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# The Indo-cultural groups Canadian Community

## Introduction

Thirty-seven percent of the Canadian population are members of ethnic and racial minorities (non French and non English background) (Fleras & Elliot, 1992). In British Columbia and Prince George, Indo-Canadians are the largest immigrant group. Most of these immigrants came to Canada in 1904 and were Sikhs from the state of Punjab. The original immigrants, 5,000 in total, settled in the Vancouver area and were mostly employed as mill workers in the forestry industry. However, because of the anti-Asian sentiments, early Sikhs experienced a great deal of overt prejudice and criticism. In order to minimize anti-Asian sentiments, Sikhs tried to close the gap between their cultural practices and that of the host society (Joy, 1989; Jagpal, 1994).

In describing the expectations of the new Sikhs by members of those Sikhs who were already established in British Columbia, Jagpal (1994) stated that “ Soon after landing the routine of Canadianization usually

began” (p.5). It was the custom in the early 1900’s to dress in Western styles in public and traditional clothes were saved for inside the home. Older or earlier immigrant Sikhs would counsel new immigrants from India to try to fit into Canadian ways in terms of fashion, hairstyles and attitudes. This informal integration policy was established so that they would gain acceptance (Joy, 1989). They were advised to be flexible. Through acceptance and flexibility, the Sikhs hoped to establish themselves as valuable Canadians in the eyes of the host society. Jagpal stated that advice given to newcomers in the early 20’s was very similar to the advice still given today.

Central to the Sikh identity is their religion, which occupies a pivotal role in their culture and integrates all other spheres of their individual lives (Joy, 1989). When Sikhs first immigrated to Canada, temples were quickly erected and the resumption of their religious practices were continued. The Sikh temple served as a community meet-

ing place where news, social activities and political concerns would all be discussed. The emphasis on community and care for one another rather than care for self underlined the cultural values practiced by Sikhs. Because of this collective identity, the Sikhs, according to Joy, initially experienced some confusion as to their place in the host society which emphasized an individualistic identity.

As a reaction to anti-Asian sentiments, the Sikhs encouraged each other to integrate as a means of gaining recognition and acceptance. Through education and work, the immigrants gained social status. After 1949, the political struggle for voting rights and social recognition changed from the early settlement years. Indo-Canadians now had the right to vote. Additionally, the New Constitution of 1982 and new Multicultural legislation, which gave them the right to equal participation as an ethnic minority in Canada, continued to ease the pressure for them to conform publicly to the host society. As a result of these political and social changes, the process of integration soon took on a more natural change where two cultures interacted, exchanging values over time (Joy, 1989 ; Jagpal, 1994).

Canada has officially embraced the diversities of ethnic and cultural backgrounds through its Multicultural Ministry (Multiculturalism B.C. Annual Report [MBCAR], 1993/1994). Weinfeld (1994) discussed how the Canadian Charter of Rights attempted to ensure survival of ethnic groups and their cultures as well as “full and equal participation of people of different ethnic origins without discrimination”

( p. 239). The Ministry of Multiculturalism attempted to specify the rights of ethnic minorities to practice their cultural activities. Multicultural Societies are sponsored by grants from the government, and assist new immigrants in the transition from their homeland to the Prince George community. In Prince George, the Immigration and Multicultural Services Society helps new Canadians in a variety of ways such as employment opportunities, legal matters, linking immigrants to other organizations, counselling, English classes and cultural activities (Directory of Community Services, 1993). In the March 1994 publication of Immigrant Settlement in British Columbia it was noted that 12% of the total population of Prince George were foreign born.

Through government sponsored initiatives, ethnic minorities should enjoy the same quality of life as that of mainstream Canadians who appear to welcome the diversity of cultures and who state that minorities have the same right to happiness as they do (MBCAR, 1993/94). Difficulties for ethnic minority groups can still be experienced. Veenhoven (1984) noted “one could imagine minority status to be generally detrimental to happiness. It usually involved less favorable living conditions; in particular ‘less legal security’, less ‘material comfort’ and less ‘social appreciation’ ” (p. 187).

Counsellors and educators commonly provide professional services to students and others from a minority ethnic background. Ramirez (1983) points out that change for newcomers in a country demands “a reorganization of ethnic identity which may be psychologically stressful” (p. 143). Further-

more, he noted that if the change is too fast or too extreme, then integration can become confusing and stressful for the families. In order to work effectively with an ethnic minority, it is important to understand their specific cultural needs. It is also important to understand if the need to maintain ethnic activities impacts their quality of life or their happiness. Counselors need to be able to identify the nature of the problem as it exists from the Indo-Canadian point of view.

### Surveying the Indo-Canadian Community

In a recent Quality of Life survey of over 2,000 households in Prince George, it was noted that 93% of the respondents reported English as their first language. The sample also had an over-representation of the relatively well-off segment of the city (Michalos 1995). It is questionable if the Michalos study represented ethnic minority groups such as the Indo-Canadian group in Prince George.

