THE CASE OF HINDUS IN CANADA

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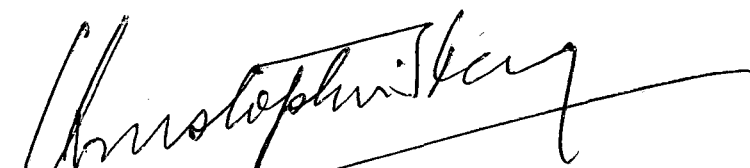JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled **CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES: THE CASE OF HINDUS IN CANADA** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is my own work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.
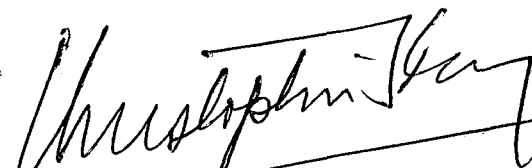
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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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To my beloved
Pappa and Mummy...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS

BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
BNA Act	British North America Act
HSC	Hindu Student Council
NRI	Non Resident Indian
PIO	Person of Indian Origin
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
U.K.	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad

PREFACE

Multiculturalism has been an operating phenomenon in most of the settler and non-settler societies of the world today. Countries with diverse cultures have been engaged in the process of managing diversity within the institutional framework of the nation state. Societies with large immigration flows have been vociferous in declaring their commitment to a multicultural framework primarily to attain the integration of immigrants with full citizenship rights. Many of the non-settler countries of the world have also been multicultural eventhough they are not as vocal as the settler societies in declaring it. However, most of the present day nation states with cultural diversity wish to identify themselves as multicultural, and this indicates the recognition that the concept of multiculturalism has acquired within a relatively short span of time.

India has always been committed to its multicultural character eventhough it is widely known as a plural society. With the co-existence of different cultures as equals in the public domain, India can be located completely within the framework of multiculturalism, eventhough it is not a declared policy of the country. However, multiculturalism has been a social reality and an officially declared policy of Canada. Since we are well aware of the multicultural character of India as we have been experiencing it, present study looks at the multicultural framework and policy as it is declared in Canada. Study becomes more relevant as it looks at the Indian immigration to Canada with special focus on the formation of a Hindu Diaspora under the multicultural framework of Canada.

The objectives of this study are: to make an enquiry in to the thematic aspects of multiculturalism and the way in which it gives recognition to the ethno-cultural and immigrants communities in Canada; to analyze the role of multiculturalism in fostering group identity among immigrant communities in Canada; to understand the history of Canadian immigration policy, Indian immigration to Canada and the growth of Indian diaspora in Canada; to identify the reasons for and implications of the growth of Hindu consciousness as an organized religion among overseas Indian community; to examine the impact of religious and nationalist organizations among

diaspora Hindus and their transnational charter; and to study the role of Hindu diaspora in the context of bilateral relationship between India and Canada.

Hypotheses of the study are: Canadian policy of multiculturalism and its special recognition and support to ethno-cultural minorities help the immigrants to mobilize themselves as minority communities and these mobilizations take different manifestations over the years; religious organizations play an important role in the lives of diaspora communities with the intention of mobilizing support for their activities in the home country; and the advancements in communication and transportation facilities intensify the transnational networks of diaspora communities and it also affects the relations between countries.

This study is based on the primary and secondary literature available on the topic. The primary sources include the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other documents available in official websites of Canada. Statistics Canada and the report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora have been major sources of primary data in this regard. Secondary materials include several books, journal articles and information available on the internet. Historical and analytical methods have been used for the study.

Multiculturalism, notwithstanding the fact that it is comparatively a new area of study in social science, has triggered a series of discourses and debates concerning the co-existence of diverse cultures in a society. It has also given ideological impetus to the movements around the world for equality by different minority communities within their political systems. Diasporic studies have also assumed greater importance today. Indian diaspora which is spread over more than a hundred countries have been a major source of foreign exchange remittances for India. Moreover, Indian diaspora take active participation in the political social and cultural life of their country of settlement. With the developments in communication technology and the means of transportation the ties with the home country have been increasing. They associate themselves with the developments in India and feel proud of their heritage. Indo-Canadians are no exemption. Understanding the nature and implications of such networks and assertions in the host and home countries are of great significance.

Present study focuses on the history of Indian immigration in the context of Canadian multiculturalism and immigration policies from 1900 to 2004. Emphasis is laid on the Hindu immigration to Canada from 1960s to 2004. It also discusses in detail the formation and nature of Hindu diaspora in the light of multiculturalism policy of Canada. Thus, focus of the study is centered on themes such as Multiculturalism, Immigration, Hindu Diaspora, Transnational Networks, Nationalism etc.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Canada, a country of diverse ethnic and immigrant groups, has always been engaged in the process of managing its diversity. Ever since the establishment of Confederation in 1867, the major concern of the policy makers has been to strike the balance between the different ethnic groups in Canada. This was the reason, Canada rejected a unitary form of government and chose the federal institutions as the best means to recognize and protect the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of Canadians. Powers of the Federal and Provincial governments were clearly divided in such a way that the cultural diversity of the country was maintained and protected. Any attempt to tilt the balance of power between the Federal and Provincial governments is, therefore, seen as a threat to the management of diversity in Canada.

Given the demographic and cultural heterogeneity of the country, different ideologies for managing diversity gained prominence in Canada over the years. Like many other European and American societies, Canada for long time managed its diversity by adopting ideologies of assimilation, segregation, and integration. However, under these ideologies of cultural pluralism minority ethnic and immigrant communities had been compelled to renounce their identity and were expected to assimilate or integrate into the larger Canadian identity and those who were identified as 'unassimilable' were segregated. Government policies and programmes explicitly endorsed the majority concerns, values and institutions against that of the minorities and they were treated as second class citizens. However, these models of managing diversity were proved to be inappropriate in a modern liberal democracy where notions of equality, justice and liberty are respected and protected. Thus, the search for new ideologies of cultural pluralism continued and found its answer in the form of official multiculturalism policy in early 1970s. Since then multiculturalism, with its different dimensions and approaches, has been the guiding principle for the management of diversity in Canada. Government policies and programmes relating to the cultural diversity of the country have been formulated and oriented towards the ideology and principles of multiculturalism. The conviction that the Canadian identity is rooted in the celebration of diversity, rather than in the elimination of differences, continues to shape the Canadian public discourse. Right form the beginning, multiculturalism, therefore, has been a major theme of academic discourse, political debate, and a social reality in Canada.

The ideology of multiculturalism stands for the co-existence of different cultures as equals in the public domain. Different societies are characterized by the co-existence of diverse cultures. However, different scholars have argued that the mere co-existence of diverse cultures does not mean that such a society is multicultural. Mere co-existence of diverse cultures in a society can only be termed as cultural plurality or heterogeneity. Multiculturalism is different from these ideologies of cultural pluralism as it goes beyond the mere presence of various communities and cultures within the same social space. Multiculturalism is concerned with the notion of equality and insists that a society will be multicultural, in its complete sense, only when the different cultures of that society peacefully co-exist as equals in the public domain. Thus, the emphasis on the notion of equality makes multiculturalism different from other theories of cultural plurality. The focus of contemporary multiculturalism is radically different from the earlier notions of pluralism and cultural difference such as pluralism, diversity, heterogeneity etc. It is opposed to the exclusionist policies of cultural pluralism and embraces liberal ideals such as freedom, tolerance, acceptance, respect etc. Hence, contemporary multiculturalism is more than a theory of minority rights. It is a conception of democracy in which members of diverse cultures are represented as equals in the public domain.[1] The ideology of multiculturalism is, therefore, well within the institutional structures and framework of democracy that are propounded by liberal thinkers.

Multicultural theorists attribute positive value to the cultural diversity. They argue that as part of promoting cultural diversity, minority cultures must be differentiated on the ground that they are otherwise marginalized and discriminated in the society. Therefore, multiculturalism argues that apart from the special consideration given to the minority communities, some special rights must be granted that would enable them to sustain themselves and to maintain their distinct identity in the society they are living in. However, multiculturalism does not deny the idea of universal citizenship. But it argues that the existence of universal citizenship may not be sufficient enough all the time as it speaks only of the rights of individuals as citizens of a state and not as members of a cultural community. Multicultural theorists argue that democracies must go beyond the universal citizenship rights of the citizens to recognize their cultural differences so as to

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[1] The concept of multiculturalism within a democratic framework has been elaborated by Gurpreet Mahajan in her book *The Multicultural Path: Issues of Diversity and Discrimination in Democracy* (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2002), pp.11-18

facilitate their equal participation in the society. This can be found in the writings of Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh, Joseph Carens, Gurpreet Mahajan etc.

Because of its recognition of cultural diversity, Canada has not followed the standard model of liberal republicanism, in which citizens are granted a uniform set of individual rights based on a common citizenship, it has accepted the existence of cultural groups, and minority cultures are granted special recognition to protect their identity in Canada. Based on this Canada has chosen some measure of protection and differentiated treatment for minority communities in the country on the premise that they need special recognition to resist the pressures of integration or assimilation in to the mainstream culture. The special recognition and differentiated treatment for the minority cultures granted has been based on the notion of group rights.[2] Group based rights can be exercised either individually or collectively by the members of the minority groups in the country in order to protect their cultural identity. The British North American Act, 1867 and the Constitution Act, 1982 each recognize a range of group based rights- for example, educational rights for religious minorities (BNA Act) and minority language educational rights (the Charter of Rights and Freedoms) - that are held by individuals, but exercised collectively through institutional arrangements granting the right to public funding to the minority groups for their protection and growth. However, group based rights are not completely collective in the complete sense, and most of such rights are enjoyed individually rather than by the group as a whole.[3] Thus, the group-based rights guaranteed by Canada are well with in the framework of a liberal democratic society as most of the group-based rights are enjoyed by the individuals based on their group membership.[4] However, this ensures the special recognition for ethno-cultural minorities in Canada.

Multiculturalism has been a sociological reality and a government policy in Canada. A number of prescriptions underpin this ideology and policy; a serious commitment to cultural differences, ideals of unity within diversity, principle of cultural relativism,

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[2] Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon, *The "Canadian Diversity Model": A Repertoire in Search of a Framework* (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper, November 2001), p. 12-13. www.cprn.org, Accessed on 10th January, 2006

[3] Ibid. 13-14

[4] The relationship between the liberal principles and group-based rights has been elaborated by Will Kymlicka in his book *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 34-48.

respecting the other cultures, active and positive role of the state, celebration of the 'cultural mosaic', commitment to equality, participation and inclusiveness. Multiculturalism therefore is not just the assertion of tolerance or the celebration of diversity, but it is concerned with the equality of cultures in a democratic society. Canadian multiculturalism is based on the belief that beyond the commitment to certain common values of the Canadian society and polity individuals of a cultural group may be allowed to identify and participate in the life of a cultural group that they belong to. This is not in contradiction with the individual rights guaranteed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as the citizenship is not based on group membership. However, it recognizes the rights of each ethno-cultural minority to maintain its distinctiveness and they are supported to do so by giving public funding for cultural practices. With the introduction of multiculturalism policy, ethno-cultural minorities of Canada, who were other wise ghettoized by the English and French, secured equal rights and began to assert themselves because of the special and differentiated treatment extended to them. Ethno-cultural and other immigrant communities who had been dispersed and unorganized till then began to mobilize themselves on the basis of different identities as they received the support of the Canadian state and their cultural practices could be exercised with official recognition.

The introduction of the official multiculturalism policy, in practice has facilitated the entry and identification of many ethnic minority groups in Canada. Canadian immigration policy which had been racially discriminative over the years underwent serious changes in the wake of country's commitment to a multicultural policy. This has encouraged the entry of number of immigrants from non-traditional sources and Canada became a home for number of ethno-racial minorities. This is because, multiculturalism advocates the interest of not just geographically distinct minority groups but also of the dispersed immigrant minority populace. Critics of the official policy have argued that multiculturalism promotes an understanding of Canadian society as composed on multiple 'parallel' cultural groups. Critics from the Left as well as Right have alleged that multiculturalism weakens the common identity of all Canadians as, in practice, it allows the immigrants to maintain stronger ties with their country of origin than with Canada, and it continues even into the next generations.[5] Thus, it can be stated that

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[5] Ibid. p.36-37

multiculturalism facilitates the mobilization of otherwise dispersed and unorganized immigrants as an organized community so that they can evade marginalization and discrimination and can enjoy the recognition and support granted to the minority communities. Thus the members of the minority communities tend to act collectively and not merely individually to fight for their rights.

Minority rights are protected not only through the power of the mobilization of immigrants themselves but also through the actions of indigenous organizations in the host society. Immigrants up on their arrival in Canada, generally face the problem of identification with a group. Such immigrants are mobilized by the organizations working in the host community. The main characteristic feature of these organizations is their direct or indirect association with groups working in the country of origin of immigrants and their motive has often been to mobilize the support of diaspora communities outside for their activities in the home country. The ideology and practices of these organizations are multifarious and sometimes can even be destructive and divisive in nature. Thus immigrant organizations facilitate the association and mobilization of the immigrants and encourage the vigorous assertion of their interests within and out side Canada. It further leads to the formal establishment of trans-national networks of the immigrants and strengthens the ties with their home countries. Such transnational networks have different dimensions and implications as they often indulge, directly or indirectly, in diverse kinds of activities.

