BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF SECOND GENERATION ASIAN INDIANS

Shonia K. Kuar
B.A., California State University, Sacramento, 2000

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in a

SPECIAL MAJOR
ETHNIC STUDIES

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

FALL
2005

Abstract

of

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF SECOND GENERATION ASIAN INDIANS

By

Shonia K. Kuar

The emphasis of this study was to ascertain the identity development experiences of second generation Asian Indian young adults (ages 18-34, born and raised in the United States, and currently residing in California). The study showcases how Indian Americans use the influence of their family, culture, community, peers and the media in the development of their identities. The findings confirm that Indian American identity consists of a bicultural theme. The groups studied are living in between two diverse worlds, the immigrant world of their parents, culture and community as well as the American world of their education, peers and media. The outcome of this study will provide a greater understanding of the experiences of the Indian American population and insights on how to respond to their needs during the stages of identity development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by acknowledging the almighty Waheguru-Ji (God) for blessing me with ample love, friendship, health and opportunities. I am very appreciative for the tremendous support that I have received, while pursing my master's degree, from family, friends and colleagues. For never ending love, encouragement and support, I thank my parents and brother. I will forever be indebted to the sacrifices you have made for me to have a better life and vast opportunities. I am the person I am today because of the three of you. For support during my initial decision to pursue a master's degree, I thank Sarban Rai, Shereen Rai, Kierstan DeLong, Kristi McDonald and Misha Gutierrez. In more ways than one you have enabled me to grow as person and expand my understanding of the world. Your friendship and love will always have a special place in my heart.

For helping me think through my research questions and research strategies, I thank Dr. Timothy Fong in the Ethnic Studies Department at CSUS. The opportunity to work with an intellectual who empowered me to pursue my passion for the Indian American population was beyond valuable. Special thanks to Dr. Desiree Backman for guidance on the research and evaluation process, Hardeep "Deepi" Sihota for disseminating my survey tool to the masses, and all of the anonymous persons' who spent time providing me with information to make this study possible.

Last, but certainly not the least, it is hard for me to imagine conducting this research without the presence and support of Rajpreet Aujla in my life. Thank you for

always inspiring me to live, love and laugh. I am looking forward to a life filled with eternal happiness and smiles.

Introduction

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 1.7 million people in the U.S. who identify themselves as Asian Indians or Indian Americans and 314,819 of this population live in California. (These include those individuals who are first and second-generation immigrants or those whose ancestors migrated to the U.S. from India). Most immigrants who have roots in vastly different cultures are involved in maintaining their traditions and heritage, while changing their way of life to assimilate into a new culture. Some of the more apparent values of the East include family as central, respect for elders, living by custom, ritual and religion. In the West, independence, technological and material development, and personal freedom are valued. For U.S. born children of Asian Indian immigrant parents, the experience of identity development and biculturalism are both complex and fascinating.

As a product of Asian Indian immigrant parents and biculturalism, I am passionate about studying the experiences of other people, like myself, who have managed to "straddle" two cultures at once while developing an identity that is inherently Indian American. My goal is to look at how second generation Indian Americans negotiate race and come to make sense of who they are within the broader racial and ethnic landscape of the United States. With a focus on these issues, I will increase not only my personal knowledge, but will contribute to the overall study of the Indian American population.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Since Indian American youth are so tightly woven into and defined by customs and culture, discussions of Indian American youth struggling to establish and maintain their identity are rarely discussed or documented. For this reason, this literature review will critically examine literature that discusses Asian American experiences, focusing specifically on the identity formation of second generation American born Asian Indians (those ages 18-34)[1] . Additionally, this examination will make comparative inferences between the Chinese American, Japanese American and Indian American experience. The literature review will focus on three primary areas. The first is an overview of theories related to identity formation, acculturation, and biculturalism. The second section is an overview of the history of Asian Indians in the United States. And lastly, the third will explore how Indian Americans in the United States adapt, adopt, create and maintain their identities with the influence of family, school, peers and the media.

Identity defines an individual, sets them apart and makes them recognizable or known. Phinney and Alipuria (1987) define ethnic identity as "an individual's sense of self as a member of an ethnic group and the attitudes and behaviors associated with that sense" (p. 36). Ethnic identification may also refer to identification or feeling of membership with others regarding the character, the spirit of a culture or the cultural ethos based on a sense of commonality of origin, beliefs, values, customs, or practices of a specific group of people (Sotomayor, 1977, p.195). Additionally, identity refers to a

[1] This focus may seem arbitrary for identification of the "second generation", however the rationale for such a categorization is that this particular group is unique as it experiences U.S. society at birth, never being displaced from the country of birth.

person's sense of belonging in a society based on his or her social experience (Fong, 2002, p. 232).

While Indian Americans have rich familial and cultural influences, often they arrive at questioning their identity and sense of belonging in both the Indian and American cultures. For many Asian Americans, questions arise as to how they develop an integrated sense of self inclusive, of their past and present cultural contexts (Yeh and Huang, 1996, p. 645). Laura Uba's (1994) contributions to the study of Asian Americans points out that the development of ethnic identity is a highly complex phenomenon and can vary greatly from one individual to another. Consciousness, adoption, and adhibition (application) of ethnic identity often ebbs and flows within an individual over time depending on his or her situation and environment (Uba, p. 95-97). Asian Indian identity can especially become highly complex as varying levels of categorizes are embedded into the value system. Kalpana Kanwar of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University states,

> "Asian Indians have various levels of identity: the national identity (Indian), state or lingual identity (Himachal or Pahaadi), religious affiliation (Hindu), caste (Rajput) and clan or subcaste (Banyal), though not necessarily in that order. Depending upon the situation and the salience of the identity, different layers are revealed" (Melawani, 1995, p. 10).

The overall subject of the construction of ethnic identity has been the focus of much examination. For purposes of this literature review of ethnic identity, I will evaluate identify formation, acculturation, and bicultural theoretical frameworks. While these frameworks may overlap in their general conceptualizations of ethnic identity, they vary in the detailed aspects they accentuate.

Identity Formation

Asian American identity and the formation of it is influenced profoundly by family, culture, education, media and the larger United States society. Identity formation is the process of an individual developing a distinct personality or a set of characteristics to which he/she becomes recognizable or known by. It is also known as "the process of development from an unexamined ethnic identity through a period of exploration, to arrive at an achieved ethnic identity" (Phinney and Alpuria, 1987, p. 38). According to Erikson (1968), identity development is a never-ending process (p.143). Helms (1990) adds that identity contains both a racial and an ethnic side (p.96). Asian American identity formation process neither begins nor ends with adolescence, for nearly all people-regardless of ethnic background, adolescence is the time of life during which concerns about the self are most prominent. It is during this time that quandaries about sexuality, independence and the future take on new meaning and seriousness. Most significantly it is during this time that a young person makes choices and comes to realizations that form some psychological sense of their core inner being—an identity that is formed with the influence of their family, cultural belief systems, peers, community, and the media.

Identity development processes are central to adopting preferences of certain cultural values and systems. Atkinson (1989) proposes that ethnic identity development follows five distinct stages: conformity— preference for values of the dominant culture

instead of one's own cultural group; dissonance—confusion and conflict regarding the dominant culture's system and one's own group's cultural system; resistance and immersion—active rejection of the dominant system and acceptance of one's own cultural group's traditions and customs; introspection—questioning the values of both the minority and majority cultures; and synergistic articulation and awareness—resolution of conflicts in previous stages and developing a cultural identity that selects elements from both the dominant and minority cultural group's values (Atkinson, p. 210). Although Atkinson's theory provides a basis to investigate identity development among Asian Americans, it was not created with the collectivistic emphasis and the layers of influence contained across Asian ethnic populations.

Most Asian values and communication styles stem from a collectivist perspective. Collectivistic cultures are family focused and driven by duty and obligation rather than self-interest and personal desires. During the process of identity development, unlike those who stem from individualistic cultures, Asian Americans select and integrate their private, public and collective selves. According to Sunaina Maira of the Havard Graduate School of Education,

> "Classic conceptions of adolescence in American psychology have stressed increasing individuation and disengagement from the family as central to this rite of passage, which are not necessarily emphasized in traditional notions of this stage in Indian families. What is considered normal in American society suddenly gets a bad or rebellious connotation in the Indian value system. And the kids are made to feel un-Indian, and parents lose face" (Melawani, 1995, p. 10).

Saving face plays a fundamental role in the process of Asian American identity development. Saving face is the avoidance of humiliation and embarrassment as well as

the preservation or redemption of one's dignity. There is fear of shame and stigmatism not only on oneself but on ones family members within the community. Saving face in the Asian family for one's reputation or good name plays a significant role in the culture and community. The Asian expression to "lose face" is to convey that one has damaged their good family name in the eyes of others. The face is the focus of outward appearances—the face that one would present to the world. O'Sullivan (1999) highlights the practice of saving face,

> The Asian community has a process called saving face. In America it is called "putting on a good face". A short list in no particular order, of things people "forget" to tell relatives: divorce, marriage, children out of wedlock, mental illness, living together rather than marrying, dropping out of college or high school, quitting or losing a job, criminal record, incarceration, and drug/alcohol addiction, just to name a few. These and other stories have some things in common. People would rather lie than come clean and face possible embarrassment they could suffer from friends or relatives. In Asian cultures, dirty laundry is something that is kept under tight raps. They don't want anyone knowing about that bit too much. Come to think of it, most cultures keep their family secrets quiet (p.7).

Most second generation Asian American children experience cultural conflicts and identity dilemmas when they attempt to bring together the different value system of their home culture with that of mainstream American society. Second generation Chinese Americans, growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown between the 1920s and 1940s, became more exposed to a Western lifestyle and ideas of individuality through public school, church and popular culture. Upon the occurrence of this exposure, some Chinese Americans began to resist the traditional beliefs and practices of their immigrant parents, even to the extent of ridiculing their "old-fashioned" ways (Yung, 1995, p. 115).

Similarly the Nisei (second generation Japanese American) felt their "twoness"—as both Japanese and American. Takaki (1998) highlights the experience of Japanese Americans:

> Their lives and identities were bifurcated between the land of their parents and the land of their birth, folk stories about boy Momotaro and children's tales about Jack and the Beanstalk, the Japanese love songs their mothers sang in the kitchen and the popular songs they heard on the radio, the summer obon dances and the weekend jitterbug dances, Japanese New Year's Day and Christmas, the annual kenjinkai picnics and high school outings, banzai to the emperor's health and the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States (Takaki, p.215).

Many theories on identity formation provide a basis to investigate identity development among Asian Americans, however as aforementioned, most academic theories on identity formation were not created on the basis of the Asian experience, but the dominant White majority. In her work, Laura Uba (1994) highlights a number of factors that play a part in Asian American identity formation. First, she recognizes that experiences with racism are the "root" of individual differences in ethnic identity. Second, nativity and generation differences in creating and maintaining identity. Third, differences in cognitive development, i.e. younger children are simply too young to understand the complexities of ethnicity . Fourth, selective attitude toward different aspects of ethnicity. Fifth, one's ability to evaluate the salience of ethnicity appropriately (p.97-110).

Asian Americans may perhaps use the experience of belonging to a particular ethnic group to establish characteristics during the identity formation process. Wong (1998) uses "diaspora and imagined communities" to illustrate the complexities and dynamics in the process of ethnic identity formation. Imagined communities can be defined as an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and

sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members never know their fellow-members. Nationalism invents nation; It is imagined as *limited* because it has finite boundaries; It is imagined as sovereign because this is an age of post-Enlightenment and Revolution, i.e., an age of freedom of individuals; It is imagined as a community because the nation is conceived as deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson, 1991, p.7). This view emphasizes that one's ethnic identity and perceptions of one's own ethnic culture may change through his/her life span "as new immigrants arrive, new generations are born, new alliances are formed, old alliances are broken," and special events and other concerns arise in the world (Wong, 1998,p. 133).

Acculturation

Living in mainstream United States society, acculturation becomes inevitable for individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In a broad sense acculturation is a social process by which social and cultural changes occur when people from different cultures come in direct contact with each other. Acculturation is the progression of acquiring the capability to function within a dominant culture while retaining one's original culture. Acculturation is also a communication process that facilitates cultural contact, transmission, and mutual understandings between ethnic groups and the larger society, as well as the individuals who are from different cultures (Berry, 1990, p.232). For some of the old immigrants, the assimilation to American culture was obligatory to some extent, enhancing their survival chance in a new land. Others willingly accepted the American way because they wanted to come to this land of liberty, and raise their children to be perfect Americans by birth (Sekiguchi, 2005, p. 4).

Acculturation theories focus on how an individual relates to the dominant or host society, arguing that a unified ethnic identity results from an individual's commitment to, or separation from, his or her ethnic ties. It focuses attention on how immigrants, worldwide, confront the adaptational requirements and ensuing stresses of movement into a sociocultural system different from their own.

> Some Asian Americans mentioned that their white friends do not understand their involvement with other Asian Americans and stereotype them as being "clannish" and "cliquish." That is, when they are part of an Asian American group like the South Asian Student Alliance, their white friends do not view them as individuals. Furthermore, when they associate with their white friends, they feel that they must forsake their ethnicity in order to be accepted. On the other hand, Asian Americans who associate with white students fear being labeled "bananas" or "coconuts" by their Asian American peers (Assisi, 1991, p.49).