By comparison, the survey reported in this chapter provided specific information about the Indo-Canadian group. Many of the respondents of this survey were expected to report English as their second language.

The survey sampled some long term residents of the Indo-Canadian community of Prince George and some of the more recent arrivals from India. Recent arrivals (between the years 1986-1991) for the Indo-Canadian community in Prince George represent 11.7% of total immigrants (Immigrants settlement in British Columbia: A study of 1991 census data, 1994, p.

186). Immigrants from India represent the largest percentage of new immigrants to British Columbia and to Prince George. The perceptions of both long term residents and new arrivals and their varying degrees of integration were represented in the survey.

Purposive sampling and a snowball technique (Palys, 1992) were used to draw the survey sample. The target group was adult Indo-Canadians living in the city of Prince George. Indo-Canadians are those people who were born in India and are now living in Canada as well as those adults (age 19 years to 71 years) who were born in Canada but whose parents and/or grandparents were from India. The sample was a homogeneous sample based on ethnic origin, not on citizenship status. All respondents were adult Indo-Canadians.

Recruitment for participants began in mid-October 1995, when the idea of the survey was presented to the Sikh Community at the Gurugobind Singh Sikh Temple. The Sikh temple membership was listed (as of November 1995) as being approximately 1,400 adults. Not all Indo-Canadians are members of the Sikh Temple. Some Indo-Canadians are Hindu and do not attend the services at the temple. Questionnaires were distributed to those people at the temple who agreed to participate in the study. Other surveys were given to other members of the Indo-Canadian community upon request, and were distributed to students identified as being from the College of New Caledonia. A small number were also distributed by a local contact person in the Indo-Canadian community, to business

associates and family. The survey was also advertised in the community calendar of the *Prince George Citizen*.

Of the total 200 questionnaires distributed in the Prince George Indo-Canadian community, 42 (20%) of the questionnaires were returned. Fifteen (36%) (of returned questionnaires) respondents were adult females and 27 (64%) were adult males. Age ranged from 19 years to 71 years of age. The mean age was 33 years, which is ten years younger than the average age in the Michalos study. Twenty-eight (68%) of all respondents were married and living with their spouses, 11 (26%) were never married, 2 (5%) were widowed, and 1(2%) was divorced. Thirty (71%) respondents had children living at home with them.

Thirty-five (83%) of the respondents were practicing Sikhs and the remaining 7 (17%) were Hindu. Thirty-seven of the respondents reported speaking Punjabi fluently. Fourteen (33%) spoke only Punjabi in the home and the remaining 28 (67%) spoke Punjabi and other languages such as, English, Hindi and Urdu. Punjabi was the main language spoken by their parents in their home, followed by Urdu and Hindi. Based on the reported use of Punjabi spoken in their home by all of the respondents, the researcher inferred that English is the second language in this sample. Twenty-four (58%) of the respondents reported themselves as Canadian citizens and 16 (39%) were landed immigrants. The remaining 2 (3%) reported something else.

Twenty-three (56%) respondents had some college up to advanced degrees, compared

to 12 (29%) who reported having some high school or having graduated from high school. The remaining 7 (17%) had less than high school or no schooling. Thirteen (30%) respondents were employed full-time, and 9 (21%) were part-time employed. Twenty-one (51%) had a total income of \$50,000 or more with the modal range between \$50,000 and \$69,999. The mean reported years in Canada was 15, ranging from 1.5 years to 35 years.

The sample characteristics from the current study are similar to those found by Michalos (1995). This is not considered unusual given the similarities between respondents in this study and those in the Michalos study. For example, Indo-Canadians in the current study had an average of 15 years residency in Prince George while the Michalos study reported an average of 22 years, both relatively long periods of time in Prince George. The average income was \$50,000 for approximately 51% of the respondents in the Indo-Canadian study and 55% of the respondents in the Michalos study. Sixty-eight percent of the Indo-Canadian study were married and 70% were married in the Michalos study. Finally, 55% of the Indo-Canadian sample had some college education up to advanced degrees such as a masters or doctorate. In the Prince George sample, 72% of respondents reported having some university education or a university degree.

However, major discrepancies in the sample characteristics of the two studies lie in three areas. First, the respondents in the current study identified themselves as Indo-Canadian. The Indo-Canadian sample repre-

sent a minority sample rather than the mainstream sample as presented in the Michalos study. As a consequence, English was not the first language as was reported in the Michalos study. The reported first language in the current study was primarily Punjabi. Secondly, there were differences in gender ratios. Thirty-five percent were female respondents and 65% were males in the Indo-Canadian study compared to 60% female and 40% males in the Michalos study.

Among other things, the survey questionnaire asked respondents to rate their levels of satisfaction with many aspects of their lives on a 7-point scale with 1 point indicating “very dissatisfied”, 4 points indicating “mixed levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction” and 7 points indicating “very satisfied”.

