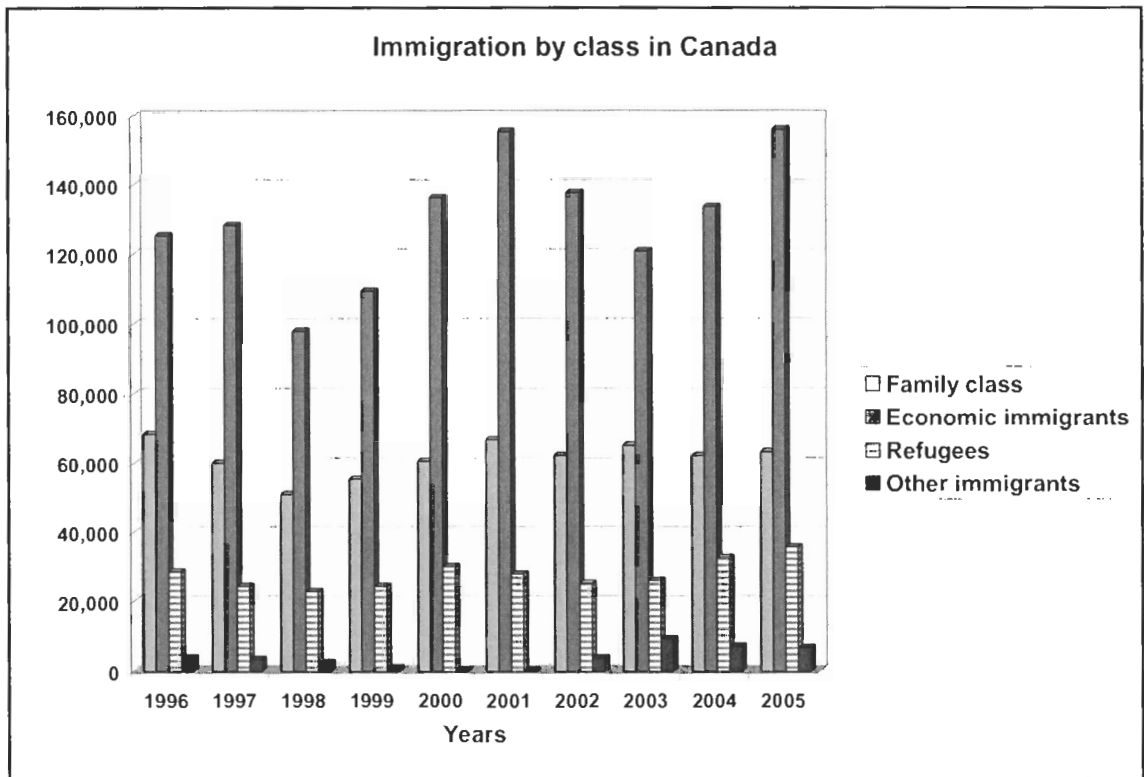
*Data Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2005-Immigration Overview*

Since this paper focuses mainly on the skilled immigrants, it is necessary to understand this class of immigrant.

## 2.1.1   Skilled immigrants

Skilled worker immigrants are those who are selected primarily based on their skills, education, and occupational experiences. Skilled worker immigrants, along with some immigrants admitted under the Provincial Nominee Program, are admitted to Canada mainly for filling the domestic shortage of skilled labour. (BC Stats, 2005a; BC Stats, 2006a).

The Government of Canada has laid down six criteria for judging the immigrants in the skilled category (Citizenship and Immigration Canada). Immigrants are awarded points under

each criterion. In order to qualify an applicant needs minimum 67 points (Citizenship and Immigration Canada). The criteria are:

1. **Education**: Applicants are awarded 25 points for a Master's Degree or a PhD with at least 17 years of full time study. Minimum points are five for high school study.

2. **Official Languages**: Principal Applicants have to take the IELTS test or the CELPIP test as a proof of English language proficiency. The minimum acceptable score is 7 out of 9 in all the four areas of listening, reading, writing and speaking.

3. **Work Experience**: A maximum of 21 points are awarded for work experience of more than 4 years.

4. **Age**: If the applicants are between the age of 21 and 49 years, they receive the maximum 10 points. For age other than above, 2 points are deducted for each year over 49 or under 21 years.

5. **Arranged Employment in Canada**: If a person has a permanent job offer, a maximum of 10 points are awarded in this criterion.

6. **Adaptability**: A maximum of 10 points are awarded under this criteria. Points are awarded if the immigrant can show that he/she or his dependants will adapt easily to living in Canada. These are based on the previous study in Canada, previous work in Canada, arranged employment in Canada, spouse or common law partner's education, and having relatives in Canada.

In addition to the above requirements, an immigrant also has to disclose the funds required for settlement in Canada, because the Government of Canada does not provide financial support to new skilled worker immigrants. An applicant has to show a sum of at least CAD 18,895 as settlement fund for a family of four people, which is a considerable amount for immigrants coming from developing countries. Therefore, we can see that skilled immigrants

have to pass through very rigid criteria before their application is even accepted for immigration

to Canada. Skilled workers are generally younger and are more likely to possess post-secondary

education when compared to immigrants in other classes. Of all the skilled workers who arrived

between 2000 and 2004, 57.1 percent had a bachelor's degree and another 30.2 percent had some

post-graduate education (BC Stats, 2006a). As illustrated in Figure 2.2, India is ranked second,

after China as the country providing economic immigrants to Canada (Citizenship and

Immigration Canada, 2005).

**Figure 2.2: Top five source countries for economic class immigrants**
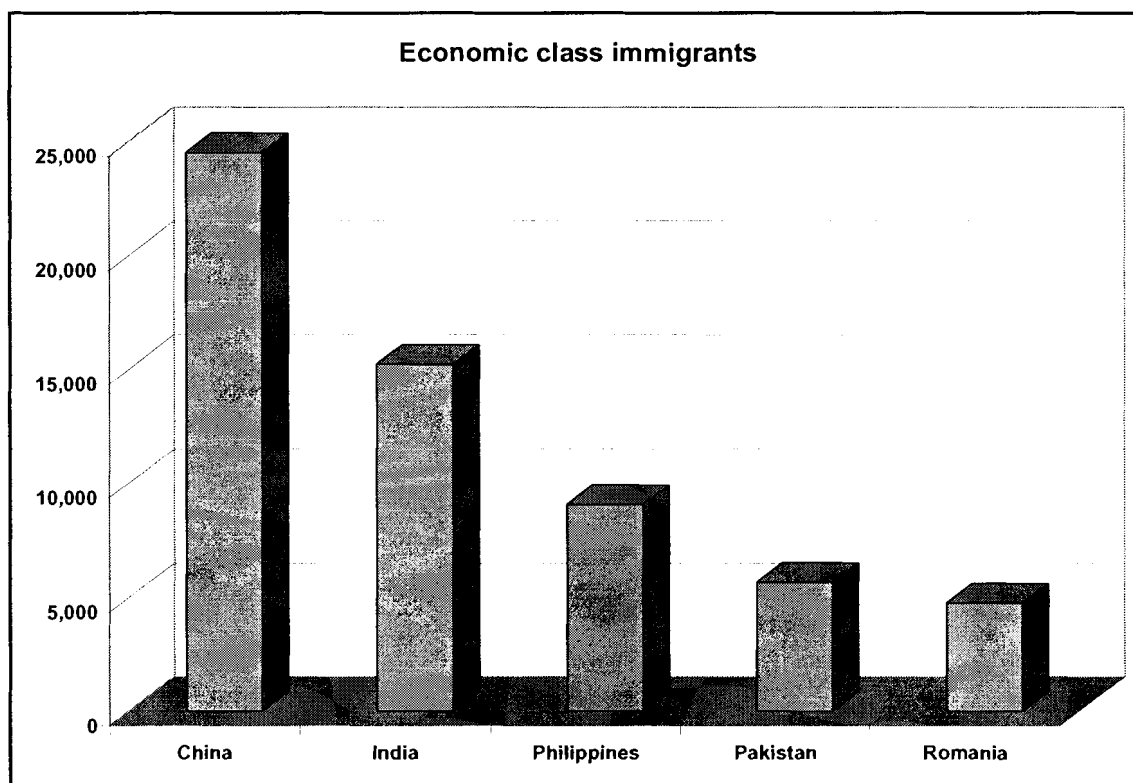


*Data Source: The Monitor, Spring 2005, Citizenship and Immigration Canada*

## 2.1.2 Other immigrants

Business immigrants are the next most highly educated group, followed by family

immigrants. Refugee immigrants tend to possess, at the time of landing, the lowest educational

levels among all immigrants (BC Stats, 2005b).

## 2.2  Population projections: 2005 to 2031

According to new population projections released by Statistics Canada on December 15, 2005, Canada's population is ageing fast and senior citizens would outnumber children in about a decade. Three scenarios were considered namely low, medium, and high. These were based on fertility level, immigration into Canada and growth in life expectancy. In all low, medium and high growth scenarios considered, seniors aged 65 and over would outnumber children aged less than 15 around the year 2015 (Figure 2.3). The aging of the baby boomers will combine with continuing low fertility levels and increasing longevity to age the population rapidly.

**Figure 2.3: Population projections for Canada**
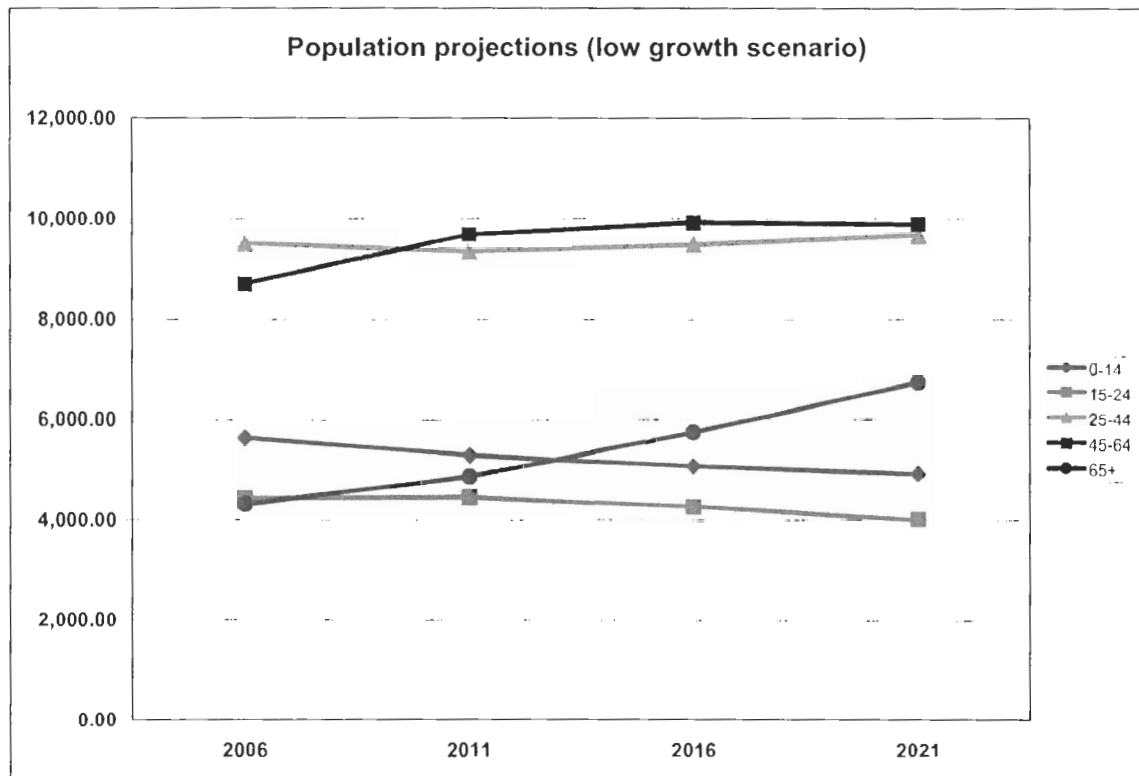
In all the three scenarios of low, medium, and high growth considered, natural increase would eventually become negative, that is, there would be more deaths than births. This would occur in 2020 under the low-growth scenario, in 2030 under the medium-growth scenario, and

in 2046 under the high-growth scenario. As a result, international net migration would become the country's only source of population growth.