Asian Americans involved in the acculturation process may choose to retain much of their traditional Asian culture, norms and behaviors while still acquiring those of mainstream American society, or to discard their traditional forms of Asian culture entirely in favor of complete immersion and identification with mainstream American society. Sue and Sue define four category levels that individuals of Asian descent may fall into: traditionalists, assimilationist, bicultural and marginal. Traditionalists, who are typically foreign born, strongly accept parental cultural values and typically socialize only with members of their own ethnic group. Assimilationists are those who choose to fully adopt American values and behavioral norms as their own. Bicultural Asian Americans are those who maintain, and move "freely" in, both the Asian and American culture. A marginal person rejects Asian values, wants to assimilate into American

culture, and tends to feel isolated, alienated and alone. These individuals tend to have little ethnic identity that is associated with the Asian culture (Sue and Sue, p. 36-49).

Asian Americans, like all people of color in the United States, can acculturate into American life in terms of values, customs and cultural forms, however due to embedded racial barriers they will not be able to completely assimilate or become fully integrated into American society. Many Japanese American (Nisei) changed, shorten or Americanized their Japanese first names in order to acculturate into society. For example, Makoto to Mac, Isamu to Sam, and Chiyoji to George (Takaki, 1998, p. 215). But citizenship, education or even name changes, the second generation Japanese Americans discovered, did not immunize them from racial discrimination (Takaki, 1998, p.217). The Asian American group as a whole has always been stereotypically deemed homogenous and visually “un-American”. This viewpoint is changing widely everyday, however, it is the primary reasoning behind why the group has been unable to blend and fully acculturate into the dominant White majority.

The processes of acculturation can be conceptualized on two levels: the population level (ecological, cultural, social, and institutional) and the individual level (the behaviors and traits of persons). Both levels of acculturation (population and individual) are central to Asian Americans understanding themselves in relation to their cultural contexts and society. The population level can be defined as the communication that takes place at the societal level between an ethnic group and the larger society, regarding social structure, economic transactions, and political organization. This dialogue creates social and cultural contexts that Asian Americans can use to identify

themselves and to function as a member in society, i.e., being aware of cultural change in the ethnic group and the relationship between the ethnic group and the larger society. At the individual level, both intra- and inter-group communication occurs, through which an ethnic individual's behavior, identity, values, and attitudes are formed, practiced, and reformed, i.e., going through acculturation--individual change (Berry, 1990, p.234).

Biculturalism

The literature showcases that biculturalism is a common theme in the lives of a majority of second generation Asian Americans born and raised in the U.S. Biculturalism, "is the ability of a person to function effectively in more than one culture and also to switch roles back and forth as the situation changes" (Jambunathan, Burts and Pierce, 1990, p.398). "Biculturalism," or being bicultural, is the constant blending of cultural contexts while functioning in two or more ethnic customs and or traditions. The concept of biculturalism is closely related to acculturation, but assumes that acculturation can take place without a loss in cultural patterns (Kiang, 1995, p.215). Ramirez defines biculturalism as an integration of the competencies and sensitivities associated with two cultures within a single person (Ramirez, 1983, p.65). Bicultural Asian Americans have their own unique issues and needs. Despite the increasing number of bicultural Asian Americans, little is being done to understand or respond to their development of concurrent identities. Rosenthal (1997) summarizes that it seems that ethnic individuals adopt a variety of strategies in dealing with their dual cultural environment. For some, the primary ethnic group serves as the most potent identification. Others adopt a more

assimilatory position or view themselves as members of two cultural worlds, switching identification according to situation (p. 178).

Bicultural individuals occupy a space between two cultural spaces, suggesting marginal competency and sensitivity in both cultures. A majority of ethnic children live in a bicultural environment (Darder, 1995, p.12). Asian Americans vary considerably in biculturality, from those who are largely low in acculturative involvements in both cultures to those who are largely high on both and are able to move across cultures competently. Recent studies show that for these children "growing up bicultural and bilingual is a trying process, even in the best of circumstances"(Portes, 1996, p. 195). It is a complex experience of loneliness and struggle to belong to two separate cultures and generations.

Being shuttled between American schools and Asian homes, Asian children question the likelihood of ever finding the right balance between cultures. Their parents, on the one hand, tend to teach collectivism, religious commitment and gender role differentiation. On the other hand, school and wider society promote individualism, secularism and gender equality. The tension this arouses in children can lead to great psychological stress. Hegde (1998) argues that because of traveling between cultures, one's ethnic identity needs to be constantly defined and redefined, and to be "negotiated between the self and the external world"(p. 318). Although many ethnic children are used to integrating their own ethnic culture and the host culture, they often complain that the situation of being caught between two cultures makes them feel marginal (Chen, 1997,p.230).

Second generation Chinese youth from the 1920s experienced this dilemma of being caught between two worlds. The 'marginal man' concept during this time exemplified a person who straddles two cultures in society. The marginal person may be rejected, and feel alienated, by one or both parents, by home or by school. An excerpt from Ronald Takaki's *Strangers from a Different Shore* (1998) illustrates the concept of being marginal:

> "There was endless discussion about what to do about the dilemma of being caught in between…being loyal to the parents and their ways and yet trying to assess the good from both sides," commented Victor Wong. "We use to call ourselves just a 'marginal man,' caught between two cultures" (p. 260).

Bicultural Asian women from different backgrounds and generations have attempted to understand and redefine themselves, their families and their communities as they search for a bicultural identity. Chen (1997), when studying Chinese American women's identity, uncovered the complexity of the formation of females' bicultural identity. Because they were born or growing up in America and also have a Chinese cultural background and history, they were caught in-between two cultures. Consequently, they experienced identity contradictory and ambiguousness (p.225). Reaching bicultural adulthood can be difficult for anyone, it is even more difficult for children of immigrants who must reconcile conflicting gender influences. Perhaps the most important area Asian American young women struggle with is gender biases and stereotypes. They face difficulties of trying to gain equal status, removing language barriers, trying to find an identity, and battling with the misconceptions that Asian women are the least oppressed, least stereotyped, least marginalized and most happy.

One of the most important goals for many Asian Americans is keeping the culture alive. In order to strengthen their own identities, their heritage and cultures have been deeply ingrained in them. Chen (1997) found that in spite of Chinese American cultures being deep rooted, bicultural ethnic identities are for the most part socially constructed.

> “As a child I faced my first challenge fitting in. Growing up in a predominantly white suburb and attending school with white kids. I was like any kid - insecure about myself and wanting desperately to fit in and be one of the gang. And because that gang was white, I did what I could to be white. That meant playing baseball, having mom hide all that "weird Chinesey" food when friends came for dinner, and pretending not to understand my grand-parents' Chinese. It also meant trying my best to avoid the "science geek or nerd" stereotype by denying any interest in medicine and focusing on the school newspaper and literary magazine. Childhood and adolescence was a period of denial and purposeful ignorance” (Chen, p. 11).

Some individuals may develop fusion identities whereby they accommodate the norms, attitudes and behavior patterns of their own culture and other cultural groups into one mindset. Assimilation and biculturalism are processes of integration into the dominant society. It is a process whose eventual outcome is fundamentally uncertain and that is influenced by the active efforts of the minority group to shape the terms of their own integration (Kibria, 2002, p.197). In 1930, in an attempt to claim their identities as Americans, the Nisei actively formed the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). JACL educated the dominant society, disseminating information about the educational and business achievements of the Japanese American community. Additionally, the JACL held conferences, dances, and social activities, to respond to the needs of the Japanese community (Takaki, 1998,p.223). Second generation Chinese American author and ceramicist Jade Snow Wong came to terms with her cultural conflicts by selectively

integrating elements of both cultures into her life. She came to appreciate Western thought and culture through her education and life experience, but she also returned to her community to rediscover her rich cultural heritage (Yung, 1995, p. 120). Likewise, many Indian Americans after living through the initial stages of identity formation, acculturation and biculturalism process are beginning to come to terms with their constant push and pull worlds of the U.S.

The literature review has thus far provided extensive material on identity formation, acculturation and biculturalism among Asian Americans, second generation Chinese and Indian Americans. There was no literature that combined the biculturalism of Indian Americans and the way in which the occurrence of it has created, shaped, reshaped and reinforced their identity as Americans specifically. The second and third parts of this literature review will provide a brief overview of Indian American history and detailed testimonials and personal experiences of people of Indian descent. The information contained in the testimonials and personal experiences fails to provide an in-depth evaluation of the formation process. It does, nevertheless, provide an insightful picture of what many Indian Americans came in contact with growing up in the U.S.

Overview of the History of Asian Indians in the U.S.

The first major presence of Asian Indians in the United States can be traced to the early 1900s, when peasants from the province of Punjab began appearing on the west coast, seeking work in Washington's lumber mills and California's agricultural fields. The most substantial amount of Indians came to the U.S. when the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 increased visa quotas among immigrants from various

countries. The act enabled primarily technically skilled professionals, students and relatives of immigrants to enter the country. At that time, the Indian economy suffered due to India's independence. A number of prospective people with higher education were frustrated and decided to move abroad. The boom in American industries created a strong demand for professionals, preferably with little need to train. Educated Asian Indians met this demand, resulting in the brain drain of such Indians (Sekiguchi, 2005, p. 2). Indian immigration increased rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s, with 1996 marking the second highest level in U.S. history, making India at the time the country with the third largest number of immigrants after Mexico and the Philippines (Little India Business Directory 1997, p. 62). In 1980 the US Census introduced "Asian Indians" as a sub category of Asian Americans. This enabled information such as population, economic and social conditions to be available about Indian residents in the U.S. The recognition in census statistics reinforced official recognition of Indian immigrants' position as a minority group in the United States (Sekiguchi, 2005, p. 2). Prior to the new census category being introduced, Indian immigrants labeled themselves by their individual identity such as Punjabi, Gujrati or Malayalee, while most Americans referred to them as Hindus or East Indians.

Asian American society, which Indians are categorized under, are labeled as model minorities by the media and politicians because unlike other minorities, they are seen as very close to the majority by their work ethic, family values, success in business and education and as law abiding citizen (Kimenyi, 2002, p.15). Indians specifically are perceived as a successful immigrant group, epitomized by highly educated professionals,

a longitudinal view over the decades since the 1960s reveals a continual widening of social-class differences within this group (Khandelwal, 2002, p.6). Indian immigrants of the 1960s and 1970s indeed were a group of well paying career oriented people. But thereafter the spectrum began to widen as the pioneer immigrants sponsored relatives from India who lacked elite educational backgrounds (Khandelwal, 2002, p.6). Asian Indians, like many immigrants to the U.S., believed firmly in the American Dream, that if they worked hard they could become rich and influential.

The 1990s brought about the issues of the Asian Indian experience in the literary world. Stories, poems and articles based on the lives of the ethnic community's struggle as a minority in America were developed. Several of these collections were developed by Asian Indian women. Popular Asian Indian writers included Bharti Mukerjee and Meena Alexander, both of which focused on the life and society of Indian immigrants or inner struggles of individual members (Sekiguchi, 2005, p. 10). Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni published poems, short stories and novels specifically on the Asian Indian experience in Northern California. Banerjee's literature revolves around the immigrant experience, independent women, arranged marriages and familial duties. Writers from other minority groups like the Chinese or Vietnamese tend to use the style of autobiographies or non fictional family histories when they write on tradition and background of their communities. This is in sharp contrast to Indian writers who prefer fictional works even if they are based on their own or ancestors' experience (Sekiguchi, 2005,p. 10).

The children of post 1965 Indian immigrants, the outcomes of the pursuit of the American Dream, have hardly been studied. This group began to come of age and to

enter college and the workforce during the late 1980s and 1990s, but the stories of these Indian Americans have not been yet etched into the larger narratives of immigration, ethnicity, racialization and youth cultures in the United State (Maira, 2002,p.2). As a result, the experiences of Indian Americans are frequently misrepresented in academic research, popular literature and the mass media. The common story that ties all of us Asian Indians together, especially the children of immigrants, is the celebrated "model minority".

> According to a 2004 Newsweek report, "Young South Asians are transforming America's cultural landscape, setting the pace in business, the arts and media as well as the traditional field favored by their parent's generation, medicine and technology. Many have spent time on several continents; they're multilingual, and comfortable mixing cultures. They're also often children of affluence; South Asians here are wealthier and better educated than almost any other immigrant group" (Kantrowitz and Scelfo, p.52).

Even though the model minority image can be quite complimentary, it has definitely contributed to misconceptions about the Asian population as a whole. A 1992 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights outlined how the model minority myth is indeed harmful to Asian Americans:

1. The model minority image diverts from real and very serious social and economic problems that plague many segments of the Asian American population.
2. Second, it distracts public attention away from continued, often times overt, racial discrimination faced by Asian Americans.
3. The model minority stereotype places undue pressure and anguish on young Asian Americans who think they have to achieve in school.
4. The model minority image serves to fuel competition and resentment between groups, particularly among other racial minorities, who are asked if Asian Americans can succeed, why can't they? (Fong, 2002, p.61).

Asian Indian Family Unit

Research shows that immigrants raising a family in the U.S. face challenges between acculturation, assimilation and socialization. Tensions are caused when homeland-oriented and tradition –bound immigrant elders attempt to impose their ideas and values on increasingly Americanized children (Kibria, 2002, p. 41). Asian Indian values and communication styles stem from a culture that is primarily collectivist. Gender roles, cultural, language, religious preservation and family expectations and responsibilities are enforced in most collectivist households. To add, double standards toward male and female offspring occur in most Asian Indian households. Females are expected to assume gender specific chores and duties (including cleaning and cooking); whereas males are not obliged to participate in household responsibilities.