Figure 26.1 shows that the Indo-Canadian sample reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction with life as a whole, happiness and overall quality of life than the sample in the Michalos study.

FIGURE 26.1  
**COMPARISON BETWEEN THE MICHALOS SAMPLE (1995) AND INDO-CANADIAN MEAN SCORES OF GLOBAL INDICATORS OF LIFE SATISFACTION**

		<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
<b>Satisfaction with life as a whole</b>	<i>Indo-Canadian</i>	42	6.2
	<i>Prince George</i>	498	5.5
<b>Happiness</b>	<i>Indo-Canadian</i>	42	5.7
	<i>Prince George</i>	482	5.6
<b>Satisfaction with overall quality of life</b>	<i>Indo-Canadian</i>	42	6.1
	<i>Prince George</i>	500	5.7

Figure 26.2 gives the average scores for all the questions about satisfaction. The most remarkable thing about the results summarized in this Table is the fact that for every aspect of life, the Indo-Canadian sample mean scores are higher than those of the sample in the Michalos study. At this point in time, we do not know how to account for the discrepancy.

Highest mean levels of satisfaction were satisfaction with housing ( 6.75), followed by satisfaction with family relations ( 6.67), satisfaction with living partner ( 6.58), satisfaction with neighborhood ( 6.48), and friendship ( 6.25). Living partners (people who you live with) and spouses had the highest mean scores for satisfaction in the Michalos (1995) study. These domains were followed by satisfaction with family relations, friendships, and housing. Both studies found similar high levels of reported satisfaction. The greatest levels for dissatisfaction were for drug and alcohol abuse ( 3.83), amount of taxes paid ( 4.08) and the number of motor accidents ( 4.67). These items again reflect similar results to the Michalos (1995) study (see Figure 26.2).

Respondents were also asked to report things they liked most about a many-ethnic lifestyle. In order of most frequent to less frequent, things reported to be liked about a many-ethnic lifestyle were “learning from each other”, “enjoying many lifestyles”, and “keeping an open mind”. Things disliked about a many- ethnic lifestyle were “too much freedom for children”, “confusion about what is or isn’t proper”, “difficult to wear ethnic clothes in public”, “don’t like

one kind of people dominating” and “un-friendliness of some people”.

In response to a question about what was easy about raising children in a dominant non-Indo-Canadian society, participants reported the following: ”having family support”, “mixing with other cultures”, and “giving their children lots of opportunities”. There were many reported difficulties in raising children. Some of the more frequent responses were: “training at home (traditions and beliefs) was different at school” and “this caused problems at home between the children and the parents”, “differences in value systems caused identity problems especially in adolescents”, and “too much freedom for children make the children spoiled and difficult to raise”.

We asked about customs or beliefs the respondents found difficult to practice in Canada. Respondents reported wearing traditional clothing such as turbans, suits, and karbans to be the most difficult customs to practice in Canada. One respondent stated that “Whites don’t like Sikhs wearing turbans and karpans”. Another respondent stated that ‘kids want to do what White kids do - the family unit is in danger’. A central theme that seemed to arise from this question was the conflict between traditional customs of the parents and the values their children were exposed to in school, and the problems created from this as a result of these differing values.

All things considered, the results of this survey reflect an established and relatively well integrated minority group. It also reflects a minority group who enjoys an

FIGURE 26.2

**COMPARISON OF MEANS FOR THE 54 ITEMS ON THE SATISFACTION SCORES BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCE GEORGE SAMPLES**

<b>VARIABLE FROM SATISFACTION QUESTIONS</b>	<b>PRINCE GEORGE</b>	<b>INDO-CANADIAN</b>
<b>Your house, apartment or mobile home</b>	5.78	6.75
<b>Your neighbourhood as a place to live</b>	5.66	6.46
<b>Prince George as a place to live</b>	5.48	6.33
<b>Your family relations, generally</b>	5.91	6.67
<b>Your living partner</b>	6.09	6.58
<b>Your job</b>	5.39	6.25
<b>Your friendships</b>	5.84	6.08
<b>Your health</b>	5.61	5.92
<b>Your religion or spiritual fulfillment</b>	5.40	6.37
<b>Your overall standard of living</b>	5.48	6.20
<b>Your financial security</b>	4.74	5.75
<b>The physical beauty of Prince George</b>	4.15	5.46
<b>Your recreation activities</b>	5.04	5.53
<b>What you are accomplishing in life</b>	5.20	5.92
<b>Your self-esteem</b>	5.48	6.08
<b>How you feel about life as a whole</b>	5.58	6.25
<b>The police protection service</b>	4.39	5.25
<b>Public transportation services</b>	3.89	5.58
<b>Play areas for children</b>	4.59	6.00
<b>Elementary education</b>	4.00	6.08
<b>The College of New Caledonia</b>	4.56	6.04
<b>The University of Northern BC</b>	4.73	6.18
<b>Hospitals and clinics here</b>	3.55	5.88
<b>The friendliness of neighbours</b>	5.23	6.00
<b>Public health services</b>	4.27	5.92
<b>The condition of local housing</b>	4.37	5.75
<b>Ambulance service</b>	4.52	5.96
<b>Federal government officials</b>	3.04	5.46

