Post-positivist study exploring the resettlement experience of professional Asian Indian women

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POST-POSITIVIST STUDY EXPLORING THE RESETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE
OF PROFESSIONAL ASIAN INDIAN WOMEN

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Karmjit Singh
June 1997
POST-POSITIVIST STUDY EXPLORING THE RESETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE
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Approved by:

Lupe Alle-Corliss, Project Advisor, Social Work

Dr. Teresa Morris, Chair of Research Sequence, Social Work
ABSTRACT

This research study used the Post-Positivist approach to explore the resettlement experience of professional Asian Indian women and the possible changes in their perceptions as a result of immigrating to the United States from India. Data was gathered through personal, face to face interviews with twenty-two professional Asian Indian women. Results identified struggles many of the women experienced in their resettlement. In addition, the research revealed that the women in this study currently possess and practice values which are consistent with the traditional attitudes of their homeland, yet at the same time, these same women exhibit behaviors congruent with mainstream America. In the process of assimilation and in the pursuit of greater opportunities, these professional women have not passed on the richness of their traditional values to their children who currently practice more westernized values and traditions. This study also revealed that the elderly do not play as significant a role in the lives of these Asian Indian families as they did or would in India. This appears to be further widening the gap between these professional women’s children (first-American-born) and their grandparents. Implications for research and practice are presented.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank Lupe Alle-Corliss for offering her guidance and her patience while this study was being completed.
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Table 1. Professional Breakdown

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Graph 1. Marriage Breakdown
INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

There were 23 million foreign-born persons in the United States in 1994. This represents 9% of the population. This is the highest level in the last 50 years (Census and You, 1996). Immigrants come from diverse countries with different cultural and economic backgrounds and have different connections in the host country. The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 provided an increase in immigration from Asia. This paper will focus on the immigration of Indians from Asia. Asian Indians have been known to come to the United States primarily in search of educational or professional opportunities (Segal, 1991). This research study explored the reasons for which professional Asian Indian women in particular, resettle in the United States.

Scholars have researched experiences of women in different cultures in some detail and told stories of their lives, but this research study will share in colorful and powerful language the rarely shared experiences of professional Asian Indian women. The area of Women Studies exercises on the basic tenet that women’s experiences and contributions are significant to understanding our world. In reaction to this premise, it was quite surprising to
acknowledge the extent to which Asian Indian women are underrepresented in mainstream and key even in the Women Studies literature.

There is a significant amount of literature on immigration and resettlement on a generic level and some on the Asian Indian immigration experience. However, there is limited research that addresses the resettlement experience of Asian Indian women in general, with even less reference to professional Asian Indian women in specific. This study will contribute to the existing research on Asian Indians and more specifically to our understanding of professional Asian Indian women. This understanding may further endow the profession of Social Work in its goal of providing services to people of all races and sexes. It behooves social workers to gain a better understanding of their clientele, Asian Indian women in particular because little is commonly shared of their struggles and triumphs.

This research study explored the resettlement experience of professional Asian Indian women by investigating the following two questions: (1) What are the processes professional Asian Indian women go through in their resettlement in the United States? (2) To what degree, if any, do their views change toward education, child rearing practices, marriage, or the elderly after
immigrating to the United States?

Literature Review

Immigration from India to the United States has taken place in two distinct phases. In the early twentieth century, several thousand poorly educated Indian agricultural laborers migrated to the West Coast and settled in rural regions in Washington and California (Taylor, 1994). They experienced much discrimination because of the prevailing anti-Asian attitudes of that time. Since 1965, a second group of immigrants who are better educated, more urbanized and affluent has come to the United States. The immigrants of post-1965 are generally referred to as "new immigrants".

Since 1965, the immigration laws have allowed in an increased number of Asian immigrants, but this alone does not explain the increase in immigration. Conditions in India are an important factor. India is the world’s second most populous country. Furthermore, Census Bureau’s World Population Profile of 1996, indicated that India is expected to become the world’s most populous country by 2040 if present trends continue (Census and You, 1996). With a large portion of the population being illiterate and engaged primarily in agriculture, India does not have very much to offer in terms of economic security for professionals. So,
"many of the recent immigrants have been professional workers—physicians, surgeons, dentists, teachers, and skilled workers—providing the United States with the very people India needs to retain if the quality of life there is to improve" (Parrillo, 1985).

The way a country chooses to receive new settlers is an important element of their adaptation to the new land. The response of the authorities to the settlement of migrants and refugees is generally identified with the attitudes of the host society towards the people it receives (Kalka, 1990). Groups confronting prejudice may be forced into isolation and spatial segregation which can present hurdles in their successful integration into the host society.

All immigrants face the challenge of choosing an effective integration strategy. According to Moghaddam, Taylor, and LaLonde (1989), integration options that are available can be conceptualized as lying on a continuum, at the extremes of which are total assimilation and complete heritage culture maintenance. Assimilation involves the adoption of the culture of the host society and the abandonment of the heritage culture; heritage culture maintenance involves the maintenance of fundamental aspects of the traditional culture, including the language (Cyrus, 1993; Moghaddam et al. 1989). Both assimilation and
heritage culture maintenance seem to be a result of resettlement and its successful completion. Sluzki (1979) identified five stages of resettlement which include the following: the preimigration or preparatory stage; actual migration; arrival in new home; decompensation stage; and the transgenerational stage (Hulewat, 1996).

This leads to assumptions in the literature on integration which can also be viewed at extremes with some researchers sharing that assimilation of ethnic minorities is inevitable in the course of urbanization and industrialization while others defend the "rise of ethnicity" whereby ethnic minorities show strong support for heritage culture maintenance (Moghaddam, et al. 1989). Studies looking at attitudes of minority groups in respect to spatial segregation as a way of achieving such heritage culture maintenance suggest ambivalence among Asian Indians who seem to be motivated to disperse in the city rather than concentrate in particular areas (Tran, 1991). However, behavior suggests the opposite because there is a high concentration of Asian Indians in particular parts of the country (Census and You, 1995). In March 1994, "California was leading all states with 7.7 million foreign-born persons—more than one-third of all immigrants to the United States and nearly one quarter of all California residents"
There can be many reasons for large concentrations of immigrants in certain locations. Asian Indian immigrants assimilate through the process of regroupment with fellow Indians irrespective of the linguistic or regional background they may have had in India. Research suggests that taking on a new identity can be a threatening experience, and the sense of belonging to an ethnic community may be one of the primary sources of security for the immigrants who face the challenge of adapting to a new culture (Taylor, 1994). Social identity theory may interpret this to indicate that ethnic in-group identification provides these immigrants with some positive distinctiveness in their social milieu (Lalonde, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1992).

Professionals:

Literature review thus far suggests that young and old Asian Indians are constituting a rapidly growing ethnic group, a group that in several respects is different than most other ethnic groups in this country. According to Segal (1991), the migration of this group takes place very selectively. Asian Indian immigrants on the average are noted by a high level of education, by occupational concentration in the professions, and by a strong commitment to maintaining family connections, both here in the United
Asian Americans are often referred to as the model minority which is comprised of hard-working, highly educated, family-oriented, and financially successful people (Anderson, 1995).

With their education and occupational skills, Asian Indian immigrants can achieve economic security, but usually not without encountering some struggles. One such struggle may be the peripherization of immigrant workers in the U.S. labor market. There seems to be many reasons for this, however job instability is not among the reasons. Actually, it is that “foreign medical graduates fulfill a residual role in the American employment market and that job availability is the single most important element in the initial placement of foreign medical graduates” (Stevens, 1991). Due to job availability, they obtain the least sought-after training positions. Research suggests that this reality may not be coincidental, but rather planned for regulating the admittance of foreign medical graduates into this country. Furthermore, by controlling who gets into this country and subsequently who pursues which specialty, “the medical community can exploit foreign medical graduates while still offering them sufficient incentive to emigrate from their opportunity-barren homelands” (Shin & Chang,
A study by Shin & Chin (1993) looking at Korean physicians found that female Korean physicians are more likely to immigrate to the United States than their male counterparts although both groups are more likely to immigrate than to stay. One possibility for this can be the expectation of a lesser segregation by gender in the United States than in their native country. Research also found that as language, education, and cultural barriers begin to break down in the assimilation process, peripherization continues to exist among the professionals and curtails upward mobility (Shin and Chang, 1993). They further related their findings to immigrant laborers who also are represented disproportionately in peripheral areas.