> According to K. Dasgupta (1997), "At no other time do the trials of the Asian Indian immigrant family reach such severity as when it is involved in the socialization of its children, especially adolescents. Culture conflict is experienced in a most turbulent way, as the immigrant family tries to navigate its course through the usual tumult of raising adolescent children" (p.58).

When Indian parents have children in the United States they consider various options on the upbringing of their children. Sekiguchi (2005) highlights the steps that Indian parents take in the rearing of their American born children:

> First of all, naming their American-born children is a serious and sensitive issue. Names of non-Christian culture may sound strange for ordinary Americans, difficult to pronounce of to remember. Such names could become a target for uneasy feelings or discrimination. Many in the culture insist that name is a pride of the culture, those in favor of American names emphasize a practical advantage. After naming, they need to decide on a which discipline or policy to raise their children: in an American way or in an Indian way or in a combined way.

> Education comes the third. When children are small they send them to Indian language class, traditional dance or music lessons. Watching Indian films (of course from Bollywood) in videos in the living room with the whole family members is not only a pastime but an important ritual. Parents encourage children to sing film songs to learn the language; they point out the traditional practice from scenes of festivals or pujas. Parents urge their children to choose a professional major at university such as engineering, medicine and law. These degrees are closely related to authorized and respected careers. They rarely prefer a major in English literature or European art, since these majors are suitable only for pastime. Most probably, they never allow their son to be a professional football player, since entertainers like sports players or musicians are established only in this country but are not regarded at having "respected" occupation by their standards (p.5).

Asian Indian parents want to maintain authority of their children for the sake of emphasizing a strong emotional commitment to their families and the Indian culture. To reproduce the dense matrix of relationships of their natal cultures, Indian parents bind themselves to their children in sentimental systems of rights and duties. They expected their children to respect and obey their judgments about the host society and about India (Dasgupta, 1997, p.572). In doing this, Indian parents are conveying and reinforcing ideas of pride and respect. Sathi Dasgupta (1989) suggests,

> "Indian parents feel that since they and their children cannot hide their differences like Europeans, it is better to be proud of their differences. Thus they strive to maintain their ethnic identity both for the present and future generations. Therefore, the socialization process is challenging to Indian immigrant parents. The parents try to teach their children to be American and at the same time to maintain their ethnic identity" (p. 118).

Since control from parents maintains the family structure and develops initial identity, Indian Americans are socialized at an early age that American cultural behavior is somewhat acceptable as long as it occurs outside of the home. Parents of Chinese American students, studied by Kibria (2002), urged them to compensate for the

disadvantages of their racial identity by being “twice as good”, outshining their peers in their achievements. This counsel was applied in a variety of specific activities, including music and sports, but it was most powerfully directed toward academic achievement (Kibria, p. 53). Doing well at school with an individualistic mindset is similarly presented to Indian American students as a successful method to achieve status and reward in the United States. This theme of bicultural socialization seems to be consistent with Indian, Japanese and Chinese Americans studied in this literature review. Bicultural socialization is where a person is socialized within their own culture and within the dominant culture so that social and personal well being are achieved (Ackron & Benipal, 1994, p.5).

The idea of bicultural socialization is embraced, however, when traditional values are challenged Indian Americans are advised to steer clear of the American culture. Archana A. Pathak, a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma, has noted in her paper on mate selection among Indian Americans:

> "Up until dating and mate selection becomes an issue, most Indian parents encourage and aid their children in the utilization, internalization and manifestation of American modes of behavior to assure the child's success. This support is then directly contradicted when the children make the natural extension of their behavior to choosing a mate. At this point the parents make it clear the children are expected to uphold and engage in traditional Indian behavior" (Melawani, 1995, p. 10).

Mainstream American culture is perceived as destroying the innocence of Asian Indian children and transforming them into coarser more cynical people (Dasgupta, K., 1997, p. 65).

> Indian American youth experience early in their lives the ways in which the different social spaces, or cultural fields, they occupy are associated with

> particular notions of generationally appropriate behavior and ideologies of citizenship and ethnicity. Second generation youth learn in childhood that they have to negotiate different ideals of youthful behavior in specific contexts and select certain images or identifications within particular social and structural constraints (Maira, 2002, p.92).

Because one's cultural values are often unrecognized until they are challenged by exposure to different values, Asian Indians may expect reactions that range from suspicion to surprise, from disbelief to delight, and from acceptance to appreciation. Acknowledging different cultural perspectives and learning to work effectively within the boundaries that are comfortable for the individual and family, while sharing views of the larger culture to increase the understanding will improve the ability to negotiate a balance of two cultures (Hanson, Lynch and Wayman, 1990, p. 113).

Indian American identities are constructed comparatively in terms of sameness and difference with Chinese and Japanese Americans and other groups in the dominant population. Their tastes in clothing, sports, music, food and culture are marks of difference from the preferences of their parents. In every family, such expressions of difference signal historical ruptures within the "same" community—ruptures of personal, ethnic and national identity between generations. Even as these ruptures are unwelcome, they are recognized (Leonard, 1997, p. 153).

Balancing Act

Despite the participation in cultural activities, Indian Americans represent two different worlds, the American world of their peers and the Indian world of their family. Many Indian Americans seem to be leading a double existence—Indian at home to follow

their parent's teachings and gain their approval and American outside, to win peer acceptance (Prasad, 1993, p.18).

> When I am with my American friends, I allow myself to fuse with their personalities. But I am also quick to point out Indian influences on American culture, from tabla beats in rap songs to fashion trends like bindis and pashminas– and I proudly proclaim them as influences from "my culture." This is a realization that all Indian-American youth must arrive at on their own. They need to form an identity in order to come to terms with being an American of Indian origin (Pia & Sharad, 2001, p. 40).

The literature review suggests that Indian Americans have been able to divide their lives between both cultures and have been able to prioritize their cultures in context of their environment accordingly.

> Gawle (2002) illustrates, "So when we grew up and flew out of the nest and became comfortable with being American our parents experienced angst and betrayal. To make them happy we did what made them happy at home and did what made us happy outside. It was the only way we could really make peace with the situation. After all we can't ask our parents to change after 20 or 30 years. And of course we respect and love them and would not want them to be hurt. So it was only natural that we be came chameleons" (p.33).

Being Indian on the weekends and Americans during the weekdays many times results in a backlash against the Indian culture for many.

> It is important to recognize that there is a subset that chooses not to identify at all on any level with South Asian Americans; most of these individuals do not see themselves as people of color, having been assimilated into white mainstream culture (Shankar & Srikanth, 1998, p. 129).

The effect is exacerbated for Indian American young women, who feel the pressure of white beauty standards and the pressure of being a dutiful, very "Indian" daughter at home. Sayantani Dasgupta (1993) highlights, "It depresses me still to

remember how many of my lighter skin Indian sisters tried to pass themselves off as Italian or Greek during school, while dancing in the bharata natyam recitals and going to pujas on the weekend" (p.26). The media's role in the socialization of Indian Americans also contributes to the backlash of the Indian culture.

> The desire for whiteness is demonstrated in depth by second generation Asian Indian activist and theatre artist Sheila James' personal narrative about how she unnaturally became a blond because "All the sex objects on TV, film and magazines were blond-haired and blue eyed. I figured I could adjust the color in my head to fit the role. Underlying the desire for 'whiteness' is a racist ideology which interprets the world associated with the dark skin of Indian and African people with danger, savagery, primitiveness, intellectual inferiority, and the inability to progress beyond a childlike mentality. Meanwhile whiteness is equated with purity, virginity, beauty, and civility" (Arora, 1995, p.36).

In addition, the Indian immigrant community simultaneously applies pressure to Indian Americans by mocking them as the outsiders. "Within the Indian immigrant community, the 'too Americanized'second generation members are seen as "alienated, boorish and culturally deprived" (Sayanthani Dasgupta, 1993, p.26). Indian immigrants widely use the acronym ABCD, American Born Confused Desi[2], to refer to children born and raised in the U.S. The term is used to ridicule and belittle American born persons of Indian decent.

<u>Development of a Unique Culture</u>

[2] Asian Indians casually refer to each other as desi, a Hindi term that refers to someone who is "native" to India. The term has taken hold among many second generation youth in the diaspora of Indian decent (Maira, p2).

There is no one Indian American or South Asian identity. All that is common to Indian Americans is that they trace their roots to a deep cultural tradition that is now transplanted into a very different soil. Thousands of young Americans of Indian ancestry are weaving a new culture (Ranchod, 1998). The “American” identity being formed for Asian Indians is termed South Asians. The impending development of this title is highlighted below,

> "The second generation thinks not just of India or Pakistan, but of their American life also. So South Asian is a very useful, conscious identity that will not replace the national identity," points out Khandelwal. "There's a culture that is being shaped that defines who a South Asian is and within that the national identities can be subsumed. I think South Asian is the new ethnic identity that is very much an American ethnic identity that's forging itself right now” (Melwani, 2004, p.18).

Whether identifying themselves as South Asian or Asian Indian, bicultural Indian Americans are moving freely in both the Indian and American culture spheres. Children of immigrants, the inheritors of their parent’s American Dream, find their own novel ways in which a peaceful coexistence is negotiated for bhangra/hindi music and hip-hop, spaghetti and Channa Masala, and Diwali and Christmas.

> Having grown up in America they (Indian Americans) are American. Rock concerts, Fourth of July picnics, and college campuses are all part of their expanding world. They have grown up in the light flickering from the TV screen in the living room, and know well the power of advocacy, media and individuality. Thanks to the culture of Oprah, nothing is hidden or taboo (Melwani, 2001, p.11).

What is being alluded to is that an Indian American identities and values are influenced and therefore are unfixed. This leads them to create their own boundaries within the Asian American population and experiences in the U.S.

> "I am an Indian American, or so I've been told. As I near the end of my college years, I am still trying to find out exactly what this means. I look like somebody from India, but I dress differently, I speak differently, I socialize differently, my friends look different, my values are different, and my identity is different" (Ranchod, 1998, p.50).

The dreams of Indian Americans are focused around finding themselves and not particularly pursuing financial success so much as happiness. Whether you live in the suburbs or in the vital enclaves of a Little India, you are a part of America and American life. So even if you think in Hindi, like to dress in salwar kameez and feel conflicted about where you fit in the American landscape, that's all right because you make your own definition of what it means to be American (Melwani, 2004, p.18).This literature review has demonstrated that many Indian Americans are able to draw from their varied cultural backgrounds and experiences to create a unique identity. A unique identity that allows many of them to stop struggling to belong to an assigned category or group that is "Asian Indian".

Conclusion

Being "too Asian" in the United States can enable you to quickly become labeled as ethnocentric or hold the burden of knowing everything there is to know about your cultural group. Being "too American" you can be branded as and ABCD (American Born Confused Desi), coconut or banana by your Asian peers. Being Indian American is being comfortable, smooth and cool amidst non Indianess, in the playing fields of

hybridity. It is being able to dance Bhangra unabashedly, wear contemporary Indian and western clothes smartly, enjoy the pleasures of an urban, cosmopolitan life in New York, as well as in Bombay, London, or Hong Kong, and still care for mom and dad and go to the temple on occasion.

Growing up in the United States has not been a uniform experience for the children of Asian Indian immigrants. Most seem to go through a cycle of identification with the Indian and American culture and simultaneous exclusion from the Indian and American culture. They acknowledge different cultural perspectives and learn to work effectively within the boundaries that are comfortable for the individual and family, while sharing views of the larger culture to increase their understanding and improve the ability to negotiate a balance of two cultures (Hanson, Lynch and Wayman, 1990, p. 113).

In summation, the issues of Indian American identity, the balance of two cultural forces and the development of a unique cultural identity were discussed. Even though most of the literature did not provide any baseline studies on similar challenges Indian Americans face in the development of their identity, the information still serves to be important and highly significant for this literature review project as well as for my M.A. thesis. These findings indicate that there is an opportunity for creating a specific baseline study on how family, peers, the media influence identity development among Indian Americans in Northern California. I will take into consideration the findings of this project and devise a way to take this opportunity and begin development of an innovative research project.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the identity development experiences of second generation Indian American young adults (ages 18-34, born and raised in the United States and currently residing in California). The study focused on how Indian Americans have used the influence of their family, culture and U.S. society as a tool for identity development. The outcome of the study will provide a greater understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the Indian American segment.

A total of sixty (60) surveys were conducted in Northern California. (See APPENDIX A for survey) Although the survey contains qualitative elements, it was primarily intended to be a quantitative instrument. The key informant interviews were designed to provide qualitative insights and allowed for further exploration of the findings, while at the same time accumulating enough information about the Indian American population to confidently project results.

Research Design

The survey tool was developed in areas identified in the literature review. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher to determine the identity development experience of Indian Americans. The twenty two question survey focused on identity formation, acculturation, and biculturalism. The survey tool was submitted to the Division of Research Committee at California State University, Sacramento which approved the Protection of Human Subjects Protocol. Participants in the survey were voluntary. No inducements were offered.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher placed a specific emphasis on studying the experiences of those Indian Americans living in Northern California. Northern California contains a large Asian Indian population. Cities with a high density of Asian Indians include, Sacramento, Yuba City, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara and Fremont. The researcher born and raised as a member of the Asian Indian community in Northern California was able to leverage relationships to gain access to the Indian American population being studied.