FIGURE 26.2  
**COMPARISON OF MEANS FOR THE 54 ITEMS ON THE SATISFACTION SCORES BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCE GEORGE SAMPLES (cont)**

VARIABLE FROM SATISFACTION QUESTIONS	PRINCE GEORGE	INDO-CANADIAN
Provincial government officials	3.00	5.33
Local government officials	3.54	5.46
Public housing	3.89	5.46
Local parks and recreation facilities	4.87	5.88
Shopping facilities here	3.98	5.75
The amount of taxes you pay	2.90	4.08
Elderly care services	3.79	5.45
Child care services	3.96	5.41
The public highways, streets & roads	3.58	5.25
Street lighting	4.06	5.79
The quality of drinking water	4.55	5.83
Libraries here	5.31	6.04
Your overall quality of life	5.70	6.13
Job opportunities	4.06	4.96
Traffic congestion	4.59	5.38
The sewage system	4.87	5.88
Garbage collection	5.05	5.83
Sidewalks & pedestrian walkways	4.22	5.42
Planning and zoning regulations	3.97	5.54
Correctional services	3.83	5.54
Judicial services	3.24	5.45
Noise levels here	4.21	5.29
Drug & alcohol abuse	2.47	3.83
The number of motor vehicle accidents	2.93	4.67
The weather most of the time	4.42	4.83
Prince George's geographical location	4.67	5.58

overall high quality of life. Some conflicts and confusions were expressed which seemed to indicate identity conflicts and seem to pose as a threat to the community, family, and individual. With heightened awareness through education and support, counsellors can help facilitate the transition from one world to another.

### Determining Quality of Life Among Indo-Canadians as it Relates to Their Level of Integration

#### Statement of Problem

In a recent Quality of Life survey of over 2,000 households in Prince George (Michalos, 1994) it was noted that 93% of the respondents reported English as their first language. The sample also had an over-representation of the relatively well-off segment of Prince George (Michalos 1995). It is questionable if the Michalos study represented ethnic minority groups such as the Indo-Canadian group in Prince George.

By comparison, the present survey provided specific information about an ethnic minority group that may not have been reflected in the Quality of Life survey done by Michalos. Many of the respondents of the present study were expected to report English as their second language.

The current study sampled some long term residents of the Indo-Canadian community of Prince George and some of the more recent arrivals from India to Prince George. Recent arrivals (between years 1986-1991; Immigrants settlement in British Columbia: A study of 1991 census data, 1994,) for the

Indo-Canadian community in Prince George represent 11.7% of total immigrants (Immigrants settlement in British Columbia: A study of 1991 census data, 1994, p. 186). Immigrants from India represent the largest percentage of new immigrants to British Columbia and to Prince George. The perception of both long term residents and new arrivals and their varying degrees of integration were represented in the current study.

Although the main focus of this study was on respondent's level of integration and perceived quality of life, other issues were considered. Integration into the mainstream culture means both retaining some cultural activities of your ethnic origin and changing some. Change in lifestyle can be radical for an ethnic minority. Therefore, the study attempted to ascertain if there were specific variables which may deter and/or facilitate integration.

**Rationale**

Canada has officially embraced the diversities of ethnic and cultural backgrounds through its Multicultural Ministry (Multiculturalism B.C. Annual Report [MBCAR], 1993/1994). Weinfeld (1994) discussed how the Canadian Charter of Rights attempted to ensure survival of ethnic groups and their cultures as well as "full and equal participation of people of different ethnic origins without discrimination" (p.239). The Ministry of Multiculturalism attempted to specify the rights of ethnic minorities to practice their cultural activities. Multicultural Societies, are sponsored by grants from the government, assist new immigrants in the transition from their homeland to the Prince George community. In Prince George, the Immigration and

Multicultural Services Society, helps new Canadians in a variety of ways such as employment opportunities, legal matters, linking immigrants to other organizations, counselling, English classes and cultural activities (Directory of Community Services, 1993). In the March 1994 publication of Immigrant Settlement in British Columbia it was noted that 12% of the total population of Prince George were foreign born. Of the total recent (1986 -1991) immigrants to Prince George, immigrants from India were identified as the largest group to settle here.