### 2.2.1 Visible minorities in Canada

In the given scenario of population projections, it would also be necessary to look at the population projection of visible minorities in Canada. According to the Employment Equity Act of 1986, visible minority is anyone whose ancestors are neither European nor partially aboriginal. This definition includes large ethnic groupings namely the Chinese, South Asian, and Black (compromising predominantly Caribbean, African, and Canadian Black). In 2001, about one-eighths of Canada's people were visible minorities. This proportion will grow to one-fifth by 2017 because visible minorities comprise of a large share of immigrants and they are of child-rearing age (Pendakur, 2005). Three quarters of visible minorities live in Canada's three largest cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. By 2017, half of the visible minority population will be in two ethnic groups- South Asian and Chinese populations (Statistics Canada 2004, Draft). Since the current paper focuses on Indian immigrants that are part of South Asian immigrants, the above projections also have economic implications for the Indian immigrants living in the Greater Vancouver Area.

## 2.3 Long term vacancies and skilled labour shortages

Before dwelling into the issue of immigrant underemployment, it would be prudent to look at the job vacancies in Canada and British Columbia in particular. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business research (2006), there is a persistent shortage of qualified labour in Canada, which has challenged small business owners and hindered their potential to grow. An important indicator of staffing shortfalls is the vacancy rate, which is the number of vacancies as a share of total number of job positions. The long-term vacancy rate for small and medium sized business across Canada in 2004 was 2.7, and it increased to 3.2 in 2005.

For British Columbia, this was 1.7 in 2004 and it jumped to 3.2 in 2005. Larger businesses typically face higher chances of having at least one long-term vacancy. All business sectors are challenged by long-term vacancies. The construction sector reported the highest vacancy rates of 4.7 percent. The other sectors in order of decreasing vacancy rates were agri-business, retail, transportation, primary, wholesale, and business services. Vacancy rates suggest that a significant number of jobs in the small business sector are left unfulfilled for an extended period every year. Therefore, it is evident that there are a number of jobs available in British Columbia.

## 2.4   The employment contradiction and remedial measures

We have seen that the population of Canada is aging and most of the population growth will come from the immigrants to Canada. It is also shown that the visible minorities in Canada, particularly from South Asia and China will increase. In the above circumstances, companies will have to hire from the immigrant population. At present Canada is experiencing an employment contradiction. There are jobs available, yet they are not being filled. It was reported by Canadian HR Reporter (2006, February) that many of the skilled people needed are already in Canada as immigrants, yet their skills were not being used. A 1998 study by Owen indicated that 40% of employers in Canada would screen out internationally educated applicants because they did not know how to access their education. Another study by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (2003) found that the biggest concerns for employers in recruiting immigrants were the understanding foreign credentials and determining language skills.

To overcome such issues, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) is working to end the taxi-driver stereotype, setting up mentoring and job entry opportunities for new immigrants. A website has been set up by TRIC to answer employer questions about how to tap into the skilled labour pool that is available. TRIC has also initiated an Immigrant Success award. Employers in Greater Toronto area are being invited to compete for the "best employers

for immigrants" competition (Canadian HR Reporter, Toronto: February 27, 2006). The site is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canadian Heritage, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and the Maytree Foundation.

Similar activities are evident in British Columbia. For example, a Regional Immigrant Initiative was started on February 7, 2005. The purpose of this initiative is to encourage immigrants to settle in areas outside Vancouver and the lower mainland so that communities in these areas share the benefits of immigration. Government of Canada has also launched an Internationally Trained Workers Initiative on April 25, 2005 to accelerate the entry of immigrants and foreign trained Canadians into the Canadian labour market in jobs that make full use of their skills and experience (http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/mib/IPIR/id_regional.htm). A website www.lookingahead.bc.ca has been launched to help employers in hiring immigrants in British Columbia.

It is hoped that the above initiatives will go a long way in helping immigrants to Canada who had until now, a very hard time in getting jobs in their intended occupation. However, even today, despite all the initiatives being taken, Indian immigrants are having problems finding employment in their desired field and are as such underutilized. The present study proposes to focus on the Greater Vancouver Area of British Columbia where most of the Indian immigrants are living. This study is being done to satisfy the needs of the local BC community who wants to know more about this group of immigrants.

## 2.5 Immigration to British Columbia

Between 2000 and 2004, 48.1 percent of all immigrants that landed in British Columbia were skilled workers. The province attracted 14.2 percent of all skilled workers to Canada during the five-year period from 2000 to 2004. Approximately half of the BC skilled workers were clustered in ten occupation groups. The majority were computer programmers, engineers, and

finance, marketing, and sales professionals (BC Stats, 2005a). British Columbia's proportion of

immigrants stood at 16% of the national flow in 2004, compared to 13% in 1990. While B.C.

immigration levels rose as high as 23% in 1996, the level has stabilized between 15% and 16%

since 2001. As can be seen in figure 2.4, among the Canada's three largest cities, Toronto had the

largest proportion of recent immigrants (23%), followed by Vancouver (21%) and Montréal (9%).

**Figure 2.4: Immigration pattern of three largest cities of Canada**
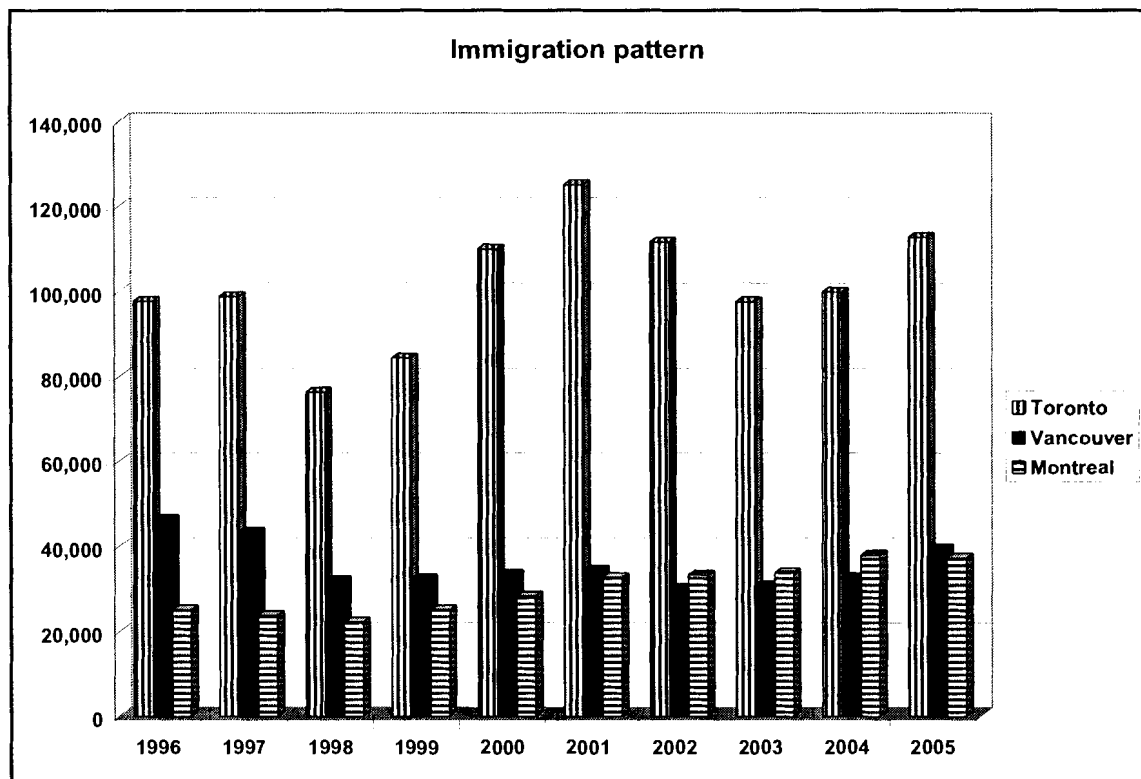


Data Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005

Over 80% of Vancouver's recent immigrants were born in Asia, half of whom were born

in East Asia. The number of economic immigrants from India has risen from 2 percent in 1990 to

15 percent in 2001. BC is attracting lesser share of the economic Indian immigrants with 16

percent of all Indian economic immigrants choosing BC between 1980 and 1984 compared to

only 7 percent between 2000 and 2003 (BC Stats, 2004). According to a longitudinal survey done

in 2001 the primary reason for all immigrants to choose a particular city was family and friends.

11

However, the second reason was different. It was job prospects in case of Toronto, climate in case of Vancouver, and language in case of Montreal. Job prospects ranked as a fifth reason for immigrants to come to Vancouver whereas it was third for Montreal and second for other Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and non-CMAs. Therefore, it can be seen that immigrants do not rate highly of Vancouver in terms of job prospects. However, with the predicted economic boom of British Columbia, things could change and immigrants may start coming to Vancouver for finding better jobs, as is evident from the upswing in the immigrant flow to British Columbia in figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5: Immigration to British Columbia**
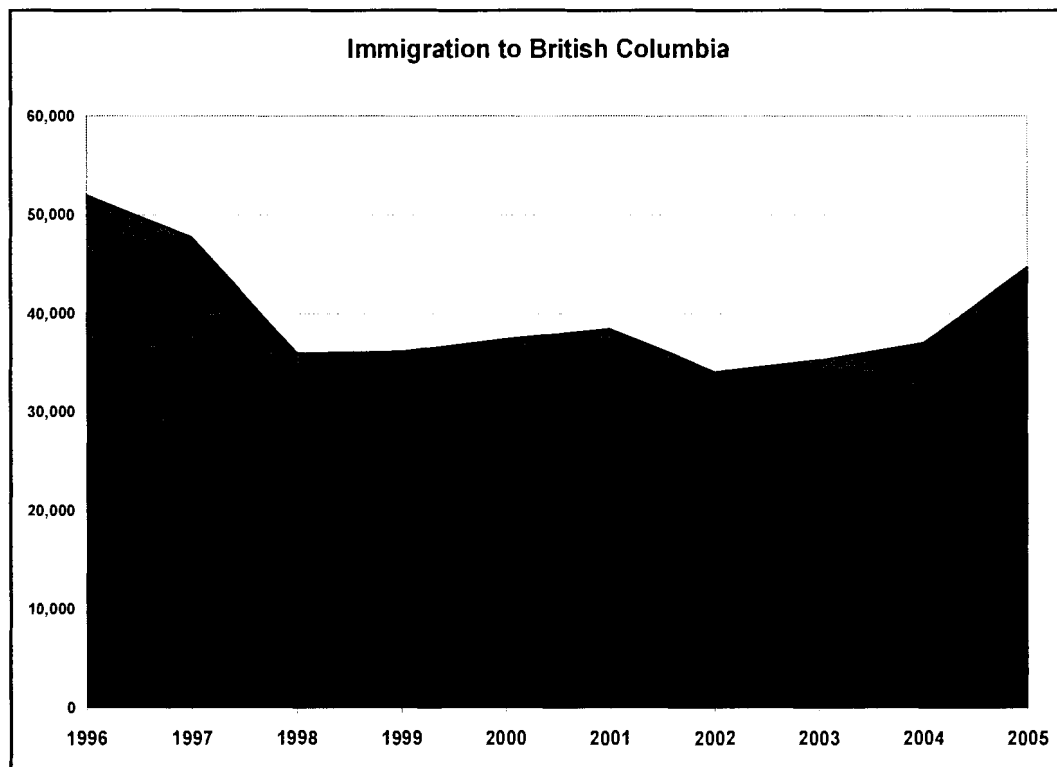


*Data source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005*

According to Statistics Canada, British Columbia's economy has seen a "rebound" during the past five years. Since 2001, the real GDP growth in BC has averaged 3.4 percent. Exports snapped out of a 3-year slump, with a 16 percent gain in earnings between 2004 and 2005. Bank

of Montreal predicts BC will outperform the Canadian average across a range of economic indicators and will continue to be top performer until 2010.

Canadian Federation of Independent Business found that employers in BC have approximately 23,000 vacant positions (CFIB Research, April, 2006). Credit Union Central forecasts that total employment in BC will grow by 62,000 jobs in 2006 and another 59,000 in 2007. BC's unemployment rate was 5.1 percent in October 2005, the lowest in 30 years (Statistics Canada, November, 2005). According to Canada West Foundation, BC is poised to become Canada's Growth Engine.

According to a BC Skills Force Initiative sponsored by the BC Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures Development Association, increasing retirements and a hot economy are combining to leave small business owners throughout British Columbia unable to find skilled staff they need to run their businesses. (The Vancouver Sun, Business BC, 22 June 2006). This is in contrast to the availability of skilled immigrants from other parts of the world. Therefore, if proper manpower planning is done, this staff shortage can be overcome by training and increasing the diversity at the workplace. One key initiative employers can undertake is concerted efforts to take advantage of the skilled immigration pool available in British Columbia.