The survey was implemented using a "push-pull" approach. Pushing the survey out to targeted groups via e-mail communications and pulling or directly approaching Indian Americans in the community as potential respondents. The researcher disseminated the survey via e-mail to Northern California based Indian student associations. Schools that received the e-mail include:

- California State University, Sacramento
- California State University, Chico
- California State University, San Francisco
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Berkeley

The researcher also utilized community based organizations, publication and personal e-mail databases to obtain response on the survey. The researcher was able to "pull" survey responses via informal recruiting on the California State University, Sacramento campus, a local temple and a high traffic Indian grocery retailer.

The selection criteria for participation were:

- Men and Women between ages 18-34 who classify themselves to be of Indian origin.
- Born and raised in the United States.
- Reside in Northern California.

For the key informant interviews, the researcher met and informally engaged in communications with five (5) Indian Americans living in Northern, California. Key informants were connections that the researcher built with members of the Indian American community. All participants matched the research criteria aforementioned. The researcher individually contacted and met with the key informants. At each meeting the researcher obtained consent for participation and began the interview process. The interview was moderated by the researcher using questions featured on the survey instrument. Comments were observed and tape recorded by the researcher. All participation in the study was voluntary. No inducements were offered.

Limitations of the Study

There were only sixty participants who participated in the complete study, and they principally possessed a college degree and shed light on the experiences of residing in Northern California. The study failed to capture the experience of Indian Americans statewide or nationally. Additionally, the experiences 1.5 generation of Indian

Americans, those who were born outside of the U.S. but raised here between the ages of 0-18, were not captured.

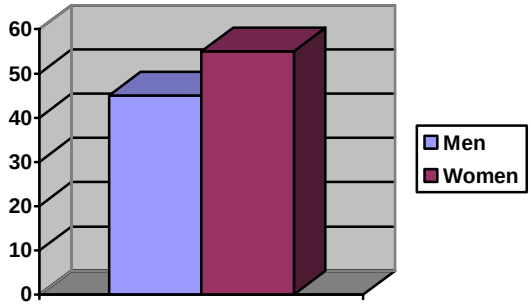
Delimitations of the Study

The study was confined to second generation Indian Americans who were born and raised in the United States and between the ages of 18-34. The sample size was limited to those born and raised in the U.S. for significant reasons. First, each subject came of age in the U.S. between 1971-1987, eras experiencing vast social change as a result of immigration law reform and civil rights legislation. Second, the Indian American group, specifically those born and raised in the U.S., is an overlooked population of study.

Chapter 3: Findings

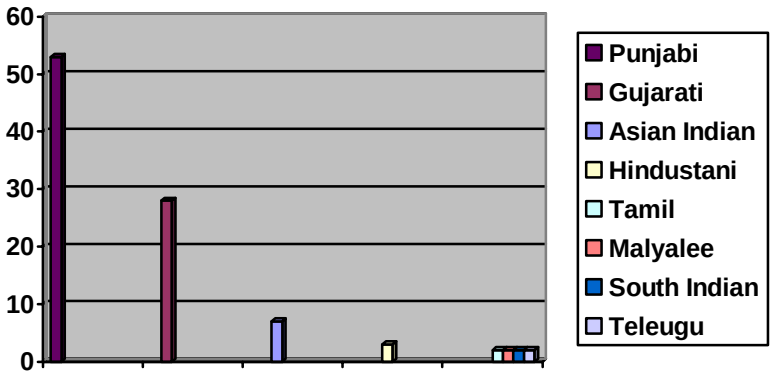
The data gathered for this research is based on a quantitative survey and five (5) in-depth interviews with the Indian American population. The demographics of the study participants are as follows: sixty (60) second generation Indian Americans. All participants were between the ages of 18-34 and born and raised in the United States. 55% of the participants were women and 45% were men.

Question 1: What is your gender?



Thirty seven percent of the respondents were between the ages of 23-26, 30% were 27-30, 27% were 18-22 and 3% were 31-34. Fifty five percent of the respondents possessed a Bachelor's Degree, 23% a Graduate Degree, 17% had some college experience and 3% possessed only a high school diploma. Fifty three percent specifically identified themselves as Punjabi , 28% Gujarati , 3% Hindustani and 2% Tamil. Seven percent identified themselves as Asian Indian, 2% Malyalee, 2% South Indian, and 2 % Teleugu.

Question 5: How do you identify yourself ethnically?



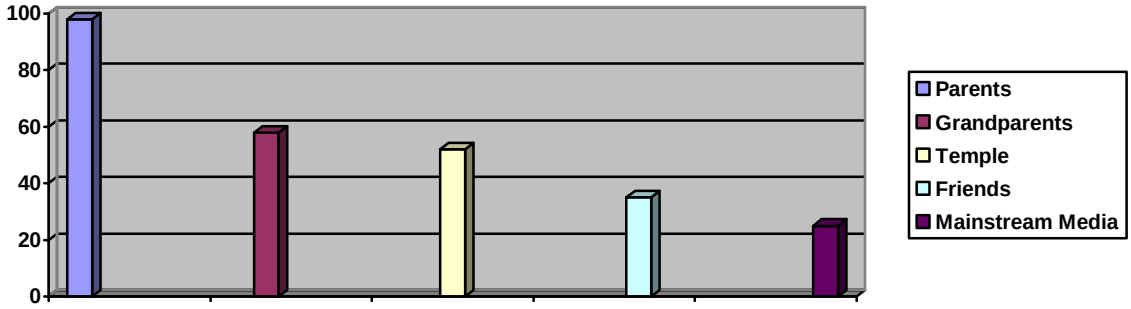
Ninety two percent of the participants indicated they speak English at home, 30% speak Punjabi, 25% speak Gujarati, 17% speak Hindi, 2% speak Tamil, 2% speak Teleugu, and 2% speak Urdu. The data gathered will be analyzed in three (3) categories. Those three (3) categories include Influence of Society and the Asian Indian Family Unit, Balancing Two Worlds and Development of a Unique Culture.

Influence of Society and the Asian Indian Family Unit

Indian American identity development is formed with the influence of family, cultural beliefs, peers, the community and media. Ninety eight percent of the respondents learned Indian history, traditions and customs from their parents, 58% from their grandparents, 52% from the temple, 35% from friends, 25% from mainstream media (television/magazines/newspapers/books). A key informant interviewee describes how Indian history, traditions and customs were learned and reinforced:

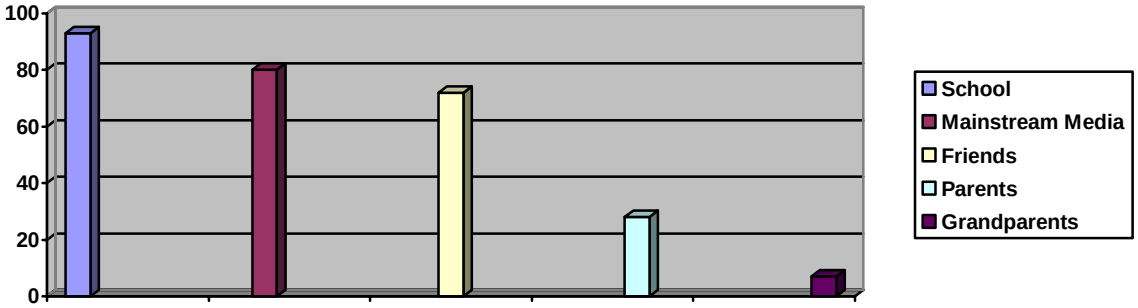
My family is a huge part of my life and with that comes many cultural and religious functions. My upbringing was rooted within the Indian community and our Sikh Temple.

Question 7: Where did you learn Indian history, traditions and customs from?



In contrast, 93% of the respondents learned American history, traditions and customs from school, 80% from mainstream media (television, magazines, newspapers), 72% from friends, 28% from parents and 7% from grandparents.

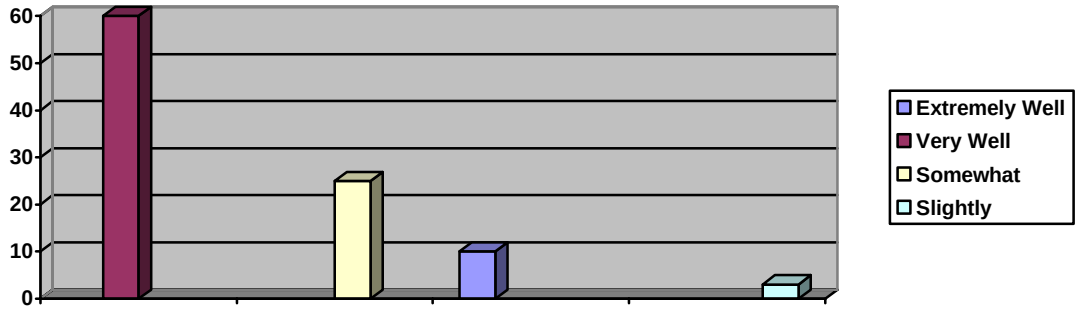
Question 8: Where did you learn American history, traditions and customs from?



When asked how well you identify with the Indian culture, 60% responded very well, 25% somewhat, 10% extremely well, and 3% indicated slightly. Combined 70% of

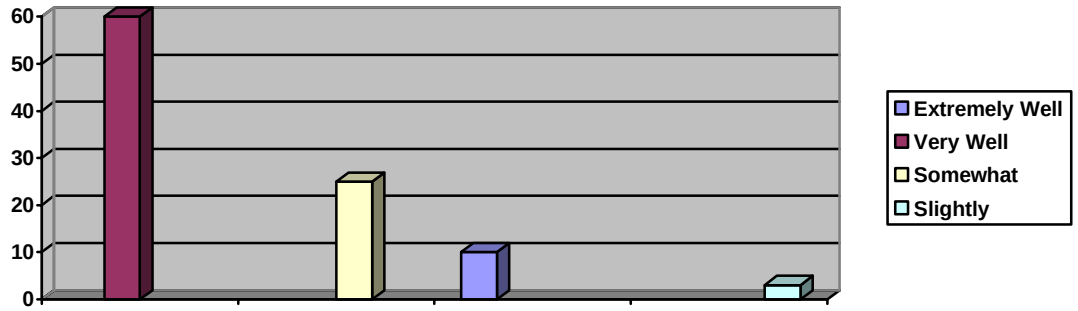
the respondents feel that they identify well with the Indian culture**.** No one indicated that they did not at all identify with the Indian culture.

Question 13: How well do you identify with the Indian Culture?



Sixty percent indicated that they identified with the American culture very well, 25% somewhat, 10% extremely well, and 3% indicated slightly. Combined 70% of the respondents feel that they identify with the American culture. No one indicated that they did not at any level not identify with the American culture.

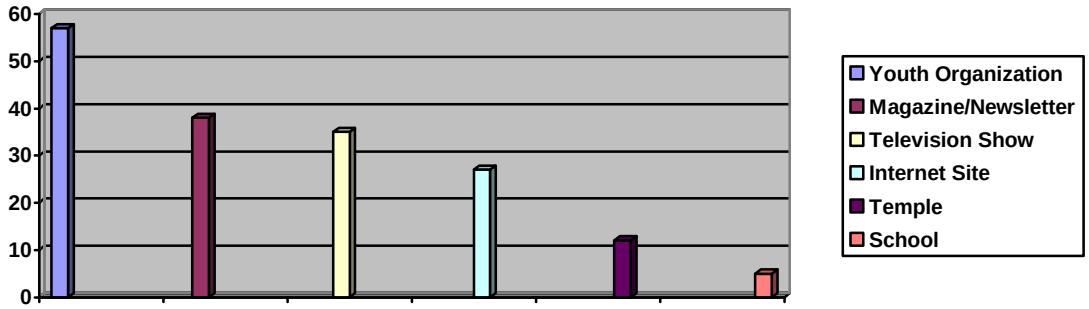
Question 14: How well do you identify with the American Culture?



Fifty two percent of the respondents thought is would have been most helpful to have information on the experience of growing up Indian American in a youth organization. This was followed by 38% indicating a magazine or newsletter, 35% television show, 27% Internet site, 12% temple and 5% saying school. An informant explained about how television could have influenced her identity:

Seeing second generation Indians in the mainstream media legitimizes my identity in a way. I grew up immersed in a largely non-Indian setting and grew up without my life-experiences being confirmed. It would have been nice to see other Asian Indians experiencing the same or similar thing.

Question 9: Where would it have been most helpful to have information about the experience of growing up Indian American?



On the issue of going through a phase in life where respondents might have opted to not identify or participate at all with the Indian culture, 67 % of the respondents indicated no. Most respondents indicated that the reason being was the influence of family, religion and culture. Thirty five percent indicated that

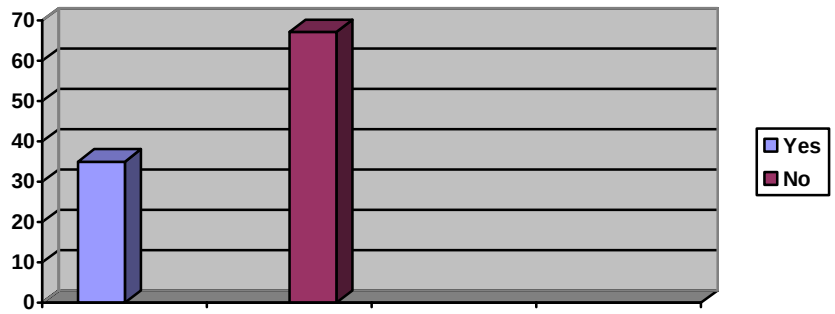
they have gone through a phase where they might have opted to not identify or participate at all with the Indian culture. Most pointed out that they had little interest in the Indian culture because of the need to "fit in" at predominantly Caucasian schools and the frustrations that come along with not being able to identify with the Indian culture. Study participants highlighted that childhood and teen years were the phases in which they chose to sway away from participation in the Indian culture. The following excerpts are from the experiences of interview respondents:

I did not identify with my Indian culture up till the age of 17. Was not interested in Indian functions, music, films – anything Indian. I was brought up in a city predominantly made up of Caucasians and had no influence with regards to the Indian culture besides my parents. Typically, friends have a great influence to a youth during that time, however majority of my friends were non-Indian.