Through government sponsored initiatives, ethnic minorities should enjoy the same quality of life as that of mainstream Canadians who appear to welcome the diversity of cultures and who state that minorities have the same right to happiness as they do (MBCAR, 1993/94). Difficulties for ethnic minority groups can still be experienced. Veenhoven (1984) noted "one could imagine minority status to be generally detrimental to happiness. It usually involved less favorable living conditions; in particular 'less legal security', less 'material comfort' and less 'social appreciation' " (p. 187). With the information provided by the respondents of the study, perhaps it will be possible to better meet the needs that characterize the Indo-Canadian community in Significance Prince George.

Counsellors and educators commonly provide professional services to students and others from a minority ethnic background. Ramirez (1983) points out that change for newcomers in a country demands "a reorganization of ethnic identity which may be psychologically stressful" (p. 143). Furthermore, he noted that if the change is too fast

or too extreme, then integration can become confusing and stressful for the families. In order to work effectively with an ethnic minority it is important to understand their specific cultural needs. It is also important to understand if the need to maintain ethnic activities impacts their quality of life or their happiness. Counselors need to be able to identify the nature of the problem as it exists from the Indo-Canadian point of view.

The proposed research intended to help clarify how level of integration related to the respondents' perceived quality of life. It was further hoped that results of the study would clarify needs of ethnic minorities.

Results of the study may also impact on current ethnic minority policy as it relates to immigrants in Prince George.

#### Limitations

The major limitation for this study was generalizability. It was difficult to determine the degree to which the study's sample was representative of the Prince George adult Indo-Canadian population. Therefore because all adult Indo-Canadians in Prince George did not have equal opportunity to be part of the sample, the sample was not representative of the Indo-Canadian community here. Financial limitations required that my primary source of subjects came from the members of the Sikh temple. The Sikh temple membership was listed (as of November 1995) as being approximately 1,400 adults. Not all Indo-Canadians are members of the Sikh Temple. Some Indo-Canadians are Hindu and do not attend the services at the temple. Therefore, the results

are confined to the specific group of respondents in this study and cannot be generalized beyond this sample.

The questionnaire was a combined scale of the Michalos 7-point satisfaction scale used in his study and the 5-point scale from Biculturalism / Multiculturalism Experience Inventory (BMEI). No modifications were made on the 7-point satisfaction scale, however modifications were made to the BMEI. The target group changed from a student-Mexican minority sample to an adult Indo Canadian minority sample in Prince George. Because of the changes on the BMEI part of the questionnaire, future studies would need to examine the reliability of the instrument.

The questionnaire was reported by several respondents to be too long. This could account for a lot of missing data in the Opinion section (5-point likert type scale) and the demographic questions designed for the people who have recently (within the last 5 years) become residents of Prince George. Also some of the demographic questions, in retrospect, could have been worded so that they were more relevant to the Indo-Canadian culture. For example, the question on dating was not relevant to this minority group.

Some of the responses on the open-ended questions were confusing to interpret because some of the questions were confusing. Specifically the question Are there any customs, beliefs, that you find difficult to practice in Canada? Why? confused the respondents in that they were unsure whether the customs were Indian customs

or Canadian customs that were difficult . This confusion was reflected in the responses.

And finally, Palys (1992) has pointed out “the response rate for questionnaire surveys is in the 10 to 40 percent range” (p.163). Although 200 questionnaire were distributed into the Indo-Canadian community, 42 (20%) questionnaires were returned. It is hard to determine what segment of the total Prince George Indo-Canadian population this represent.

### Integration

#### Indo-Canadians and Integration: A brief historical perspective

Thirty-seven percent of the Canadian population represents ethnic and racial minorities (non French and non English background) (Fleras & Elliot, 1992). In British Columbia and Prince George, Indo-Canadians are represented as the largest immigrant group. Most of these immigrants came to Canada in 1904 and were Sikhs from the state of Punjab. The original immigrants, 5,000 in total, settled in the Vancouver area and were mostly employed as mill workers in the forestry industry. However, because of the anti-Asian sentiments, early Sikhs experienced a great deal of overt prejudice and criticism. In order to minimize anti-Asian sentiments, Sikhs tried to close the gap between their cultural practices and that of the host society (Joy, 1989; Jagpal, 1994).

In describing the expectations of the new Sikhs by members of those Sikhs who were already established in British Columbia,

Jagpal (1994) stated that “ Soon after landing the routine of Canadianization usually began” (p.5). It was the custom in the early 1900’s to dress in Western styles in public and traditional clothes were saved for inside the home. Older or earlier immigrant Sikhs would counsel new immigrants from India to try to fit into Canadian ways in terms of fashion, hairstyles and attitudes. This informal integration policy was established so that they would gain acceptance (Joy, 1989). They were advised to be flexible. Through acceptance and flexibility, the Sikhs hoped to establish themselves as valuable Canadians in the eyes of the host society. Jagpal stated that advice given to newcomers in the early 20’s was very similar to the advice still given today.