At the same time, it is important to note that research on male immigrants has documented that their labor supply is higher than that of the native-born population, and consistent over time (Borjas, 1983). One of the main explanations for this finding is that immigrants migrate for economic reasons, and are thus ready to work harder in order to achieve their economic goals (Stier, 1991). Even though, not much has been written about women, the same argument seems to apply to their market behavior. In fact, Filipino and Asian Indian women who have been recognized as
economically motivated immigrants while Korean, Chinese, and Japanese women are considered to enter the country mostly as nonworking wives (Gardner, Robey, & Smith, 1985). Asian Indian and Filipino women also have the highest education levels on average among the Asian groups, while Vietnamese have the lowest (Stier, 1991). According to Duleep and Sanders (1993), a majority of Filipino and Asian Indian women are proficient in English, but only a small percentage of Chinese and Korean immigrant women actually report being proficient in English.

Literature discussed earlier suggests that Asian Indian women are well educated and quite motivated to work. It is now important to discuss the reasons that may contribute to immigrant women's decision to work. Given that Asian immigrant women are highly educated and relatively young, Duleep and Sanders (1993), point out that this may characteristically explain their comparatively high labor force participation. Stier (1991) studied the economic and family conditions as well as individual characteristics under which immigrant families of Asian origin are most likely to utilize the wives' economic potential. The study found that family constraints play an important role in the decision to go to work for all ethnic groups. However, the decision of Asian Indian wives' to go to work was more of a
function of their market productivity and their personal endowment rather than due to family concerns or the economic needs of the family as compared to the other groups (Stier, 1991).

Several studies have found that the propensity of immigrant women to work increases along with their hourly earnings with the number of years since migration (Duleep & Sanders, 1993). Marriage prior to migration is also found to be positively associated with labor force participation for some ethnic groups (Stier, 1991). Furthermore, a positive association exists between relatives in the home and the propensity of immigrant women to work. Since Asian immigrant women are more likely to have young children at home than Nonhispanic white immigrant woman, the presence of a live-in relative lowers the cost of work for the immigrant women (Duleep & Sanders, 1993).

The large influx of immigrant women in the work force does not come without its problems. Actually, Asians of all classes and generations are now experiencing a rise in Anti-Asian sentiment. This sentiment is expressed both through "subtle, systemic discrimination, particularly in higher education and job opportunities" (Cyrus, 1993). Women, in general, also face the constraints of patriarchal systems in the forms of racism and sexism when working for
men in both capitalist enterprises in the general labor market and in ethnic economies (Dallalfar, 1994). However, professional women in particular, may be handicapped in even more ways. The term "professional woman contains the fundamental paradox and the potential double-bind faced by women in professions. There is a basic contradiction between abstract social definitions of 'woman' and normative behavioral expectations of 'professional'" (Wood & Conrad, 1983). Within western culture, the term "professional" and its variants "executive" and "manager" are defined in terms of qualities traditionally associated with male or masculinity, like rationality, power, and decisiveness (Wood & Conrad, 1983). These researchers further contend that women who reach the upper levels are informally no longer considered as part of the woman group and may be condemned as being unfeminine, however if professional women are too emotional, they may be regarded as ineffectual. The paradox may be even more significant for women whose culture reinforces feminine traits (e.g., lack of assertiveness and nurturance). India is one of those cultures. In fact, the statement, "Shame and shyness are the ornaments of Indian women", was shared by a participant in a study exploring the Indian gender culture.

In the patriarchal societies of the Indian
subcontinent, the social behavior of women is rigidly
controlled and in smaller rural and urban areas, women are
practically secluded, a practice known as "purdah" (Menon,
1989). Scholars have noted that Indian women are
disadvantaged by widely shared gender ideologies that
restrict women's movements outside the home and limit
women's interactions with their husband within the home
(Derne, 1994). Some Asian Indian women have denied the
image of woman as docile and have confronted the restriction
of women to the home by making references to the working-
class women. Even though, the working class women of
professionals have challenged such ideas, they do still
sometimes "underplay their abilities in order not to upset
their male colleagues" (Derne, 1994). Furthermore,
professional women sometimes maintain the "illusion" of
'submissiveness' when in the presence of their husband's
evera or "feign incompetence to avoid upsetting co-workers"
(Derne, 1994). Asian Indian women are "indoctrinated from
infancy to value and manifest ideals of feminine modesty"
(Suggs & Miracle 1993).

Marriage:

This exhibition of shyness and modesty is even more
pronounced when men evaluate their potential bride in terms
of such traits. In relation to marriage, arranged marriages
are common outside the Western world, and despite the urbanization and geographic dispersal of community members, they are still the norm in the Indian subcontinent (Bhargava, 1988). However, modern arranged marriages are somewhat different from the traditional arranged marriages where parents had total control over the selection of the mate. Modern arranged marriages provide some opportunities for the son or daughter to contribute to the decision making process. Some parents even go as far as permit the two individuals to meet one another to determine compatibility before proceeding with the engagement process. Such liberty of modern arranged marriages is most often seen in urban areas of the Indian subcontinent and with increasing number of immigrants in the United States (Rao & Rao, 1982).

In current times, parents often find it difficult to rely upon personal contacts or those of a marriage broker, as they might have in a tight rural community back in the Indian subcontinent to learn of prospective adults looking to get married. It is very common these days to make use of newspapers and magazines to place personal advertisements. This is an offshoot of traditional arranged marriages because parents or other family members are the ones who most often sponsor the advertisements in search of a suitable mate for their loved one.
Menon (1989), examined the impact of gender and age on the family role in arranged marriages using matrimonial advertisements as a method for content analysis. Menon found males to be more self-sponsoring than females and older males were more self-sponsoring than younger males. However, older females were significantly more likely to be sponsored by family as compared to older males who were less often sponsored by family. Males on the whole were found more likely to self-sponsor their marriage inquires. Menon considered self-sponsorship of an advertisement to indicate that the marriage is nonarranged, while sponsorship of an advertisement indicates an arranged marriage.

Research suggests that Asian immigrant women, with the exception of the Japanese, have relatively low divorce and separation rates (Duleep & Sanders, 1993). However, this does not suggest that Asian marriages are trouble free or that these couples see things eye to eye most of the time. In relation to Asian Indians in specific, the inequality in the matrimonial relationships has been well documented (Derne, 1994; Gupta, 1995). Gupta (1995) found that young wives are subordinate both to men and to older women in the household. When women marry and move to their husband’s village, they lose almost all voice and autonomy. Consequently, women have less power and autonomy than men in
Child Rearing:

Cultural diversity within the United States has provided for a variety of beliefs and values about raising children. Parents develop their "own parenting theory based on their cultural and reference group socialization, in addition to individual and family experiences, personality style, and characteristics of their children" (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994). However, the socialization techniques used by different cultural groups are similar to those used by Caucasian parents like modeling, reinforcement, and identification. The main difference is that they are used to pass on unique values and behavior of their cultural group.

Traditionally, Asian American family structure has been "patriarchal, patrilocal, and often extended" with family life centering around duty, obligation, and self-sacrifice to elders (Julian et al., 1994). Shifts in traditional beliefs have been the result of varying degrees of assimilation into Western culture by each group. However, strong sense of importance of family over the individual, appreciation of one's cultural heritage, and self-control to achieve societal goals seem to remain as important values regardless of the Asian group or its degree of assimilation.
According to Brooks (1991), positive orientation to the culture, socialization for interdependence, and cognitive flexibility are common child rearing goals among ethnic groups.