## 2.5.1   British Columbia technology sector

Since the present paper is being done for the British Columbia Technological Industries Association, it is necessary to look at the technology sector of British Columbia. In 2004, British Columbia's high tech sector recorded above average growth in every indicator with the exception of employment. British Columbia tech sector suffered the most significant job loss in the country.

Employment in British Columbia's high tech sector dropped 2.4% to 64,660 in 2004, with declines in both the services (-1.7%) and manufacturing (-5.1%) sectors contributing to the

13

total drop. British Columbia's high tech sector has achieved some gains in productivity between 2003 and 2004, as a small labour force was able to generate greater output. High tech service exports from British Columbia are approximately three times the value of international shipments of high tech goods. The outlook for British Columbia high tech sector is positive (Source: BC Stats, 2006b). This implies that there could be more employment opportunities for skilled Indian immigrants in the field of software development and information technology. The positive outlook of the British Columbia's high tech sector opens tremendous opportunities for business partnerships and trade with India.

# 3  INDIA

It has been shown earlier that India is the second source country for immigrants to

Canada and that in the coming years the proportion of visible minorities will grow to one-fifth by

2017. In addition, the South Asian immigrants will form the major group of immigrants to

Canada. Therefore, it is important to understand India and its culture.

India is a vast country with a population of nearly 1.1 billion people. It is a diverse

country with different religions and languages. Hindi is the official and main link language of

India (Constitution of India). English enjoys associate status but is the most important language

for national, political, and commercial communication (CIA World Fact Book). Although

majority of the people in India are Hindus, it is home to a large population of Muslims. Other

smaller religious minorities include Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Jews, Parsis, Ahmadi and

Bahá'í. Being one of the earliest of civilizations, India has a rich and unique cultural heritage. It

has striven to preserve its established traditions throughout history; its dynamic nature is manifest

in its willingness to respect and tolerate foreign ways and practices.

The Indian economy has changed dramatically since 1991 when India launched its

program of economic reforms and trade and investment liberalization. Competition increased in

all industries. As a result, companies started to reinvent or reshape their culture to attain higher

levels of performance (Kumar & Sethi, 2005, pg 67). According to the CIA World Fact Book, the

Indian economy today is the sixth largest in the world (See Table 3.1). It achieved a real GDP

growth rate of 8.3% in 2005, which was highest in over a decade (BC Stats, 2006c). India's

foreign exchange reserves and gold amount to nearly 145 billion US dollars (CIA World Fact

Book). The Indian economy is largely agrarian but manufacturing and services have recently

gathered pace as India becomes a more attractive destination for outsourcing and grows as a

consumer market. Other important industries are iron and steel, petroleum, entertainment, textile,

information technology services and handicrafts. India has a well-qualified and motivated

workforce. Almost everyone speaks English and can be easily trained to work for Western

companies (Cavusgil, Ghauri, & Agarwal, 2002, pg 181).

**Table 3.1: Ranking of world economies based on GDP (Purchasing power parity)**

| Rank | Country | GDP (PPP) |
|------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | **World** | $ 60.71 trillion |
| 2 | **United States** | $ 12.36 trillion |
| 3 | **European Union** | $ 12.18 trillion |
| 4 | **China** | $ 8.859 trillion |
| 5 | **Japan** | $ 4.018 trillion |
| 6 | **India** | $ 3.611 trillion |

*Data Source: CIA World fact book, 2006.*

## 3.1 Trade potential between India and Canada

India offers significant opportunities for Canadian trade and investment, particularly in

traditionally strong areas, such as telecommunications, power equipment and engineering,

infrastructure development and environmental technology. Canada's trade partnership with India

is greatly affected by the presence of large number of immigrants from India. It has the potential

to become very significant for Canada and British Columbia in particular (BC Stats, 2006c).

Canada's trade partnership with India is greatly affected by the presence of a large number of

immigrants from India in many of its provinces. Interpersonal links can prove a very influential

factor in a two-way trade between the two countries (BC Stats, 2006c).

British Columbia was the source of 19% of Canadian exports to India, second only to

Saskatchewan (29%). In 2005, India ranked 14th as destination for British Columbia origin

exports, well ahead of free trade partner Chile (22nd) and only four behind Mexico (10th). This is

in contrast to India's rank of 18th as destination for Canadian domestic exports, accounting for 0.3% of country's overall exports (BC Stats, 2006c). In the light of the above, it becomes all the more important for Canadian companies to understand the Indian culture.

## 3.2 Indian culture

Since the liberalization, there is a shift from a soft-oriented work culture to a work centric nurturing culture. The Indian culture has been described as a vertically collectivistic one. This means that Indians have a tolerance of, and respect for hierarchy (Kumar & Sethi, 2005). Therefore, under no circumstances can a subordinate criticize or openly question the superior even if subordinate feels that his/her superior is in the wrong. It is argued that Indians not only conform but also at times may over conform (Prasad, 2003 as cited by Kumar & Sethi, 2005). Over conformity may produce a "yes" culture in which the subordinate quietly accepts whatever the superior tells him to do. Similarly, it is imperative that the norms of protocol are rigidly followed. Hierarchical norms are also likely to encourage "dependency seeking" behaviour.

Indians have a coexistence of collectivism and individualism. Therefore, Indians display a high degree of behavioural flexibility. Indian leader-manager is seen as direct, aggressive, and individualistic (Gopalakrishnan, 2002, as cited in Kumar & Sethi, 2005). The Indian behaviour is context sensitive. It is shaped by three aspects of the environment namely place, time, and person (Sinha & Kanungo, 1997, as cited in Kumar & Sethi, 2005). Therefore, a behaviour that is appropriate in one context may be considered inappropriate in the other context. Context-sensitivity may foster the perception of unpredictability and may impede effective communication because the person may say one thing but may mean the exact opposite.

# 4   RELATED CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## 4.1   Underemployment

It has been documented in various studies (Hiebert, 2003; Brouwer, 1999; Berry & Aycan, 1996) that immigrants to Canada are not being properly utilized and are doing ordinary jobs unrelated to their skill sets. As such, we have engineers and doctors driving taxicabs or working as security guards. Since the paper attempts to address the issue of underemployment of Indian immigrants staying in Greater Vancouver Area, it is important to understand the related concept of underemployment.

Underemployment is defined as holding a job that is in some way inferior or of lower quality, relative to some standard (Feldman, 1996). Feldman (1996) has argued that underemployment can be broken down into five dimensions: (a) more skills or experience than required by the job, (b) more education than required by the job, (c) involuntary employment in a field outside the area of education, (d) involuntary employment in part time, temporary, or intermittent work and (e) low pay relative to either previous job or others with similar educational backgrounds. The present paper mainly focuses on the aspect of involuntary employment in a field outside the area of education and involuntary employment in part-time, temporary, or other intermittent works.

Time-related underemployment is a measure indicating that the hours of work of an employed person are less than what a person is willing and available to take. The unemployment rate tells us the proportion of the labour force that does not have a job but is available and actively looking for work.

18

A related concept to underemployment is job satisfaction. Employees with inadequate employment may feel disillusioned with the job, frustrated with lack of career opportunities, and unfulfilled due to underutilization of their skills (Borgen et al., 1988, as cited in Maynard, Joseph and Maynard, 2006). Maynard et al's (2006) review reported that previous research had found negative relationships between job satisfaction and (a) perceptions of skill underutilization, (b) perceptions of underemployment, (c) perceived or actual mismatch between actual education level and the position's requirements, (d) holding a temporary or part time position, rather than permanent or full time work, (e) employment outside one's field, and (f) degree of pay difference between previous and current job. Maynard et al (2006) concluded that underemployment is related to poorer job attitudes and underemployment may ultimately hinder organizational effectiveness. From the above discussion, it is clear that the underemployment of immigrants in Canada may lead to poorer job attitudes and it may hinder the organizational effectiveness.

### 4.1.1   Reasons for underemployment of immigrants in Canada

We have now understood the concept of underemployment and are aware that immigrants are not being employed in relation to their skill sets. As a result, they are underemployed and do not work in their desired field of study or find work involuntarily in part-time or other temporary jobs. It is now important to understand the reasons cited for the underemployment of immigrants in Canada.

1.  Lack of recognition of foreign academic credentials by Canadian academic institutions, occupational regulatory bodies, and employers (Wong, 2004; Brouwer, 1999, Berry & Aycan, 1996). The Conference Board of Canada, in its report the Brain Gain published in 2001, estimated a loss between $4.1 and $5.9 billion annually for the Canadian economy because of the lack of appropriate recognition of immigrants' qualifications and skills. Therefore, we can see that underemployment of immigrants due to lack of recognition of foreign credentials in Canada also negatively affects the Canadian economy.

2. Lack of Canadian work experience (Man, 1997; Berry & Aycan, 1996) or difficulty in gaining recognition of foreign work experience by occupational regulatory bodies and employers (Brouwer, 1999). The longitudinal survey of immigrants to Canada (2001) also found that one of the most critical hurdles faced by immigrants trying to find employment was lack of experience in the Canadian work force.

3. Incomplete or lack of access to information for newcomers about how to access a profession or trade, including licensing standards and requirements (Teo, 2003; Brouwer, 1999).

4. Differences in social values, roles, and rules between Canada and the country of origin of immigrants (Mak et al., 1999, Spitzberg & Cupach 1984 as cited by Frankson, 2005). Even the CFIB research (2006) reported in that employers perceived culture as one of the factor posing difficulty in hiring decisions in British Columbia.

5. Poor language or communication skills (Teo & Waters 2003, Devoretz et al, 2000 as cited by Frankson, 2005, Berry & Aycan, 1996). The longitudinal survey of immigrants to Canada (2001) also found that 22% of immigrants identified language barriers as a critical factor for lack of job.

In addition to the above, Brouwer (1999) also identified as barriers (a) lack of access to adequate, occupation-specific educational/testing upgrading, language training and testing, and (b) absence of institutionalized arm's length appeal processes for those unfairly denied entry into regulated occupations.

## 4.2 Work place diversity

As noted above, immigration is the main population growth driver in Canada and that a substantial part of the incoming immigrants will comprise of visible minorities from South Asia and China. Further, due to shortages of skilled workers, the growth potential of many companies in Canada is being threatened. However, it was also observed that due to various reasons

20

including cultural differences and language ability of immigrants, they are still under-employed and their skills are not being utilized. Canadian HR Reporter (February, 2006) reported that many Chinese immigrants are finding jobs in China and are leaving Canada. In such a scenario, companies may be able to overcome the problem of worker shortage by sincerely resorting to workplace diversity programs. Workplace diversity programs are initiatives by organizations to communicate, train, recruit, mentor, promote, and involve employees in opening the organization to competent representatives from amidst emerging diversity categories.

### 4.2.1   Advantages and disadvantages of workplace diversity

Having a diverse workplace creates an increase in attracting and retaining the most qualified candidates. Having inside information on how to communicate and on what a community wants in a product or service is a great asset for a company. A multicultural company can penetrate and widen their markets with the knowledge of political, social, legal, economic, and cultural environments (White, 1999, p 477 as cited by Aghazadeh, 2004). It has been documented that workplace diversity can lead to cost savings, improved customer service, increased system flexibility. Workplace diversity helps organizations move to global markets since it enhances openness to many languages, cultures, lifestyles, and races (Wexler, 2000, pg 327)

However, workplace diversity has some disadvantages. There is an increase in costs of training, and conflict may increase over time as diversity compels people and groups who often do not get along to search for mutual interests. Aghazadeh (2004) has pointed out that mismanaged diversity can have long reaching effects on employee satisfaction and productivity, and therefore, it should be managed with utmost care.

Top management plays a crucial role in making diversity a success. Leaders must be the first to receive training to address myths, stereotypes, and real cultural differences as well as

organizational barriers that interfere with the full contribution of all employees. Therefore, organizations must have continuous learning necessary for trainers.

## 4.3 Understanding culture

Workplace diversity initiatives can help in overcoming labour shortages and, if managed properly, can lead to improved productivity. However, workplace diversity will be successful only if companies understand the different cultures of its employees. Similarly, for the immigrants to Canada, a better cultural understanding will help them in faster integration into Canada and better performance at the workplace.

Culture is a learned, shared, compelling, interrelated set of symbols whose meaning provides a set of orientations for members of a society. These orientations, taken together, provide solutions to problems that all societies must solve if they are to remain viable (Terpstra and David, 1985:5 as cited by Punnett, 2001, p 53). In general, a particular group would react in a similar way to a given stimulus. Therefore understanding a culture can help in determining how group members might react in various situations. Unfortunately, ethnocentrism and parochialism are quite common among managers. Ethnocentrism implies that cultures are being interpreted through the prism of one's own culture. It combines with a deep-seated belief that one's own culture is superior to all other cultures. Parochialism, on the other hand makes one believe in the superiority of one's own culture because he/she is ignorant of the other culture and value systems.