Central to the Sikh identity is their religion, which occupies a pivotal role in their culture and integrates all other spheres of their individual lives (Joy, 1989). When Sikhs first immigrated to Canada, temples were quickly erected and the resumption of their religious practices were continued. The Sikh temple served as a community meeting place wherein news, social activities and political concerns would all be discussed. The emphasis on community and care for one another rather than care for self underlined the cultural values practiced by Sikhs. Because of this collective identity, the Sikhs, according to Joy, initially experienced some confusion as to their place in the host society which emphasized an individualistic identity.

As a reaction to anti-Asian sentiments, the Sikhs encouraged each other to integrate as a means of gaining recognition and accept-

ance. Through education and work, the immigrants gained social status. After 1949, the political struggle for voting rights and social recognition changed from the early settlement years. Indo-Canadians now had the right to vote. Additionally, the New Constitution of 1982 and new Multicultural legislation, which gave them the right to equal participation as an ethnic minority in Canada, continued to ease the pressure for them to conform publicly to the host society. As a result of these political and social changes, the process of integration soon took on a more natural change where two cultures interacted, exchanging values over time (Joy, 1989 ; Jagpal, 1994).

### Summary

Factors such as generational status, the speed of integration and retention and integration affect the quality of life experienced by an ethnic group or individual. Early immigrants experienced overt racism. This is not the case for more recent immigrants and Indo-Canadians or Canadian citizens. Although they do experience some degree of racism, they find comfort in the legislative privilege of equal participation and rights of the host society. This political support would naturally improve the quality of life or happiness of the ethnic group. First generation immigrants have a lower economic status, and lower educational background than second and third generation minorities. These factors impacted the quality of life of the early or first generation immigrants and continue to have a role on long term residence as was observed in the quality of life literature. Differences in level of satisfaction with life and happiness

among generations is not explored in this study.

The methodology chapter includes three parts. First, the sample and sample recruitment is described. This is followed by a description of the measurement instrument used to test the three hypotheses. The chapter concludes with a description of the statistical analyses used to test the three hypotheses.

### Sample

Purposive sampling and a snowball technique (Palys, 1992) were used for this study. The target group for this study were adult Indo-Canadians living in the city of Prince George. Indo-Canadians are those people who were born in India and are now living in Canada as well as those adults (age 19 years to 71 years) who were born in Canada but whose parents and/or grandparents were from India. The sample was a homogeneous sample based on ethnic origin, not on citizenship status. All respondents were adult Indo-Canadians.

### Recruitment Procedure

Recruitment for participants began in mid-October 1995, when I presented my study to the Sikh Community at the Gurugobind Singh Sikh Temple. Questionnaires were distributed to those people at the temple who agreed to participate in the study. Other surveys were given to other members of the Indo-Canadian community upon request, and were distributed to students identified as being from the College of New Caledonia. All questionnaires were either returned to my home address by mail or were picked up at a later date. A small

number were also distributed by a local contact person in the Indo-Canadian community, to business associates and family.

The study was also advertised in the community calendar of the Prince George Citizen. This resulted in only one response. That respondent requested a further 11 questionnaires to pass around to friends and family to fill out. These were completed and were returned to my home address. Seven were obtained from a group of students studying English as a Second Language at the Multicultural Center in Prince George. From a total of 200 questionnaires, distributed at four points of time over a two month period, 42 questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

**Measurement Instrument**

Included with the questionnaire for the study were two pages written both in Punjabi and English introducing the researcher and the nature of the study (Appendix A ). The questionnaire for this study combined questions from the Michalos' study with questions from the BMEI. In order to draw comparisons between the Michalos survey on quality of life in Prince George and the present study, a 7-step series of likert type scale was included which examined the 54 aspects (domains) which affect peoples lives. Also included from the Michalos (1995) study were the question examining the extent to which people were happy with their lives as a whole; a series of questions regarding expectations of a better life in the Prince George community; and, questions which asked if the respondents expected certain aspects of their lives to be better than they had been before moving

and if it actually were better. Demographic questions from the Biculturalism / Multiculturalism Experience Inventory (BMEI) (Ramirez, 1983) were used in conjunction with some of the demographic questions from the Michalos (1995) study. Demographic questions were included which asked for the ethnic background of the respondent and relatives of the respondents, such as parents and grandparents. The last three open-ended questions were designed specifically for this study in order to obtain some personal opinions on specific individual cultural experiences ( see Appendix A).

Chapter four begins with an overview of the sample. It outlines the results and discussion of the results for the hypotheses. It also outlines responses to the open-ended questions related to ethnic minority status in Prince George and reasons for coming to Prince George.

**Sample Characteristics**

Of the total 200 questionnaires distributed in the Prince George Indo- Canadian community, 42 (20%) of the questionnaires were returned. Fifteen (36%) (of returned questionnaires) respondents were adult females and 27 (64%) were adult males. Age ranged from 19 years to 71 years of age. The mean age was 33 years, which is ten years younger than the average age in the Michalos study. Twenty -eight (68%) of all respondents were married and living with their spouses, 11 (26%) were never married; 2 (5%) were widowed; and 1(2%) was divorced. Thirty ( 71%) respondents had children living at home with them.