Asians also place a high premium on respect and conformity. Furthermore, interdependence is fostered and self-identity is inhibited (Gupta, 1995). In fact, Segal (1991) found that whereas infants are generally overindulged, young children are reared in an authoritarian atmosphere, in which autonomy is not tolerated. As children enter their teen and young adult years, guilt, shame and a sense of moral obligation are used as the primary mechanisms of control (Anderson & Collins, 1995). Julian et al., (1994), found a pattern among ethnic groups which emphasizes self-control and doing well in school. More specifically, it has been found that Asian Americans are more involved with their children’s education in that they help with reading and homework more often than Hispanics. In addition, research reveals that Asian American parents also use praise and slapping significantly more often than some other cultural groups (Julian et al., 1994).

The literature discussed earlier suggests that immigrants resettle in concentrated areas because the in-
group identification provides for a smoother resettlement. However, this in-group identification is not always enough for the elderly, especially for the elderly women to successfully integrate into their new environments upon resettlement. Research has found that in many Asian societies, males are given more resources than women (Segal, 1994). Older women in particular often lack the resource of formal education, thus are not prepared to participate in many social activities and positions outside their homes. Consequently, women immigrants from Asian countries tend to experience more problems in their host societies (Tran, 1988). More specifically, language serves as the culprit facilitating a rough adjustment. Language acculturation is a process that requires immigrants and refugees who have no linguistic compatibility with a host society to learn and to use its language in order to survive and to adjust to a new environment (Lalonde, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1992).

There exists a common assumption that older immigrants tend to have more problems in learning the new language than their younger counterparts. Tran (1988) found that older Vietnamese women had more problems with their English language than older Vietnamese men and that the men were more likely to use various learning strategies to improve their English skills in the host country than the women.
Since men are given more resources in India than women, they may have learned that they can make use of the available resources. Tran (1988) found that the existence of English language skills increases social adjustment directly, and self-esteem and psychological well-being indirectly. It can be deduced that the lack of English skills may therefore tend to increase social alienation among immigrants especially among the older generation because older individuals tend to speak less fluently than their younger cohorts (Tran, 1988). Other studies have found that in general, the newly arrived older immigrants and refugee groups are much more vulnerable than their younger immigrant counterparts (Tran, 1988 & Tran, 1991). Unlike the younger generations, older immigrants do not have enough time to prepare for their retirement. These people also seem to suffer more from culture shock and language difficulties, resulting from their displacement, than the younger generations. At the same time, they are also suffering from various physical, social, and psychological problems of old age (Go, Brustrom, Lynch, & Aldwin, 1995).

Family relations have been viewed as an important element in the life of older people. In fact, research on family stress has documented that family relations such as family cohesion could buffer or reduce the effect of stress
and strains on well-being (Tran 1991). Previous studies also show that immediate family members are the main sources of social support for the older individuals in time of illness. A study by Tran (1991) found that elderly refugees who lived within the nuclear or extended family in the United States had a better sense of social adjustment than those living outside the family context. However, elderly refugees who lived in overcrowded households and in households that had children under the age of sixteen experienced a more difficult adjustment process. This may be because these households had more economic needs and more stresses than those without them. Minority elders in general, remain understudied, and there exists an under coverage in regard to topic areas that are important to the advancement of research on minority elderly (LaVeist, 1995). However, existing literature suggests that the role of the elderly is held in high regard in Asian families. They are respected and honored for their experiences in Asian cultures (Cyrus, 1981).

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

**Design**

There has been little research conducted to understand professional Asian Indian women and their resettlement experience. Due to the lack of literature pertaining to the
research at hand, the Post-Postivist approach with its qualitative methods and exploratory nature accommodated this research study in its plan to learn more about the processes employed by professional Asian Indian women in their resettlement and their change in views, if any, due to resettling in the United States. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research methods can be used to uncover and understand phenomenon about which little is known. This qualitative approach with its orientation of discovery made this the logical design of choice.

The Post-Postivist approach used in this study provided the researcher with an opportunity to begin with an area of study and in the process allowed relevant material to emerge. In this case, the researcher began by exploring the immigrant experience of Asian Indian women and subsequently uncovered some of the processes employed by these women in their resettlement. Since literature suggests Asian Indians to be close knit people, it was of great benefit that the exploratory nature of the Post-Postivist approach further accommodated the researcher for entering the natural, close-knit settings of the participants which included their homes or work settings.

**Sample**

This study utilized a convenient sample of twenty-two
professional Asian Indian women residing in Southern California. The sample consisted on only "new immigrant" (post 1965) females who are currently working as professionals in the United States. A snow-ball method was used to obtain this convenience sample for the following reasons. One such reason was the researcher's lack of affiliation with professional Asian Indian women. The researcher had to therefore rely upon the sample to introduce other prospective participants to be included in the study. Another reason the snowball method was the logical choice had to do with the fact that the researcher was not looking for random sampling, nor hoped to obtain information at this time to generalize to the greater Asian Indian population of women. This study was focusing only on professionals, so all of the participants were currently working as professionals in the various fields and had at one time resettled from India to the United States. Participation in this research was strictly voluntary.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected via one to one interviews conducted in English in the participant's home or work place. Interviews were semi-structured for the purpose of gaining an initial understanding of participants' resettlement experience. The following open-ended questions were used to
guide the interviews: What are some processes you went through in your resettlement in the United States? Have your views changed in any way regarding marriage, education, child rearing or the elderly since your resettlement and if so, how? The answers given in response to these guiding questions prompted the researcher to ask further open-ended questions fitting within each participant’s unique narrative.

The data from these interviews was collected via note-taking and a tape recorder. The researcher took notes on emerging themes in the interview. The researcher used the tape recorder for two reasons. First, it was to provide the researcher the ease of concentrating on the interview, and, at the same time, it allowed the interviewer to capture the actual words and the essence of the interview. Furthermore, this type of recording not only captured the richness of the interviews, but also the subtleties in the speech of the person being interviewed. These unique expressions were later transcribed accordingly during the data analyzing phase.

After the interview, the participants were debriefed as to the specific purpose of the study and any of their questions and concerns were addressed at this time. Confidentiality was again emphasized. Participants were
assured that all identifiable information would be eliminated from the results to assure anonymity.

The average interview lasted one to one and one-half hours. The shortest interview lasted an hour and the longest approximately two hours. The data was collected over a two month period. Upon completion of each interview, the researcher made personal notes of her impressions and interpretations. Portions of the tape recordings were also transcribed. Responses were then coded by themes, thus leading to the categories presented in this report.

The specific method used for this coding was similar to the one described by Lincoln & Guba (1985). Open coding was conducted by a line-by-line analysis of the interview information gathered in relation to the topics under study. As themes emerged, researcher identified categories and their properties. Efforts were made to maintain theoretical sensitivity during the coding and analysis process and inductive reasoning was practiced in continuous comparison of the categories to promote safeguarding this process from biases and assumptions. The following categories emerged from the themes: Resettlement; Reasons for immigrating, Educational status upon arrival, Adjustment to new environment, Role of family, community, or church in resettlement. Marriage; Demographics, Participants’
definitions of marriage, Impact of Indian culture on views regarding marriage, Impact of resettlement on views regarding marriage. Child Rearing; Demographics, Parenting style, Forms of discipline, Impact of Indian culture in child rearing, Impact of resettlement in child rearing, education. Elderly; Demographics, Roles, Impact of Indian culture on views regarding elderly, Impact of resettlement on views regarding elderly.

Protection of Human Subject

In order to ensure anonymity, the names of the participants were not used at anytime during the recorded interview. Furthermore, numbers were assigned to each participant and all written and recorded information that was gathered was coded with these numbers to protect participants' identity.