Canada is a country with diverse ethnic groups and the Indian Diaspora ranks among the top five immigrant communities of the country. Migration of people of Indian origin to Canada dates back to the early twentieth century, majority of them being Punjabi-Sikhs. Early Indian immigrants had to face severe problems up on their arrival in Canada as the immigration policies blatantly discriminated against the non-White immigrants. Canada for long followed a selective immigration policy and only in late 1960s and 1970s immigrants from different parts of the world could migrate to Canada. Indian immigration to Canada, especially non-Sikh Hindu immigrants, remained stagnant until the changes in immigration policies were initiated. Major group of Hindus migrated to Canada as part of the large influx of Indian professionals as independent immigrants in the 1960s. Indian immigrants who had to face racial exclusion and marginalization in the early 1900s began to enjoy better social conditions in Canada in the wake of multiculturalism. The policy of

multiculturalism has tried to improve the status of different ethnic communities in which the Indian Diaspora is a prominent one. Apart from the larger grouping of Indian Diaspora, the Hindus of Canada could also emerge as what is called the Hindu Diaspora. Today, Hindu religious community is one of the most rapidly growing ethnic groups and according to the 1991 Census, the Hindu population of Canada was 157010. The projections of the Statistics Canada show that the Hindus of Canada will increase to 5.83 lacks by 2017.

As the Hindus in Canada mobilize themselves as a community, the proclaimed *Hinduness* or the Hindu consciousness of the immigrants also increase. What existed as worship, rituals and celebrations in the form of family events within home, started becoming group events comprising few families. This grew into large group events and many temples and large organizations were also formed over the years. These temples and the *gurus* (religious leaders) associated with it, and the Hindu cultural and religious organizations, including the Hindu nationalist organizations such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), started enjoying a considerable degree of influence in the lives of the immigrants. Hindu organizations and temples influence the patters of worship and rituals of the immigrants along with other issues such as the education of the second generation immigrants, relationship with other communities, public policy issues and also the relationship with the home land and the Hindu religious groups in India and in other parts of the world. Hindu nationalist organizations working in Canada have been indulged in the task of mobilizing support of the overseas Indians for their activities back in Indian. They have also been instrumental in making Hinduism an identity for all the Hindus settled in different parts of the world and attempt to create a transnational Hindu diaspora making use of the advancements in communication and transportation facilities. Occasionally they take different and extreme manifestations and also play a major role in the development of government to government and people to people cooperation between India and Canada.

Chapter Outline

Present study is an attempt to comprehend the ideology of Canadian multiculturalism in general and way in which it deals with the immigrant and religious communities of the country. First chapter is a modest attempt to introduce the concept and focus of

multiculturalism, its distinction from other theories of cultural plurality and locate it within the liberal democratic framework. It also narrates the evolution of Canadian multiculturalism policy, its various dimensions, and explains how immigrant communities in Canada who are otherwise dispersed and unorganized rely on their religious identity to create an ethnic group identity under the multicultural character of the Canadian society. It is also argued that the recognition and support given to the ethno-cultural minorities promote such group identification as it becomes imperative for the immigrant communities to identify themselves as an ethno-cultural minority which is different from other minority communities in Canada.

Chapter two makes a historic enquiry in to the Canadian immigration policy and the corresponding immigration trends over the years. Racially selective immigration policy of Canada which blatantly discriminated the Asian and other non-White immigrants has been discussed here. It also describes the hardships that the early Indian immigrants had to face in Canada with special reference of the Komagata Maru incident of 1914. Indian immigration to Canada in the context of racially discriminative immigration policy and after the changes in policy has also been described in this chapter. Last part of this chapter discusses the growth of a prominent Indian diaspora and its character in the wake of multicultural policy of Canada.

History of Hindu immigration to Canada and its evolution as an organized religious diaspora has been discussed in chapter three of the dissertation. Large number of Hindu immigration to Canada began only in the late 1960s and early 1970s when 'point system' was adopted for the entry of immigrants. With the introduction of multiculturalism policy immigrants from non-traditional sources began to reach Canada in large numbers. This made the way for Hindu immigrants from India to enter Canada as they were professionally qualified and could match the 'points' required for the immigrants according to the new criteria. Hindu immigrants began to mobilize themselves under their religious identity and constructed number of temples through out Canada. However, this process has been precipitated by the Hindu nationalist organizations like Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu Students' Councils (HSC) working in Canada. It also explains the way in which Hindu religious identity has been used by these organizations to mobilize overseas Indians and describes their attempt to make Hinduism a unified and

homogenous religion comprising its differen. sects. Chapter also discusses the transnational and nationalist character of the Hindu diaspora in Canada and their relationship with the 'homeland.' It also discusses the role of women in maintaining Hindu religious rituals and practices among the diaspora Hindus. Nature of religious education in the lives of second and third generation Hindu children and the role of Hindu nationalist organization in this process is also described here. The focus is laid on the nature of activities of the VHP, RSS and HSC and the long-distance nationalism of the Hindu immigrants in Canada. Last part of the chapter analyses how the multiculturalism policy has facilitated the group identification of Hindu immigrants in Canada.

The last chapter attempts to make short summery of the major arguments taking cue from the analysis made in the previous chapters. It concludes that with the introduction of multicultural policy immigrants in Canada emerged as a powerful component of the social and political system of the country. Indian immigrants, especially the Hindus, are also benefited from this. However, over a period of time, they took different manifestations with diverse implications.

CHAPTER I

Multiculturalism, Group Recognition and Immigrant Mobilization in Canada

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Introducing Multiculturalism

The concept of multiculturalism is relatively novel in social science literature despite the fact that cultural plurality has always been a social reality. Multiculturalism, as a movement and a dominant theme of debate emerged only in the early 1970s, first in Canada and Australia followed by U.S.A, U.K and elsewhere. Canada was the first country in the world to incorporate multiculturalism into the federal and provincial policies following the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1971. Many countries of the world, today, wish to identify themselves as 'multicultural' and the philosophy of multiculturalism has been one of the dominant themes of social science literature and discourse.

As indicated in the beginning, co-existence of different cultures within a society is not a modern phenomenon. However, multiculturalism is relatively a new conception. This indicates that there is a notable difference between cultural plurality and multiculturalism. Although terms such as 'pluralism,' 'diversity,' 'heterogeneity' etc. are used to denote the existence of two or more cultures in a society, proponents of multiculturalism maintain that it makes a shift from the old concepts as the term 'multicultural' covers many different forms of cultural pluralism.[1] Cultural plurality has been a hallmark of many societies for a very long time. However, the existence of plurality at the societal level does not imply that multiculturalism as a value prevailed in these societies. Whereas pluralism points to the simultaneous presence of many cultures and communities within the same social space, multiculturalism entails something more and beyond the mere presence of diverse cultures. It is concerned with the peaceful co-existence of members of different cultures as equals in the public arena. It is this emphasis on equality that distinguishes multiculturalism from

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[1] Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.10

pluralism. The focus of contemporary multiculturalism is, therefore, radically different from the earlier notions of pluralism and cultural difference. It is not just the assertion of tolerance, nor is it just a celebration of diversity, but it is concerned with the equality of cultures in a democratic society. Contemporary multiculturalism is, therefore, more than a theory of minority rights. It is a conception of democracy in which members of diverse cultures are represented as equals in the public domain.[2] The ideology of multiculturalism is, therefore, well within the institutional structures and framework of democracy that are propounded by liberal thinkers.

The conceptual framework of multiculturalism encapsulates a number of interrelated perceptions. It underscores the need to have a stable identity, emphasizes the contribution of cultural communities to the fulfillment of this need and brings out the link between identity and recognition. It stresses the importance of cultural belonging and legitimizes the desire to maintain difference.[3] The whole debate and literature on multiculturalism, therefore, are centered on the interpretations of self, justice, equality, rights, and freedom that are largely dealt within liberal discourse. The concern about accommodating differences or diversity in a democratic nation state starts from the premises of identity. The recognition of one's identity is important for his/her life. It is socially constituted and carries the assumption of equality also. Charles Taylor argues that there are two trajectories of equal recognition. The first, emphasizing the equal dignity of all citizens- a politics of universalism and the content of this politics has been the equality of rights and entitlements. The second trajectory is the politics of difference, which means that everyone should be recognized for his/her unique identity in the public domain. These two trajectories produce different kinds of policies. While one fought against discrimination, other wanted distinctions to be recognized in constituting politics. To Taylor, the politics of equality or rights require that people should be treated in a difference-blind fashion, which has often led to reverse discrimination so that disadvantaged groups can establish a competitive edge over others. On the other hand, the politics of difference suggests that differences be cherished. The difference blind principle can not, but

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[2] Gurpreet Mahajan, *The Multicultural Path: Issues of Diversity and Discrimination in Democracy* (New Delhi: age Publications, 2002), pp.11-18

[3] Rajeev Bhargava, "Introducing Multiculturalism" in Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi and R. Sudharshan (ed.), *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy,* (New Delhi:Oxford University Press, 1999), p.1

upholds the hegemonic culture and such a society turns out to be highly discriminatory. The role of the state, therefore, is to uphold right and affirm identities. [4] This argument is seen as one of the normative foundations of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism, according to Bhikhu Parekh, should be understood as perspective on or a way of viewing human life. It is composed of the creative interplay of three important and complementary insights, namely, the cultural embeddedness of human beings, desirable interaction of different cultures, and the plural and multicultural constitution of each culture. The first principle implies that the human beings grow up and live within a culturally structured world and organize their lives and social relations in terms of a culturally derived system of meanings and significance. It does not mean that they are unable to rise above their cultural structures and institutions, but they are deeply shaped by it, and necessarily view the world from within a culture. Second insight maintains that since different cultures represent different systems of meaning and visions of good life, it is desirable that cultures interact with each other so that one can understand his/her own culture better, expand its intellectual horizon, stretch its imagination and so on. Last principle is based on the assumption that every culture is internally plural and reflects a continuing conversation between its different traditions and strands of thought. A culture's relation to itself shapes, and is in turn shaped by, its relation to others and their internal and external pluralities presuppose and reinforce each other. A culture can not appreciate the values of others unless it appreciates the plurality within it. Thus a multicultural society, according to Parekh, cherishes the diversity of and encourages a creative dialogue between its different cultures and their moral visions. Such a society will last only by developing a common sense of belonging among its citizens. [5] Thus the idea of difference and heterogeneity that is embodied in the concepts of diversity and pluralism is being endorsed by multiculturalism; it also explains how these different cultures co-exist, as equals, in the society.

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[4] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" in Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 33-44

[5] Bhikhu, Parekh, "What is Multiculturalism", *Seminar,* (No- 484, December 1999), pp-14-17

Multicultural theorists attribute positive value to cultural diversity. For Will Kymlicka, human beings are "cultural creatures," that cultures are essential to their development as human beings; culture gives them with meaningful options, defines and structures their world and also gives them a sense of identity.[6] Kymlicka attempts to reconstruct the Liberal discourse on multiculturalism with an emphasis on community and culture. He tries to find out the fair way to relate cultural identities and distribute power in a multicultural society; in other words what constitutes justice in multicultural society is his primary concern. For him, incorporation of national minorities and immigration are the two sources of cultural diversity in modern states.[7] National minorities necessitates the coexistence of more than one nation within a state, where 'nation' means a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territorial homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture. So a country which contains more than one nation, according to Kymlicka, is not a nation-state but a multination state, and the smaller cultures form 'national minorities'. The second source of cultural pluralism is immigration. A country would be culturally plural if it accepts large numbers of immigrants from other cultures, and allows them to maintain some of their ethnic particularity. This makes one country a polyethnic state. In Kymlicka's opinion, many of the modern nation states are multinational and polyethnic. He says that by the beginning of 1970s immigrants in many states started asserting their right to ethnic particularity, and under pressure from the immigrant groups, countries rejected their old models of cultural pluralism such as assimilation, integration and segregation, and adopted a more tolerant and pluralistic policy, which allows and encourages immigrants to maintain various aspects of their cultural heritage, emerged.[8] This resulted in the emergence of multicultural policies around the world. He argues that the vast bulk of the multiculturalism policies demanded by the immigrants involve improving the terms of integration to make them fairer. Fairness requires an ongoing, systematic exploration of institutions to see whether the rules, structures and symbols disadvantage the immigrants. The idea of multiculturalism can be seen as precisely an attempt to

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[6] Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp-161-165

[7] Will Kymlicka, n.1, p. 24

[8] Ibid. pp.11-17

negotiate such terms.[9]

The advocates of multiculturalism argue that if the equality for diverse cultures is to be ensured, the liberal democracies have to go beyond the notion of universal citizenship rights by providing some special group-differentiated rights to its minority cultures. Thus, multiculturalism argues that democracies would have to give institutional and public recognition to minority cultures through a system of group rights to provide opportunities to immigrant cultures to survive themselves in society. In this context Kymlicka speaks of three kinds of group differentiated rights to the minority cultures, namely, self-government rights, polyethnic rights and self-representation rights. In his opinion, self-government rights to the national minorities can be ensured through the mechanism of federalism; group-specific measures by the state can ensure the rights of ethnic groups, and special representation rights for the minorities should also be guaranteed.[10] Thus Kymlicka makes strong arguments in favour of multiculturalism and the system of group-differentiated rights within it. But the notion of group-based rights has invited criticisms from many quarters especially from the feminists. The main point of disagreement for the feminists, as far as group rights are concerned, is the existence of intra-group inequalities of cultures. Multiculturalism, however, has raised important questions about the status of minorities within the nation state, and, as a political doctrine, provides an equitable way of managing the cultural pluralism in a diverse society.