Thirty-five (83%) of the respondents were practicing Sikhs and the remaining 7 (17%) were Hindu. Thirty-seven of the respondents reported to speak Punjabi fluently. Fourteen (33%) spoke only Punjabi in the home and the remaining 28 (67%) spoke Punjabi and other such as, English, Hindi and Urdu. Punjabi was the main language spoken by their parents in their home followed by Urdu and Hindi. Based on the reported use of Punjabi spoken in their home, by all of the respondents, the researcher inferred that English is the second language in this sample. Twenty-four (58%) of the respondents reported themselves as Canadian citizens and 16 (39%) were landed immigrants. The remaining 2 (3%) reported other.

Twenty-three (56%) respondents had some college up to advanced degrees, compared to 12 (29%) who reported having some high school or having graduated from high school. The remaining 7 (17%) had less than high school or no schooling. Thirteen (30%) respondents were employed full-time, and 9 (21%) were part-time employed. Twenty-one (51%) had a total income of \$50,000 or more with the modal range between \$50,000 and \$69,999. The mean reported years in Canada was 15, ranging from 1.5 years to 35 years.

The sample characteristics from the current study are similar to those found by Michalos (1995). This is not considered unusual given the similarities between respondents in this study and those in the Michalos study. For example, Indo-Canadians in the current study had an average of 15 years residency in Prince George while

the Michalos study reported an average of 22 years; both relatively long residency in Prince George. The average income was \$50,000 for approximately 51% of the respondents in the Indo-Canadian study and 55% of the respondents in the Michalos study. Sixty-eight percent of the Indo-Canadian study were married and 70% were married in the Michalos study. Finally, 55% of the Indo-Canadian sample had some college education up to advanced degrees such as a masters or doctorate. In the Prince George sample, 72% of respondents reported having some university education or held a university degree.

However, major discrepancies in the sample characteristics of the two studies lie in three areas. First, the respondents in the current study identified themselves as Indo Canadian. This was in response to the question "Please indicate the ethnic background of the following persons" (note Appendix A). The Indo-Canadian sample represented a minority sample rather than the mainstream sample as presented in the Michalos study. As a consequence, English was not the first language as was reported in the Michalos study. The reported language in the current study was primarily Punjabi. Secondly, there were differences in gender ratios. There were 35% were female respondents and 65% were males in the Indo-Canadian study compared to 60% female and 40% males in the Michalos study. (Refer to Figure 26.1)

#### Scores of Global Indicators of Life Satisfaction

Discussion of results of hypothesis # 1: As was discussed at the beginning of this chapter the ratings for satisfaction with life as a

whole and satisfaction with overall quality of life could be accounted for by the relatively high incomes reported by both samples. This positive association between income and happiness had been noted by Michalos (1995). The reported lengthy stay, on the average, in the community may also be positively associated with these high ratings. The t-tests indicated that a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) existed between the groups for satisfaction with life as a whole and satisfaction with overall quality of life (Palys, 1992). The Indo-Canadians were more satisfied in both cases. All mean scores on the 54 satisfaction items in the Indo-Canadian study and the Prince George study are reported in Figure 26.2.

Variable from Satisfaction Questions

\* these items refer to global satisfaction with how you feel about life as a whole and your overall quality of life (see Table 1). Highest mean levels of satisfaction were satisfaction with housing (= 6.75), followed by satisfaction with family relations (= 6.67), satisfaction with living partner (= 6.58), satisfaction with neighborhood (= 6.48), and friendship (= 6.25). Living partners (people who you live with) and spouses had the highest mean scores for satisfaction in the Michalos (1995) study. These domains were followed by satisfaction with family relations, friendships, and housing. Both studies found similar high levels of reported satisfaction. The greatest levels for dissatisfaction were for drug and alcohol abuse (= 3.83), amount of taxes paid (= 4.08) and the number of motor accidents (= 4.67). These items again reflect similar results to the Michalos (1995) study (see Table 2). In conclusion, the

Indo-Canadians reported an overall higher quality of life than did the respondents in the Michalos (1995) study.

Open-Ended Questions

This final part of the results presents responses to the three open-ended questions relating to ethnic minority status in Prince George.

Question one asked respondents to report things they liked most about a many-ethnic lifestyle. In response to question one; in order of most frequent to less frequent, things reported to be liked about a many-ethnic lifestyle were “learning from each other”, “enjoying many lifestyles”, and “keeping an open mind”. Things disliked about a many ethnic lifestyle were “too much freedom for children”, “confusion about what is or isn’t proper”, “difficult to wear ethnic clothes in public”, “don’t like one kind of people dominating” and “un-friendliness of some people”. Although many reported that they liked the multicultural aspect of the community, they did acknowledge some confusions and conflicts that seemed to arise.