A participant consent form was issued at the beginning of each interview and a debriefing form was left with each participant in conclusion of the interview which briefly explained the purpose of the study and provided the researcher's name and phone number to encourage contact in case participants had any concerns after the interview.

This study examined the responses of twenty two Asian Indian women who currently work as professionals in Southern California. This study helped develop a knowledge base
regarding the resettlement of professionals in general, and Asian Indian women, in specific.

RESULTS

Resettlement

Reasons for immigrating:

Participants gave various reasons for immigrating to the United States from India. Of the women, (40.9%) said they immigrated primarily for work purposes. More specifically, some were accepted into residency programs in the United States or had been awarded fellowships. Of the women, (27.3%) immigrated in hopes of completing their graduate education and beginning their careers in the United States as they felt opportunities for success were greater in the United States as opposed to India. Of the participants, (54.5%) voiced their concerns about the limited opportunities for professional women in India. One woman shared that in her residency program in India she was the only woman among an all male residency program.

Of the women, (27.3%) said that providing their families with greater opportunities to succeed was among the primary reasons for their immigration. Of the participants, (31.8%) shared that they immigrated because they had just married someone who was already living in the United States or planning to move here. Two women immigrated with their
parents when they were young, and thus were not formally involved in the decision making process to resettle.

**Educational Status Upon Arrival:**

Of the participants, (90.9%) were college graduates from India. Some also completed their graduate level education in India while others completed it in the United States. Of the participants, (9.1%) resettled as children and received some of their primary education as well as all of their college education in the United States. In specific, the following is a view of the various professional levels represented in this sample including a corresponding number indicating how many women from the sample practicing in each profession:

**Table 1: Professional Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA in Nursing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA in Secretarial Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA of Social Work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD (MBBS)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA in Business</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA in Business Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Logistics of Resettlement:**

The process of resettlement required a great deal of paperwork which many of the participants said they were not prepared for and felt overwhelmed by. The type of paperwork
required varied depending on their status upon entering the United States (i.e. student visa, green card). For many, the most frustrating aspect of this was not the actual paperwork, rather the lack of information given to them about what was involved in the overall process of resettlement. Furthermore, all of the participants had to deal with the issue of sponsorship. Some were sponsored by a spouse or family member, while others were sponsored by the institution they were planning to work or study in (i.e. hospital residency program, university, or company).

Orientation to New Environment:

All of the women who immigrated as adults remember being told about all of the wonderful things they could expect upon their arrival in the United States. However, (50%) of the participants verbalized that the reality they found was not what they had anticipated and (13.6%) actually expressed a desire to return to India shortly after their arrival. One participant was noted as saying, "the brochure did not show a picture of a ghetto in the heart of New York, but that is where our apartment happened to be, thanks to our host hospital. We had to walk through the dirty streets to get to the hospital every morning". Of the participants, (18.2%) described not only being misled, but also taken advantage of due to their naivete. One
participant was quoted as saying, "we had money when the
taxi driver picked us up from outside the airport and took
us on a very long scenic tour before taking us to our new
home. We did not know the taxi was going to cost us so
much, but we had very little money left over after that ride
and this made things very difficult for us".

Adjustment to New Environment:

As a whole, the group of participants found that their
adjustment to the United States proved to be more difficult
than they had anticipated. Various common themes were
shared in regards to this adjustment process. These
included: language, mobility, feelings of isolation,
adjustment to diverse values and norms. These themes will
now be discussed in greater detail.

The language itself did not appear to be a significant
problem for most of the participants as they all had learned
some English while living in India. Many however, did
experience difficulties when it came to understanding
western English and translating slang. One woman shared how
horrified she felt when her colleagues told jokes that she
did not understand. Some also felt awkward about their
accents and problems with pronunciations. Even the two
participants who immigrated as children found it difficult
to cope with the language or the difference in
pronunciation. One shared the ridicule she suffered by her peers due her accent. One of these two participants also remembered the social difficulties she experienced when she was promoted academically. More specifically, she remembered feeling socially isolated in high school as she was given the opportunity to enter twelfth grade when she was only sixteen years old. Although she said she felt intellectually capable of meeting the educational demand, emotionally she felt immature.

Mobility was another common theme because most of the participants did not know how, nor were they expected to learn how to drive in India. Some of the women shared how terrified they felt when they learned that they would need to orient themselves to the automobile and the freeway systems. One woman shared that even after eight years of driving, she still experiences anxiety and panic each time she gets into a car to go to work or to take her children to school. However, most of the participants now feel capable and comfortable driving an automobile. Some of the women who visit India regularly, shared that they feel safer driving in the United States as compared to India where there are limited driving regulations.

The third major theme experienced by the participants upon arrival in the United States was one of feeling
isolated. Two women shared that they did not venture out by themselves even to go to the market during the day and actually waited for their husbands to come home from work so they could go together. These women said that they felt afraid and uncomfortable going out by themselves. However, within a year or two, most of the women felt less isolated. A few women mentioned that meeting other students or professionals from their homeland was helpful for them, yet this was often difficult due to the limited number of individuals of Indian origin in the United States at the time of their resettlement. It was found that many of the participants who were preparing for their upcoming medical exams met other fellow Asian Indians at Kaplan Testing Centers.

This study also found that adjustment to diverse values and norms was a common concern for many women upon arrival. The following are some of the examples the women shared in respect to culture shock: high divorce rate in the U.S.; less family unity; self comes first and family later. Many women shared that they had difficulty with the culture in the United States because there were so many people here from different cultures and with so many different value systems as opposed to their home country where people held similar values even if they were of different religions.
Most of these concerns however, subsided with time and as they adjusted to their new environments.

Role Of Family, Community or Church in Resettlement:

Looking back, all of the women in the study said their families played a critical role in their resettlement experience. Many of the women whose husbands or family members had already been resettled in the United States said their experience was easier compared to other people they know because their family led the way for them or at least told them what to anticipate. Most of the other women said they did not know anyone other than the family members with whom they immigrated to the United States. Due to their lack of affiliations with other people or organizations, many of the participants said they were very isolated and lonely, however the togetherness of their family made it easier. Three women said that the contact person whom they were told to look up upon their resettlement was also of great help to them. However, not one woman said that she received any help from any religious or community organization upon arrival or during the initial stages of her resettlement experience.
Marriage

Demographics:

Demographics show that the women in this study were married in their twenties. Their age at the time of marriage ranged from 23-27 years of age while the age of their spouses ranged from 24-33. The range in years the couples have been married is 7-32. The two women who came as children are not yet married, but both are in their late twenties. Of the twenty women in the study who are married, (85%) had a love marriage while the other (15%) had an arranged marriage. Graph one illustrates this.

Graph 1

Participants' Definition of Marriage:

Researcher noticed a difference between the way the participants defined marriage. The women who had a love marriage defined marriage using similar terms which included
the following: two souls becoming one to form a loving life-
long relationship; an institution in which two people
willingly enter; a partnership full of making adjustments;
marrige is friendship. The women who had an arranged
marriage defined marriage in the following ways: a
relationship that grows with time; love develops over time;
marrige is an understanding which acknowledges that two
people may need to adjust to each other's habits which can
take years; marriage is the acceptance of a person and
usually not based on love or emotions in our culture;
marrige is based on the background compatibility of two
people which the families have accepted prior to marriage.
The two women in this study who are not married defined
marriage as a big decision. Both felt they needed to find a
partner or companion for life. Neither could say at this
time when they were going to get married, but they both were
sure that they would not have an arranged marriage in the
traditional sense.

**Impact of Indian Culture on Views Regarding Marriage:**

**Benefits and Drawbacks of Each Type of Marriage**

According to the participants, some of the benefits of
love marriages include the following: "you know who you are
marrying, less element of surprise"; "emphasis is on the
individual and how you are compatible with him and not
necessarily with your compatibility with the rest of his family”; “it is easier to leave a love marriage if it does not work out because less people are involved in the making of the union in the first place”.