Canada: From Anglo-Conformity to Multiculturalism

Canada, a country of astonishingly diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious groups, has been well renowned for forging and preserving the unity and cohabitation of these groups which are heterogeneous in character. The ideology for this unity in diversity has been evolved, historically, through a policy of official multiculturalism. Demographically, the society in Canada has broadly been divided in to three major groups. First, the Indigenous peoples of the country who include the Inuit, the Métis and the Status and non-status Indians (together called the First Peoples), account for

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[9] Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.162-165

[10] Will Kymlicka, n.1, pp. 26-33

about 3 percent of the population. They are the first settlers and therefore the legitimate original peoples of Canada. The second major component of the Canadian society is the so called Charter Groups, the English and the French, constitute nearly 60 percent of the total population in which the French is a minority. In addition to the Indigenous peoples and the founding British and French groups, there are a wide variety of ethnic groups who account for the rest of the population including large numbers of Ukrainian, Chinese, Black, German, Italian, South-Asian and Caribbean among others. Given this demographic and cultural diversity, the Canadian state has always been engaged in a process of integrating these divergent groups and identities in a single political community of Canada. Thus in the words of Will Kymlicka, the policy of multiculturalism is in continuous evolution involving an ongoing renegotiation of the terms of fairness and integration in Canada.[11] Hence official policy of multiculturalism has to strike the balance between the claims and counter claims of these multiple and divergent identities and in this continuing process it is faced with threats of failures, eventual success- need not be absolute, and criticisms.

Multiculturalism was a social fact in Canada long before it featured as an issue of public policy. Even at confederation in 1867, Canada consisted of quite a mix of peoples. The aboriginal peoples, who accounted for a few hundred thousand, were divided into many nations, cultures and ethnicities. The French who entered in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century were concentrated in Quebec and New Brunswick although they were present in other parts of the Canada as well. The British who came after the French were not a unified group. They came from different places to settle in Canada. There were English from thirteen colonies who had left America after the Revolution, American immigrants from the independent USA, Scots and Irish. Number of Europeans also reached Canada over the years. Afro-Americans who had to suffer the evils of slavery also entered Canada and made permanent settlements in many parts of the country. Germans and Ukrainians began to reach Canada and they contributed in the development of the agriculture of the country. Chinese and Indians migrated to Canada to work in railway building and the lumber industry by the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Twentieth century witnessed the large scale influx of immigrants to Canada

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[11] Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 49-59

from different parts of the world. Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, refugees from Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Latin America, people from Caribbean, Indians, Chinese and from entire Asia and Africa etc. As a result of the change in immigration policy the direction of immigration to Canada changed from Europe to Asia. In the words of Donald E. Waterfall, this has created a Canada of striking new patterns.[12]

However the official recognition of the diversity of the population has been relatively recent. Until 1960s governmental policy concerning the immigration was based upon the principle that those who were admitted into Canadian society should assimilate into the dominant British and French ethnic groups. Even the policy regarding the native peoples was dominated by the same principle; it was aimed at isolation and gradual assimilation.[13] The immigration policy had been harsh upon those who were considered unassimilable. Covert and overt exclusionary measures were directed against Chinese, Japanese, South Asians, Blacks and other visible minorities. Although many speakers and writers praised the situation in which ethnic groups could retain their distinctive identity and yet be Canadian, in contrast to the American 'Melting pot', it remained only in rhetoric and the public policy continued to be governed by the notion of 'Anglo-conformity', that is, the assumption that the immigrants admitted to the country or their descendents would assimilate to the British group. Little support was given either by the federal or the provincial governments to groups that wanted to maintain their old ethnic and cultural heritage.

The change in attitudes and policies began to take place in the 1960s. During this decade the relations between English Canadians and French Canadians became very critical, which has been one of the greatest crises in the Canadian polity. With the increasing concern about human rights and the emergence of ethnicity and nationalism in many parts of the world, a tumultuous nationalism developed in

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[12] Donald E. Waterfall, "Multiculturalism Policy in Canada" in Kushal Deb (ed.), *Mapping Multiculturalism*, (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002), pp. 222-224.

[13] Jean Burnet, "Multiculturalism in Canada" in Leo Driedger (ed.), *Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities,* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1987), pp. 65-66.

Quebec also.[14] The response of the federal government to the situation was the setting up of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963.

The Commission was expected to look into the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races. It carried out a massive research programme and made numerous recommendations concerning all the aspects of ethnicity and diversity in Canada. Before the Commission could complete its work, it became evident that the problem of Canadian cultures could not be adequately approached without also considering the presence of 'other' ethnic groups in Canada and the issue of cultural diversity.[15] By the end of the 1960s the demographic patterns of Canada well reflected the effects of increased immigration. According to the Canadian census of 1971, 33.9 percent, or one-third of the total Canadian population, were first and second generation immigrants. Sociologically, this meant that at least one-third of the total population had been either fully or partially socialized in cultures other than what, in the past, was considered as 'Canadian' and that they would begin to make some political demands of their own.[16] In the end, the Commission devoted Book IV of its report which appeared in March 1970, to the other ethnic groups; and recommended the 'integration' (not assimilation) into Canadian society of non-Charter ethnic groups with full citizenship rights and equal participation in Canada's institutional structure. The recommendations of the Commission hastened the introduction of an innovative ethnocultural policy. On October 8, 1971, Canada's first official policy of multiculturalism, entitled "Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework" was announced by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau accepting all the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

After the declaration of first multiculturalism policy in 1971, the government began to support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups which were considered

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[14]Jean R. Burnet and Howard Palmer, *Coming Canadians: An Introduction to the History of Canada's Peoples,* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), p. 223.

[15]Wsevolod W. Isajiw, *Understanding Diversity: Ethnicity and Race in the Canadian Context* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing. INC., 1999), p. 246.

[16] Ibid. p. 247

to be giving structure and vitality to the Canadian society. In the implementation of the policy government was expected to provide support in four ways;

> First, resources permitting, the government will seek to assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance, the small and weak group no less than the strong and highly organized. Second, the government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society. Third, the government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity. Fourth, the government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society.[17]

In the years that followed, not only the federal government but most of the provinces were actively engaged in promoting multiculturalism. The federal government appointed a minister of state responsible for multiculturalism in 1972. Through the multiculturalism Directorate within the Department of the Secretary of the State, it carried on number of activities with ethnic communities for the promotion of their cultures. A number of provinces also proclaimed policies of multiculturalism and took initiatives in the spheres under their jurisdiction. Several significant legislations were passed. The Citizenship Act that came into effect in 1977 abolished the preferential treatment previously accorded to British subjects who applied for Canadian citizenship. The Canadian Human Rights Act passed in 1977, outlawed discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, or colour or a number of other factors within the federal area of legislative competence. The Immigration Act proclaimed in 1978 reiterated the principles of universality and non-discrimination.[18]

The 1980s witnessed a growing institutionalization of multicultural policy. In 1982 multiculturalism was referred to in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Section 27 of the Charter stated, that "this Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of

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[17] Canada, House of Commons Debates, 1971, pp. 8545-46 cited in Jean R. Burnet and Howard Palmer, n, 14, p. 225.

[18] Jean R. Burnet and Howard Palmer, n.14, p. 225.

Canadians." [19] Moreover, the Charter intended to eliminate the expressions of discrimination by guaranteeing both equality and fairness to all under the law, regardless of race or ethnicity. Section 15 (1) stated that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability."[20] Hence, the Constitution Act of 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which came in to effect in 1985 enshrined multiculturalism as a distinguishing characteristic of Canadian life. Earlier in 1984, the Special Parliamentary Committee on Visible Minorities had produced its well-known report *Equality Now*, and in 1985 a House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism was created. The Committee, in an extensive report in 1987, called for the enactment of a new policy on multiculturalism and the creation of the Department of Multiculturalism. A new multiculturalism policy came into effect in July 1988 when the *Multiculturalism Act* was adopted by Parliament. Canada was the first country in the world to pass a national multiculturalism law. It restated and reinforced the 1971 policy objectives and, in addition, it brought up the issue of equality. [21] The Act acknowledged multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society with an integral role in the decision-making process of the federal government. The Multiculturalism Act sought to assist in the preservation of culture and language to enhance cultural awareness and understanding, to reduce discrimination, to promote culturally sensitive institutional change at the federal level, and to ensure equal treatment and equal protection under the law for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada.

Section (3) of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act states; "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to; (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society

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[19] *Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*,
http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pdp-hrp/canada/guide/index_e.cfm, accessed on 5th February, 2006

[20] Ibid.

[21] Wsevolod W. Isajiw, n.15, p.248.

to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage; (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future; (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation; (d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development; (e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity; (f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character; (g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins; (h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures; (i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.[22] Thus Multiculturalism Act offered to ensure fair terms of integration for the immigrants within the institutional structures of Canada. Even though it was initiated to review the bilingual and bicultural framework involving the English and French, multiculturalism ended up giving unprecedented acceptance and importance to the immigrant population of the country with special recognition and support for their unique cultures. In this context it can be stated that the immigrant communities of Canada acquired a recognized position in the country which had not been there till then.

Multiculturalism as an Ideology in Canada

Ideologies for managing diversity have evolved over time and in different places. Canada for a long time managed diversity by adopting ideologies of assimilation,

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[22] *Canadian Multiculturalism Act,* http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act_e.cfm, accessed on 5th February, 2006

segregation, and integration, like many other countries of Europe and America.[23] Under the first conception of assimilation immigrants to Canada were expected to renounce their old culture and adopt the cultural practices, values and behaviour of English-Canadians. This was built on the assumption that Canada should exclusively follow the British model which is considered to be superior to other models and the cultural values of the dominant society were considered superior and that of others as subordinate and inferior. It was a process of absorbing, deliberately or unintentionally, other cultures in to the dominant culture. When Canada began to identify itself independent of British identity coupled with the difficulty in the assimilation of many immigrant group the ideology of assimilation was relegated and the search for new ideologies of managing diversity began. Although Canada has not followed the strict policy of segregation in its full sense the elements of colour-bar ideology existed in Canadian society for some time. Under this policy dominant and subordinate cultures were forcefully lived apart and the society was divided on cultural lines without any interaction between them. Ideal of integration or the 'Melting Pot' ideal emerged prominent over a period of time in Canada as in the case of many other countries. Integration aimed at forging a new Canadian identity through the interaction of the dominant and other cultures of Canada. This new identity claimed to have the best elements of all the cultures of Canada. This was initiated more on the lines of American ideal of Melting Pot where all the cultures fuse together to form one single culture.

But none of these ideologies proved to be efficient in the acceptance of diversity as it existed in Canada; instead these ideologies of cultural pluralism explicitly endorsed the majority concerns, values, and institutions. Fleras and Elliott write that differences were rejected completely as inconceivable for national unity and identity, or pushed into the margins to minimize their relevance to the society. Diversity was viewed as irrelevant and unnecessary to the process of nation building.[24] Even the government policies and programmes were oriented in these lines and other cultures were considered to be contrary to Canada-building.

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[23] Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliott, *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada*, (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002.), p.37

[24] Augie Fleras and Leonard Elliott, *Multiculturalism in Canada: The challenge of Diversity* (Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1992), pp.53-62

As the number of immigrants increased over the years especially in the 1950s and 1960s the ideology of multiculturalism gained more acceptance and became very popular. Kushal Deb identifies the reasons behind the growth of such a liberal ideology around this time in Canada. First; the new wave of immigrants entered Canada during this period were well educated or professionals and this helped to break down the rigid correlation between class and ethnicity; second, the decline of the supremacy of Britain as a world power after the World War made it a less attractive model to follow. Moreover the rising Canadian nationalism wanted a self-image to distinguish itself from the 'melting pot' ideology of America. The most important of all was the dramatic changes brought about by the Quebec nationalism. The increasing self-assertion of the Quebec nationalists and the mounting divisions between the English and French Canadians led to the formation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.[25] It must be stated in this context, as Professor Kallen put it, that the impetus for Canada's multicultural policy lay in the negative response of immigrant ethnic minorities to the mandate of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Reacting against a policy that would relegate non-English and non-French Canadians to the status of second-class citizens, spokespersons for the immigrant ethnic collectives demanded equal treatment.[26] The Royal Commission responded positively to the demand of the dominant ethnic groups of the country that the patterns and values of their cultures and their contributions to the Canada-building should also be taken seriously when it deals with the diversity of Canadian society which ultimately led to the introduction of multicultural policy in Canada.