Values have been described as enduring beliefs that specific mode of conduct or end states of existence are socially preferable to their opposites (Rokeach, 1973 as cited by Punnett, p 54). Values are acquired early in life and are useful in explaining and understanding cultural similarities and differences in behaviour. They tend to remain stable over time.

A number of cultural value models have been developed. Most popular among them is Hofstede model (1980, 2001) that describes culture through 5 value dimensions – power distance (i.e., the degree of equality, or inequality, between people in the country's society), individualism (i.e., the degree the society reinforces individual or collective, achievement and interpersonal relationships), masculinity (i.e., the degree to which the society reinforces, or does not reinforce, the traditional masculine work role model of male achievement, control, and power), uncertainty avoidance (i.e., the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society), and long term-orientation (i.e., the degree the society embraces, or does not embrace long-term devotion to traditional, forward thinking values).

Since this paper focuses on the Indian immigrants in Greater Vancouver Area of Canada, it is necessary to compare the culture of the two countries to get a deeper understanding of the cultural differences.

### 4.3.1 Differences between Indian and Canadian culture

The scores for Canada and India have been plotted below. It is evident from the graph (See Figure 4.1) that there is a marked difference between the Canadian values and the Indian values. This vast difference between the two cultures could be the key reason for the difficulty in obtaining meaningful employment by Indian immigrants and the employers' uneasiness in hiring immigrants, especially those of Indian origin.

We can see that Canada has low power distance index compared to India. This implies that Indians value high power distance. In terms of the individuality dimension, it can be noted that Canada has a high individuality score compared to India. This is because India is more of a collectivistic society. According to Kumar & Sethi (2005), India has a streak of individualism and individual achievement is important. On masculinity, the scores of Canada and India are very close to each other with the score of India being slightly higher.

**Figure 4.1: Comparison of cultures of Canada and India**
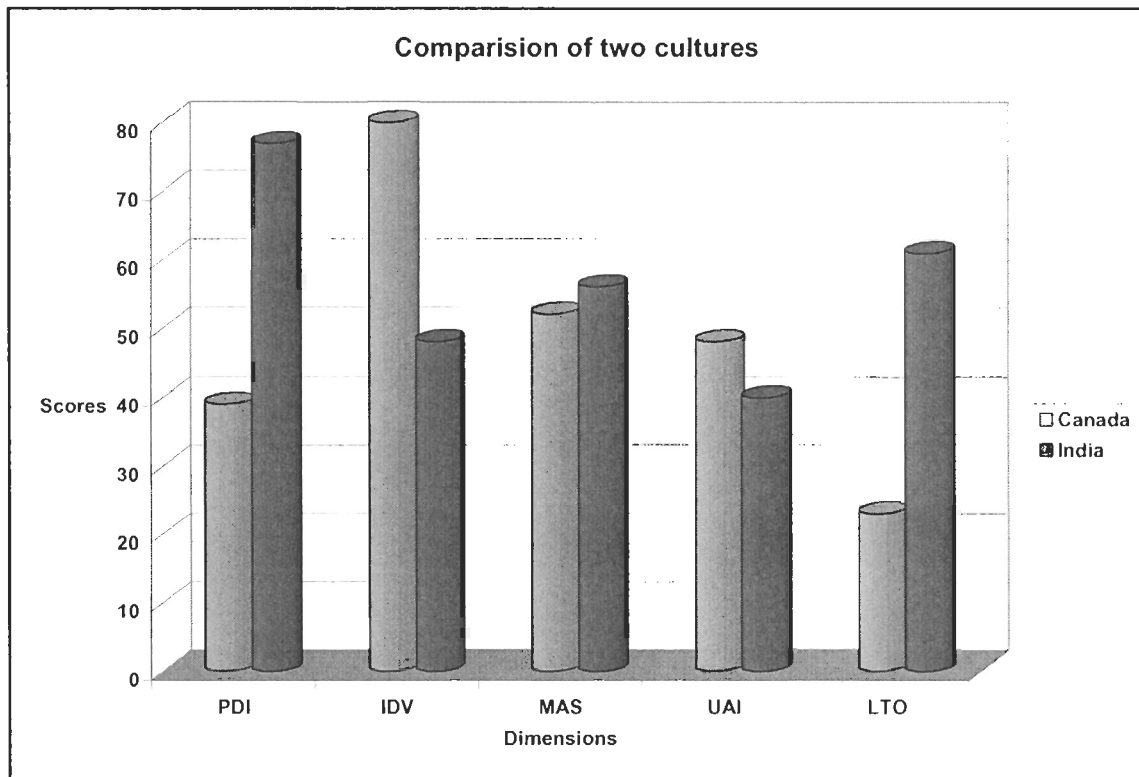


*Data source: Cultures and Organizations-Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its importance for survival. Hofstede, G. & Hofstede G. J. (2005).*

The uncertainty avoidance score for India is slightly lower than Canada. We also see that India has a very high score on long-term orientation compared to Canada. The above comparison shows that there is a marked difference on the dimensions of power distance, individualism, and long-term orientation. There is not much difference on the dimensions of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance index.

### 4.3.2   Comparison between Indian and Canadian English language

Since language is an integral part of culture, it is important to understand the language differences between India and Canada. Even though the official language and other languages spoken in India are very different from Canada, the two countries have one language in common,

which is the English language. Even though both countries speak English there is a subtle difference between the English language used in India and English used in Canada.

The Indian English spoken in India is rooted in British English. The written language is the Standard English and dates back to the early 16th century in its current form. It is based on the dialects from the South East of England and is used by newspapers and official publications. Words from Hindi language have also made their way into the Indian English language. The English language taught in schools is essentially British English and in particular, spellings follow British conventions. However, the British left India in 1947, and therefore many phrases that the British may consider antique are still popular in India. This difference in style though is not as marked a difference as between British and American English. Indian schools teach grammar from British textbooks and the grammar of British English is considered the only correct one (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_English)

In many respects, the spelling of Canadian English is intermediate between British English and American English. However, the spoken language is much closer to American English than British English. Where Canadian English shares vocabulary with other English dialects, it tends to be more American than British English. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_English). Therefore, it can be said that even though many Indians have good command of English language, there may still be differences in accents, pronunciations, spelling and context in its use.

## 4. 4. Acculturation

Acculturation is a very important concept for understanding the cultural changes that occur when two cultures interact with each other. The new immigrants to Canada come from different countries, and in many cases, the culture of the home country is very different from the culture in Canada. After landing in Canada, they experience a state of euphoria when they are

happy to have come to their dream destination. However, the euphoria gradually changes to a state of culture shock where they realize that the culture of Canada is very different from the home culture, and gradually a period of acculturation starts (See Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2: The acculturation curve**

Acculturation is defined as the process of cultural change that results when two or more cultural groups come in contact with each other. The changes occur in both groups, but usually one (the dominant group) changes less than the other groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herkovits, 1936 as cited by Berry, 1999). Acculturation may also be defined as social interaction and communication response styles (both competency and ease/comfort in communicating) that individuals adopt when interacting with individuals and groups from another culture (Barry & Garner, 2001 as cited by Berry, 1999). The issues of cultural maintenance (the extent to which people value and wish to maintain their cultural identity and behaviours) and contact participation

(the extent to which people value and seek out contact with those outside their own group, and wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society) are important in the study of acculturation process.

Berry (1980) studied the acculturation process and identified four modes of acculturation. These are termed as assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (See Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3: Modes of acculturation**

| | | Important to maintain cultural identity | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No |
| Important to maintain relationship with other cultures | Yes | Integration | Assimilation |
| | No | Separation | Marginalization |

*Source: Diagram adapted with permission from JW Berry (1987)*

Cultural assimilation takes place when the individuals of the non-dominant group do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures. In contract, if individuals of the non-dominant group prefer to holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, separation takes place. If the individuals of the non-dominant culture have interest in both maintaining their own original culture and seek daily interaction with other cultures, cultural integration occurs. However, if the individuals of the non-dominant culture neither maintain their own culture nor interact with the other cultures then marginalization happens (Berry, 1980).

Integration can be freely chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open to new culture and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity (Berry, 1991). Therefore, a mutual accommodation by both the dominant and the non-

dominant cultural groups is required for integration to take place. Either integration or separation mode of acculturation can be followed when other members of one's ethno cultural group want to maintain their cultural heritage (Berry, 1999). Therefore, both integration and separation are "collective" strategies whereas assimilation is more "individualistic" (Moghaddam, 1988 as cited by Berry, 1999).

It has been established that both cultural groups become acculturated. Therefore, the role played by the dominant group influences the way in which mutual acculturation would take place. When acculturation experiences are judged to pose no problem for the individual, changes are likely to be easy, and behavioural shifts will follow smoothly. This process involves three sub-processes. These are culture shedding, culture learning, and culture conflict (Berry, 1992). The process of culture shedding and culture learning is termed as the process of adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993 as cited by Berry, 1999).

These involve a deliberate loss of behaviours by the individual of the non-dominant culture to allow a better fit with the larger society. Thus, the individual of the non-dominant culture adopts the language spoken, the clothes worn and the food eaten by the dominant culture. Integration involves the selective adoption of new behaviours from the larger society and the retention of cherished features of one's own heritage culture. Fewest behavioural shifts result from the separation strategy and maximum from the assimilation strategy (Berry, 1980, 1990, 1997 as cited by Berry, 1999). For multiculturalism to be successful there needs to be a general support for cultural diversity as a valuable resource for the society and low levels of intolerance or prejudice in the population (Berry, 1999).

# 5  HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses for the present study are based on the previous discussion on the two modes of acculturation, namely integration and separation. Past research suggests that strong identification with the majority culture enhances one's career outcomes (Carnevale and Stone, 1994 as cited by Aghazadeh, 2004). Similarly, it has been mentioned that an understanding of the social codes and customs of society is required for suitable employment (Anisef, Sweet, & Frempong, 2004). The Canadian government also stresses on the integration of immigrants into the Canadian society. This leads to believe that immigrants who are integrated into the Canadian society would have obtained jobs in their desired field. We may also infer that those immigrants who are separated from the society will be less likely to be working in the desired field of study.

Coward (1999) had pointed out that close ties are maintained between Hindu South Asians in Canada and India. They frequently visit their home in India to see the members of the extended family. Roberts (2003) had shown that Indians maintain their identity by having linkages with family members in India by regular visits to India or by other means like marriage, etc. Since most of the Indian immigrants to British Columbia are from the family class (BC Stats, 2006c) it is evident that Indians want to maintain their cultural identity. This means that Indians are less likely to lose their cultural identity through assimilation or marginalization mode of acculturation. Even though integration and separation are the opposite poles of the same spectrum, no study has been done to show their impacts on work related outcomes. Therefore, it was decided to test in the impact of these two strategies on work related outcomes.

In order to understand the effects of integration and separation on the underemployment in Canada, that the following hypotheses were made

*Hypothesis 1a*: Level of integration into the Canadian culture is related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

*Hypothesis 1b*: Level of separation is inversely related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

The key hypotheses of the paper were related to the two modes of acculturation namely integration and separation, but our literature review of research related to underemployment and barriers to gaining Canadian credentials suggested additional factors to explore. Further, with the present study we wanted to extend a recent study by Frankson (2005). Frankson (2005) focused on the reasons for the underemployment of the Chinese immigrants in Greater Vancouver Area. She interviewed 20 Human Resource professional in the Vancouver high tech industry to find their perceptions of Asian immigrants in the GVA. She found that only a small percentage of Asian immigrants applying for jobs got hired. She found that recruiters were afraid that immigrants might not be able to integrate in the work place. They also expressed that Asian immigrants tended to lack confidence in their abilities and did not feel ready for responsible positions. According to Frankson (2005), recruiters felt that communication skills and ability to work within the Canadian context affected hiring decisions. Even though Asian immigrants were very respectful, they were not well-versed with Canadian customs. Among the most important factors were the ability to communicate innovative ideas, and being confident and assertive.

Further, underemployment of immigrants has often been attributed to lack of information (Teo, 2003; Brouwer, 1999). Therefore, we hypothesise that if immigrants know about the Canadian job requirements before immigrating to Canada, then they will be more likely to find job in their desired field. It is assumed that prior knowledge may sensitise the immigrants to the specific skills needed and other job requirements, and they may be better prepared to take the challenge and upgrade their skills.