When I was in elementary school I would be shy of my Indian culture because mostly all of my classmates were white. I stood out but didn't want to and at times wished I wasn't Indian but white instead. Or at least wished that I had a white name in hopes of fitting in.

Definitely, during the ages of 12-18, my teenaged high school years. I was frustrated by what felt like the intrusion of Indian culture when I was discovering myself apart from any preconceived association.

Question 15: Have you gone through a phase in life where you have chosen not to identify or participate on any level with the Indian Culture?



Two interviewees illustrated why they never chosen to not identify or participate on any level with the Indian culture:

Even though there have been times where I may have chosen to engage in behaviors or values that are not consistent with Indian culture, I have always participated in and identified at SOME level with Indian Culture. In other words, there was never a phase in my life where I completely rejected my Indian identity. As for why…. Being Indian involves many aspects of my life which I will always identify and be connected with no matter what phase I may be going through, including but not limited to family, friends, religion, and food.

When I was younger, going through my elementary school years, I was unable to greatly identify with my Indian culture because I was constantly surrounded by the American culture in school. As I grew older and closer to my family I began to receive more exposure to my culture and embraced it all with great appreciation. There was never a time, even when I didn't identify, that I did not choose to participate. I just did.

Balancing Two Worlds

My parents said, "You are an Indian before an American. You don't expect an American to act Indian, so why should you forget your roots and act like someone who you really are not." –survey respondent.

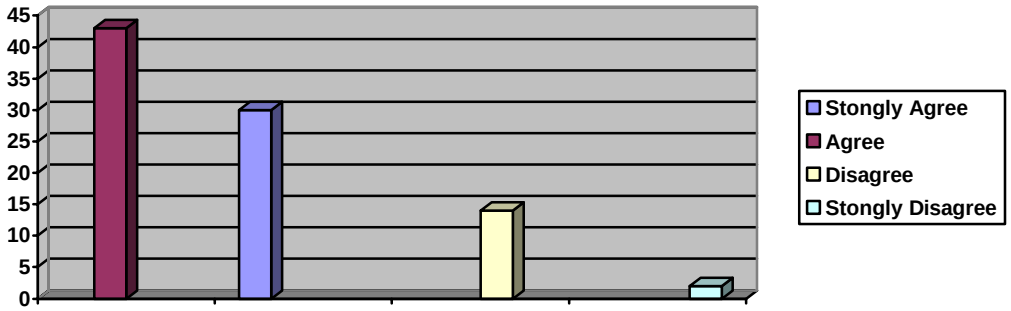
Indian Americans overwhelmingly believe that they represent and participate in two worlds simultaneously.

Family has been a big influence on my life. As the only son, I've always had it unofficially engrained in me that I have to carry on the family and cultural traditions, and as much as I respect those traditions, I don't think that's entirely possible in America. For most of my life, I've had to do a balancing with most everything I do and try to figure how much I can adapt to American culture without sacrificing too much of my Indian culture. Part of it has also been wanting to differentiate myself from my family and establishing my own identity apart from the rest of my family.

Seventy three percent of Indian Americans in this study feel like they live in two cultures are once. Forty three percent agreed and 30% strongly agreed about the experience of living in two cultures. A female interview participants showcased her struggles with different cultures :

Although I would say I have struggled with the differences that come with being Indian American, I can't say I have ever made the choice not to identify/participate with the Indian culture. I think this is mainly because my struggles are not specifically based on the Indian culture alone, yet they are dealing with the difference of the Indian culture and American culture.

Question 12: Do you feel like you live in two cultures at once?



A male interview participant highlighted the responsibility of living in two cultures concurrently:

My parents instilled the culture and tradition into me at a young age, with bi-annual trips back home (India). The fact that parents, and a majority of the family lived very close together, it wasn't easy to deviate from the culture or tradition. I grew up speaking Punjabi/Hindi with the elders and English with the

> *younger kids, as I got older I learned Spanish to help my father with his business. Since I was the oldest son I did all the paper work and took them everywhere, so a lot of responsibility was given to me at a young age. My parents never actually let us watch American movies at home until we got older, so we use to watch every latest Hindi movie…*

Twenty three percent of Indian Americans disagreed about living in two cultures at once, followed by 3% who strongly disagreed. An interviewee provided additional insight about those who disagree to the notion of living in two cultures simultaneously:

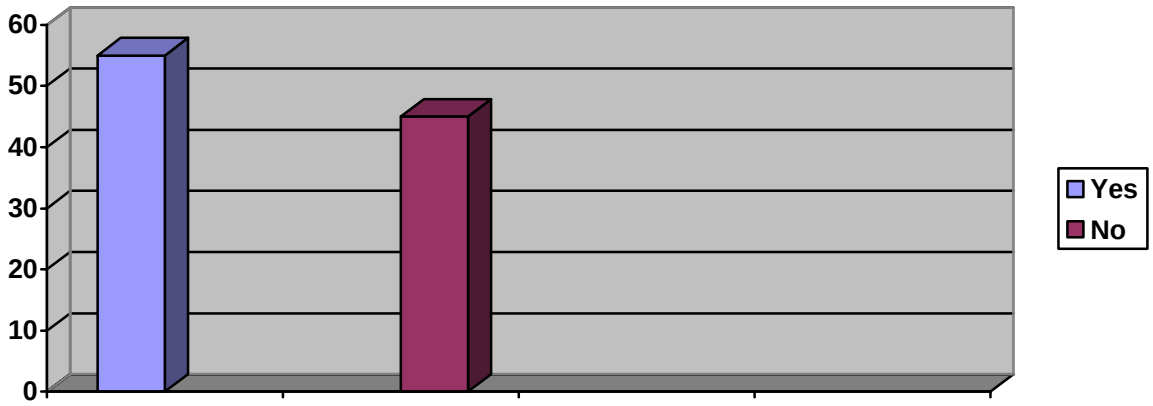
> *I believe that regardless of one's ethnic background, we all share similar experiences and emotions as human beings. I have worked enough with a variety of ethnic groups and Americans and relate to each and everyone of them. Topics related to fear, hope, success and spirituality are all common threads. I think we should focus on being our own individuals rather than confining ourselves into a specific cultural category.*

Fifty five percent of Indian Americans maintain that they do not separate their social circles between Indian and non-Indian groups. A number of respondents stated that social circles are developed and maintained with people (Indian and non-Indian) who have similar interests and ambitions. An interviewee confirmed this by stating:

> *My social circles actually overlap and are not purposely split up by ethnicity. I have Indian friends that are friends with my non-Indian friends. For example, One of my closest friends (actually a couple) happen to be Indian – and then another set of very close friends happen to be white and some other Asians. We all go to A's games together and although I may be closer to each of them than they are to each other, we all email each other, we all get invited to each others homes, etc. So there are times when I am hanging out with friends that all happen to be Indian, or there are times when they are not, but the circles are not purposely set up by ethnicity, more like whom gets along with whom. If there is a heavier ethnicity of friends together at a certain time, that happened maybe*

because of an event, or just that my friends might have more friends of theirs around whom happen to be the same ethnicity.

Question 16: Do you have separate Indian and American social circles?



Forty five percent declared that they do indeed separate their social circles. Social circles were said to be separated due to lack of common Indian values, knowledge and interests. Examples of how and why social circles are separated included:

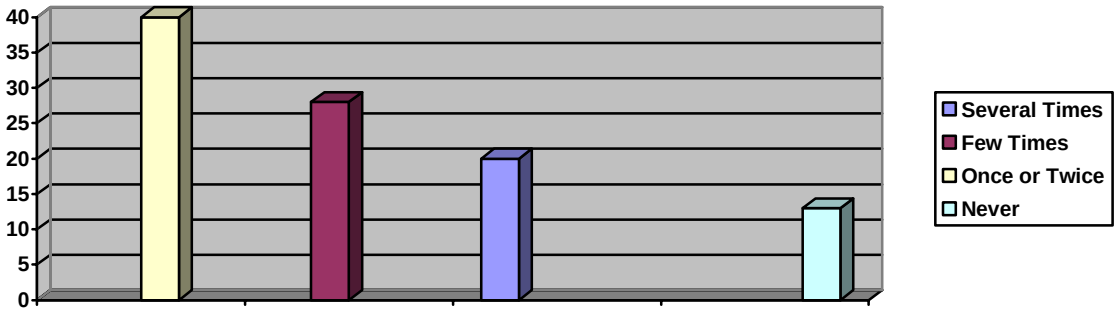
I do not choose to separate my social circles, but I do understand there is a clear separation between my Indian social circle and my American social circle. For example, at the temple, my family and friends and I interact with one another in a manner that may seem reserved or restricted in eyes of my social circle at work. I have always viewed this as a cultural separation made for me. I would also view it as a form of convention I choose to practice in as an Indian American.

The people I work with (predominantly non-Indian) I associate with only in the workplace. At the temple, I see a lot of family and family friends all of Indian culture, most of which I only see at the temple. At school my American social circles are not very strong as I tend to lean towards my Indian social circles, and they typically do not mix. However, this separation is not done purposely. Perhaps it is just a subconscious level of comfort and familiarity that keeps my Indian social circles typically all Indian.

Discrimination and aggression from the dominant majority certainly plays a role in the way people develop identity and balance specific cultural nuances. Eighty eight percent of the Indian Americans studied have experienced hostility because of their Indian background. Forty percent experienced this hostility once or twice, 28% a few times, and 20% several times. Thirteen percent indicated that they never felt they experienced hostility because of their Indian background. Interviewees all mentioned that in some form or another, September 11th was a time of heightened resentment towards the Indian community.

> *Post September 11th was an uneasy time for Indians and all people of South Asian and Middle Eastern descent. Indian temples, cabdrivers, students and travelers were all subject to verbal and physical abuse. If you didn't have an American flag on your t-shirt, car, house, temple or even place of business then you were assumed to be conveying that you weren't loyal to this country. I really feel like prejudice beliefs which were concealed during the Civil Rights Movement were re-released by Americans after 9/11.*

Question 17: Have you ever experienced any hostility because of your Indian background?



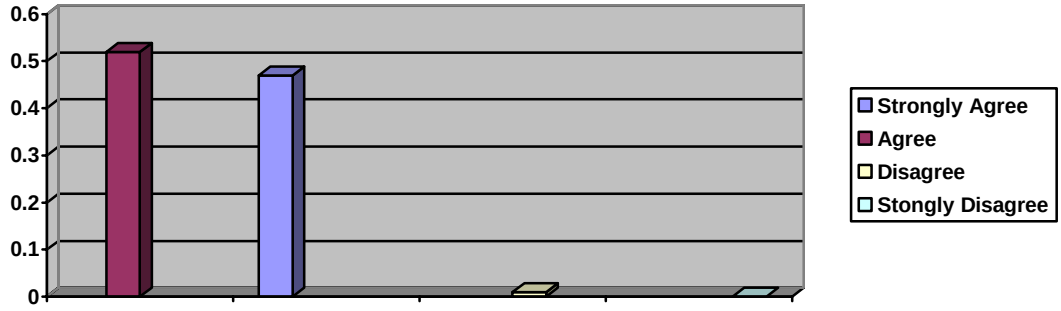
Clothing and food can be significant markers of cultural influence, adoption and participation. The researcher wanted to assess the specific preferences of the Indian American respondents. As a result, participants were asked how often they wear tradition clothes and what their food preferences are. Sixty percent sometimes wear traditional clothing, 23% wear Indian clothing once or twice a year and 18% never wear traditional clothes. Ninety percent preferred both Indian and other foods and 7% have a preference for other non-Indian food. No participants indicated that they only preferred Indian foods.

Development of a Unique Culture

Although Indian Americans at times experience social influences and cultural balancing acts, it undeniably appears that the second generation creates their own fluid definition of what is considered to be Indian in the United States. Ninety nine percent of Indian Americans indicated that they have been able to draw from their Indian and American experiences to form their own definitions of what it means to be Indian in the U.S. 52% agree and 47% strongly agree about developing their own identities. Only 1% disagreed with being able to draw from dual cultures to form a definition of being Indian America. An interviewee offered the aspiration to balance both worlds:

There are many aspects of Indian culture that I'm just not familiar with. I'm good on the big stuff, but Indian culture varies depending on which part of the country you're from (both India and America). The best I can do is relate to my specific culture which may not be the same as someone else's. BUT I also think, especially in today's world, that Indian culture is being usurped by other more "popular" cultures. I don't see the balance between cultures in today's kids anymore. Those that do relate to Indian culture, only relate to it through Bollywood movies (many of which glamorize western cultures anyway). The goal shouldn't be to shun American or Indian culture, but to find the balance that preserves both and, hopefully, makes both better.

Question 18: Have you been able to draw from your Indian and American experiences to form your own definitions of what it means to be Indian in the U.S.?