Multiculturalism as an ideology substantially differs from the other policies of cultural pluralism such as assimilation, segregation and integration. It ascribes a positive value to the existence of diversity and considers it as necessary, beneficial and inescapable feature of Canadian society. It also upholds the rights of minorities to

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[25] Kushal Deb, "Irreconcilable Solitudes: Nationalism and Multiculturalism in Canada" in Kushal Deb (ed.), *Mapping Multiculturalism*, (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002), p.236

[26] E. Kallen, *Ethnicity and Human Rights in Canada* (Toronto: Gage, 1982), p.165

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retain aspects of their culture practices without loss of social equality.[27] Contrary to the idea of absorption of other cultures into the dominant culture under the policy of assimilation, multiculturalism renounces the belief of superiority of the majority culture and considers ethno racial minorities as equal participants of the Canadian mosaic. Whereas segregation is likely to promote separatist tendencies by different marginalized groups, multiculturalism ensures the co-existence of different societal patterns on an equal footing. When integration encourages the creation of a new identity through the fusion of cultures, multiculturalism endorses a mosaic of plurality where all the cultures are given the opportunity to maintain its separate identity within the larger framework of a Canadian polity. A close examination of the old ideologies of managing diversity and the response of the Canadian society to those policies suggest that multiculturalism has been an advance over the previous ideologies.

Multiculturalism is considered to be the apex of cultural pluralism. There are few ideals that constitute the ideology of Canadian multiculturalism. They are: a strong commitment to differences, the ideal of diversity within unity, notion of cultural relativism, respect for other cultures and practices, idea of a cultural mosaic and commitment towards equality, participation and inclusiveness.[28] Multiculturalism as an ideology, in the words of Augie Fleras and Jean Elliott, considers 'what ought to be' rather than describing 'what is.' Multicultural ideals help people to understand the nature, benefits, and consequences of diversity; decide how much diversity a society can absorb; evaluate the status of minority women and men in Canadian society; and judge where to draw the cultural lines in an increasingly complex society.[29] The ideology of Canadian multiculturalism within a Bilingual framework envisages a just society.

Multiculturalism assumes that each ethnic group will view this as a procedure by which each group may sustain basic cultural attributes. It is also meant to enable groups to transmit key cultural elements from one generation to the next, and thus

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[27] Augie Fleras and Leonard Elliott, n.24, pp. 63-64

[28] Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliott, n.23, pp. 37-41

[29] Ibid. p.35

allow the survival of the culture. All the cultural groups in Canada are free (at least in theory) to develop and maintain its own culture within a framework of Canadian social system and in some cases federal government will financially support the groups.[30] Jean Burnet has pointed out that the multiculturalism encourages the members of the ethnic groups to maintain a proud sense of the contribution of their group to Canadian society. It is also a policy enables various peoples to transfer foreign cultures and languages as living wholes into a new place and time.[31] The fundamental notion about the Canadian multiculturalism is that verity of cultures can coexist without separate social structures within Canada. The coexistence of various cultures makes it impossible for any ethnic group in Canada to effectively restrict their members within their social structures independent of others.

The French-Canadians have expressed discomfort about, or resistance to, the multicultural policy of the federal government since its inception. This is largely because they perceive the policy of the federal government as intrusion into their province's internal affairs. The most important contention is that the French-Canadians view it as a means of undermining their status of one of the two founding nations of the confederation. It is also viewed as the denial of the basic fact of Canadian social life, i.e., the fundamental bicultural nature of Canada. Many are inclined to view multiculturalism as a ploy to downgrade the distinct society status of Quebeckers to the level of an ethnic minority culture under the domination of English-speaking Canada. It is argued that, although the Royal Commission was set up to articulate the problems of French Canadians vis-à-vis the English Canadians, multiculturalism ended up in a policy of preferential treatment to the ethnic minorities of Canada. This preferential treatment was seen to be at the cost of the status and privileges of the French-Canadians. There are scholars who underpin this thesis. Professor J.D.Wilson points out that, opinion in Quebec, both official and unofficial, has been hostile to the federal policy of multiculturalism from its

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[30] Alan B. Anderson and James S. Frideres, *Ethnicity in Canada: Theoretical Perspectives,* (Toronto: Butterworth & Co. (Canada) Ltd., 1981), p. 297

[31] Jean Burnet, "The Policy of Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: An Interpretation", in Aaron Wolfgang (ed.), *Education of the Immigrant Students* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1975), pp. 211-212

inception.[32]Professor writes that multiculturalism was originally intended to buy off the compliance of a potential Third Force of immigrants, while bilingualism was intended to appease a revitalized Quebec and to contain its claims to political power. As a whole, the policy served as a technique of domination which legitimated the entrenched powers of the ruling Anglo elite when its super-ordinate national position was threatened by Quebec's claim to political power, on the one hand and by the growing numerical and economic strength and increasing cultural vitality of immigrant ethnic collectives, on the other hand.[33] Multiculturalism is thus seen as an attempt to dilute the French fact in Canada, reducing the rights of French-speaking Canadians to the same level as those of other ethno-racial minorities in the name of multicultural equality. Thus the official multiculturalism is seen as a manipulative strategy of the federal government to undermine the special status and rights of the French-Canadians as a founding nation and a distinct society.

Will Kymlicka argues that Canada is both multinational, consisting of the English, French and the Aboriginal Peoples, and polyethnic, involving various ethnic immigrants. He argues that the patterns of settlement shows that the Indians were overrun by the French settlers, the French were conquered by the English, although the current relationship between the two can be seen as a voluntary confederation, and both the English and French have accepted immigrants who are allowed to maintain their ethnic identity. Kymlicka argues that the fear of the French Canadians that multiculturalism reduces their claims of nationhood to the level of immigrant ethnicity and the apprehension that the policy would treat immigrants as nations and thereby support the development of institutionally complete cultures alongside the French and English do not justify, since multiculturalism is a policy of supporting poliethnicity within the national institutions of the English and French cultures. Canada, with its policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework and its recognition of Aboriginal self-government is one of the few countries which has

[32] J.D.Wilson, "Multicultural Programmes in Canadian Education," in R.J. Samuda, J.W.Berry and M. LaFerriere, (ed.) *Multiculturalism in Canada: Social and Educational Perspectives* (Toronto: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1984), p. 70

[33] Karl Peter, "Multicultural Politics, Money and the Conduct of Canadian Ethnic Studies," *Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Bulletin* (Vol.3, No.2, 1978), pp. 2-3

officially recognized and endorsed both polyethnicity and multinationality.[34] He further points out that multiculturalism allows people-especially immigrants, to identify themselves in public with the ethnic group without fear that this will disadvantage or stigmatize them. Further it has made the possession of an identity an acceptable, even normal, part of life in the mainstream society.[35] Immigrant groups accept the expectation that they will integrate into the larger societal culture, and positively respond to the requirement that they learn an official language as a condition of citizenship. In his opinion immigrants in Canada have accepted the assumption that their life-chances and those of their children will be bound up with participation in mainstream institutions operating in either English or French. Multiculturalism is intended to ensure fairer terms of integration for the immigrants but within the bilingual framework and the institutional arrangement of either English or French.[36] Kymlicka, in his defence of Canadian multiculturalism and the way it is operated, argues that by upholding the necessity of official languages and expecting the immigrants to learn an official language, multiculturalism makes explicit the principle that the interests and lifestyles of immigrants are as worthy of respect as those of the two founding cultures. By cherishing and following the ethno cultural identities which is different from that of the French and English cultures immigrants are not any less 'Canadian' in comparison to others. By adopting multiculturalism, he says that, Canada will never see itself as a 'white' or 'British' country, and it is a way for Canadians to denounce those historical practices. Therefore, in his opinion, multiculturalism is not only necessary and important but also generally successful.[37]

Group-Differentiated Rights and Religion as an Ethnic Group

Within multiculturalism, as a part of promoting cultural diversity, minority cultures are differentiated on the ground that they are marginalized and discriminated against. According to the ideology of multiculturalism this requires not just special

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[34] Will Kymlicka, n.1, pp. 17-22

[35] Will Kymlicka, n.11, p. 44.

[36] Ibid. p. 39

[37] Ibid. pp. 56-57

consideration for marginalized communities, but also special rights for them; rights that would enable them to sustain themselves and resist pressures from of assimilation that come from the state and society. It is assumed here that by resisting homogenization and preserving their cultures, minority communities would not only be able to fight existing patterns of cultural discrimination, they would also be able to participate as equal members of the polity. Multiculturalism argues for the special rights of this kind, for marginalized minority communities, which are located and defended within the framework of differentiated citizenship. [38] Although multiculturalism does not deny the ideal of universal citizenship, it, however, believes that this ideal has not effectively realized the goal of equality because it speaks only for individuals as citizens of the state and does not recognize the right of the citizens as members of a cultural community.[39] Therefore multicultural theorist argue that certain collective rights must be granted to the minority cultures within the system of differentiated citizenship. However, this is not in contrary to the principles of liberal democracy as they maintain that the rights and freedoms of the individuals must be given priority.

Ethnic groups today, like many other previously disadvantaged groups such as women, gays, people with disability etc. are demanding something more than the ideal of universal citizenship. They want not just the common rights given to all the citizens, but also specific rights that recognize and accommodate their particular ethnocultural practices and identities.[40] There are two kinds of rights that the ethnic groups demand under multiculturalism. In some cases a minority culture would demand certain rights against the larger society, to protect it from the economic or political decisions of the larger population. In other cases, the rights are demanded against its own members, to protect its traditional way of life against individual dissent.[41] These kinds of group rights are intended to protect the stability of national, ethnic or religious groups.

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[38] Gurpreet Mahajan, n.2, p. 85

[39] Ibid. pp. 86-93

[40] Will Kymlicka, n.11, p. 62

[41] Will Kymlicka (ed.) *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.14

Because of its recognition of diversity and the official acceptance of the policy of multiculturalism, Canada provides a verity of group differentiated rights to the minority cultures alongside the universal individual rights to the citizens. Group based rights can be exercised by individuals or groups. *The British North America Act, 1867* and the *Constitution Act, 1982* each recognize a range of group based rights- for example; educational rights for religious minorities and minority language educational rights that are held by individuals, but exercised collectively through institutional arrangements granting the right to public funding to the minority group for separate school in some provinces.

Section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* extended the original group-based protections already present in human rights conventions and legislation. Subsection (1) of the Section 15 of the Charter clearly states that;

> It does not preclude any law, programme or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.[42]

This extension means that mere procedural equality- treating everyone the same without distinction based on race, language, sex, religion or other characteristics- is not sufficient enough to guarantee equality, but affirmative action may be needed to overcome discrimination against certain groups. Language and educational rights, and the Aboriginal rights which are elaborated in the Section 25 of the *Charter* are constitutional recognition given to groups that result in differential treatment.

It is argued that these group-based rights- held by individuals of certain groups and the groups themselves- are in contradiction to a strict elaboration of the principles of universal and equal citizenship guaranteed in a liberal tradition. But, as part of managing its diverse cultures, Canada has gone beyond the strict lines of procedural equality to extend certain group-based rights and differentiated citizenship to its ethnic, religious and cultural minorities under the policy of multiculturalism. Thus, in the words of Kymlicka, multiculturalism policies increase the access of immigrants to

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[42] *The Contents of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,*
http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pdp-hrp/canada/guide/equality_e.cfm

mainstream institutions through affirmative action, prohibit discriminatory or prejudiced conduct within these institutions, improve the sensitivity of these institutions to cultural differences, and provide services that the minority could not otherwise afford. All of these policies have to do with inter-group relations and they regulate how the minority is treated by and within the larger society, and are intended to promote fairness between groups.[43]

This leads to the question of how much of diversity can a liberal society afford to have while recognizing the identities and rights of ethnocultural minorities. In Canada multiculturalism also raises the question of the limits of tolerance. Does multiculturalism require that Canadian people should tolerate the traditional practices of other cultures, even of that violate the principle of individual rights and sexual equality guaranteed in the Canadian constitution?[44] Canadian multiculturalism, in principle, does not allow such practices. But the critics of the federal policy argue that multiculturalism, often, promotes the acceptance of such practices which are contrary to the basic ideals of Canadian society. Group-based rights often promote the immigrants to identify themselves in some ethnic groups so that they can also come under the benefit category of the programmes and policies of multiculturalism. The most common and easy source of ethnic identity for the immigrants is ethnic religion, and, therefore, immigrants often turn to their religion for ethnic identity in Canada.

The role of religion under multiculturalism or the part religion plays in ethnicity, especially from the perspective of religious affiliation of ethnic-group members, is important for our understanding. The relationship between religion and ethnic-group cohesion and religion and ethnic origin are complicated in Canada. Some religions comprise the principal or sole basis for ethnic-group identity and thereby become their ethnicity in Canada. In some other groups membership is spread among many different faiths. Even though there are people who practice no religion in all the ethnic groups, in the census most of them identify themselves as members of any one of the ethnic groups.