30

*Hypothesis 2*: Knowledge of Canadian job requirements before immigrating to Canada is related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

Lack of recognition of foreign academic credentials has been identified as another major reason for underemployment of immigrants in Canada (Wong, 2004; Brouwer, 1999, Berry & Aycan, 1996). Therefore, it was hypothesised that if Indian immigrants got their academic credentials evaluated in Canada, then they might have better chances of working in their desired occupational field.

*Hypothesis 3*: Evaluation of one's Indian degree is related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

Lack of Canadian work experience has also been cited as an important reason for the underemployment of immigrants to Canada (Man, 1997; Berry & Aycan, 1996). Therefore, it was hypothesised that if Indian immigrants' previous work experience was acknowledged then they have better chances of finding work in the desired field of study and finding employment at middle or higher-level positions.

*Hypothesis 4a*: Acceptance of previous work experience of immigrants is related obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

*Hypothesis 4b*: Acceptance of previous work experience of immigrants is related to the level of employment in Canada.

Anisef et al. (2004) reported that receiving education in Canada had a greater chance of success in the labour market because of better cultural understanding. To that end, lack of appropriate academic credentials has often emerged as a key reason for underemployment of immigrants (Wong, 2004; Brouwer, 1999, Berry & Aycan, 1996). We thus suggest that if immigrants obtain education at a Canadian educational institution, they will have better chances

of finding work in the desired field of study and finding employment at middle or higher-level positions. This led to the formulation of the fifth set of hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 5a*: Education obtained at a Canadian institution is related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

*Hypothesis 5b*: Education obtained at a Canadian institution is related to the level of employment in Canada.

Since the present paper is focused on the skilled Indian immigrants, it is hypothesised that skilled Indian immigrants are more likely to find employment in their desired field. This is because skilled immigrants are selected primarily based on their skills, education, and occupational experiences. These immigrants are admitted into Canada mainly for filling the domestic shortage of skilled labour. (BC Stats, 2005a; BC Stats, 2006a). This led to the formulation of the sixth hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 6*: Category of immigration is related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

Literature on acculturation shows that acculturation starts after some time of arrival in a country (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p324). Similarly, it was reported that after a period, the barriers for finding employment are overcome (Berry & Aycan, 1996). Therefore, it was hypothesized that length of stay in Canada is related to finding employment in the desired field. This led to the formulation of the seventh hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 7*: Length of stay in Canada is related to obtaining employment in one's desired occupational field.

# 6  METHODS

The current survey-based study is focused on the Indian immigrants living in Greater Vancouver Area. The Internet was used to collect data as this approach allowed us to reach more potential respondents in the shortest possible time. Since the researcher did not have an accurate list of skilled Indian immigrants in the Greater Vancouver Area (GVA), referral or snowball sampling technique was used for getting responses. The survey was designed to eliminate responses from people living outside the GVA or who were not Indian immigrants. Temporary residents who had come to Canada on a visa were not allowed to complete the survey and the survey was closed as soon as they indicated that they were holding a visa. Indian immigrants who had received Canadian citizenship were allowed to take the survey because immigrants receive citizenship status after a continuous stay in Canada for a period of minimum three years. During pilot testing, a number of minor modifications were made to the survey based on feedback from the respondents. For example, accounting was added in the question requesting the respondents to indicate their field specialization in India, and additional category of employment level was included.

## 6.1  Measures

Both categorical and scale variables were used in the survey. The categorical variables included: the age of the respondent, his or her gender, his/her marital status, highest previous education in India, professional qualifications in India, employment status and employment level in India, and the number of years worked in India. Other categorical variables included the knowledge whether international degrees have to be evaluated in Canada, type of education received in Canada, current employment status and level of employment in Canada. The

33

continuous variables were related to the perceived obstacles faced for getting Canadian credentials, language skills, and integration and separation measures.

The variables that were tested in the hypotheses were working in one's desired occupational field, level of employment in Canada, category of immigration, length of stay in Canada, integration, and separation. The variable working in one's desired occupational field was measured as yes or no. Yes responses were coded as 1 and no responses as 2. Level of employment in Canada was measured at five levels with 1=temporary job, 2=junior management, 3=middle management, 4=senior management, 5=other, 6 = unemployed. The variable was subsequently recoded as "lower level" employment status (temporary, junior and others) were given a value of 1, and higher management levels (middle and senior) were given a value of 2. Since the analysis had to done of only employed immigrants the respondents who were unemployed were filtered out. Therefore our final sample only included 32 respondents. Category of immigration was measured on just two levels, 1=skilled and 2=other. Length of stay in Canada was measured at four levels, 1=less than one year, 2= one year or more but less than five years, 3= five years or more but less than ten years, 4=ten years or more. For data analysis the variable was recoded by combining levels 1 and 2 as 1=less than five years, and combining levels 3 and 4 as 2= five years or more.

The East Asian Immigrant Acculturation scale developed by Barry (1991) was used to measure integration and separation. The items were modified to incorporate Indians instead of Asians, and Canadians instead of Americans. Since the questionnaire had to be administered to an adult and probably married respondents, the question –"I would prefer to go out on a date with an Asian than with an American" was not included. A 5-anchor scale was used from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The full survey is provided in Appendix 1. The items included in the integration measure were : I think as well in English as in my native language; I tell jokes both in English and in my mother tongue; I have both Indian and Canadian friends; I feel very

comfortable around both Indian and Canadians; and I feel both Canadians and Indians value me. The items included in the separation measure were: Most of the music I listen to is Indian; Most of the music I listen to is Indian; I feel that Indians treat me better than Canadians; My closest friends are Indians; Indians should not marry/date Canadians; I feel more relaxed with an Indian than when I am with Canadians; and I prefer going to social gatherings where most of the people are Indians. The variables had acceptable reliabilities (for integration: alpha=.85; and for separation: alpha=.69).

## 6.2 Sample characteristics

Since the survey was hosted on the Internet, it is impossible to calculate the exact response rate because the number of people knowing about the survey is not known. The survey was accessed by 46 respondents. Two people chose not to complete the survey; three responses were deleted because the respondents were holding visas and were not yet immigrants or citizens of Canada. Of the remaining 41 responses, one respondent was a retired Canadian citizen of Indian origin and such his response was deleted, as he was no longer a part of the labour force. Four more respondents had to be eliminated because of large amount of missing data. Therefore, the final sample had 36 respondents (of which only 32 were usable for testing our specific hypotheses).

Out of the total of 36 valid responses, 58.3% (n=21) were between 30 and 39 years of age and 16.7% (n=6) were between 40 and 49 years. The sample consisted of 30 males and 6 female respondents (See figure 5.1). Out of the total 36 respondents, 31 respondents were married, four were single, and one was divorced/separated/widowed. All married respondents had Indian spouses. 69.4% (n=25) respondents had children while seven had none, the remaining four were single at the time of the survey and therefore they did not have children.

Over fifty-five percent (55.6%, n=20) respondents had stayed in Canada for more than 1 year but less than 5 years, 19.4% (n=7) respondents had stayed in Canada for more than 5 years but less than 10 years, 13.9% (n=5) respondents had stayed in Canada for more than 10 years while the remaining 11.1% (n=4) had stayed in Canada for less than a year. 66.7% (n=24) respondents were landed immigrants while 33.3% (n=12) respondents were Canadian citizens of Indian origin.

Sixty-one percent (n=22) of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree from India, while 30.6% (n=11) of the respondents had a Master's degree from India. 33.3% (n=12) respondents had an engineering degree or were in information technology field, while 13.9 % (n=5) had a business management degree from India. An interesting feature of the sample was that five respondents had both engineering degree and a business management degree from India. Four respondents had no professional qualifications like engineering, information technology, medical, management or accounting, and 16.7% (n=6) respondents had other qualifications like banker, lawyer, scientist, and insurance professional.

Over eighty percent (80.6 %, n=29) of the respondents were employed full time in India while 5.6 % were self-employed and the remaining 13.9 % (n=5) were unemployed in India. Over forty-two percent (47.2%, n=17) respondents were employed at middle management level in India, while 22.2% (n=8) were employed at junior management level in India. Only three respondents worked in senior management positions in India. The remaining 22.3 % (n=8) were either in temporary employment or worked at non-managerial level or were not employed in India. Of the five unemployed respondents, three were minors and had immigrated with their parents. Out of the remaining two unemployed immigrants, one was a female and was a homemaker in India and the other respondent had just completed his Engineering degree and had come to Canada.

Over thirty three percent (33.3%, n=12) respondents had worked for more than 5 years but less than 10 years in India, 27.8% (n=10) respondents worked more than 1 year but less than 5 years and 19.4% (n=7) respondents had worked more than 10 years in India. Only one respondent had worked for less than a year in India.

In Canada, 72.2% (n=26) respondents were working full time and two were self-employed. 11.1% (n=4) respondents worked in part time jobs of less than 30 hours per week and 4 respondents were still unemployed. 36.1% (n=13) respondents were employed at middle management level, 19.4% (n=7) respondents were employed in other occupations like gas pipeline designer, receptionist in CGA firm, call-centre operator, software developer, and as a customer service representative. One respondent had his own business and another respondent had his own business consulting work.

Over forty-seven percent (47.2%, n=17) respondents claimed to be working in their desired field of study, while the remaining 52.8% (n=19) respondents indicated as not working in the desired field. All but one of the respondents had the intention to work in their desired field of occupation. Over seventy-two percent (72.2%, n=26) respondents had immigrated in the skilled category while 27.8% (n=10) respondents had immigrated in other categories to Canada. Out of the 10 respondents in other category, three of them had immigrated with their parents, two had come with their spouses, three had come on work permits and had later received landed immigrant status, and two had come as dependents of family and were now landed immigrants in Canada.

Of all the respondents 52.8% (n=19) respondents had either received education from Canada or were in the process of getting education from Canada. Almost twenty-eight percent (27.8%, n=10) respondents reported taking education from Canada in other courses like the Chartered Insurance Professional program, Certificate in Investments Funds in Canada by

Institute of Canadian Bankers, Certificate from British Columbia Institute of Technology, Chartered Accountant course, Certified Professional Purchaser course, High School Teacher Training, Professional Certification in Management from Simon Fraser University, Marketing certification, vocational school telecommunication, and some diploma program. Nearly eleven percent (11.1%, n=4) respondents had completed their Bachelor's degree from Canada and 8.3% (n=3) respondents had done their Master's from Canada. One respondent was also taking another course in Purchase Management after completing his Master's coursework. Only one respondent had done his PhD in Canada.

Even though we intended to include employment status as a dependent variable in the hypotheses, only four of the respondents were unemployed, thus not providing us with a sample size large enough to compare the group of the employed and the group of the unemployed. Therefore, the tests were done for the employed respondents only, with a focus on employment in desired occupation and level of employment.

## 6.3 Results

To test hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, 4a, 4b, and 7, we split our respondents into two groups based on their responses to the question asking them whether they worked in their desired occupational field or not (yes = 1, no =2) and used an independent sample t-tests to assess differences between the two groups. To test hypotheses 3, 5a, 5b, 6, and 8 we split our respondents into two groups based on their responses to the question asking them whether they worked in their desired occupational field or not (yes = 1, no =2) and used chi-square tests. We used a similar approach to test hypotheses 4b, and 5b but we used level of employment as a grouping variable (temporary and junior=1, middle and senior = 2)

Our first hypothesis (H1a) predicted that level of integration by Indian immigrants into the Canadian Culture was related to obtaining employment in desired field. Hypothesis 1b

predicted that level of separation by Indian immigrants into the Canadian Culture is negatively

related to obtaining employment in desired field. Independent sample t-tests were used to test

both hypotheses.

**Table 6.1: Test for H1a and H1b**

|  | Work in desired field | N | Mean | SD | T | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Integration | Yes | 17 | 4.12 | .79 |  |  |  |
|  | No | 15 | 3.85 | .68 | 1.01 | 30 | .32 |
| Separation | Yes | 17 | 2.57 | .54 |  |  |  |
|  | No | 15 | 3.09 | .50 | -2.83 | 30 | .01 |

As shown in table 6.1, it can be seen that hypothesis 1a is not supported because it has a

t- value of 1.01 (p>0.10). However, separation and work in desired field is significant because it

has a t-value of -2.83 (p<0.05). Thus, H1b is supported. This means that people who are more

separated are less likely to work in their desired occupational field.