When asked to use three words to describe a person who is Indian and born and raised in the U.S., respondents' answers were particularly consistent. Adjectives that were used conveyed values not only specific to the Indian or American cultures, but to the experiences of second generation populations who are both Indian and American. The following adjectives were identified time and again to describe a person who is Indian American, each adjective is categorized under "positive experiences" or "negative experiences":

Positive Adjectives Which Highlight Cultural Experiences	**Negative Adjectives Which Highlight Cultural Experiences**
Cultured	Adaptive
Aware	Tolerant
Family Oriented	Confused
Fortunate	Chameleon-like
Value Driven	
Diverse	
Hardworking	
Proud	
Open minded	
Understanding	
Motivated	
Accepting	
Unique	
Persistent	

Indian Americans reaffirmed that family, friends, culture and religion have been an influence in their lives. Apart from traditional influences, Indian Americans in this study highlighted an array of multicultural influences which contribute to their distinctive identities. The following is an assortment of what influenced and continues to influence study participants:

> *Ghandi is a major influence, and Carl Jung, basketball, Run DMC, Ravi Shankar and NWA as well. Mos Def, Talib Kweli, De La Soul and Les Nubians, Nustrat, Talvin Singh, Nina Simone, and the Doors fill my ears. I'm a hip hop head and been that way since my earliest memories. I'm influenced by Sinsila, ladoos, Rehka, and Amjit Khan. The first record I ever bought was Licensed to ILL and the first movie I ever owned starred Mitun. I used to day dream about being Krishna and Walter Payton when I was a little boy. Amita Bachan always seemed more graceful than some god damn Michael Jackson and Eddie Murphy's the*

funniest man I've ever seen. I feel I've been immersed and stimulated by two vivid cultures from the day I was born. I feel blessed for it.

The outdoors, healthy living, dancing, the arts is a big part of who I am.

Because of the Punjabi cultures invasion into the mainstream culture, we got Punjabi MC and Jay Z collaborating on songs like Beware of the BOYZ, the Punjabi American infusion has taken off and I have American friends that come up to me and say "mundeya tho bach ke" , and the people I hang out don't distinguish between races everyone gets along so there is no real reason to live a dual life anymore.

Second Generation Looking Forward

It is apparent that mainstream media features stories, plots and imagery that relates to the dominant society. Study participants were asked if they would tune into media (television, movies, internet, radio and) specifically developed for Indians born and raised in the U.S. 78 % responded yes and 18% no. Interviewees specify reasons why they may or may not tune into media targeted directly at them:

Comfort. I think it's natural to find comfort in people who have a similar background and have had similar experiences as oneself. This is something we as Indian Americans don't have much access to today, so initially I think I would tune in. I would also say media developed for Indians born and raised in the US would not take a special precedence to the current media I tune into.

Maybe. I've seen the recent wave of movies directed by Indian Americans and aimed at the Indians-born-in-America market and, while they have hit on some major issues, I don't think there's anything that could accurately reflect the experience of being an Indian born in America. This is mostly because the experience varies from person to person. I don't think I've had the same experience growing up in California as someone who grew up in New Jersey has had (for example). For example, there are parts of New Jersey which have huge Indian populations so someone born there would grow up having seen other Indians on a daily basis. BUT for me growing up in California, until about 1992, it was actually something to talk about when I saw another Indian. (Seeing another Indian at the mall was always funny because we'd just stare at each other

> *in amazement as we walked by) Being part of a very small population affected the way I grew up and my relationship with the Indian culture just as being part of a large population has affected the New Jersey kid's relationship with the culture.*

Eighty eight percent indicated that they would be willing to volunteer time to get involved with the next generation of Indian American youth. Twelve percent stated they would not be willing to get involved to volunteer time with the next generation. The following comments by respondents highlights the attention that the next generation of youth may require for their identity development :

> *I would enjoy being a mentor to children growing up with immigrant parents. There is such a disconnect with parents and children. Indian children especially need a guide/inspiration outside of their families.*
>
> *I could identify with some of the struggles that they may endure and provide support and encouragement.*
>
> *Yes, because I would want to make sure that Indians born in America knew that there are other people that can relate to them and I would want them to be able to identify with all aspects of the American culture while still keeping close contact to all their cultural roots.*
>
> *Asian Indian youth need role models beyond Doctors, Engineers, and Lawyers. They need to know it's okay to venture into "alternative" fields of study and engage in all of what life has to offer. Although this will be a nightmare for many of their parents.*

Growing up in the United States has certainly not been a homogenous experience for Indian Americans. The findings have demonstrated that family, peers, community and the media are central influencers for Indian American identity development. Indian American participants in this study acknowledge their dissimilar cultural perspectives and have learned to exist within the boundaries that are comfortable for the individual and

family, while taking in views of the larger culture (community, peers, media) to increase personal understanding and improve their abilities to negotiate a balance of two cultures. The summary, conclusions and recommendations section will address the bicultural spheres this group resides in, the establishment of a fluid definition of “Indian Americaness” and recommendations on how to respond to the needs of those Indian Americans in the process of developing their identities.

Chapter 4: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

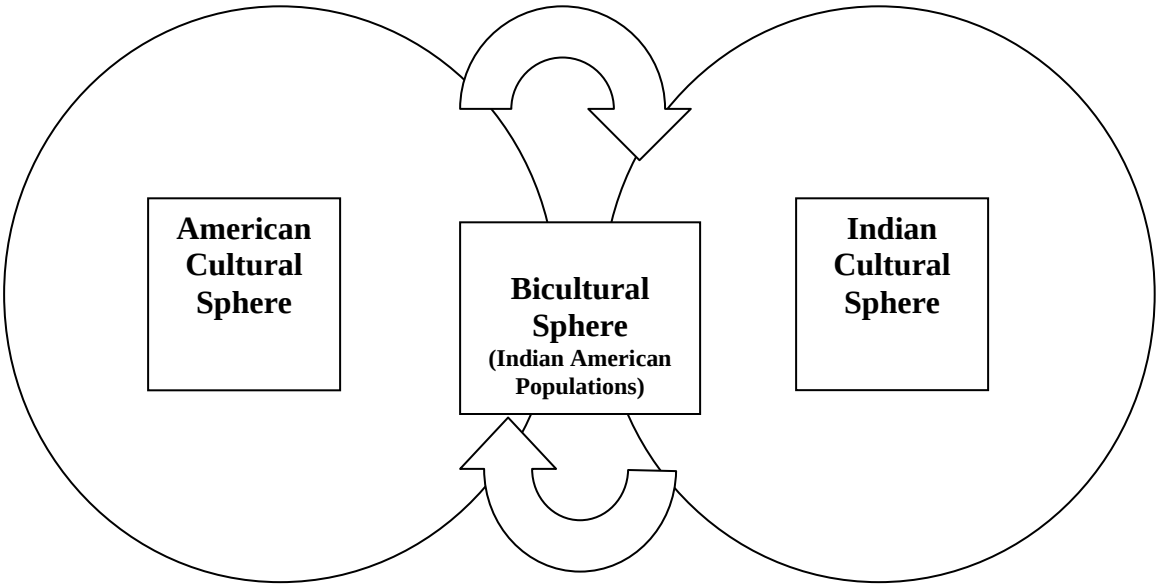
There is no other topic as fascinating to the researcher as the experience of Indian Americans. The children of Asian Indian immigrants have been much more vulnerable to experiencing uncertainty in a very real sense than were their parents. This is particularly true in the early years through adolescence and is in large part centered in the socialization process.

The dreams of Indian Americans are unlike their parent's immigrant dreams. Their dreams are focused around finding themselves and happiness and many times this does not include financial success. For many Asian Indian parents, their primary reference group continues to be family and friends in India and Indian immigrant community social groups. Their influences, traditions and values, not based on the dominant majority's European culture, are considerably different from the "All-American" standards Indian Americans face. Vijay Prashad, author of "The Karma of Brown Folk", in an interview suggests,

> "The high standards are reinforced by relentless parental and community pressure to conform. South Asian young people who don't conform to the myth, deny their parents access to the power centers of the community: joining the chamber of commerce, becoming a leader in the temple or heading a community organization. The pressure on the child is enormous, and the parents suffer the embarrassment of their children not being the performing animals of their community" (Blake, 2002).

As indicated previously, this study focused on the identity development experiences of second generation Indian Americans and how they use the influence of their family, culture and U.S. society as a tool for identity development. Despite parental

and cultural pressure, the men and women featured in this study confirmed that traveling and living in between two cultures is as familiar as breathing. The research established that biculturalism is the lifestyle these participants embrace the most. Bicultural Indian Americans maintain both Indian and American values while participating in the American mainstream. Indian Americans in the study overwhelmingly believed that they represent and participate in two worlds simultaneously. The following graphic depicts the simultaneous cultural spheres that Indian Americans featured in this study live in:



This graphic showcases how bicultural Indian Americans occupy a space between two cultural worlds (Indian and American). The bicultural sphere is in constant motion, moving at times concurrently between both cultural spheres. This bicultural sphere allows for code-switching or combining of cultures in various contexts. Living in the bicultural sphere, the group studied has inevitably developed "fusion" identities by taking on the norms, attitudes and behavior patterns of their Indian and American culture into

one cultural approach. Even though a number of respondents indicated being comfortable living in two cultural spheres, they also pointed out instances where they concentrated on altering their characteristics for a particular situation or being "chameleon like".

The stereotyped story of the "American Born Confused Desi" is weaved into the Indian culture, however the real situations of the Indian American bicultural experiences are without a doubt significant and complex. The study upholds theories which indicate that ethnic identity results from an individual's commitment to or separation from his or her ethnic ties. Since Asian values are collectivist and family is central, the involvement and commitment of Indian Americans in their family is high. In the same respect, individuals in the study concurrently had overlapping commitments to non-Indian ethnic ties and social spheres (schools, friends, the media). These dual commitments to both ethnic identities have allowed Indian Americans to adapt and adopt their identities from the Indian and American cultural influences. To reiterate, the group studied (Indian Americans, ages 18-34) felt like each cultural group offered them something to relate to in terms of their identity and experience.

Indian Americans in this study experienced, in no particular order, five distinct stages of ethnic identity development. Atkinson (1989) proposed that ethnic identity development follows five distinct stages: conformity— preference for values of the dominant culture instead of one's own cultural group; dissonance—confusion and conflict regarding the dominant culture's system and one's own group's cultural system; resistance and immersion—active rejection of the dominant system and acceptance of one's own cultural group's traditions and customs; introspection—questioning the values

of both the minority and majority cultures; and synergistic articulation and awareness—resolution of conflicts in previous stages and developing a cultural identity that selects elements from both the dominant and minority cultural group's values (Atkinson, p. 210).

Primarily during the years of elementary and high school, respondents conveyed facing conformity and dissonance with the Indian culture. Erikson (1968) theorized that the task of identity formation among adolescents and young adults is one of making choices by exploring alternatives and committing to roles. According to Erikson, identity formation among adolescents and young adults requires sifting through a range of choices in our lives before we make commitments around key areas of interpersonal relations, work and career choices, ideology (beliefs and values).

Indian American identity, similar to other ethnic groups, is formed with the influence of family, cultural beliefs, peers, the community and the media. Family, community relationships and religious affiliations are core to this group's development. Asian Americans are influenced by schools and media, which are run by the dominant group and which propagate the racist, deprecatory and colonialist attitudes that some members of the dominant group have about Asian Americans (Uba, 1994, p. 113). During adolescence, the group studied felt pressure to have preferences for values of the American culture instead of their own. They also at times felt confused and conflicted about the structure of the American culture in relation to their own.

Resistance of the American culture and immersion into the Indian culture occurred predominantly after high school when a majority of the participants began college. Colleges and universities allowed respondents to question and reject the value of

the dominant Caucasian American influence and embrace their own. Participants of this study, those Indian Americans ages 18-34, appeared to be at the last stage in Atkinson's ethnic identity development model, synergistic articulation and awareness. Ninety nine percent of the respondents considered themselves to have unique experiences of their own and have come to form their own definitions of what it means to be Indian in the U.S. Particularly, they have come to adopt strategies to deal with their cultural environments and develop a cultural identity exclusive to their influences and environments.

Identity development is a never ending process. The development of Indian American identity among the group studied will continue. They have developed their identities with the influence of two vastly different cultural backgrounds—the Indian culture with a predominantly collective emphasis and the American culture with a focus on individuality. Interestingly enough, these participants have not become assimilated in the way previous ethnic minorities have in the U.S. Participants in the research identify both with Indian and American cultures and feel comfortable in each cultural situation. In sum, Indian Americans featured in this study should not be labeled as "marginal" because they are not rejected and do not feel alienated from both cultural spheres.

Conclusion

Although Indian Americans at times experience social influences and cultural balancing acts, it undeniably appears that the second generation creates their own fluid definition of what is considered to be an Indian who is born and raised in the United States. Individual differences in attitudes toward ethnicity will affect individual

differences in the consciousness, adoption and adhibition of ethnic identity. While some Asian Americans take pride in their ethnicity, others do not (Uba, 1994, p. 102). Knowing this, we cannot presume that each member of the Indian American population will embrace their dual identities or have feelings of marginality.

The researcher anticipated that respondents would view themselves as members of two worlds, switching identification according to situation. Second generation Indian American respondents in this study were in between two different worlds, the Indian world and the American, and appear to be comfortable in each one. What most resonates for this group is feeling at ease and happy in their personally defined identities which contain several layers of multicultural influence. Above all, the study concluded that the group was not as homogenous as deemed by larger society, i.e. policy makers, social institutions, their families and the media. The following recommendations can be made regarding the data collected by the study participants.