The participants shared the following to be among the drawbacks of love marriages: “the social price is often too high for love marriages”; “girls get disowned and parents feel ashamed”; “people put you down for going against tradition depending on how and where (village or city) you were raised and if you are rich or poor”; “you take a big risk marrying the man of your liking if your parents do not give their blessing because if the marriage does not work out, you may not be able to count on your family for support”; “in love marriages, the individuals involved sometimes fail to look past their hearts to acknowledge the differences in family values”.

According to the participants in this study, benefits of an arranged marriage include the following: many of the women said that when parents arrange the marriage, they often conduct a thorough background check of the other family to insure suitability and compatibility among the individuals getting married and their families. These thorough checks may include a check of their finances, educational levels, and their inter family relations. Some
of the women believed that arranged marriages are a union of two families, not only of two individuals, so there is more support in troubling times which can be of great benefit. One woman said that it is of benefit in arranged marriages when “commitment comes first and love later, because love marriages are often ruled by emotions, so there tends to be less commitment”.

Some common themes arising from drawbacks related to arranged marriages included the following: many women felt that in arranged marriages, you don’t often know the person you are marrying and even though your backgrounds may be similar doesn’t mean that you will be totally compatible because there is a possibility that your values may differ and that your personalities may clash; The marriage broker who helps in arranging the marriage may not share similar values with you and may be looking for something different in a marriage than you are. In sharing drawbacks, one woman who had an arranged marriage said that it took a long time for her to love the man she married. She said it is a drawback because she eventually had to decide that she could either hate or love him. She said that he grew on her with time; Another woman said that with arranged marriages, you don’t have much of a choice, but to learn to adapt and put up with your significant other’s habits and educate yourself
with time about his likes and dislikes.

**Impact of Resettlement on Views Regarding Marriage:**

When asked if they would want an arranged marriage for their children. All of the women answered no to this question and gave the following reasons for their responses: “my children probably won’t want my input because there are too many factors which have influence on kids in the United States, not just their parents like in India”; “I will not be living with their partner, but I hope they make the right choice in selecting their spouse”. A majority of the women said they would like to be involved in their children’s decisions regarding marriage, but do not expect an arranged marriage in the traditional sense. One woman said that she would not necessarily need to choose her child’s partner, but she hopes that the person would be acceptable to the family. Another woman said that she would not want a typical arranged marriage for her children where a girl from one town could only marry a boy from certain other towns or villages-territorial marriage. She went on to say that she would not be able to make her children get married like this, nor would she want to. Of the women, (27.3%) said that if their child asked them to arrange their marriage, they would.
Child Rearing

Demographics:

There were two women in this study who were not married and did not have any children. Of the participants who have children, (20%) gave birth to them in India, while the other (80%) gave birth and reared their children in the United States. Of the women, (85%) gave birth to two children and (10%) gave birth to three children, while the remaining (5%) had given birth to one child. The ages of the children today range from 6-30 years of age.

Parenting Style:

Of the participants with children, (65%) used a democratic parenting style which consisted of “taking away privileges; giving children reasonable choices; using the children’s input in coming up with consequences and making deals with children”. Majority of these women indicated that they were more democratic than their husbands. Of the women, (10%) use an authoritarian parenting style when rearing their children. Authoritarian style included “spanking; not encouraging autonomous decision making; rigid disciplining”. Note that both of these women said that their husbands were more authoritarian than themselves. Furthermore, children that were primarily raised by their grandparents when their parents were working also received
the more authoritarian type of discipline. The remaining
(25%) of the women, said that they used a combination of a
democratic and authoritarian parenting style with their
children.

Most of the women with children said that they use a
discipline style different than the one used with them by
their parents. Findings from this study suggest that an
authoritarian style is common practice in India. The women
said, "children are not given choices in India; rules are
set, but not always understood by the children. However,
children do understand and know that parents are always
right".

Forms of Discipline:

Of the women, (70%) said that they use or have used
time outs with their children along with using reward
systems and taking away privileges. A few of these women
felt that time outs were no longer as effective as their
children grew older. Of the participants, (10%) revealed
that their husbands are more controlling and enforce what
they say by raising their voice and verbalizing their
concerns. Of the women, (20%) said that they often use
moral obligation in disciplining their children. More
specifically, they either provide the atmosphere or the time
for their child to think about what he/she has done wrong

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and how this is not appropriate for the family.

**Impact of Indian Culture in Child Rearing:**

Results identified that culture continues to influence these women's democratic and authoritarian parenting styles. The following are some examples of this impact: many women did not want their children to date unless it was a group date and many did not allow their children to sleep over other people's homes. However, (20%) of the women did say that they would allow other children to sleep over their home, but not their own children in other people’s homes. Of the women with children, (10%) said that when they have permitted their children to sleep over in other people’s homes, tension increased between them and their husbands. The following includes other ways in which culture continues to influence these women's parenting styles: “no foul language permitted in the home; weird dress styles are not permitted; respect for adults and elderly is expected”.

**Impact of Resettlement in Child Rearing:**

Of the women with children, (90%) said that they want to foster independence in their children, however a majority of these women also wanted to promote interdependence in that they wanted their children to make time for family and consider how their decisions effect the other members in their family system. Of the participants, (20%) clearly
said that they prefer to foster interdependence in their children because they believed that family comes first.

**Education:**

Of the participants, (95%) said that education was the number one priority in their families, while only (5%) of the women said that it was number two only to being drug free. In general, there was a consensus which suggested that "we will put our children through school and they can live with us until marriage or longer as long as they take advantage of the education". A majority of the participants structure their time around their childrens' education like with evening study sessions. These women further promote education by not expecting their children to clean the house or earn money, however making it clear that they do expect their children to get the best education that they possibly can.

**Elderly**

**Demographics:**

Findings suggest that (90.9%) of the participants had elderly members within their family which consisted of their parents and/or in-laws. The elderly members ranged from fifty years of age to over eighty. Of the participants, (63.6%) said that their elderly family members live with them or near them. While, (27.3%) of the women
said that their in-laws or parents live away from them, but visit for a few months at a time each year. The participant’s relationships appeared to be closer with parents than with their in-laws however there were a few exceptions.

Roles:

The elderly members did not appear to play much of a role in the lives of those women who said their elderly members do not live with or near them. However, a majority of the women who said that their elderly do live with or near them recognized that their elderly members do not play a significant role in their lives either, except for teaching their grandchildren values and respect for the family. This study also found that the elderly do not play a significant role in the Indian community in the United States as they may have if they were still living in India. Results show that the elderly member’s primary role appears to be one of caretaker for their grandchildren. Of the women who said that their in-laws lived with them, (15%) indicated having disagreements about child rearing with their elderly. One of these women said, “my in-laws did not understand how I was trying to raise my children, so instead they un-did everything I tried to do. Finally, I just gave up and now they take care of my children. I’m ok with this
now because I see that they cherish my children so much”.

**Impact of Indian Culture on Views Regarding Elderly:**

This study found the following ways in which culture impacts these women's views regarding the elderly: elderly should always be respected and cared for. All of the women in this study indicated a desire to help their elderly members financially and medically, while a few also mentioned emotionally. All of them also said their commitment to their elderly was until death even if the elderly members did not live with them. A majority of the women said that other extended family also shared in this care and commitment to the elderly.

**Impact of Resettlement on Views Regarding Elderly:**

Conditions for the elderly in the United States has impacted these women's views regarding their own commitment to their elderly parents and in respect to outside care. One woman said, “as a doctor, I would not want my parents or in-laws to be in a nursing home at any time. Family should be caring for their elderly. They have done so much for us”. Another woman said, “as a physician, I have found nursing homes to be good for temporary purposes like recuperating needs, but not for long-term care. Of the women, (13.6%) said that they would consider a nursing home as their last option if they could no longer care for their
elderly. In addition, a few women indicated that they see their elderly as assets now more than ever because they have witnessed the lack of care offered to the elderly in the United States.