Our second hypothesises postulated that knowledge of Canadian job requirements before

immigration is related to working in one's desired field. Most of the immigrants did not know

about the Canadian job requirements before immigration as a mean of only 2.24 was observed. In

order to test 2 independent sample t-test was carried out

**Table 6.2: Test for H2**

|  | Work in desired field | N | Mean | SD | T | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knew Canadian job requirements before immigration | Yes | 17 | 3.24 | 1.48 |  |  |  |
|  | No | 15 | 2.53 | 1.13 | 1.49 | 30 | .15 |

As it can be seen from table 6.2, that a t-value of 1.49 (p>0.10) was obtained which was

not significant. Therefore, we may reject H2. This means that even if immigrants know about

Canadian job requirements it is not necessary that they will be working in their desired field.

Our third hypothesises postulated that evaluation of Indian degree is related to working in one's desired field. It may be mentioned here that 83.3% (n=30) knew that International degrees have to be evaluated in Canada. However, only 55.6% (n=20) respondents knew the institution that evaluates foreign degrees. Surprisingly, only 27.8% (n=10) respondents actually had their Indian degree evaluated in Canada. In order to test H3, $X^2$ (Chi-square) test was done between evaluation of Indian degrees and working in desired field.

**Table 6.3: Test for H3**

|  |  | Work in desired field | | Total | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Yes | No |  |  |  |
| Evaluated Indian degrees | Yes | 6 | 2 | 8 |  |  |
|  | No | 11 | 13 | 24 |  |  |
| Total |  | 17 | 15 | 32 | 2.05 | 0.15 |

As it can be seen from table 6.3 that a $X^2$-value of 2.05 (p>0.10) was obtained which was not significant. Therefore, we may reject H3. This means that evaluation of Indian degrees is not related to working in their desired field.

Our fourth set of hypothesis stated that acceptance of previous work experience is related to working in the desired field and to level of employment in Canada. In order to test these independent sample t-tests were carried out.

**Table 6.4: Test for H4a**

|  | Work in desired field | N | Mean | SD | T | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Previous work experience accepted | Yes | 17 | 3.41 | 1.33 |  |  |  |
|  | No | 15 | 1.93 | 1.22 | 3.26 | 30 | .01 |

From table 6.4 it is clear that acceptance of previous work experience is related to working in desired field. A t-value of 3.26 (p<0.05) was obtained which was significant. Thus,

we may accept H4a. Therefore, we can say that if the previous work experience is accepted it is more likely that the person would be working in his desired field of education.

**Table 6.5: Test for H4b**

|  | Level of employment in Canada | N | Mean | SD | T | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Previous work experience accepted | Temporary and junior | 17 | 2.29 | 1.31 |  |  |  |
|  | Middle and senior | 15 | 3.20 | 1.52 | -1.81 | 30 | .08 |

Further, we also hypothesized that the acceptance of previous work experience would be related to level of employment. Table 6.5 illustrated the results of testing this hypothesis. Given that the t-test was only marginally significant (t=-1.81, p<0.10), H4b may only be accepted conditionally. In other words, acceptance of previous experience is marginally related to level of employment in Canada.

Our fifth set of hypothesis stated that education obtained from Canada is related to working in the desired field and is related to the level of employment in Canada. In order to test these hypotheses, $X^2$-tests were carried out.

**Table 6.6: Test for H5a**

|  |  | Work in desired field | | Total | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Yes | No |  |  |  |
| Education from Canada | Yes | 6 | 10 | 16 |  |  |
|  | No | 11 | 5 | 16 |  |  |
| Total |  | 17 | 15 | 32 | 3.14 | 0.08 |

From table 6.6, we can see that a chi-square value of 3.14 is obtained which is marginally significant (p<0.10). Therefore, we can conditionally accept H5a. Hypothesis 5b is also conditionally accepted, as a marginally significant $X^2$ (Chi square) value of 3.14 (p<0.10) was obtained (See table 6.7)

41

**Table 6.7: Test for H5b.**

| | | Level of employment in Canada | | Total | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Temporary and junior | Middle and senior | | | |
| Education from Canada | Yes | 11 | 5 | 16 | | |
| | No | 6 | 10 | 16 | | |
| Total | | 17 | 15 | 32 | 3.14 | 0.08 |

Our sixth set of hypothesis stated that category of immigration is related to working in the desired field and is related to the level of employment in Canada. In order to test these $X^2$-tests were carried out.

**Table 6.8: Test for H6**

| | | Work in desired field | | Total | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | | | |
| Category of immigration | Skilled | 12 | 12 | 24 | | |
| | Other | 5 | 3 | 8 | | |
| Total | | 17 | 15 | 32 | 0.38 | 0.54 |

From table 6.8 it is evident that category of immigration is not related to working in the desired field. A Chi square value of 0.38 was obtained which was not significant (p>0.10). Therefore, we may reject H6. Our seventh hypothesis stated that length of stay in Canada is related to working in one's desired field. We tested the hypothesis by running a Chi-square test.

**Table 6.9: Test for H7**

| | | Work in desired field | | Total | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | | | |
| Stay in Canada | Less than 5 years | 8 | 13 | 24 | | |
| | More than 5 years | 9 | 2 | 8 | | |
| Total | | 17 | 15 | 32 | 5.54 | 0.02 |

From table 6.9 we can see that a chi-square value of 5.54 was obtained, which was significant (p<0.05). Therefore, we may accept H7.

# 7  DISCUSSION

From the results of the hypothesis 1a and 1b, we may infer that finding job in the desired field is not related to level of integration. However, this may be interpreted with caution because all respondents reported to be highly integrated (mean=4.01) and as such the standard deviation for integration was only 0.71. This low variance gives less chances of finding a significant difference. In contrast, there was high variance on separation- and not surprisingly, a significant result was obtained. Therefore, we can say that, if an immigrant is separated, then it is more likely that he/she will not be working in his/her desired field.

This is because the immigrant will not be able to understand the majority culture, which will hinder his/her chances of finding employment in his/her desired field. According to Livingstone (2003), there are hidden dimensions of work and learning. Work includes paid and volunteer work, and learning includes informal training, non-taught training, formal schooling and formal adult education. For most adults, informal learning represents the most important learning required for coping with the changing environment (Livingstone, 2003). It has also been recognized that continued informal training and untaught learning are important for success in context of paid workplaces (Livingstone, 2003). Livingstone further argues that greater democratic participation will be associated with lower levels of underemployment.

In the light of the above, it may be suggested that immigrants should participate in volunteer programs, even if they do not have paid employment at that time. This will make them communicate with the majority population. More interaction will make the immigrant aware of the cultural norms of people of Canada. The immigrant would develop a network, which may

lead him into getting a suitable employment. It is also suggested, that immigrants should move out of their ethnic enclaves and intermingle with the larger society.

Based on the result of hypothesis 2, we can say that prior knowledge of Canadian job requirements may be necessary but is not a sufficient condition to ensure that a person would be working in his desired field. This may be because of high barriers to getting the required credentials in Canada for getting employed in the required field of study.

From result of hypothesis 3, we may conclude that for this sample of skilled workers, evaluation of Indian degrees is not related to working in one's desired field. This may be because of the inadequate evaluation of foreign degrees and experience required for entering the field of one's study (Anisef et al., 2004; Brouwer, 1999). Brouwer (1999) also reported that the evaluations of foreign credentials by agencies are not binding on employers, educational institutions or regulatory bodies. In addition to the above, the inherent barriers in gaining Canadian credentials might also affect the working in the desired field of study.

Hypothesis 4a was supported. Therefore, if the respondent's previous experience is accepted, then he/she might work in his desired field. This makes sense as if one's experience is recognized he/she will be more likely to be given employment related to his/her skill sets. Hypothesis 4b was only conditionally accepted. This means that even though immigrants whose past work experience is accepted may find jobs in their respective professions, they will have to "prove" themselves in Canada in order to reach higher levels of management.

Results from testing Hypothesis 5a suggest that education from Canada is related to working in one's desired field. This is because employers are able to evaluate the resumes and find a fit between the person and the job. Research has indicated that employers do not know how to evaluate resumes citing foreign university credentials and work experience and a large number of employers screen out internationally trained applicants without really looking at their resumes

(Owen, 2005). It is easier for employers to choose the person with the local skills and education (Brooks, 2006). Findings related to Hypothesis 5b further suggest that education from Canada is related to level of employment in Canada. This could again be explained due to the fact that it becomes easy for employers to access the skills and education level of persons who have studied in Canada. It has been mentioned earlier that taking education in Canada makes a person more aware of the culture of Canada (Anisef et al., 2004). It is therefore likely that he/she will move up in the organization.

Hypothesis 6 showed that once a person is in Canada, no distinction is made between the skilled and other classes of immigrants. Employers are unable to evaluate the foreign credentials and access their work experience and as such even though they were selected by the Canadian government on the basis of their skills, education and experience, they end up doing jobs unrelated to their profession. Stats Canada reported that the ratio of university educated migrants that come to Canada and leave for the US is 4:1 (Brouwer, 1999). Similarly, it was discussed earlier that Canada loses between $4.1 and $5.9 billion annually due to the lack of appropriate recognition of immigrants' qualifications and skills (Bloom & Grant, 2001).

The test for Hypothesis 7 showed significant relationship between length of stay in Canada and working in the desired field. This could be explained from the fact that over time an immigrant understands the culture of Canada; he/she gains proficiency in the official languages, and gets the required credentials required by the Canadian employers.

## 7.1 Additional findings

In addition to collecting data that would allow us to test our hypotheses, our survey also included questions on several additional important topics that past research has suggested as relevant to employment of immigrants. We included these questions in an attempt to better understand the issues surrounding immigrant employment.

The barriers to acquiring Canadian credentials were measured on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the asked questions (Refer Appendix 1, Qs. 24-29). The items related to barriers that were measured included the time required for getting Canadian credentials, cost of education in the desired field, the number of seats in the desired program, the admission criteria, family commitments, and perception of respondents age were measured.

The highest mean for barriers to acquiring Canadian credentials was for the variable cost of education at 3.89. The next most important variable was the time required for getting Canadian credentials is too long at 3.81. The next barrier was family commitments with a mean of 3.31. Means for insufficient openings in the program, admission criteria being unreasonable and age "too old to study" were 3.14, 2.97, and 2.25 respectively (See table 7.1). Therefore, we can say that the biggest obstacles for getting Canadian credentials are the cost of the program followed by the time required for completion and the family commitments of the immigrants.

**Table 7.1: Means for barriers to getting Canadian credentials.**

|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Time required | 36 | 3.81 | 1.06 |
| Cost of education | 36 | 3.89 | 0.95 |
| Openings in program | 36 | 3.14 | 1.22 |
| Admission criteria | 36 | 2.97 | 1.13 |
| Family commitments | 36 | 3.31 | 1.12 |
| Too old | 36 | 2.25 | 1.18 |

The means for cost of education were 3.81 and 4.10 for the skilled and other category immigrants respectively. Even though this was not a part of our original hypotheses, we wanted to explore the issue further. On doing independent sample t-tests between category of immigration and cost of education, t-value of -0.82, p>0.10 was obtained, which was not significant. Therefore, we can say that the cost of education was perceived to be high by both

categories of immigrants. Similarly, the time required for desired educational program was perceived to be long by both categories of immigrants (3.81 for skilled immigrants and 3.80 for other immigrants).

Status of Indian immigrants was compared with the cost of education and the time required for desired educational program barriers. The respective means for cost of education were 4.08 for landed immigrants, and 3.50 for Canadian citizens of Indian origin. On doing independent sample t-test, a t value of 1.79 (p<0.10) was obtained (See table 7.2). This means that the perception of courses related to the field of education being costly decreased with the change of status in Canada. To probe the effect of time on the perception of cost of education being high, independent sample t-test was done. A t value of 2.23 (p<0.05) was obtained (See table 7.3). It was found that Indian immigrants who stayed in Canada for less than 5 years perceived education to be more costly than those who had stayed in Canada for more than 5 years.

**Table 7.2: Test of differences for cost of education with the status in Canada**

|  | Status in Canada | N | Mean | SD | T | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cost of education | Landed immigrant | 24 | 4.08 | 0.83 |  |  |  |
|  | Canadian citizen | 12 | 3.50 | 1.08 | 1.79 | 34 | .08 |

**Table 7.3: Test of differences for cost of education with the length of stay in Canada**

|  | Length of stay in Canada | N | Mean | SD | T | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cost of education | Less than 5 years | 24 | 4.13 | 0.85 |  |  |  |
|  | More than 5 years | 12 | 3.42 | 0.99 | 2.23 | 34 | .03 |

The above findings, though not hypothesized earlier, revealed that as immigrants settled in Canada and obtained any employment, the perception of educational programs being costly decreased. Despite the fact that the perception appears to be a function of time, it may be noted

that the means are still above the mid range of 3 on a scale of 1-5, showing that overall the perception of educational programs being costly persists. This means that educational institutions should lower the cost of various educational programs that help the immigrants in gaining Canadian credentials.