Recommendations

According to the study, Indian Americans are aware, cultured and at times chameleon like. The survey responses and interviews clearly demonstrated that it is important to focus on the needs of second generation Asian Indians. The respondents frequently shared that family (parents, grandparents and other extended family), school and the media were major influences in the development of Indian American identity. The aforementioned were also the cause of struggle and confusion due to the misinformation held by them at various levels. It was also apparent that many Indian Americans, after living though the initial stages of identity formation, acculturation and

biculturalism are beginning in adulthood to develop cultural identities that selects elements from both Indian and multicultural American cultural influences. Based upon frequently cited statements by Indian Americans that participated in the research, the researcher has concluded that the three most promising strategies to assist second generation Indian Americans are to foster supportive Asian Indian community environments, improve knowledge, awareness and access to multicultural education (K-12) and establish realistic mainstream media imagery.[3]

The following highlight steps to take to allow key influencers to focus on the needs of Indian Americans:

1. Foster supportive Asian Indian community environments that encourage the discovery of both the minority and majority culture.
    - Increased efforts from the Indian community (both first and second generation) to mobilize themselves around the issues of second generation populations. Provide an ongoing venue for bringing identity and cultural matters to the forefront of cultural livelihood.
    - Establishment of community based organizations offering classes specifically designed for immigrant Asian Indian parents raising children in the United States.
    - Development of a community platform which cultivates and empowers Indian American youth.

[3] The strategies mentioned are what is needed to rethink approaches and bodies of knowledge used to guide our understanding of the Indian American populations.

- Improvement in the temple's role in providing congregation members with tools and resources to function in U.S. society. The temple overlooks its influence in the lives of congregation members and the need for "how to" information on caretaking of the family unit in an environment beyond India.

2. Improve awareness, knowledge and access to existent multicultural education in K-12.
    - Increased availability of ethnic studies curriculum in K-12. Curriculum should include the historical and contemporary issues of multicultural America, with an emphasis on Asian Indians.
    - Development of a school based (K-12) platforms which develop and empower Indian American youth to frame their identities. This could take the form of clubs or other organized activities.
    - Improvement in K-12 teachers and other education professional's knowledge of the historical and contemporary issues faced by youth raised by immigrant parents.

3. Establish mainstream media imagery (television, print, radio) to represent the realistic experience of second generation populations.
    - Improvement on the roles of Asian Indians in television programming. Roles should feature characters with more inspirational depth instead of the repeated portrayal of stereotypes.

- Development of a media based platform which enables Indian American youth to share experiences and provide insight on issues of interest to the population.
- Development of a national, statewide or local parenting publication which reaches 1st generation Asian Indians.
- Establishment of a national, statewide or local publication which reaches 2nd generation Indian American youth with inspirational tools and resources to aid in the identity development process.

Works Cited

Ackron, E. and Benipal, K. (1994).*The Effects of Western Education on the Concepts of Love and Marriage on East Indian Students,* California State University, Sacramento. Master's Thesis Project.

Agarwal, P. (1991).*Passage from India: Post 1965 Indian immigrants and their children: Conflicts, concerns and solutions*. Palos verdes:Yuvati.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition ed. London & NY: Verso, 1991. xi-xv, 1-7, 37-65.

Arnett, J. (1995). "Adolescents' use of media for self-socialization."*Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, v24 n5 p519.

Arora, P. (1995). "Imperiling the Prestige of the White Woman: Colonial Anxiety and Film Censorship in India." *Visual Anthropology Review 11,* 1995, p.36-49.

Assisi, F. (1991)."Asian American Students Seek Ethnic Identity." *India West*, August 9, p. 49.

Atkinson, D., & Gim, R. (1989)."Asian-American cultural identity and attitudes toward mental health services." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, p. 209-212.

Berry, J. W. (1990). "Psychology of acculturation: Understanding individuals moving between cultures." In R. W. Brislin (Ed.), *Applied cross-cultural psychology* p. 232-253,. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Blake, J. (2002). "South Asian Atlantans Feel Burden of Model Minority Myth." Atlanta Journal Constitution.http://modelminority.com/printout177.html

Chen, A.(1997). "Shaping a Philippine-Chinese American Identity." *Filipino Reporter*, July 24, p. 18.

Darder, A . (1995). The politics of biculturalism: Culture and difference in the formation of Warriors for Gringostroika and The new Mestizas. In A. Darder (Ed**.),** *Culture and difference: On the bicultural experience in the United States*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.

Dasgupta, K. (1997). "Raising BiCultural Children*."Asian Indian Immigrants*, Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

Dasgupta, Sathi. (1989). On *the Trail of an Uncertain Dream Indian Immigrant Experience in America.* AMS Press Inc.

Dasgupta, Sayantani.(1993). "Thoughts from a Feminist ABCD." *India Currents Magazine*, March 31, v66; N.122 p. 26.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

Fong, T. (2002).The Contemporary Asian American Experience. Prentice Hall.

Romanucci-Ross, L., & De Vos, G. (1995). *Ethnic identity: Creation, conflict, and accommodation (3rd ed.)*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Hanson, M., Lynch , E. and Wayman, K. (1990). "Honoring the cultural diversity of families when gathering data." *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, p.112-131.

Hegde, R. (1998). "Translated enactments: The relational configurations of the Asian Indian immigrant experience", in: J. Martin, T. Nakayama and L. Flores, eds., Readings in cultural contexts, Mountain view, CA: Mayfield, pp. 315-321.

Helms, J. (1995). "An update of Helm's White and people of color racial identity models." *Handbook of multicultural counseling*, p.181-198.

Helms, J. (1990). "Toward a model of white racial identity." In J. Helms (Ed.), *Black and white racial identity theory, research, and practice.* New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.

Gawle, R. (2002). "Desi chameleon: Gen X Indian Americans need the right blend of East and West." *India Abroad*. November 22, p.33.

Ghuman, P. (1997). "Assimilation or integration? A study of Asian adolescents." *Educational Research*, p. 23-35.

Gibson, M. (1988). Accommodation without assimilation: Sikh immigrants in an American High School. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jambunathan, S., Burts, D. and Pierce, S. (1990). "Comparisons of parenting attitudes among five ethnic groups in the United States." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 31 (4), p. 395-406.

Kantrowitz, B. and Scelfo, J. (2004). "American Masala." *Newsweek Magazine*. March 22, 2004

Katz, P. (1987). "Developmental and social processes in ethnic attitudes and self-identification." In J. Phinney & M. Rotheram (Eds.), *Children's ethnic socialization: Pluralism and development*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Khandelwal, M. (2002). *Becoming American, Being Indian*. Cornell University Press.

Kiang, P. (1995). "Bicultural strengths and struggles of Southeast Asian American in school." In A. Darder (Ed.), *Culture and difference: On the bicultural experience in the United States.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Kibria, N. (2002). *Becoming Asian American: second generation Chinese and Korean American identities.* The John Hopkins University Press, Maryland.

Kimenyi, A. (2002). "The Genesis of Ethnicity and Collective Identity." *Ethnic America*, p.15.

Leaonard, Karen. (1997). *The South Asian Americans.* Greenwood Press.

Little India Business Directory. (1997-1998). Reading, PA :Little India Publications.

Maira, S. (2002). *Desis in the House. Indian American Youth in New York City.* Temple University Press.

Melwani, L. (2001). "American Born Cool Desis." *Little India*, August 31, p.11.

Melwani, L. (1995). "FORGING AN INDIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY: How Authentic an Indian Are You?." *Little India,* October 31, 1995, p. 10.

Melwani, L. (2004) "Half & Half." *Little India*, April 4, p. 18.

O'Sullivan, T. (1999). "Asian-American Affairs: A face saved is a faced earned." February 5, p. 7.

Phinney, J. and Alipuria, L. (1987). *Ethnic identity in older adolescents from four ethnic groups.* Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore.

Pia, P. & Sharad, J. (2001). " The Identity Issue: Two Students Speak Out." *News India-Times*, September 14, Vol.32, Iss.33, p.40.

Portes, A. (1996). *The new second generation*. New York: Russell Sage.

Prasad, V. (1993). "Growing up in America." *India Currents Magazine*. October 31, v7, p.18.

Ramirez, M. (1983). *Psychology of the Americas*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Ramsey, P. (1987). "Young children's thinking about ethnic differences." In J.Phinney & M. Rotheram (Eds.), *Children's ethnic socialization: Pluralism and development*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Ranchod, T. (1998). "Common Identity That Binds." *India Currents Magazine*. May 31, v.12 p.49.

Rosenthal, D.A.(1997). "Ethnic identity development in adolescents." In J. Phinney and M Rotheram (Eds.), *Children's Ethnic Socialization: Pluralism and Development*. London:Sage.

Sekiguchi, M. (2005) "Between ABCD and DCBA: Rise of the New Generation in Asian Indians in the United States." http://homepage3.nifty.com/~mariamma/mar-abcd.pdf .

Sotomayor, M. (1977). "Language, culture, ethnicity in developing self-concept" *Social Casework*, 1977, p. 195-203.

Shah, A. (2004). "Pursuing their Passion." *India Currents Magazine*. July, Vol 18, No. 4.

Shankar, L. & Srikanth, R. (1998). *A Part, Yet Apart.* Temple University Press.

Sue, S. & Sue, D. “Chinese American personality and mental health.” *Amerasia Journal,* 1, 36-49.

Takaki, R. (1998). *Strangers From A Different Shore.* Canada: Little Brown and Company.

Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans Personality Patters, Identity, and Mental Health*. Guilford Press, New York.

United States Census Bureau.(2004) “Highlights from the Census 2000 Demographic Profiles.” http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet.

Wong, K. (1998). “Migration across generations: Whose identity is authentic?” In J. N. Martin, T. K. Nakayama, & L. A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in cultural contexts*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1998.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary. (2004).MICRA, Inc. May 4, 2004 http://www.dictionary.com

Yeh, C. and Huang, K. (1996). “The collective nature of ethnic identity development among Asian American college students.” *Adolescence*, p. 645.

Yung, J. (1995). *Unbound Feet.* A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Appendix A—Project Questionnaire

You are being asked to participate in research which will be conducted by Shonia Kuar, a graduate student in Ethnic Studies at California State University, Sacramento. The study will focus on how Indian Americans have used the influence of their family, culture and U.S. society in terms of their identity development.

Please answer all questions contained in the survey. The information you provide is entirely private and will only be used in the study. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate, or to decide at a later time to stop participating.

Please do not put your name or any other identification of yourself on this survey. If you do not wish to participate, please return the survey. Thank you.

1. What is your Gender?

___ Male ___ Female

2. How old are you?

a) 18-22
b) 23-26
c) 27-30
d) 31-34
e) None of the above, please end the survey

3. Were you born in the United States of America?
   a) Yes
   b) No, please end survey.

4. What is your education level?
   a) High school
   b) Some college
   c) Bachelor's degree
   d) Graduate degree
   e) Other, please specify:

5. How do you identify yourself ethnically?
   a) Punjabi
   b) Hindustani
   c) Gujarati
   d) Tamil
   e) Bengali
   f) Other, please specify:

6. What language do you usually speak at home?
   (Please mark all that apply)
   a) English

   b) Hindi

   c) Punjabi

   d) Gujrati

   e) Tamil

   f) Bengali

   g) Other, please specify:

7. Where did you learn Indian history, traditions and customs from? (Please mark all that apply):
   a) Parents
   b) Grandparents
   c) Temple
   d) Mainstream Media: Television/Magazines/Newspapers
   e) School
   f) Friends
   g) Other, please specify:

8. Where did you learn American history, traditions and customs from (Please mark all that apply):
   a) Parents
   b) Grandparents
   c) Temple
   d) Mainstream Media: Television/Magazines/Newspapers
   e) School
   f) Friends
   g) Other, please specify:

9. Where would it have been most helpful to have information about the experience of growing up an Indian American?
   a) Youth organization
   b) Temple
   c) Magazine or newsletter
   d) Television Show
   e) Internet site
   f) Other, please specify:

10. How often do you wear traditional clothes?
    a) Always
    b) Sometimes
    c) Only once or twice a year
    d) Never

11. What are your food preferences?
    a) Mostly Indian foods
    b) Both Indian and other foods
    c) Mostly other foods

12. Do you feel like you live in two cultures at once?
(For example: Indian at home to follow family teachings and American outside to follow mainstream America's values.)
    a) Strongly Agree
    b) Agree
    c) Disagree
    d) Strongly Disagree

13. How well do you identify with the Indian culture?
    a) Extremely well
    b) Very well
    c) Somewhat
    d) Slightly
    e) Not at all, please specify:

14. How well do you identify with the American culture?
    a) Extremely well
    b) Very well
    c) Somewhat
    d) Slightly
    e) Not at all, please specify:

15. Have you gone through a phase in life where you have chosen not to identify or participate at all or on any level with the Indian culture?

    a) Yes, please specify what age and provide a scenario example:

    b) No, please specify why.