Religion plays an important role in immigration. It is argued that, very often,

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[43] Will Kymlicka, n.11, pp. 63-64

[44] Ibid. p.60

immigration results in the increased religiosity for the migrants. Will Herberg, citing the case of U.S, points out the importance of religion for the immigrant upon entry in to the new society, in his classic work *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* that

> Of the immigrants who came to this country it was expected that, sooner or later, either in his own person or through his children, he will give up virtually everything he had brought with him from the 'old country'- his language, his nationality, his manner of life- and will adopt the ways of his new home. Within broad limits, however, his becoming American did not involve his abandoning the old religion in favour of some Native American alternative. Quite the contrary, not only he was expected to retain his old religion, as he was not expected to retain his old language or nationality, but such was the shape of America that it was largely in and through his religion that he, or rather his children and grandchildren, found an identifiable place in American life.[45]

Although Herberg was referring to the American situation of 1960s, this is quit true of the immigrants in most of the multicultural countries. Religion serves a verity of functions for the immigrants. Religious institutions operate as centers of cultural reproduction for immigrants, religious institutions often become centers of social networks for the immigrants and some times religious institutions can act as centers for the immigrants where they can exercise those traditional values and practices that are, some times, not permitted in the receiving society. Thus religion becomes the most important source of identity for the immigrants when they settle in the new country.

Prema Kurien argues that the ideology and practice of multiculturalism frequently promotes the development of ethnic nationalism. For a variety of reasons, religious organizations become the preferred means for immigrants to maintain and develop ethnic identities; with the result that national heritage is redefined in terms of the religion of the particular group. In multicultural societies, there is pressure on immigrants and their children to identify themselves as an ethnic group in order to be recognized and validated by the wider society, and to enjoy the benefits that are provided by the state to ethnic groups. This usually involves a process of group consolidation, cultural homogenization and glorification. Since religion is the only common source of ethnicity,

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[45] Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 27-28

much of this process is accomplished through the use of religious organizations and religious symbols. This combination often results in the development of an expatriate nationalism that attempts to rewrite the past, reconstruct the present, and reshape the future in ways that are congruent with religious identity.[46]

It is argued that even those immigrants who had taken religion for granted before coming to Canada start asserting their ancestral faith once they arrive in Canada. The religious clergy often saw their role not only as that of maintaining the faith of the people and ministering to their needs, but also as that of supporting the group's ethnicity and culture as well. In most groups, the place of worship became the focus of a transplanted ethnic life, and the role of ethnic religion and its ministry in the cultural survival of the group became critical. Although it was difficult for the immigrants to practice their faith exactly as it existed in the old country, the changes were very subtle and barely discernible to those outside the group. But what had been traditional faith and routine form in the mother country was maintained systematically and with care.[47] Places of religious worship become an important centre of activity for the immigrants and religious institutions take active role in imparting cultural heritage and religious education to the second generation immigrants. Thus, religion becomes an active participant in the lives of immigrants in a multicultural state.

Although multiculturalism was a new concept in the social science literature, over the years, it has taken different dimensions and has triggered a new debate on minority rights, cultural pluralism and its various ramifications. This is more so in the context of the growing degree of immigrant population in the world and the part they play in domestic politics of their country of origin as well as the country of settlement. They also have started making impact on international politics owing to the increasing degrees of transnational networks of immigrants. Since, Canada has been a country of immigrants and the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism policy different people who immigrated to Canada enjoyed the benefits of the official policy and mobilized themselves as an ethnic community in the country. It is argued that religious identity,

[46] Prema Kurien, "Multiculturalism, Immigrant Religion, and Diasporic Nationalism: The Development of an American Hinduism" *Social Problems*, (Vol. 51, No.3, August 2004), pp.362-385

[47] Edward N. Herberg, *Ethnic Groups in Canada: Adaptations and Transitions* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1989) pp. 144-147

very often, was the uniting factor for most of these immigrants. This made the immigrant communities to be identified as an ethnic minority different from other ethno-cultural minorities of Canada. This can be well explained with the example of Indian immigrants to Canada in general and the Hindu immigrants in particular. An analysis of Indian immigration and the growth of a Hindu religious diaspora in Canada, which is made in the following chapters, would be useful for better understanding of this phenomenon.

CHAPTER II

Canadian Immigration Policies and the History Indian Immigration to Canada

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Canadian Immigration Policies and the History Indian Immigration to Canada

Canada has always been a country of immigrants. It is obvious that, through out history, immigration has been an important component of demographic growth in Canada, and the Canadian nation-state has been built on the foundations of continuous immigration trends. Apart from the First Nation Aboriginals of the country, major portion of the Canadian population reached Canada as immigrants over the years. Major group of French settlers reached Canada by the end of sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. The French settlers were followed by the English who reached Canada by the end of Seventeenth century and the early decades of the Eighteenth century. Despite the initial rivalry between the two over a variety of economic, social and political reasons, French and English arrived at a consensus to form the confederation in 1867.

The immediate problem for Canada after confederation was to retain its own population increase due to the out-migration of Canadians to the United States. The only solution before Canada to compensate for the population lost was to encourage large number of immigration to the country. Moreover Canada underwent an important transformation during the nineteenth century, becoming urbanized and industrial. This necessitated the immigration of large scale industrial workers and other labourers to meet the growing demand of industrial work force. National Policy of the country started aiming at the immigrant population from Europe. While Canada opened its doors to the European and other White immigrants, it remained closed to the African, Asian and other 'Black' people who wanted to immigrate to Canada. Covert and overt restrictive practices and policies were initiated against them for a long time. But over a period of time Canadian state found that the selective immigration policy was anachronistic and antithetical to the Canadian identity, and therefore new immigration policies encouraged the entry of immigrants from different parts of the world. Canada became the home for a large number of international immigrants and international migration started playing an important role in Canada's nation-building. Immigration was responsible not only in broadening Canada's labour

market and economic development opportunities, but also in terms of enhancing the diversity of Canadian population. It also laid the foundations of what is called the 'Canadian mosaic' and eventually the policy of multiculturalism in Canada. Immigration and the presence of large number of visible minorities[1] in the context of multiculturalism have generated a wide range of discussions and debates inside as well as outside Canada. This chapter would look into the Indian immigration to Canada and the evolution of a Hindu Diaspora in the context of Canadian multiculturalism.

Canadian Immigration Trends in Historical Perspective

Immigration policy represents the means by which the citizenry selects its partners in the building of the future nation.[2] Until confederation in 1867, immigration to British North America was determined by the officials in London. The first Immigration Act of Canada implicitly assumed that the bulk of immigrants would come from Britain, with a smaller number from northern Europe.[3] Thus the census of 1870-71, conducted after Confederation documented that the two largest groups in Canada at that time were the French with just over one million persons and the British (English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish) with more than two million. This meant that the ninety percent of the Canadian population was of British, French or Native origin. And the rest of the immigrant population of the country was also from Britain and Western Europe.

A small number of Chinese who immigrated to Canada in the mid and late years of nineteenth century found job in the construction of Canadian Pacific Railway. In the 1880s a considerable number of 85000 immigrants per year entered Canada and the Chinese formed a major portion of this. As a reaction to this, two major policy decisions of that period disenfranchised the Chinese in 1872 and Japanese in 1895 in the province of British Columbia to prevent their becoming part of the polity. The

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[1] The *Employment Equity Act* of Canada defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." They generally include Blacks, South Asians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Southeast Asians, West Asians and Pacific Islanders.

[2] James W.St. G Walker, "The Canada Connection: Canadian Identity, Immigration Policy and the Indian Diaspora in Historical Perspective." in Sarva Daman Singh & Mahavir Singh (ed.), *Indians Abroad* (New Delhi: Hope India Publications, 2003), p. 66

[3] Ibid. p. 67

immigration was allowed on the sole consideration of 'genetic suitability.' "Alien settlers must be assimilated and made acquainted with our institutions", declared the Conservative Party leader at a political rally in 1907, and sought that "a national sprit must be created and maintained. Those races genetically incapable of assimilation must be kept out; if any crept in, they must be kept apart and denied participation in the full range of Canadian institutions. To do otherwise would be to risk Canada's survival as a democratic, progressive, British nation."[4] However, it must also be noted that during 1880s and early 1890s, over one million persons- one-fifth of Canada's total population- migrated to the United States looking for a milder climate.[5] During this period more people left Canada than those who entered the country.

Large-scale immigration to Canada began by the end of nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In need of farmers to settle in western provinces, Canada embarked on an unprecedented recruitment campaign in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Western Europe under the leadership of Interior Minister Clifford Sifton. The author of Canada's first Immigration Act, Sifton was particular about the nature of immigrants to the country. He was particular in recruiting the central European peasants and tried to keep the prairies white. Although no law was passed to exclude American blacks, they were not encouraged to come and their applications were usually rejected.[6] More over, Canada's economy was growing rapidly during these period and the immigrants were attracted by the good job prospects. The building of the transcontinental railway, the settlement of prairies and expanding industrial production intensified demand for labour. Aggressive recruitment campaigns by the Canadian government to boost immigration and attract workers increased the arrival of immigrant population. Between 1900 and 1914, more than 2.9 million people entered Canada. Such volumes of immigrants quickly enlarged Canada's population. Large scale migration during this period accounted for 44 % of population growth in Canada. This also increased the share of overall population born

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[4] Speech delivered by Mr. R.L. Borden at Vancouver, 24th September 1907, published as an election pamphlet, cited in James W.St. G Walker, n.2, p. 67

[5] Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates* (Toronto: Durban Press, 1992), p.55

[6] Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 6

outside Canada. While the immigrants accounted for 13% of the total population in 1901, it became 22% in 1911.[7] This increase in the percentage of the immigrant population was not intended by the Canadian policy makers.

The stated goal of the immigration policy was to secure farmers, farm workers, and other peasants from Britain, the United Stated, and northwestern Europe. However, when the excess demand for labour increased, the government was forced to abandon its strict racist approach towards certain relaxations in immigration policies and thereby immigrants came from sources other than the traditional ones. Large number of people from Central and Eastern Europe also immigrated to Canada. Ukrainians constituted the major portion among them. A small number of Asians and other immigrants also got admitted to Canada in this process of large scale immigration. Even though, immigrants had been admitted by the ethnic and racial considerations by the state the demography of the Canadian population was considerably altered due to the entry of people of different language, ethnic and religious identities.

During the First World War, immigration to Canada came down significantly. From a record number of over 400000 in 1913, entry was plunged to less than 34000 by 1915. As a result, net immigration accounted for about 20% of Canada's population growth between 1911 and 1921, less than half the contribution made in the previous decade.[8] Although the numbers increased after the War, the immigration experience and attitudes of Canada diverged noticeably in years followed. A rising chorus of nativism prompted the immigration authorities to take draconian steps to regulate the nature of immigration to the country. It was during this period that the first official division of source countries into preferred and non-preferred groups was introduced. Admission from the preferred countries was based solely on country of origin. The preferred countries included Americans and the northwestern Europeans. Prospective immigrants from no-preferred countries were admitted under a variety of conditions. Applications from northern and western Europe were treated as almost equal to those from preferred countries, while those from central, eastern, and southern Europe faced

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[7] Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers, "100 Years of Immigration in Canada." *Canadian Social Trends* (Statistics Canada- Catalogue No 11-008, Autumn 2000), p.3

[8] Ibid. pp. 5-6

stricter regulations. Immigrants from other regions were admitted only if sponsored by a relative already legally admitted to Canada. According to Alan G. Green and David A. Green this division formed the core of Canadian immigration policy till 1960s.[9]

In the 1920s immigration flows were actively monitored so as to maintain the Anglo-Saxon character of Canada, even though most of the immigrants of this period came from America or northwestern Europe. In 1925 the Mackenzie King Liberal Government handed over the administration of Canadian immigration policy to the Canadian pacific and the Canadian National Railways Corporations with an intention to attract un-skilled labour and hardy settlers to their lands. However, in the last three years of 1920s an average of 150000 persons per year entered Canada through different channels mocking the supposedly restrictive policies. But following the Great Depression, arrivals were severely curtailed by the new R.B. Bennett government of Canada. All immigrants who were not agriculturalists with capital and not British or American were barred by the government. Popular sentiment was highly against all the non-white immigrants. Asian immigrants were disenfranchised in British Columbia and prevented from entering certain professions. Whereas the total number of immigrants between 1900 and 1930 was around five million barely 200000 entered Canada between 1930 and 1945. This fall in immigration rates was due to the strict regulatory measures taken the Canadian policy makers to restrict the immigrants from places other than Western Europe. The percentage of foreign-born population had fallen to just less than 18% by the time of 1941 census.[10] Out of the total non-British and non-American immigrants arrived Canada during this period the majority was from countries like Germany, Poland, and Ukrainian. In the absence of a refugee policy that distinguished between immigrants and refugees, the restrictions imposed on earlier prevented the entry of refugees in the inter war period.[11] Thus, like the United States, Canada remained extremely restrictive on immigration throughout the 1930s and early 1940s.