DISCUSSION

Resettlement

This study consisted of twenty-two professional Asian Indian women. The sample revealed a variety of reasons for their migration to the United States. Proportionately speaking, more women resettled in the United States from India for work related purposes which included seeking out or accepting residency positions, fellowships or other full-time employment and/or continuing higher education. This seems to suggest that the existence of opportunities in the United States is highly publicized in India thus enticing the immigrant to resettle in a place where the chance to prosper is at its maximum (Segal, 1991). This is further supported by literature which suggests that Indians come to the United States either to seek educational or professional opportunities or as dependents of those seeking these opportunities (Leonard, 1980). The findings of this study support the notion that immigrants do perceive there to be an abundance of resources in the United States because the second most common reason cited by the participants was
related to their expectation that there would be increased opportunities for themselves and their children. These reasons seem to be typical of most immigrants who contemplate resettling in the United States (Wood & Conrad, 1983). This study further revealed that the processes employed by these professional Asian Indian women included the following: logistics of residency, preparation for upcoming exams, linking with others of same ethnic background, and finally beginning to venture out by self.

It is quite interesting to note that a majority of the women in this study who resettled in the United States are medical doctors. There can be many reasons for such saturation in the medical professions by Asian Indian women. Cyrus (1993), discussed medicine as being a safe field. This, along with the prestige and respect that doctors receive in Asian societies, can be considered among the reasons why medicine continues to be a highly encouraged field of study in the Asian Indian culture.

Even though all of the women in this study are highly educated, a majority of them still found the process of resettlement to be difficult. Findings suggest that many of the women did not anticipate having adjustment problems with language, mobility, and isolation upon resettlement. In this sample, these issues were further exacerbated by
complications in the legal process which involved delays in
green card and visa processing. This suggests that there
was a lack of awareness by the participants in this study on
the American culture and the orientation that would be
required of them prior to and upon resettling.

The findings in this study imply that holding onto
one's culture seems to be an important part of the
resettlement and acculturation process. The women in this
study held onto their culture in the following ways:
language, style of dress, food, and family values. However,
it is important to note that these cultural ways of life
were primarily practiced in the home environment or with
other fellow immigrants. The familiarity of these cultural
ways seemed to have provided comfort for the women in the
midst of their new environment. However, assimilation is
quite evident in this sample. For one thing, English has
become the primary language spoken in the homes of most of
these women while their native language is spoken primarily
to communicate with the elderly. Furthermore, their native
language is not consistently passed on to their children.
This poses a potential risk for a gradual loss in the
sharing of cultural values and traditions from generation to
generation.

The transmission of the cultural practices and
traditions onto future generations may not have remained a priority, however the unity of family continues to play the key role in the resettlement experience of these women, especially in the formative stages of resettlement when culture shock was most obvious. Family seemed to have provided a sense of belonging and security in an unfamiliar place. It is apparent that the women in this study had not anticipated the magnitude of differences between their culture and that of mainstream America. They were shocked by the lack of family unity, emphasis on the self, and the high divorce rates in the United States. With time, shock dissipated, while acculturation and assimilation took place. According to the Social Work Dictionary (1987), acculturation is the “adoption, by one cultural group or individual, of the culture of another”. Assimilation is the “social integration or adoption of one group’s values, norms, and folkways by another group”. In respect to most of the women in this sample, acculturation and assimilation took place for the better. Women became more liberated, joined the work forces along side their spouses, and achieved a sense of independence. However, acculturation and assimilation does present some problems for the Asian Indian family.

Assuming that immigrants acculturate and assimilate at
different speeds and in different respects, this researcher suspects that if family members are at different stages in this process, conflicts can arise within the family out of the simple change in consonance. Even though, this study did not clearly identify the existence of such problems, some women did allude to the fact that their spouses were not as understanding as they had themselves learned to become when their children wanted to spend more time with their friends as opposed to spending the time with their family. Obviously, conflict creates tension, but there appears to be something more underlying such conflicts, not just the possibility that the different individuals in the family are at different stages in the assimilation process. Actually, patriarchal authority may be one indicator in that the men may still view child rearing and the role of women in certain traditional respects, even though they have migrated to a more democratic society which attempts to promote equality. The systems theory can provide another explanation for this change in harmony among the family members. Systems theory contends that a change in one part of the system affects the entire system. For example, a women who becomes more Americanized/westernized than anticipated, may subsequently be less dependent or passive which may, in turn, change or even upset the marital
relationship with her spouse. Even though this study did not identify any marital discord in the participant’s relationships signifying a possible divorce, indications of disagreements among the spouses were evident in the findings. It is common knowledge that marriage is a culmination of ups and downs with disagreements and compromises, but this researcher proposes that acculturation and assimilation may be a cause of some distress in the marriage and in the family.

An evaluation of the available literature and the findings of this study leads this researcher to propose that professional Asian Indian women acculturate at a faster rate than their noneducated and nonprofessional counterparts. One reason for this may be that professional Asian Indian women interface with mainstream culture on a daily basis, especially in their fields of practice. Furthermore, as these immigrants assimilate into their new culture, they begin to identify themselves with their professions first and their ethnicity later. For professionals, ethnicity may become just another form of identification, not necessarily the primary one, though. Actually, this study found that as this professional group dressed more out of their native clothes, spoke less in their native tongue and celebrated less their native homeland festivals, they drew darker, more
significant lines between themselves and their families and even with their mother country. One participant talked of not being able to return to her native country because she feels she will not be accepted because she left for greater work opportunities and never returned to India with a plan to live there. Mahatma Gandhi was ostracized when he left India for London to study Law at the end of the nineteenth century (Mehta, 1977). In essence, the professional women in this study seem to be paying a great price for their success.

In general, this professional sample of women appears to have successfully completed Sluzki’s (1979) stages of resettlement and have achieved partial assimilation. Their children also seem to have integrated and adopted the western way of life. However, these women’s statements seem to contend that there exists a possible risk for a gradual loss in cultural values and traditions from being passed onto the younger generations. A few women candidly shared that they acknowledge their failure to teach or reinforce to their children the value in continuing to practice cultural traditions.

**Marriage**

Arranged marriages still take place in the Asian Indian culture, but they are not the norm in the United States,
where most parents act passively, at best. In this country, most individuals select their own spouses and the concept of an arranged marriage is alien and often distressing (Menon, 1989). This researcher was quite surprised to find the small number of arranged marriages in this sample of professional Asian Indian women. It appears that education may have contributed to the large number of love marriages found in this sample. All of these women were in the midst of their educational or professional careers when they were married in their twenties. Many of them met their spouses in school or in similar settings. Furthermore, many of these women were also reared in educated families. Education promotes the broadening of one's mind and may have further contributed by facilitating an opportunity for these women to confront the age-old tradition of arranged marriages.

Religion may also have contributed to the large number of arranged marriages found among this sample. This sample consisted of seventeen women who are Hindu, followed by three Christians and two of the women are Sikhs. Of the twenty-two women in this study, both of the Sikh women had an arranged marriage, while only one Hindu woman out of the seventeen had an arranged marriage. Even though, this study does not contend that women practicing the Sikh religion are
more apt to have an arranged marriage, this researcher does feel it is important to acknowledge the greater degree of conservativeness that is upheld by those of the Sikh faith. Furthermore, individuals practicing the Sikh religion may be more distinct in their appearance given their general attire (i.e., sari and a covered head for women and a turban with a full beard for men). This researcher will venture to propose that given their greater degree of distinctiveness, Sikh people in general, may assimilate at a slightly slower pace than their clean shaven Hindu counterparts. Consequently, the acceptance of open relationships like love marriages may not be as widespread in this specific religious population at this given time, however further research with a larger sample pool is needed to make this general assumption.