16. Do you have separate Indian and American social circles?
(For example: At the temple, school or work)

    a) Yes, please specify how you separate your social circles:

    b) No, please specify how combine your social circles:

17. Have you ever experienced any hostility because of your Indian background?
    a)Several times
    b) Few times
    c) Once or twice
    d) Never

18. Have you been able to draw from your Indian and American experiences to form your own definition of what it means to be an Indian in the U.S.?
    a) Strongly Agree
    b) Agree
    c) Disagree
    d) Strongly Disagree

19. What are three words that describe a person, like you, who is Indian and born and raised in the U.S.? (Please try to use adjectives or words that illustrate your personality)

20. What are some major influences in your life? (Influences may include clothing, sports, music, food and culture)

21. Would you tune into media (television, movies, newspapers, internet or radio) developed for Indians born and raised in the U.S.?

    a) Yes, please specify why:

    b) No, please specify why:

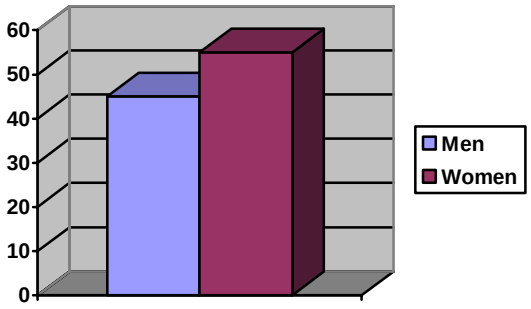
22. Would you be willing to volunteer some of your time to get involved with the next generation of Indian American youth?

    a) Yes, please specify why:

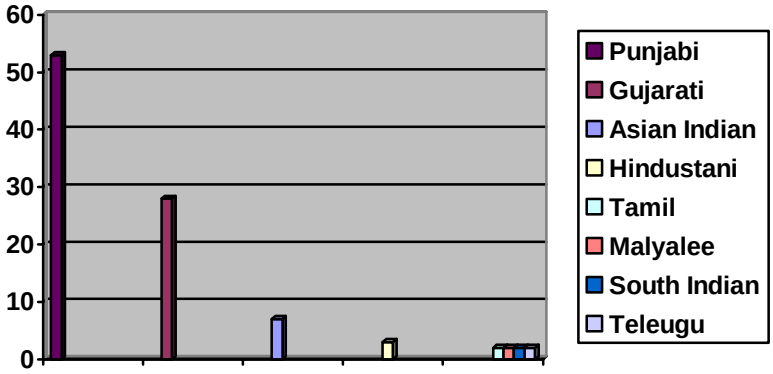
    b) No, please specify why:

Appendix B—Data Graphs

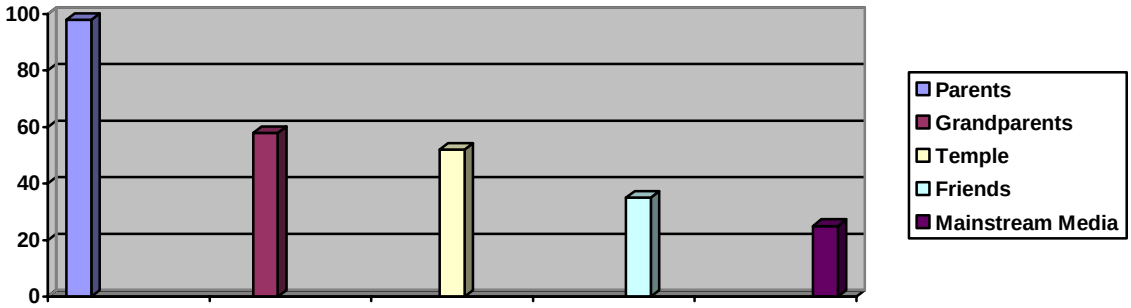
Question 1: What is your gender?



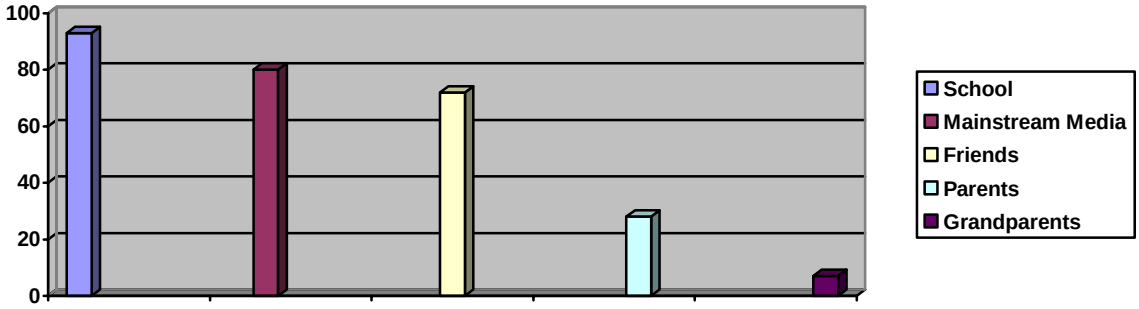
Question 5: How do you identify yourself ethnically?



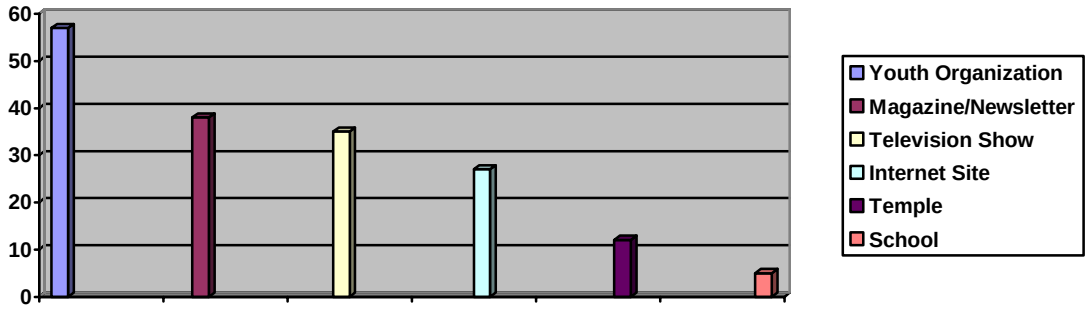
Question 7: Where did you learn Indian history, traditions and customs from?



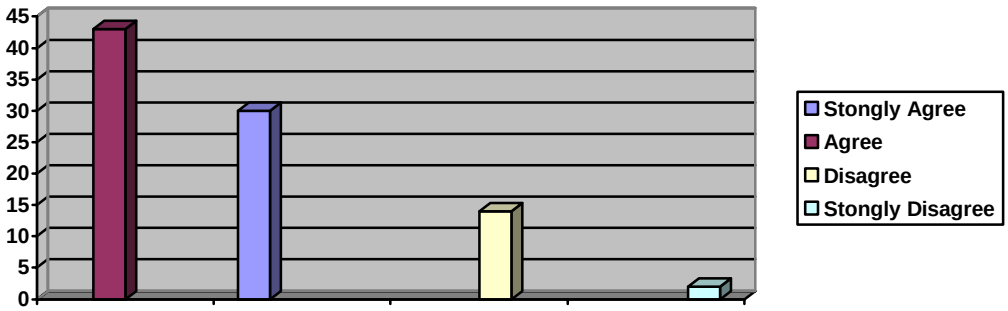
Question 8: Where did you learn American history, traditions and customs from?



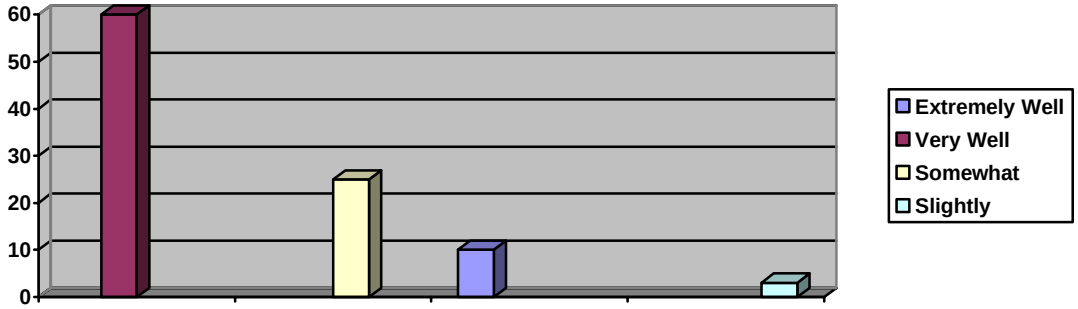
Question 9: Where would it have been most helpful to have information about the experience of growing up Indian American?



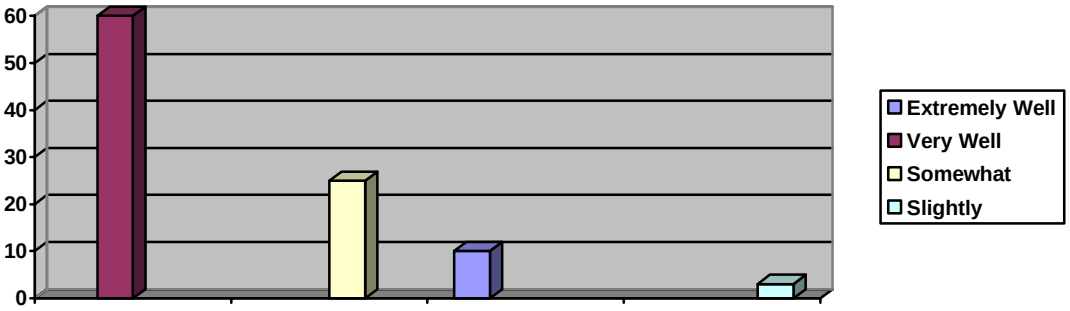
Question 12: Do you feel like you live in two cultures at once?



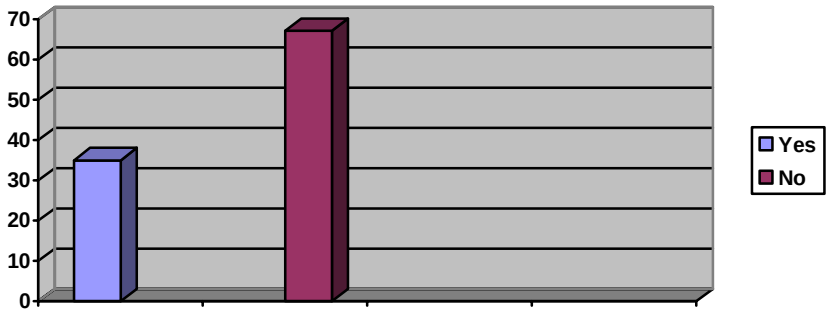
Question 13: How well do you identify with the Indian Culture?



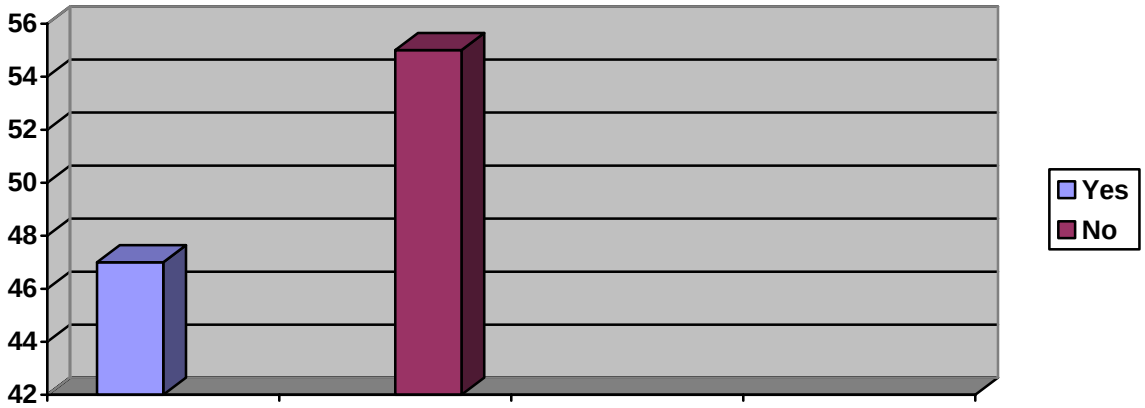
Question 14: How well do you identify with the American Culture?



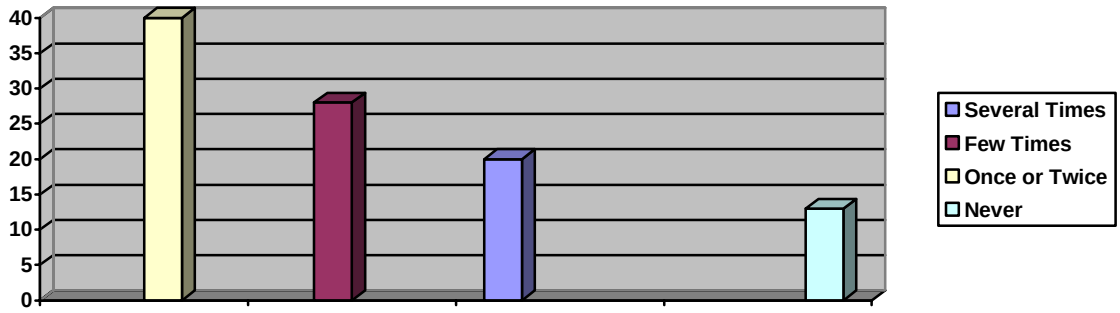
Question 15: Have you gone through a phase in life where you have chosen not to identify or participate on any level with the Indian Culture?



Question 16: Do you have separate Indian and American social circles?



Question 17: Have you ever experienced any hostility because of your Indian background?



Question 18: Have you been able to draw from your Indian and American experiences to form your own definitions of what it means to be Indian in the U.S.?