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[9] Alan G. Green and David A. Green, "The Economic Goals of Canada's Immigration Policy: Past and Present." *Canadian Public Policy* (Vol. XXV, No. 4, 1999) p. 428

[10] Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers, n.7, p. 6

[11] Ibid. p.7

Canadian nationalism was surged after the Second World War like it emerged after the First World War. But whereas nationalism had been articulated in racially exclusive terms in the First War, the specific war aims of the democratic allies in the Second made it seem disloyal to espouse openly racist ideals. Since the War was fought against the Nazi racism, world over, countries challenged the policies and practices based on racial preferences. This had its impact on immigration policy too.[12] In an immigration policy debate in 1947 E.B. McKay, MP, opined that "Canadian boys laid down their lives to defeat militarism promoted by a race which rated itself as supermen.... Let us have done with superior races and preferred nations.[13] However, the change of attitude, although not complete, to wards the nature of immigration was toned by Mackenzie King in his speech before the House of Commons in 1947. To quote his words;

> The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek legislation, regulation and vigorous administration, to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy... There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-Scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundament composition of the Canadian population.[14]

Even though the government was not ready to completely do away with the selective immigration policy, it was necessary for Canada to increase the volume of immigration. The growth of the Canadian economy after the Second World War heightened the demand for labourers. Therefore it was necessary for the government to increase the work force of the country to meet the growing demands of the booming economy. Thus the orientation of Canadian immigration policy began to change after the War. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration was set up in

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[12] James W.St. G Walker, n.2, pp. 71-72

[13] Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates* 2 May 1947, 2732, cited in James W.St. G Walker, n.2, p.72.

[14] Canada, Parliament, House of Commons *Debates* May, 1947, 2644 cited Alan G. Green and David A. Green, n.9, pp. 429-430

1949. This was the time when Canada was moving away from the British ties aspiring to maintain an identity independent of Britain that can play its own role in a complex world. This was demonstrated constitutionally by the *Canadian Citizenship Act* in 1946, and in 1949 judicial appeals to the Privy Council in London was abandoned. Economically, Canada started looking towards American commercial and investment linkages.[15] This helped Canada in its economic growth which in turn opened up more job opportunities and therefore, the need for labour force was also increased. Entry was liberalized in the beginning of 1947 with the admission of refugees from Europe. Although the Asians were not welcomed in this expansion, Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947 and the close family members of the Asian-Canadians were allowed to immigrate.

A new immigration act in 1952 expanded immigration by granting to departmental officials extensive powers for the administration, control, and exclusion of undesirable types of immigrants ranging from specific nationalities and ethnic groups to 'peculiar customs' and 'climatic unsuitability.'[16] The word 'race' was omitted from the Immigration Act and was replaced by a more moderate term 'ethnic group' for the first time since 1910.[17] The new government of John Diefenbaker promised a change in immigration policy and the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, Ellen Fairdough introduced regulations to eliminate all discrimination based on colour, race or creed.[18] The immigration to Canada continued to grow through out 1950s and the largest number of over 282000 persons came in the year 1957. Although the rate of immigration was slightly diminished by the end of 1950s due to economic recession in Canada the total number of immigrants arrived was much more than the numbers entered in the previous decades. Family sponsorship and reunification were the major themes of Canadian immigration policy during this period and it continued to govern the immigration trends in the 1960s also.

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[15] James W.St. G Walker, n.2, p. 73

[16] Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p.102

[17] *Statutes of Canada,* 1952, c.42 cited in James W.St. G Walker, n.2,, p. 74

[18] Cited in, Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p. 38

The 1960s marked the turning point in Canadian immigration policy. In 1962 Canada abandoned its racist and exclusionary immigration policy through the amendments in the immigration regulations. The new system claimed to provide a universal admission system based on skills, family unification and humanitarian considerations. However, the European immigrants enjoyed advantage over others as they could sponsor a wider range of relatives than the others under the new policy.[19] The 'point system' introduced in 1967 after the setting up of the new Department of Manpower and Immigration could do away with this bias completely. The point system provided for an objective assessment of the applicants based on education, age, language etc. This put an end to the discretionary powers of the immigration officers and a standard set of rules were to be followed for admission of immigrants. 'Applicants were divided into three main entry classes: independents, whose admission depended solely on an assessment under the point system; nominated relatives, who were assessed under the system, but were given bonus points based on family ties; and the family class, who were admitted based solely on kinship tied. The family class was to be given the top processing priority' and the total number of immigrants was fixed by the budget allocated to processing applications.[20] The point system brought about a dramatic shift in the source of Canada's immigrant intake away from northwestern Europe toward the so called non-traditional sources of immigrants: Asia, North Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The 1967 regulations favoured the immigrants from these countries by allowing them to sponsor or nominate the same range of relatives as Europeans and by emphasizing the skills of the prospective immigrant.

Whereas changes in immigration policy of the 1960s were through the alterations in the existing policy framework, in 1978 government brought about a new *Immigration Act* which upheld the principles of admissions laid out in the regulations of 1960s: economic growth, demographic growth, family unification and humanitarianism. However, one of the major reasons for the change in immigration policies was the

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[19] Kavita A. Sharma *The Ongoing Journey: Indian Immigration to Canada* (New Delhi: Creative Books, 1997), p. 46

[20] Alan G. Green and David A. Green, n.9, p. 431

introduction of the Multiculturalism policy in the early 1970s by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Canada opened its doors to immigrants from all over the world as the policy of multiculturalism gave greater importance to the 'mosaic' nature of Canadian society and the ethnic communities in Canada were brought to the mainstream of the society. Immigration numbers fluctuated in the decades of 1970, 1980 and 1990s. During the early and mid-1970s, net migration represented nearly 38% of the total increase in the population; with consistently high levels of arrivals between 1986 and 1996, it accounted for about half of the population growth, and by the time of 1996 census, immigrants comprised just over 17% of the population.[21] Another important aspect of the changes in immigration trends of this period was the diversification of source countries of immigration to Canada. Immigration from non-traditional sources increased considerably and this can be understood through the following table.

Top Ten Source Countries of Immigration to Canada from 1951-2004

1951	1968	1979	1984	1994	2004
Britain	Britain	Vietnam	Vietnam	Hong Kong	China
Germany	USA	Britain	Hong Kong	Philippines	India
Italy	Italy	USA	USA	India	Philippines
Netherlands	Germany	Hong Kong	India	China	Pakistan
Poland	Hong Kong	India	Britain	Taiwan	USA
France	France	Laos	Poland	Sri Lanka	Iran
USA	Austria	Philippines	Philippines	Vietnam	Britain
Belgium	Greece	Portugal	El Salvador	USA	Romania
Yugoslavia	Portugal	Jamaica	Jamaica	Britain	Korea
Denmark	Yugoslavia	Guyana	China	Bosnia	France

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures, Immigration Over view, http://www.cic.gc.ca

The enactment of *Multiculturalism Act* in 1988 once again reiterated that diversity was a central character of Canadian society and identity. In the 1990s, the importance was given to the economic component of immigration flows. In 1991, a designated occupations list was framed which contained occupations in short supply in specific

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[21] Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers, n.7, p. 9

provinces. Added points were given to those immigrants who matched this list; and in 1992 the Conservative government introduced a new *Immigration Act* which provided for greater control over the inflow.[22] *Into the 21st Century: A Strategy for Immigration and Citizenship* introduced by the Liberals in 1995 decided to maintain the immigration levels at one percent of the population level.
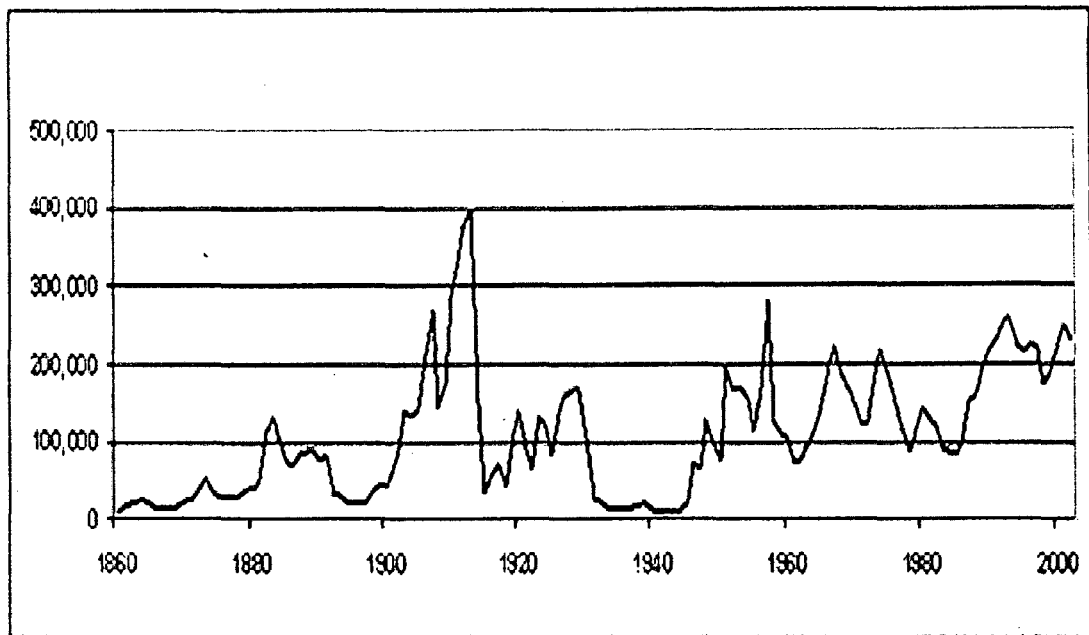
However, Canadian immigration trends, today, are governed by the Bill C-11 legislation passed by the Canadian Senate in October 2001. Key principles for the administration of the immigration and refugee programmes according to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act,* popularly known as Bill C-11 are: respect for the multicultural character of Canada; the notion that new immigrants and Canadian society have mutual obligations; the commitment to work in co-operation with provinces to secure better recognition of the foreign credentials of permanent residents and their more rapid integration; the requirement that all decisions taken under the Act be consistent with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, including its principles of equality and freedom from discrimination and equality of English and French as the official languages of Canada etc. The Act also contains the presumption that every person seeking entry to Canada is an immigrant until proven otherwise.[23]

Thus Canadian immigration policy framework has undergone serious variations and alterations over the years which directly affected the inflow of total immigration to Canada and its nature. If the diversification of source countries of immigration to Canada increased after the introduction of multiculturalism in early 1970s, total immigrant flows have fluctuated over the years corresponding to the policy existed. Total immigration to Canada and its fluctuation can be depicted as shown in the following diagram.

[22] Alan G. Green and David A. Green, n.9, p.434

[23] Bill C-11, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, www.cic.gc.ca , accessed on 25th May 2006

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                              42
500,000 ┌─────────────────────────────────────────
400,000 ┤
300,000 ┤
200,000 ┤
100,000 ┤
      0 ┤
        1860   1880   1900   1920   1940   1960   1980   2000
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Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2002: Immigration Over view, www.cic.gc.ca

It is obvious from the above figure that the immigration flows to Canada has been fluctuating over the years with the biggest spikes occurring in the 1910s, 1950s and in late 1960s and 1990s. With this prelude, it is important for us to examine the Asian and subsequent Indian immigration to Canada in the Canadian immigration history before going into the development of a Hindu Diaspora in the context of multiculturalism.

A Short History of Asian Immigration to Canada

Asian immigration to Canada started in the final decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Chinese and the Japanese were the first Asian immigrants who reached Canada. They were settled mainly in British Columbia-west coast of the United States. This was the period of economic boom and industrialization in Canada and many people could find enough job opportunities in the North American region. Despite the fact that peasants from around the world reached Canada during this period, settlement was extremely difficult for Asian immigrants as they had to suffer racism and overcome immigration barriers. From 1885 to 1923, an increasingly

oppressive head tax[24] was levied on Chinese immigrants under the Chinese Exclusion Act, and then followed by more restrictive policies. Chinese children were discouraged from attending school, professional jobs were not given to them, they were not given the voting rights, and the common perception was that the economic problems were due to the willingness of the Chinese and Japanese to work for fewer wages than their white counterparts. In 1902 the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration declared all Asians 'unfit for full citizenship' 'obnoxious to a free community' and 'dangerous to the state' preparing the way for more restrictive immigration policies. To slow down the Japanese immigration, the Canadian and Japanese governments made a 'gentleman's agreement' to limit Japanese immigration to 400 persons per year. In 1928 this number was reduced to 150 Japanese persons per year.

During World War II, Japanese Canadians were interned in work camps and many repatriated to Japan in 1946. Due to increased discrimination and being barred from the opportunities available to the whites, both the Chinese and Japanese formed their own ethnic enclaves where they could support one another financially and emotionally and where their language and cultures could safely be expressed.[25] There were race riots in Vancouver against the Asian immigration, and the government, instead of dealing with racism, responded to this by restricting Asian immigrants to Canada. Asian immigration, and in particular South Asian immigration, to Canada became prominent only after 1960s and especially in the wake of official multiculturalism policy of 1971.