In this study, more women had a love marriage than an arranged marriage, however the women shared more drawbacks of not having had an arranged marriage than benefits of a love marriage. The major theme was one illuminating the high social price associated with love marriages. A love marriage is one in which two people decide they want to marry each other without the relationship being initiated by the family (Tseng & Hsu 1991). Shame and guilt may be the riding forces experienced by the family if the love marriage
is not accepted by all of the concerned participants. Acknowledging the populous state of India, it is understandable that neighbors would know the essence of each others business, thus making it difficult to keep the particulars of a marriage within the family. Such close knit quarters may actually be at the root or heart of the shame. Literature suggests that when professional Asian Indians migrate to the United States, they resettle in urban neighborhoods that are not saturated with other Asian Indians. Therefore, given the dispersement of professional Asian Indians in the United States, this researcher contends that resettlement in the United States may consequently provide greater opportunity for Asian Indians to consecrate even more love marriages than found in this study. Furthermore, this dispersement may also offer some protection from shame given its geographical implications.

It is also very interesting to note that not one of the women said they would want or expect an arranged marriage for their children. Does this indicate that arranged marriages will soon subside? This researcher contends that maybe it is the word arranged marriage that these women in this study were having a problem with because many of the women did say they would like to introduce someone to their children. Acknowledging that Asian Indian parents don’t
introduce just anyone to their kids suggests that a component of arranged marriage will continue to exist for sometime to come. Furthermore, the finding that class differences still persist even with the increase in love marriages suggests that fairly thorough background checks will also continue to take place to prevent a negative impact of such differences to prevail in the subsequent years of marriage when passion may begin to subside in some love marriages.

Resettlement may be another reason this sample of professional Asian Indian women do not expect their children to have an arranged marriage. Traditionally speaking, when families did background checks, they often checked to make sure the individual will be compatible with the family as well as their child given the possibility that the parties may be living under the same roof or in close proximity later in the marriage. Most of these professional women did not expect their children to care for them in old age like older immigrants do today. Consequently, this shift away from interdependence may be the reason for these women not persisting on choosing partners for their kids as done in arranged marriages.

Child Rearing

The styles represented in this study ranged from
democratic to authoritarian. There definitely was some acculturation and assimilation as noted in the majority of the women practicing the democratic parenting style with their children. This is a shift from the dominant authoritarian style used in India. What is also interesting is that most of the women's parenting styles seemed to be different from how they were parented. Data from this study suggests that children are given less choices, if any in India and they certainly did not contribute to the decisions made regarding punishments. However, the women in this study seemed to acknowledge that children are more knowledgeable about their surroundings in the United States as compared to children of the same age in India. Furthermore, the familial shift from interdependence to independence may be the primary reason for more women using the democratic approach. These women may be allowing their children the freedom to choose and make decisions for their own lives because most of them do not expect their children to care for them in their old age.

The women who are opting to use both democratic and authoritarian parenting styles seem to be securing their authority by utilizing authoritarian means, but at the same time providing for fairness and democracy by demonstrating their decision to assimilate. These Asian Indian women seem
to be eliciting rational thinking in their children and providing structure for decision making and independence while exhibiting control by insisting respect and encouraging obedience. However, the women still seemed to be less authoritarian than their spouses. Furthermore, women on the average seemed to be more accepting of their children's assimilation than their spouses who were noted as attempting to limit their children's exposure especially in interpersonal relationships with those of the opposite sex. This was especially true for rearing females as shared by a few of the women in this study.

Overall, there seemed to clearly be an impact of resettlement on parenting styles. Nonetheless, it cannot be overstated that the Indian culture continued to be an influencing factor in the parenting style used because these women had not yet adopted the democratic style in all the significant spheres of their children's lives.

Furthermore, their definitions of democratic would lead one to visualize democracy on a continuum and most of these women were still closest to the side subscribing to "yes, but within these limits..." This is not to say that as their children age they will be static on the continuum. On the contrary, generational studies show that these women and their children may continue riding the continuum to the
right, but after the third generation, people start to wonder what happened to their cultural values and where did they come from. Subsequently, they may make their way back on the continuum and find some significance in their ancestral beliefs and values of using a more authoritarian parenting style when rearing their children.

Even though, a majority of these women have found themselves adopting American ways of life, the value of education continues to grow even in the process of assimilation. Education is a priority among Asians, but especially so among Asian Indians who have been resettling in the United States for quite some time under the auspices of professionals while other labor immigrants have not always been recognized for their education. The professional Asian Indian women in this study may be promoting education even more than the average Asian Indian because they too are well educated and may have learned the importance of education for their children.

**Elderly**

The fact that a majority of the elderly members lived with or near these women suggests some interdependence issues. These women strongly believe in caring for their elderly. The findings suggest that extended family further share in this commitment to provide medical, financial, and
emotional care for their elderly. Given that all of the women in this study are more educated than their parents, commitment to their elders may have arisen out of the sheer value in reciprocation. The commitment to care provides validation for value in close knit families, but at the same time it makes the researcher wonder why the elderly do not play a bigger role in their families upon resettling.

The minuscule role played by the elderly demands some attention. This researcher wonders whether the parents and in-laws are devalued because their children no longer need to rely on them for they are now professionals and able to make their own decisions and their own money. This study did not determine if the elderly play the limited role of contributing to child rearing because this is “all they are good for now”. This researcher is quite optimistic and contends that the elderly play this role in child rearing because they are valued as good teachers of respect and morals. Consequently, this study supported this in that the findings show that the elderly continue to be respected by these women. However, it does not appear that the elderly are given ample freedom or opportunity to express and ventilate their feelings. There was not much acknowledgement given to the emotional needs of the elderly. Old people need more love, care, concern and affection as
they become more sensitive, more emotional and have a tendency to be dependent in old age (Taber & Batra 1996).

In general, the care and commitment for this population remains strong and true, at least for now. Findings showed that the observation of the plight of the elderly in the United States has strengthened this notion. More specifically, the professional women in the medical field attested to the lack of care given to the elderly. Consequently, this contributed to their own desire to offer more care for their elderly.

**SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Social work can take an active role in contributing to the development of improved methods of orienting immigrants at onset or even prior to their decision to resettle. Resettling into a new environment can be quite difficult and challenging even for professionals who are well educated. When a family resettles to a new place where the sociocultural system differs from the one they are leaving behind, they not only need to adjust to the new environment in terms of residence, occupation, financial resources, and social network, but also to the ways of thinking. That is why increased education on the resettlement process is deemed necessary to facilitate a smoother process. Prior to their migration, immigrants need to be encouraged to inquire
further about the country or state where they are thinking about relocating. Social workers along with immigration workers can help to educate individuals about the particulars to expect (i.e., paper work, documentation, culture differences) in their resettlement to their contemplated location. When such information is not disseminated prior to or upon arrival in the host location, the challenge reaches new heights because immigrants find themselves struggling to acclimate to a culture they did not expect to be so significantly different than their own.

Social Workers can advocate for those people who have lived in the United States for some time to create support groups or outreach services for those just resettling to learn about the particulars involved in resettling to the United States. However, such services may need to be tailored to meet the needs of different populations (i.e., uneducated and educated). Uneducated Asian Indians who may be economically disadvantaged may not clearly fit the picture of a model minority as discussed earlier. Higher level professionals like those sampled in this study who on the average exemplify the model minority phenomenon may require different approaches, but the component of linking to another individual of the same ethnic culture will prove to serve benefit to all of the populations regardless of
their education level or needs. Social workers can further help orient immigrants to the adjustment difficulties and areas of typical assimilation. At the same time, social workers can reinforce the importance of maintaining some cultural traditions and values.