In response to question number two, which asked what was easy about raising children in a dominant non-Indo-Canadian society, participants reported the following: “having family support”, “mixing with other cultures”, and “giving their children lots of opportunities”. There were many reported difficulties in raising children. Some of the more frequent responses were: “training at home (traditions and beliefs) was different at school” and “this caused problems at home between the children and the par-

ents”, “differences in values systems caused identity problems especially in adolescents”, and “too much freedom for children make the children spoiled and difficult to raise”. Responses to this question reflected similar issues that came up in question one, such as appreciating differences but having difficulty harmonizing them within the family.

Question three asked about customs or beliefs the respondents found difficult to practice in Canada. In response to question 3, respondents reported wearing traditional clothing such as turbans, suits, and kurbans to be the most difficult customs to practice in Canada. One respondent stated that “Whites don’t like Sikhs wearing turbans and kurbans”. Another respondent stated that “kids want to do what White kids do – the family unit is in danger”. A central theme that seemed to arise from this question was the conflict between traditional customs of the parents and the values their children were exposed to in school, and the problems created from this as a result of these differing values.

### Summary

Chapter Four detailed the results and discussion of the sample, and, data analyses for the three hypotheses. It also reported on responses to the open-ended questions relating to ethnic minority status in Prince George and reasons for coming to Prince George. The last chapter addresses the purpose of the study in light of the results and experiences related to the completed study.

### Chapter Five Conclusions

This final chapter begins with a brief summary of the purpose of the study followed

by some concluding remarks on the results of the study. The chapter concludes with implications for future research.

The present study set out to draw some comparisons between the Michalos (1995) study and the Indo-Canadian study in the Prince George community. Though the main thrust of this study was to see if a relationship existed between level of integration and quality of life, none was found. Small sample could account for this result.

The questionnaire which measured quality of life and integration was uncomplicated, yet, many unanswered questions remained. Factors that influenced the process of integration into mainstream Prince George now seemed multifaceted and complicated. Some of the factors considered by the present study included the history of immigrants in the Prince George community, the effect of perceived or real racism on integration and the effect of generation as it is related to quality of life and happiness.

The first set of hypotheses examined differences in reported overall quality of life, satisfaction with life as a whole and happiness with life as a whole between the Michalos (1995) study and the Indo-Canadian study. The Indo-Canadian community reported higher levels of satisfaction with life as a whole, and satisfaction with overall quality of life compared to the study by Michalos (1995).

Reported satisfaction with life of the Indo-Canadian sample could be explained by satisfaction with financial security ( $r = .75$ ). This sample also had a relatively high mean

standard of living. Financial security for an immigrant is important. Employment in Canada, and English is not one's first language is very difficult. This success, as reported by high satisfaction with financial security, in the mainstream has other benefits. It meets basic shelter and medical needs of immigrants and it facilitates access to post-secondary institutions. Financial security also facilitates sponsorship of relatives to Canada and support to relatives still in India.

The Indo-Canadian community seems to be a very cohesive, supportive minority group. There is a strong sense of community and belonging among the Sikh community. Most Sikh families seem to know each other either through their involvement with the Temple or other community activities. It appears that a lot of Indo-Canadians work together in business. We see Indo-Canadian students together at secondary and post-secondary institutions. In conversation, I have heard Indo-Canadians express active support of each other within their community.

The second set of hypotheses examined the relationship between level of integration and satisfaction with overall quality of life, satisfaction with life as a whole and happiness with life as a whole. No significant relationship was found.

Finally, the third set of hypotheses examined the difference in predictive values between the Michalos and Indo-Canadian in predictive values: satisfaction with financial security, family relations, job, friendships, housing, area lived in, recreation activity,

religion, self-esteem, transportation, and living partner. The predictive value of satisfaction with self-esteem was significant and had high explanatory power for both satisfaction with life in the Indo-Canadian community and the Michalos (1995) study. Consideration of self may reflect a change in the value structure of the Indo-Canadians. This minority group traditionally focuses on the collective happiness of the family and community rather than focusing on self.

However, unlike the Michalos (1995) study satisfaction with financial security has very high predictive value for satisfaction with life as a whole in the Indo-Canadian study. It is not surprising that financial security was also a strong predictor for life satisfaction. Most immigrants look for a better life when they emigrate to Canada. Satisfaction with financial security ensures a better life and an overall favorable position for a minority group.

The results of this study, overall, reflect an established and relatively well integrated minority group. It also reflects a minority group who enjoys an overall high quality of life. Some conflicts and confusions were expressed which seemed to indicate identity conflicts and seem to pose as a threat to the community, family, and individual. With heightened awareness through education and support, counsellors can help facilitate the transition from one world to another.

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