Kelly Tran, Jennifer Kaddatz and Paul Allard have observed that, over the years, the South Asian community in Canada has evolved from a relatively small and

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[24] A discriminatory Federal tax levied upon Chinese immigrants admitted to Canada. Initially the Act, passed in 1885, was set at $50 per Chinese immigrant. In 1901 it was increased to $100 and later to $500. In 1923, the Chinese Exclusion Act abolished the head tax, replacing it with even more restrictive measures. The head tax was a serious financial burden to Chinese Canadians and effectively stopped any family reunification. For more details see,
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/orphans/english/themes/immigration/page2.html, accessed on 20th May, 2006

[25] Nadine Fabbi, *Early Asian Pioneers in Western Canada,* Canadian Studies Centre, University of Washington, 2003,
http://www.wwu.edu/depts/castudies/k12studycanada/files/Early%20Asian%20Pioneers%20in%20We stern%20Canada.pdf, accessed on 20th May, 2006

homogenous population to one that is unique in its diversity, boasting a multitude of different birthplace origins, ethnicities, religions and languages.[26] In 1986 ' South Asians accounted for 1.2 percent of the population of Canada and constituted one fifth of the visible minority population in the country. The number of South Asians in Canada more than tripled from 223,000 in 1981 to 917,000 in 2001 mainly due to a large number of immigrants from Southern Asia.[27] And in the year 2004, 10.8 percent of the total immigrants to Canada were from India being only second to China.[28] The character of the South Asian immigrants to Canada is very diverse in which Indian immigrants themselves constitute multiple identities, religions, languages and cultures. They have been instrumental in introducing a number of religious traditions to Canada, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Chinese Popular Religion and Islam. And in the 1990s more than 80 percent of the new immigrants who arrived in Vancouver belonged to the religious communities from South Asia.[29] They have settled in different parts of Canada with largest concentration in Ontario and British Columbia. In 2001, South Asians accounted for 10 percent of the population of Toronto and 8 percent of Vancouver.[30] In the words of Harold Coward, South Asian immigrants, both in the refugee and investor categories, have had significant impact on the country's social, economic, and political institutions in the post-1986 period, as well as on the development of religious, ethnic, and racial relationships within Canada.[31]

The new immigrants reached Canada after the shift in immigration policies were greatly different from the earlier peasants who worked so hard to secure a place for themselves in the new country. The new immigrants were highly educated

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[26] Kelly Tran, Jennifer Kaddatz and Paul Allard, "South Asians in Canada: Unity through Diversity" *Canadian Social Trends* (Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 11-008, Autumn 2005), p. 21

[27] Ibid. p. 21

[28] Facts and Figure: Immigration Over view, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, www.cic.ga.ca (Ottawa, 2004) p. 32

[29] Harold Coward, "Introduction: South Asians in Canada" in Harold Coward, John R. Hinnells and Raymond Brady Williams (ed.), *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p.148

[30] Kelly Tran, Jennifer Kaddatz and Paul Allard, n.26, p. 21

[31] Harold Coward, n.29, pp. 148-149

professionals and many of them could speak English as well as their own language. These new immigrants were able to make a place for themselves in the Canadian society. Though racism and discrimination existed in different forms, these new immigrants have had a much easier life in Canada comparing to the immigrants who reached Canada before 1960s and 1970s.[32] These new immigrants had the benefit of Canada being a multicultural country which had brought about changes in the attitude of the host country.

The response to this new wave of immigration on the part of the Canadian society has been mixed. Some welcome the investors and their development funds while others oppose their ability both to control local communities and to affect the housing market through the large-scale purchase of land. The response to refugees has also been mixed, while humanitarian and compassionate concerns are raised from some quarters, perceived drain on Canada's struggling social security system has been pointed out by others. As the proportion of visible minorities in Canada rapidly expands, the presence of such groups appears to be generating a growing anxiety among host Canadians. According to Harold Coward, this anxiety has already expressed itself on occasion in a status-preservationist backlash to which members of misunderstood and misrepresented religious, ethnic, and racial minorities often fall victim. But he goes on to say that despite the anxiety generated by the South Asian immigrants in Canada, by virtue of their distinctive dress, food, culture and religion, they have become a very productive, high-profile, and permanent part of Canada's multicultural mosaic. He also says that the South Asians have developed the reputation of being hard-working and self-sufficient as many of them are well educated professionals or successful business people. This has enabled them to adapt quickly and successfully to life in Canada through the political, religious and social institutions of the country.[33] Today, thus, South Asians in Canada enjoy better life and contribute enormously to the growth of Canadian economy, society and polity. Their contribution is valued profoundly in terms of their contribution to the diversity of Canadian society.

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[32] Nadine Fabbi, no.25.

[33] Harold Coward, n.29, pp. 149-150

Early Indian Immigration to Canada

Indian immigration to Canada began in the early years of the twentieth century. The process started when Indians passed through Canada in 1897 to attend Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Up to 1905 and 1906, Indians settled in small communities mainly in British Columbia. Initially, they attracted no attention, but began to get noticeable as their numbers increased because of direct immigration from India.[34] By 1907, there was a community of over 5000 Sikhs in British Columbia. Most of these early immigrants worked in the lumber industry and a few of them opened their own mills. Initially, South Asian immigrants faired much better in British Columbia than the Chinese or Japanese pioneers because as British subjects they enjoyed certain rights and privileges. The South Asians usually had some English language skills and understood European culture making their transition into Canadian society somewhat easier. Moreover, Chinese and Japanese immigration had been sharply curtailed prior to 1903 leaving many laboring jobs open for the South Asians. Peasants from South Asian countries were essential for the construction of Canadian Pacific Railway because of the decline in Chinese immigration to Canada. However, this took a turn around when jobs became increasingly scarce and the South Asians along with the Chinese and Japanese were blamed for taking jobs from the Whites.[35] It was alleged that the Indians were causing imbalances in the economy of British Columbia. Canadian state imposed heavy restrictions on the immigrants from South Asian countries including India in order to minimize their entry into Canada. Several discriminatory laws were passed to restrict the Indian Immigration to Canada and their employment in certain industries where white Canadians intended to work. Indians were also denied the voting right in 1907, prohibited to run for public offices, serve on juries, and were not permitted to become accountants, lawyers or pharmacists.

In 1911 the ministerial association of Vancouver set up a special committee to go into the question of Hindu[36] (Indian) migration to Canada. The committee concluded that Indians are different and cannot mix with Canadians. It believed that the admission of

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[34] Kavita A. Sharma, n.19, p. 3

[35] Nadine Fabbi, no.25

[36] All the Indian immigrants to Canada during this period were called as Hindus. This included the Sikh and people of other religious faiths who went to Canada as immigrants.

spouses would mean the establishment of a permanent colony of these people. The committee was against giving franchise to those who had already domiciled there, because according to them, their votes would go only to those who advocate a policy of favouring their entry and right to citizenship. It was unanimous that Indian immigrants are a menace to Canadian national life.[37] More stringent measures were adopted, over the years, to curb the South Asian immigration to Canada.

Continuous Journey Legislation and the Komagata Maru Incident

With an intention to prevent the South Asians from entering Canada, the Federal government introduced a legislation in January 1908. An Order-in-Council was approved which required that any immigrant arriving at a Canadian port had to come on a continuous journey from his or her country of origin.[38] Although the legislation did not refer to the South Asians directly it was meant to restrict their immigration to Canada as for both the South Asians and the Japanese there were no such facility available to carry out a 'continuous passage'. The Japanese government opposed the continues journey legislation vehemently and thereby entered into a treaty, called the 'gentleman's agreement', with the Canadian government by which four hundred Japanese could enter Canada each year. Indians, however, being British subjects, had no government mechanism to strongly oppose this move. As the ban was without exception, it operated even against wives and children of those who were already in Canada. Due to this highly discriminatory law many Indians already settled in Canada returned to India while some of them moved to the United States. The Indian population which was about five thousand in 1908 fell to less than half in 1911.[39] All the protests and efforts by the Indian immigrants did not make any impact and the discriminatory legislation continued to axe Indian immigration. The legislation finally resulted in the most infamous incident of Komagata Maru in the history of Indian immigration to Canada.

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[37] Muralidharan, "Reinventing History: Komagata Maru's Role Denied" *People's Democracy* (Vol. XXVII, No.11, March 2004) taken from http://pd.cpim.org/2004/0314/03142004_muralidharan.htm, accessed on 23rd May, 2006.

[38] Kavita A. Sharma, n.19, p.14

[39] Ibid. pp.14-15.

In 1914, a cleaver and wealthy Sikh leader, named Gurdit Singh, attempted to challenge the 'continuous passage' legislation. In the spring of 1914 they chartered a steamer, the Komagata Maru, to carry Indian emigrants to Canada. They had a sense of mission, and they called the steamer Guru Nanak Jahaz after the first Sikh Guru. The Komagata Maru arrived in Burrard Inlet in Vancouver on May 23, 1914 with 376 passengers on board. However, with the exception of 20 returning residents and the ship's doctor and his family, none of the passengers was allowed to land. Instead, they were detained in Vancouver Harbour.[40] The sudden arrival of the ship caught public attention in Canada. Some newspapers like *The Province,* described it under the headline, 'Boat Loads of Hindus on Way to Vancouver' and 'Hindu Invasion of Canada.' It produced storm of protests in British Columbia and the intention of the authorities was to prevent the landing of the ship in Canadian coast. The immigration officials surrounded the ship by armed launches to keep the passengers isolated from the mainland community.[41]

Ninety percent of the passengers of the Komagata Maru were Sikhs. The rest were Hindus and Muslims, but they all came from Punjab. Except for two women and four children, the passengers were men, most being between the ages of eighteen and thirty. The passengers on the Komagata Maru thought that they had the right to enter Canada because they were British subjects. If citizenship in the British Empire meant anything, they should have been able to go anywhere in the empire freely. At the same time, some of them knew that the Canadian government did not concede that right.[42] The Indians who were already settled in Canada wanted Komagata Maru to reach the Canadian coast and also the passengers to enter Canada. The Canadian-Indian community colleted money and other provisions to help the passengers upon their arrival in Vancouver while the Canadian officials were determined to send the ship back. The authorities did not allow any one to leave the ship nor was allowed to come on board. They argued that the passengers violated the continuous passage rules

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[40] Hugh Johnston, *The Komagata Maru incident,* 1989, for more details see
http://www.sikhpioneers.org/komagata%20maru.htm, accessed on 23rd May 2006

[41] Kavita A. Sharma, n.19, p.21.

[42] Hugh Johnston, n.40

because the voyage of the Komagata Maru started from Hong Kong. Therefore it was claimed that the ship was not arrived via direct passage which had been a requirement under the law. It was also argued that the passengers did not have the $200, the amount that the immigrants needed to qualify themselves to enter British Columbia.

The negotiations between the immigrants and the British Columbian authorities continued for long. The alleged strategy of the immigration authorities was to delay the case of passengers so as to make the basic facilities for them unavailable. However the passengers were not to leave the Canadian coast and continued their efforts to cross the threshold. Finally, after the passengers had been confined on board for a month, they were allowed to test their case before the courts. British Columbia Court of Appeal heard the arguments, and at the end the court rendered its verdict against the passengers.

When they realized that the passengers would not leave Canadian waters without provisions, British Columbian authorities made strong attempts to gain control of the ship, while the case was being heard in the court. The passengers however foiled such attempts. A police boarding party was driven off by the passengers with a barrage of coal and fire bricks. The government then brought a navy cruiser aimed its guns at the Komagata Maru. [43] Nevertheless, it was only when officials promised to put provisions on board that the passengers agreed to leave the coast after being remained on the ship for two months. On 23rd July, 1914, the Komagata Maru sailed out of Vancouver with 352 passengers on board, leaving a black mark in the history of immigration to Canada.

According to Hugh Johnston, in India, the Komagata Maru represented the Indian people's struggle for independence from the British Empire. In Canada, it was a reminder of a policy of exclusion for Sikhs and other immigrants from South Asia, which lasted for more than half a century.[44] The 'continuous journey' law continued to be in force till 1947, and the South Asian Immigration to Canada remained extremely low during this time. Moreover, many of the Indo-Canadians who had

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[43] Muralidharan, n.37.

[44] Hugh Johnston, n.40.

immigrated before the Komagata Maru left Canada and settled either in the United States or came back to India for reuniting with their families. In 1919 a law was passed to allow wives and children to join the men who had immigrated earlier. Nonetheless, the South Asian population in Canada fell to just above 2000 by the early 1950s.[45] The Immigration Act of 1952 also restricted Indian immigrants by granting clear preferential treatment to white immigrants.

As mentioned above it was only in 1967 that the immigration policy completely eliminated discrimination based on race, religion or national origin by moving towards a point system based on various qualifications. Immigration policy has evolved from one that blatantly discriminated against Asians to one that explicitly prohibited discrimination on several grounds.[46] Indian immigrant numbers started moving up only after the introduction of point system in 1967. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the changes in immigration policy and the multicultural policy of the Canada began to reflect in the number of Indian immigrants. Although the number of Indian immigrants entering Canada has been neither absolutely nor relatively phenomenal, and there have been ups and downs in the number of Indians accorded the immigrant status by the Canadian government, there has been a continuous, if not steady, flow of Indian immigrants to Canada since then.[47] Indian immigration to Canada from 1956 to 2000 has been depicted in the following diagram.