The respective means for time required for getting Canadian credentials were 3.88 for landed immigrants, and 3.67 for Canadian citizens of Indian origin. On doing independent sample t-test, the difference was found to be not significant. Similarly, the respective means for time required for getting Canadian credentials were 3.96 for immigrants staying less than 5 years, and 3.50 for immigrants staying for more than 5 years in Canada. On doing independent sample t-test, the difference was found to be not significant. The above results make us believe that the perception that the time required for getting Canadian credentials is unrelated the length of stay in Canada. This means that the duration of the courses has to be reduced and the process of getting Canadian credentials needs to be further streamlined.

The last two open-ended questions requested the respondents to indicate the reasons for being employed in their field of specialization. The respondents indicated that technical and people skills, good personality, networking, a good command over English language, team playing, a positive attitude, recognition of previous work experience, perseverance and willingness towards job, and even taking another Canadian degree helped them in getting a job in their field. Therefore, it may be noted that most of the above relate to the individual's personality, his/her technical and interpersonal skills, and his/her attitude. However, the recognition of previous work experience and taking education from Canada helped in some cases.

Reasons cited for not being able to get a job in the desired field included no recognition of Indian degrees, lack of Canadian qualification and experience, discrimination, being over qualified, and not so young for the job. Other responses related to the number of seats in the

medical program, Respondents noted, "Vancouver is not a place for very ambitious working professionals. It is in general a place for immigrants who don't mind compromising their professional aspirations for quality of life". This comment is a danger signal and may encourage brain drain from Canada if their previous credentials and work experience is not recognised. It may be recalled here that Canadian HR reporter (2006, February) had reported that Chinese immigrants were lining up to see opportunities in China and Chinese business people were visiting cities of Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa to recruit skilled professionals.

Immigrants who were new to Canada and did still not have a break in their field of specialization commented that immigration on point basis is a disadvantage because most of the jobs in Vancouver are offered by networking not by qualification. Similar views were reported by Brooks (2006) in BC Business. The last comment supports our results of hypothesis 6 that category of immigration is not related to finding work in the desired field. Therefore, once an immigrant lands in Canada all immigrants are treated at par and as such even those immigrants who have been selected based on their experience and qualifications by the federal government lose out because of preconceived notions and stereotyping.

Stereotyping presents an obstacle for minority groups. According to Webber (1984 as cited by Aghazadeh, 2004), stereotyping means that one as a person, group, event, or issue is thought to typify or confirm to an unvarying pattern or manner, lacking individuality. Stereotyping is a factor in lower acceptance of minority group members as leaders, job segregation based on identity, and differences in hiring and performances ratings between majority and minority group members (Cox, 1993 as cited by Aghazadeh, 2004).

From the survey, it was found that the mean for cross-cultural training would be helpful in getting a job was 3.58 for skilled immigrants and 3.40 for immigrants of other categories. Even though the two means were not statistically different (t=0.55, p>0.10), the means were above the

mid point range of 3. Respondents tended to agree with the statement than totally refuting it. Respondents who were not working in their desired field reported a mean of 3.58, whereas respondents working in their desired field reported a mean of 3.47. From the above it may be inferred that the respondents, in general favoured cross-cultural training for the immigrants. An overall mean of 3.44 was obtained for question relating to the perception of the HR managers in Vancouver not knowing the Indian culture. Therefore, it can be said that cross-cultural training would also be helpful for both Indian immigrants and the Canadian HR managers in better understanding of each other cultures.

Various cross-cultural training methods have been suggested in literature for improving the relational skills crucial to effective performance in expatriate assignments (Tung, 2001, p 221), such as area studies programs, culture assimilators, sensitivity training, and field experiences. However, some of these methods like language training, sensitivity training, and area study programs can be used effectively for improving job performance in multicultural societies like Canada.

## 7.2 Implications for educational institutions

The study has some insights for the educational institutions. Since a large number of immigrants feel that the time required for getting Canadian credentials is too long, it would be better to have more of online learning modules tailored for the skill requirements of the industry. Similarly, the modules should be made for fast track learning so that the time required is less. Educational institutions should increase the number of seats for intake in various programs so that more immigrants can enrol and start contributing to the Canadian economy after graduation. It is also suggested that the educational institutions should either lower down the fees of various course or tie up with the government of British Columbia for giving subsidies to educational institutions so that education is made affordable for most immigrants to Canada. A lower cost of

education would also ensure lower burden for repaying huge loans taken from either banks as student line of credit or student loans from the Canadian government.

Educational institutions can play a vital role in filling the gap caused by lack of cultural understanding. Required communication skills should be taught so that immigrants do not feel like misfits in Canada. Brouwer (1999) had pointed out that lack of trade-specific language training and testing is one of the major problems facing foreign trained trades people. Therefore, it may be pointed out that trade specific language skills and general English language skills should be given to new immigrants. Educational institutions and the business community of Vancouver should design courses to facilitate cross-cultural learning. Cross-cultural training programs should provide information not only on Canadian culture but also information about India to graduating HR professionals. Information on the socio-political history, geography, stage of economic development and culture of India should be given to students who would like to specialize in the function of Human Resource Management. Such knowledge will lead to increased empathy and facilitate intercultural relationships. Educational institutions can also offer programs that include training about workplace diversity issues.

Educational institutions can help the immigrants by providing accreditation of foreign credentials. A Conference Board of Canada survey (2000) pointed out that employers have more confidence on foreign educational qualifications verified by a university in Canada. The confidence decreases for foreign educational qualifications verified by a college in Canada and still lower for foreign educational qualifications verified by a credential assessment service in Canada.

## 7.3    Implications for immigration agencies

Since cultural incompetence can have negative consequences, it would be better if immigration agencies or consultants, in addition to the services they provide, give an overview of

the culture of Canada to the immigrants. This can be done by placing the relevant information relating to the culture of Canada on their respective websites. Such knowledge of culture of Canada before departure from the home country can help in developing an attitudinal flexibility within the immigrant so that he/she can become aware of and get used to the unfamiliar modes of behaviour and value systems of Canada.

## 7.4 Implications for financial institutions

From the results, it can be interpreted that most of the immigrants want to work in their desired field but due to high cost of education are not able to pursue the relevant courses. Therefore, in order to help the immigrants to British Columbia, gain the required credentials in Canada, financial institutions may offer loans to the immigrants after a few months of arrival in Canada at nominal interest rates. Having no credit history does not mean lack of reliability of immigrants. A timely help from the financial institutions will go a long way in helping the immigrants integrate easily into Canada. Many banks have started offering loans to immigrants but these immigrant friendly schemes have to be marketed more effectively.

## 7.5 Implications for companies in Vancouver

In the years ahead, the trade between Canada and India may increase (BC Stats, 2006c). Moreover, India is also the second source country for skilled immigrants to Canada. Under this scenario, the companies of Vancouver should get a fair understanding regarding the culture and traditions of India. This would not only help the companies in tapping the Indian markets but would also help them in recruiting Indian immigrants and develop effective workplace diversity programs. It may be suggested to that companies should have more internship and mentoring programs for new immigrants to Canada so that they quickly develop an understanding of the work culture of Canada.

### 7.5.1 Strategies for managing work place diversity

In the earlier section, the advantages of workplace diversity were discussed. It was also pointed out that such programs have to be managed carefully. Strategies required for work place diversity are equal employment opportunity and affirmative action (Aghazadeh, 2004). A company must value diversity. The main objectives of valuing diversity include awareness, education, and positive recognition of the differences among people in the workforce. A cultural environment should allow the cultural differences to be celebrated instead of being tolerated (Aghazadeh, 2004). The firm and its employees should support cultural diversity through the recognition of cultural and religious holidays, observances, practices, and diet restrictions. An organization must undergo a "cultural transformation" before it can successfully achieve full benefits of diversity (Carnevale and Stone, 1994 as cited by Aghazadeh, 2004). To be successful managers must unlearn practices rooted in an old mindset, change the ways organizations operate, shift company culture, revise policies, create new structures, and redesign human resource systems. It is important to realize that the workforce will grow in the number of women, people of colour and immigrants each year (Aghazadeh, 2004).

## 7.6 Implications for Indian immigrants

Based upon the results of the study, we can say that Indians wanting to immigrate to Canada (and British Columbia in particular) should thoroughly understand the Canadian job market and the various skill requirements of the industries in British Columbia, Canada. It would be prudent for the skilled principal applicants to come alone to Canada and update their credentials after arrival. This way their family commitments in Canada would be reduced, as they will have to look only after themselves. Before departing from India, they should enrol in online courses provided by educational institutions in British Columbia so that they may get the required Canadian credentials before they set foot in Canada. They should choose not to come to Canada if they feel that they are too old to study or they have many family commitments.

## 7.7 Implications for social service agencies and religious institutions

Lack of cultural competence can lead to problems for the new immigrant to Canada. As such, social service agencies, non-profit agencies, and religious institutions of Vancouver should hold regular cross-cultural meetings and share the cultures and traditions of the two countries with each other. This would lead to a better understanding of the different cultures and will help in removing misunderstandings between the people of Canada and India. It will also help remove the various stereotype images and prejudices associated with any particular culture.

# 8 LIMITATIONS

## 8.1 Limitations of the current study

There are a few limitations of the current study. Since it is focussed on primarily Indian immigrants and Canadian citizens of Indian origin living in Greater Vancouver area, the results cannot be generalized for other immigrant groups staying in the Greater Vancouver area. Similarly, the results cannot be generalized for Indian immigrants living in other parts of Canada.

It should be mentioned here that the sample size of the current study is very small and as such further research is required with large sample size using random sampling methods. Due to the small sample size, sophisticated statistical techniques could not be used for analyzing the data. The data for the sample was collected using non-probability sampling methods. The data was collected using referral or snowball method of sampling. This may have introduced a bias in the result. Therefore, the results have to be interpreted carefully.

Further, the sample obtained was largely homogeneous as most of the respondents reported having good knowledge of English language, most of them were working full time jobs and most of them reported to be high level of integration.

Since the questionnaire was self-completed by the respondents, there is a possibility of self-report bias. Lastly, the medium of collection was only the Internet and as such, those respondents who were not computer savvy were not able to respond to the survey.

## 8.2  Suggestions for further research

Further research can be conducted for Indian immigrants living in other parts of Canada like Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, and Calgary. The same study could be repeated in Vancouver with a much larger sample size including Asian, Chinese, and other immigrants. The impact of culture differences on employment outcomes can be studied. Longitudinal studies can be done to ascertain the relationship between underemployment and brain drain from Canada. The issue of wage disparity and employment in the desired field of study needs to be understood in greater detail. Studies can be conducted to access the relationship between underemployment and turnover intentions of employees in Canada. Studies based on secondary data for reported standardized English language test scores and employment outcomes of immigrants can also be done. Effects of stereotyping, prejudice, and bias on the employment outcomes of immigrants may be measured.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Research questionnaire

*This questionnaire is a part of study for the MBA final project at the Simon Fraser University (SFU), Canada. This is meant to be completed by either Indian immigrants or Canadian Citizens of Indian origin, living in Greater Vancouver Area only. The information provided by you will be used for academic purposes only. By filling this questionnaire, you give your consent to use the data provided by you for the MBA final project, which will be published by the SFU Library.*

Please respond to the following by ticking the appropriate answer:

1) Please indicate your age:
   - a) Under 20 years
   - b) 20-29 years
   - c) 30-39 years
   - d) 40 - 49 years
   - e) 50 -59 years
   - f) 60 and over

2) Gender: a) Male          b) Female

3) Marital Status
   - a) Single (Never married)
   - b) Married/Common Law Partner
   - c) Divorced/Separated/Widowed

4) If answer to Q3 above is married or divorced/separated/widowed, is/was your spouse of Indian descent?
   - a) Yes
   - b) No

5) Do you have children?      a) Yes        b) No

6) No. of years living in Canada:
   - a) Less than 1 year
   - b) 1 year or more but less than 5 years
   - c) 5 years or more but less than 10 years
   - d) 10 years or more

7) Please indicate your current status in Canada
   - a) Landed Immigrant
   - b) Canadian Citizen
   - c) Holding a visa