Conflicts may arise in families given assimilation and acculturation issues. Such conflict can include marital relationships, conflict with elders, and conflicts with children. To prevent or minimize the impact of these conflicts, social workers can be instrumental in providing early intervention through educating this population about the benefits of individual, couples, and family counseling. It would be essential to dispel the myth that engaging in counseling or psychotherapy indicates there is an emotional or mental disorder. On the contrary, it would be important to inform this population of the many benefits of seeking professional help as a preventative measure.

The following implications address the conflicts related to child rearing, marriage, and the elderly. Social workers can help orient the newly arrived immigrants to be aware of the fact that their parenting styles may change by virtue of the resettlement process. Also social workers can help the immigrants to understand the impact of assimilation and acculturation on their family life (i.e.,
help them prepare for the possible resistance they may encounter in their children). More specifically, social workers can educate families on the importance of open communication between parents and children. Furthermore, if the child is a teenager, social workers can provide information on the physical, social, and emotional changes associated with this developmental stage of adolescence. Education can also address the general difficulties that immigrant families may encounter during the process of cross-cultural adjustment. Social work can also help educate the second generation children on their parents' cultural values. This may help strengthen pride in their culture, as well as help them understand where their parents may be coming from.

Social work can help educate the immigrants on changes and conflicts that may occur in the marital relationship due to assimilation and acculturation. Diversity training on arranged and love marriages can also help social workers be more respectful and knowledgeable of other cultures.

Given the fact that the roles of the elderly may undergo a shift upon their arrival to the United States, loss and adjustment difficulties may arise. This may heighten the need to provide support services for the elderly once they are settled. Given the lack of English language
acculturation within this population and their containment within the walls of their homes, the generation gap between the elderly and their families may continue to widen as isolation and alienation overcomes them. Social workers can address the language barrier by facilitating supportive intergenerational communication and by encouraging assimilation outside of the home, thus narrowing the gap. Elderly often suffer from "conversation deprivation" (Corey & Corey 1997). They have a great need to be listened to and understood.

Advocacy for helping the elderly assimilate outside of their homes can provide many benefits. The role of the elderly may also need to be clarified within the family systems. Support groups led by Asian Indian professionals might be the most conducive in reaching out to this population.

The above discussed implications provide the need to also educate the immigrants on systems theory especially given the possibility that different family members in the family may be at different stages in the acculturation and assimilation process. Therefore, if a change occurs in one family member, they can prepare themselves for the subsequent changes within the family system as a whole. For example, assertiveness skills learned by the wife during the
acculturation process may impact each member in the family differently.

Theory: Resettlement does have an impact on the major areas of people’s lives which include marriage, work, education, child rearing and views of the elderly. This study found that there was a lack of existing community resources to facilitate a smooth and informed resettlement experience for most of these women. However, a Resettlement Program will now be discussed which can help orient immigrants to their new country and assist in the challenging, and often arduous process of resettlement. Ideally, providing a multitude of services within a Resettlement Center might allow for a comprehensive approach that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual ethnic groups. Ideas for the types of programs that might be incorporated include the following:
Orientation groups which would help newly arrived immigrants to learn specifics about resettlement ranging from how to enroll one’s children in school all the way to learning how to obtain a driver’s license. Legal Aid services can be provided to assist individuals struggling with their immigration status or in the pursuit of residency in the new country. Clinical services would include psychosocial assessments, as well as individual, couples, and family
counseling services for those who may need professional services. Some individuals who resettle in a new environment are traumatized or experience culture shock to the point where severe depression sets in and requires professional intervention. Psycho-education groups can be included to focus on providing immigrants with information regarding the typical stages of resettlement, as well as the possible changes related to the assimilation and acculturation process. These psycho-education groups may be further subdivided to address specific issues related to parenting, marriage, and those geared toward the successful integration of the elderly. Services geared to address the social and recreation opportunities can also be provided. Finally, Information, referral, and advocacy services can be provided to assist the immigrants with any other needs.

In conclusion, the growing proportion of immigrants resettling in the United States is permanently changing the face of America. When immigrants arrive in the United States, they bring with them their culture, values, and beliefs. The professional Asian Indian women in this study have achieved partial assimilation in that language, education, and cultural barriers have begun to collapse (Lum, 1996). They may have acculturated at a faster rate than the average Asian Indian because of their daily
interface with the greater society unlike immigrant laborers who may affiliate more with members of their ethnic group, thus delaying acculturation. Given the existing literature and the findings of this study, this professional group of Asian Indian women seem to have different needs than their uneducated counterparts and their views appear to have become more liberal over the years since migration. This study identified processes that these women went through in their resettlement and further identified the respect in which their views changed in response to their migration to the United States. This research study found that in the process of achieving greater security for themselves and their families, a large number of these professional women failed to pass on the richness of their traditional values to their children. Furthermore, the generation gap between the elderly and their grandchildren was not given sufficient attention, thus allowed to widen as the elderly sat in their home environment and watched their grandchildren become more westernized. This study also conducted an in-depth exploration of marriage which will provide a foundation for understanding the culture of arranged marriages and their modern counterparts. Even though, findings from this study cannot be generalized to the greater population, this knowledge can contribute by paving a path for future
research looking at other relations in regards to Asian Indian women, in general. The information gained from this research will also support the profession of social work in addressing the needs of all people regardless of race or gender. This study will provide valuable information for policy and program planning in the area of immigration and refugee services. Knowledge of resettlement can facilitate program development and give way to the evolution of effective practice methods that are sensitive to diversity and reflective of the unique needs of the various ethnic groups. Acknowledgement of a client's ethnicity is very important. "Cultural and ethnic identity shapes who we are" (Ackerman, 1986). Social Workers must continue to examine, appreciate, understand, and respect the culture, values, beliefs and world view of their clients.

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

Further research is needed to address the following questions: Is the adjustment, acculturation, and assimilation process of professional Asian Indians similar to that of Asian Indians, in general and to that of other minority groups? Are there similarities between professional, nonprofessional, educated and noneducated women and the age they get married? Research on arranged marriages as a whole needs to be conducted. Also research
on domestic violence and its relation to arranged marriages would be important. Further study is deemed necessary to understand if there are significant gender differences between male and female parenting styles. Also, research needs to be undertaken to study the presence of depression in the elderly upon resettlement and during acculturation and assimilation.
APPENDIX I: Research Topics

1. Resettlement experience
2. Views on marriage
3. Views on child rearing
4. Views on elderly
APPENDIX II: Informed Consent

I understand that the purpose of this research is to explore the processes professional Asian Indian women go through in their resettlement in the United States from India.

I understand that this research study is being conducted by Karmjit Singh under the supervision of Lupe Alle-Corlis, LCSW. This study has been approved by the Human Subject Review Board at California State University; San Bernardino.

I am aware that the research procedures will involve one to one interviews that will take no more than one and one half hour.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may revoke or terminate my involvement with this research project at any time without penalty.

I understand that my name and identity will not be reported with my responses nor will it be revealed at any other time.

There are no potential risks foreseen to participants in this project. However, significant benefits for Social Work practice and other disciplines may emerge from this exploratory study.

I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Karmjit Singh through the CSUSB Social Work office: phone number (909) 880-5501.

Participant ___________________ Date ___________________

Researcher ___________________ Date ___________________
APPENDIX III: Debriefing Statement

Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of the study was to explore two questions: (1) What are the processes professional Asian Indian women go through in their resettlement in the United States from India? (2) To what degree, if any, do their views change toward education, child rearing practices, marriage, and the elderly after resettling in the United States?

This research should be completed by June 1997. The general results can be obtained from the researcher named below.

California State University, San Bernardino, and the researcher named below have the responsibility for insuring that participants in research projects conducted under university auspices are safeguarded from injury or harm resulting from such participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Karmjit Singh through the CSUSB Social Work office: phone number (909) 880-5501.
REFERENCES


entrepreneurs. Gender and Society, 8(4), 541-561.