8) Highest Previous Education in India
   - a) Less than Grade 12$^{th}$
   - b) Grade 12$^{th}$
   - c) Bachelors Degree
   - d) Masters Degree
   - e) PhD

9) Please indicate your professional qualifications in India (Tick all that apply):
   - a) Engineering/IT
   - b) Medical
   - c) Business management
   - d) Accounting
   - e) No professional qualification
   - f) Other _____

10) Employment status in India
    a) Employed full time               b) Self Employed            c) Unemployed

11) If, employed in India, at what level did you work
    a) Junior management                      d) Temporary/Casual
    b) Middle management                    e) Worker level
    c) Senior Management

12) No. of years worked in India:
    a) Less than 1 year                         c) 5 years or more but less than 10
    b) 1 year or more but less than 5 years       years
                                        d) 10 years or more

13) Please indicate the category under which you immigrated to Canada
    a) Skilled (Based on point system)         b) Other _____

| | Questions | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Do you know that the international degrees have to be evaluated in Canada? | | |
| 15 | Do you know the institution that evaluates the foreign degrees? | | |
| 16 | Have you evaluated your Indian degree/s in Canada? | | |
| 17 | Have you received or are in the process of receiving any education/professional qualifications in Canada? | | |

18) If, answer to Q17 is yes, write down the type of education/qualification received or are in the process of receiving in Canada (Tick all that apply).
    a) Bachelor's degree                    d) PEngg.
    b) Master's degree                     e) Others _____
    c) PhD

| | Questions | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Are you currently studying in Canada? | | |
| 20 | Are you currently working in your desired field/occupation? | | |
| 21 | Do you want to work in your desired field of education? | | |

22) Current Employment status in Canada:

    a) Employed Full Time (More than 30 hours /week)     d) Unemployed
    b) Employed Part Time (Less than 30 hours /week)     e) Retired
    c) Self employed

23) If employed, please indicate the level of current employment:
    a) Temporary job
    b) Management position (please specify level of management_____)
    c) Other (please specify _____)

Please answer the following questions based on the scale below.

*Strongly disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5*
*(Please tick only one box)*

|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | I feel that the time required for getting Canadian credentials in my field is too long |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25 | I feel that the cost of the education in my field is too high |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26 | I feel that there are not enough openings for the courses/program I want to take. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27 | I feel the admission criteria for the courses/program I want to take are unreasonable |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28 | I feel that my family commitments make it difficult to study further |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29 | I feel I am too old to study now |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30 | I have good command of English Language |  |  |  |  |  |
| 31 | I speak in both English and my native Indian language at home |  |  |  |  |  |
| 32 | I speak only in my native Indian language at home |  |  |  |  |  |
| 33 | I think as well in English as in my native language |  |  |  |  |  |
| 34 | I tell jokes both in English and in my mother tongue |  |  |  |  |  |
| 35 | I am confident and assertive |  |  |  |  |  |
| 36 | I can effectively communicate with people at the workplace |  |  |  |  |  |
| 37 | I knew about the Canadian job requirements before immigrating to Canada. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 38 | My previous work experience was acknowledged in Canada |  |  |  |  |  |
| 39 | My previous education was accepted at the same level in Canada |  |  |  |  |  |
| 40 | I feel that I am accepted well in Canada |  |  |  |  |  |
| 41 | I feel that there is discrimination in the job market against Indians |  |  |  |  |  |
| 42 | I feel that Canadian HR managers don't know much about the Indian culture |  |  |  |  |  |
| 43 | I feel cross-culture training would be helpful in getting a job |  |  |  |  |  |
| 44 | Most of the music I listen to is Indian |  |  |  |  |  |
| 45 | I feel Indians treat me better than Canadians |  |  |  |  |  |
| 46 | I have both Indian and Canadian friends |  |  |  |  |  |
| 47 | My closest friends are Indians |  |  |  |  |  |
| 48 | Indians should not marry/date Canadians |  |  |  |  |  |
| 49 | I feel very comfortable around both Indian and Canadians |  |  |  |  |  |

*Strongly disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5*
*(Please tick only one box)*

|    |                                                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | I feel more relaxed with an Indian than when I am with Canadians              |   |   |   |   |   |
| 51 | I feel both Canadians and Indians value me                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 52 | I prefer going to social gatherings where most of the people are Indians      |   |   |   |   |   |

53) If employed please mention what factor primarily helped you in getting a job in your field?

_____

_____

_____

54) If still unemployed or underemployed, please mention the primary reason for this?

_____

_____

_____

Thanks for your participation.

# REFERENCE LIST

Aghazadeh, S. M. (2004). *Managing workforce diversity as an essential resource for improving organizational performance.* International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, Vol. 53, No. 6, 2004, 521-531.

Anisef, P., Sweet, R., & Frempong, G. (2004). *Field of study and labour market outcomes of immigrant and racial minority university graduates in Canada.* Policy Matters, CERIS, March 2004, 1-6.

Barry D. T. (2001). *Development of a new scale for measuring acculturation: the East Asian Acculturation Measure (EAAM).* Journal of Immigrant Health, October 2001, 193-197.

BC Stats (2004). *Immigrants from India and China.* Population Section, Management Services, March 2004, 1-4.

BC Stats (2005a). *Skilled worker immigrants to British Columbia.* Immigration Highlights, issue 05-3, 1-2.

BC Stats (2005b). *Education level of recent immigrants.* Immigration Highlights, issue 05-2, 1-2.

BC Stats (2006a). *Skilled worker immigrants to British Columbia.* Infoline Report, issue 06-03, January 20, 2006, 1-3.

BC Stats (2006b). *BC's high technology sector.* Infoline Report, March 3, 2006, issue 06-09, 1-5.

BC Stats (2006c). *Will Canada-India trade spice up?* Infoline Report, issue 06-22, June 2, 2006, 1-9.

Berry J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). *Comparative Studies of Acculturative Stress.* International Migration Review, Vol. xxi, No. 3, 491-511.

Berry, J. W. (1999). *Intercultural relations in plural societies.* Canadian Psychology, February 1999, Vol. 40, Issue 1; 12-28.

Berry, J. W., & Zeynep, A. (1996). *Impact of employment-related experiences on immigrant's psychological well-being and adaptation to Canada.* Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science, July 1996, Vol. 28, Issue 3, 240-260.

Blakely, J. H., & Harvey, E. B. (1988). *Socio-economic change and lack of change: employment equity.* Journal of Business Ethics, March 1988, 133-151.

Bloom, M., & Grant, M. (2001). *Brain gain: the economic benefits of recognizing learning and learning credentials in Canada.* 323-01, 1-54.

Brooks, Yolanda (2006). *Ticket to nowhere.* British Columbia Business, July 2006, 60-67.

Brouwer, Andrew (1999). *Immigrants need not apply.* Caledon Institute of Social Policy, October 1999, 1-18.

Brown, David (2002). *PM calls for business to spend more on training.* Canadian HR Reporter, December 16, 2002, p 1, 11.

Brown, David (2005). *Ottawa asks why skilled immigrants drive cabs.* Canadian HR Reporter, January 31, 2005, 1, 5.

Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988). *Multiculturalism policy of Canada.* Retrieved June 15, 2006, from http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/C-18.7/text.html

Cavusgil, S. Tamer, Ghauri, Pervez N., & Agarwal, Milind R. (2002). *Doing Business in Emerging Markets- Entry and Negotiation Strategies.* Sage Publications.

CFIB Research (2006). *British Columbia-labour pains: results of CFIB surveys on labour availability.* April 2003, 1-3.

CFIB Research (2006). *Help wanted: long-term vacancies a major small business challenge.* April 2006, 1-6.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005). *Immigration Overview: Permanent and temporary residents 1996-2005.* Retrieved on June 26, 2006, from http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2005/overview/1.html

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006). *Immigrating to Canada as a Skilled Worker.* Retrieved on July 14, 2006, from http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/skilled/index.html.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *The Monitor.* Fall 2005, p1-11.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *The Monitor.* Spring 2005, 1-21.

Coward, Harold (1999). *Hindus in Canada.* RIIM Working Paper Series, No. 99-04, February 1999, 1-26.

Demographic Trends (2005). *Population Projections for Canada.* Ministry of Finance, Office of Economic Policy Labour and Demographic Analysis Branch, Canada, 1-4.

Dooley, D., & Prause, J. (2004). *The social costs of underemployment: inadequate employment as disguised unemployment.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Feldman, D. C. (1996). *The nature, antecedents, and consequences of underemployment.* Journal of Management, 22, 385-407.

Frankson, K. (2005). *Cultural Differences-The role they play in skilled Chinese immigrant underemployment.* MBA Project, Simon Fraser University.

Hair J.F., Babin B, Money A. H., & Samouel P, (2003). *Essentials of Business Research Methods.* Wiley Publishing.

Hazard, Peggy (2004). *Diversity: think locally for global success.* Strategic HR Review, July/August 2004, Vol. 3, Issue 5, 28-31.

Hiebert, Daniel (2003). *Are immigrants welcome? Introducing the Vancouver community studies survey.* RIIM Working Paper Series, March 2003, No. 03-06, 1-63.

Hobel, J. (2006). *Use 'em or lose 'em,* Canadian HR Reporter, Toronto: February 27, 2006, Vol. 19, Issue 4, 18.

Hofstede, G. & Hofstede G. J. (2005). *Cultures and Organizations-Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its importance for survival.* 2nd edition, McGraw Hill.

Immigration- 2001 Census Bulletin #6, (2003). GVRD Policy and Planning Department, 1-5.

Immigration and Refugee protection Act (2002). Retrieved June 24, 2006, from http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5/SOR-2002-227/index.html

Kumar, Rakesh & Sethi A. K. (2005). *Doing business in India: a guide for western managers.* First edition, Palgrave Macmillan.

Livingstone, D. W. (2003). *Hidden dimensions of work and learning: the significance of unpaid work and informal learning in global capitalism.* Journal of Workplace Learning, 2003, 15, 359-367.

Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (2001). *Immigrants' choice of destination.* Retrieved July 5, 2006 from http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-611-XIE/destination.htm

Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (2001). *Lack of Canadian experience, transferability of foreign credentials critical hurdles.* Retrieved on July 14, 2006 from http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/030904/d030904a.htm

Mak et al. (1999). *Optimizing conditions for learning socio-cultural competencies for success.* International Journal Intercultural Relations. Vol. 23 No. 1, 77-90.

Man, G. (1997). *Women's work is never done: social organization of work and the experience of women in middle class Hong Kong Chinese immigrant families in Canada.* Advances in Gender Research 2; 183-226.

Maynard, D. C., Joseph, T. A., & Maynard, A. M. (2006). *Underemployment, job attitudes, and turnover intentions.* Journal of Organizational Behavior, 27, 509-536.

Owen, Timothy (2005). *The labour market experience of immigrants.* World Education Services-Canada, 1-10.

Pendakur, Krishna (2005). *Visible minorities in Canada's workplaces: a perspective on 2017 projection.* RIIM Working Paper Series, No. 05-11, May 2005, 1-16.

Pigott B. S. & Kalbach M. A. (2005). *Language Effects on Ethnic Identity in Canada.* Canadian Ethnic Studies, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, 3-18.

Punnett, B. J. (2001). *Culture, cross-national.* In Tung, Rosalie L. *IEBM Handbook of International Business* (pp 51-68). Thomson Learning.

Roberts, M. Walton (2003). *Transnational geographies: Indian immigration to Canada*. The Canadian Geographer, 47, no. 3, 235-250.

Statistics Canada (2005). *Labour force, employed and unemployed, numbers and rates, by province*. Retrieved on July 16, 2006, from http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/labor07a.htm

Statistics Canada (2005). *Population projections for Canada by age group*. Retrieved from http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo08a.htm

Teo, S (2003). *Imaging Canada: The cultural logics of Migration amongst PRC immigrants*. RIIM Working Paper No. 03-15, October 2003, 1-46.

Teo, S. & Waters, J. (2003). *Social and cultural impacts of immigration: An examination of the concept of social cohesion with implications for British Columbia*. RIIM Working Paper No. 03-03, January 2003, 1-54.

Tung, Rosalie L., (2001). *IEBM Handbook of International Business*. Thomson Learning.

Uyen, Vu (2004). *Canada invites foreign workers but neglects them on arrival*. Canadian HR Reporter, May 3, 2004, 1, 3.

Wexler, Mark N., (2000). *Confronting Moral Worlds: Understanding Business Ethics*. Prentice Hall.

Wong, E. (2004). *Make better connections: integration of skilled immigrants in British Columbia labour market*. Business Council of British Columbia, June 1, 2004, 1-33.