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[45] Nadine Fabbi, no.25

[46] Ronald D'Costa, "Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Population of South Asian Origins in Canada" in Milton Israel and N.K.Wagle (ed.) *Ethnicity, Identity, Migration: The South Asian Context* (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1993), p.184

[47] N. Jayaram, "The Indian Diaspora in Canada: An Analytical Introduction to Themes and Issues" in Sushma J. Varma and Radhika Sheshan (ed.) *Fractured Identity: The Indian Diaspora in Canada* (New Delhi: Rawlat Publications, 2003), p. 26.

Indian Immigration to Canada from 1956 to 2000
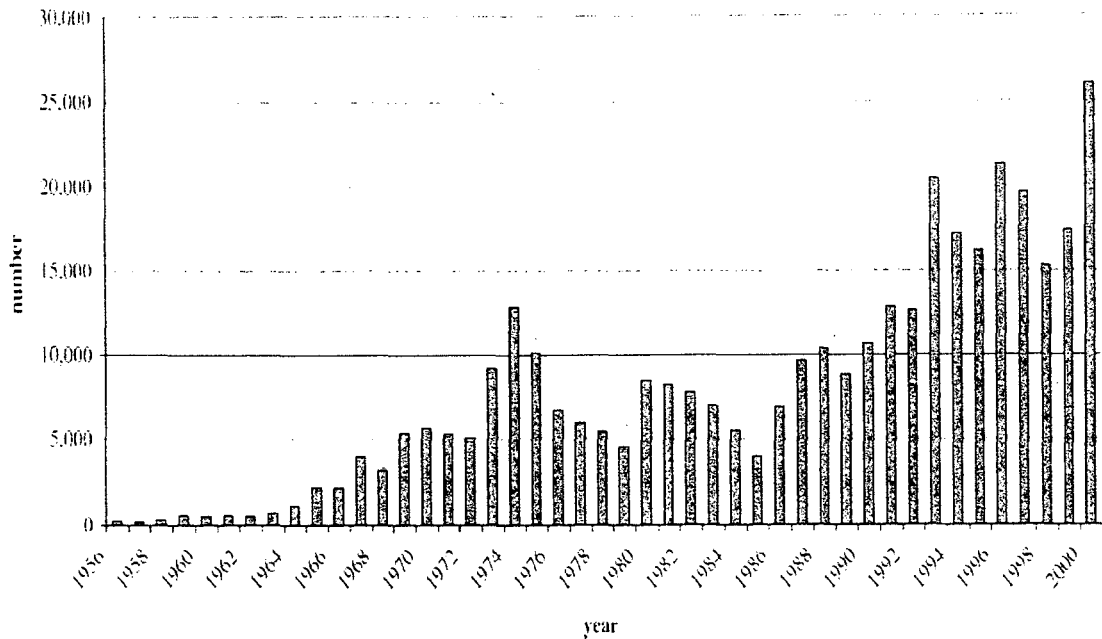
Source: Cansim matrix X100649 and D125590, http://www.statscan.com

One of the major aspects of the increased Indian immigration to Canada after the introduction of point system and official multiculturalism was the increase in the number of skilled-worker class immigration. The immigration of this class from India has been rising steadily since then and is increasingly incorporating individuals from regions other than Punjab, especially Gujarat and Maharashtra.[48] This was the time when large number of Hindus from these regions immigrated to Canada to become a major ethnic community in the later years.

Indian Diaspora in Multicultural Canada

The High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, in its report submitted to the government in 2001, defined the term Diaspora in a generic sense as 'communities of migrants, living or settled permanently in other countries, aware of its origins and identity, and maintaining varying degrees of linkages with mother country.' According to the report Indian Diaspora consists of around 20 million people living in different countries of the world, speaking different languages and engaged in different

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[48] Margaret Walton-Roberts, "Transnational Geographies: Indian Immigration to Canada." *The Canadian Geographer* (Vol. 47 No. 3, 2003), p. 242

vocations. The common identity for them is their Indian origin, their consciousness of their cultural heritage and their deep attachment to India.[49]

Canada has, today, a large Indo-Canadian community despite the stiff resistance to Indian immigration right up to the second half of the 1960s. Since then the Indo-Canadian community has grown rapidly.[50] Today, there is an estimated one million people of Indian origin in Canada and India ranks second after china in terms of total immigration to Canada. The people of Indian origin in Canada, according to the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, can be divided into three categories: the first group of immigrants to Canada was those from agricultural background. They were settled basically in the province of British Columbia and had to face severe racism on their arrival and stay in Canada. The second group of Indo-Canadians was entrepreneurs, store-owners, motel owners, self-employed small businessmen who reached mainly in the 1960s and 1970s after the relaxation in immigration policies. The last set of people of Indian origin reached Canada were high qualified professionals such as doctors, engineers, management and financial experts etc.[51] Large number of Indian immigrants reached Canada during this last phase were employed in high paying jobs and were not affected by the evils of racism in Canada as the country had already given up such racist policies and embarked on a multicultural agenda.

According to John Samuel, immigrants of Indian origin have come not from India alone. In his opinion, in Canada, there are people of Indian origin from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, East Africa, Fiji, South Africa Mauritius and many other countries.[52] Thus, Canada has a much larger number of people of Indian origin including those who have migrated to Canada in large numbers from these countries. Indo-Canadians, today, are organized on the basis of linguistic, regional, religious,

[49] Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2001, pp. 1-4, www.indiandiaspora.nic.in accessed on 12-05-2006

[50] Kavita A. Sharma, n.19, p.169

[51] Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, n.49, p.159

[52] T John Samuel, "The Impact of International Migration on Culture: Canada and India," *Indian Journal of Canadian Studies* (Vol. 2, 1993), p. 3-4, cited in Kavita A. Sharma, n.19, p. 169

cultural and other characteristics. Indian diaspora in Canada has been instrumental not only in constituting strong socio-cultural bond between Canada and India but also in creating strong economic linkages between two countries and the strengthening of India- Canada relations is predicted on the assumption that the Canadians of Indian origin would lead to a deeper and broader people-to-people contacts[53] Thus Indian diaspora in Canada and its divergent aspects are important for our understanding.

The contributions that the Indian diaspora community makes to both Canada and India have been valued heavily by both the countries. The inflow of skilled immigrants from India to Canada has always been very high. Rasesh Thakar has estimated the value of human capital flow from India to Canada from 1973 to 1990 and points out that it was hundred and twelve thousand dollars in 1973, eighty four thousand dollars in 1974, a hundred and eighteen thousand dollars in 1989 and seventy eight thousand dollars in 1990.[54] At the same time Canada was actively involved in its official developmental assistance programme and India also benefited from it. But Thakar concludes that the value of the inflow of human capital from India to Canada was much more than the contributions that Canada has made through its official developmental assistance to India.[55] Although Thakar accepts that his estimate might lack definitiveness the value addition that the skilled immigrants from India make to Canada has been large. Apart from the skilled immigrants to Canada from India who entered Canada since late 1960s and early 1970s, those immigrated to Canada before that were mainly agricultural and farm workers who have made significant contributions in those sectors. Canada's trade with India increased over the years and the trade exports to India increased by 75% in 1992, following India's economic reforms, to a record five hundred million dollars making India one of

[53] Reeta Chowdhary Tremblay, "Canada-Indian Relations: The Need to Re-Engage" Paper prepared for the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's Roundtable on the Foreign Policy Dialogue and Canada-Asia Relations Concordia University, 27 March 2003, p. 5, www.asiapacific.ca, accessed on 13-03-06

[54] Rasesh Thakar, "The Impact of Indian Immigration on the Canadian Economy: Inflow of Human Capital, 1973-1990," in J. S. Grewal and Hugh Johnston (Ed.) *The India Canada Relationship: Exploring the Political Economic and Cultural Dimensions*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), p.132

[55] Ibid. pp. 139-140

Canada's top twenty export destinations.[56] In the same year, India's exports to Canada grew by 16 percent to reach a record two hundred and seventy eight million dollars, and, thus, the bilateral trade between the two countries accounted for over eight hundred million dollars.[57] In the year 2001-2002 India's total trade with Canada as percentage of total trade with the world reached 1.17 percent. The outflow of skilled immigrants from India to Canada has been compensated by the foreign remittances by these people to India. Foreign remittances have always been an important source of revenue for India. The remittances made by Indo-Canadians have also been significant right from the days of early Sikh emigration. All these indicate the growing importance that both the countries place on each other and the growth of a strong Indo-Canadian community over the years has been a propelling factor in this.

Indo-Canadians have excelled in all the fields of Canadian life. They have been highly respected for their achievements in the fields of academia, medicine and engineering. They have also made noteworthy achievements in public life also. The election of Ujjal Dosanjh as the Premier of British Columbia and later his induction into the Federal Cabinet was an achievement no other first generation South Asian in Canada has made. A number of Indians have been elected to the Canadian House of Commons in every election including women.[58] Political prominence of ethnic communities has been increasing in Canada as they constitute a considerable 'vote banks.' Indo-Canadians also enjoy this owing to their increasing numbers in Canada and the major political parties in Canada attach great importance to the concerns of the community.

Today, Indo-Canadians constitute an organized community with the setting up of many institutions and organizations for the promotion of Indian arts and culture, and some of them have affiliations with their counterparts in India. Every area with an indo-Canadians concentration tries to bring Indian art forms, music and films. Indo-Canadian community has also produced excellent writers, artists, musicians, dancers and film personalities and some of them have received prestigious awards by the

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[56] *Focus India: Building a Canada-India Trade and Economic Strategy*, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada. p.11 cited in Kavitha Sharma 1997, p. 174.

[57] Kavita A. Sharma, n.19, p. 174

[58] Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, n.49, p. 160.

Canadian state including *Canada Governor General's Award* and *Hart House* literary prize. Indo-Canadians have also received the Order of Canada, which is awarded to the distinguished Canadians who have made excellent contributions to the community. There are more than a hundred Gurudwaras and temples through out Canada and Indian religious festivals are celebrated with much fanfare. Canadian government ministers and even Prime Minister attend these functions organized by the Indo-Canadian community. As the Canadian society becomes more liberal and enlightened with each passing generation Indian diaspora in Canada becomes more integrated to the mainstream Canadian society. This is evident from the fact that the inter-marriages between second generation Indo-Canadians and white Canadians are becoming more often.[59] Indian diaspora in Canada has always been concerned about the developments in India and maintain a close association with their relatives back in India. This helps in the development of people to people and government to government relationship between two countries. Thus, over the years, Indian immigrants in Canada have emerged from the racism and oppression in the early periods to an organized community which has been recognized and accepted by the mainstream Canadian society.

The adoption of multicultural policies in the 1970s has changed the status of immigrants in Canada who had otherwise been considered to be second class citizens different from the English or French-Canadians. In ideology and practice multiculturalism offers the coexistence of different cultures as equals in a society. It stands not only for the interests and rights of national minority groups like the French in Canada but also for the dispersed immigrants who have taken the citizenship of a new country. Multicultural policies have sensitized Canadians about their multicultural heritage. According to a 1991 national survey, 77 percent Canadians felt that multiculturalism would enrich Canadian culture. 63 percent of the participants saw it as a uniting force in the country and 61 percent thought it would promote foreign trade and relations with other countries.[60] It was a clear testimony to the change of attitude towards the South Asians in Canada that a first generation Indian became the Premier of British Columbia where strict racist policies were meted out

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[59] Ibid. pp.185-188

[60] *Multiculturalism: What is it Really About?*, (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991) p.1, cited in Kavitha Sharma, n.19, p. 161

against the non-white immigrants at one point of time and the infamous Komagata Maru incident took place. This change of attitude was not only towards the South Asian or the Indian immigrants in Canada, but also towards all the immigrants from non-traditional sources. Even though racist attitudes persist at the societal level in varying degrees, multiculturalism, since its adoption, has been the guiding principle for Canada at the government level. It was evident that the immigration policies, over the years, have also been influenced by the official multiculturalism as the Canadian identity and character have been defined in terms of its multicultural heritage.

As the diasporic and ethnic communities are granted equal rights and recognition along with the special recognition to the ethno-cultural and immigrant minorities under multiculturalism, immigrant communities have become more influential and assertive in Canada and play crucial roles in Canadian society and polity. Moreover diasporic communities around the world have become prominent actors of international politics with the development of communication and transportation facilities and the wide range of transnational networks of diasporas. Indian diaspora in Canada is no exemption to this. Indian immigrants who had to face serious discriminatory measures of the Canadian state and society in the beginning also became a prominent diaspora community in Canada over the years. This was primarily due to the changes in Canadian immigration policy from exclusively racist measures to more objective point system in the 1967. It is argued that the changes in immigration trends were influenced also by the multicultural policy of 1971, which helped the Canadians to think in terms of celebrating their cultural diversity.

CHAPTER III

Growth of a Nationalist Hindu Diaspora in Canada and its Transnational Character

Growth of a Nationalist Hindu Diaspora in Canada and its Transnational Character

Immigration of Hindus to Canada: A Historical Analysis

The history of Hindu immigration to Canada can be traced back to the late 1890s and the early years of 1900s. The early Hindu immigrants to Canada were primarily from Punjab who reached Canada along with the large group of Sikh immigrants. These early Hindu immigrants were settled in British Columbia and all the Indian immigrants of those periods were commonly referred to as "Hindoos" by the white Canadians. This small group of immigrants was mainly males from farming backgrounds [1] and worked as loggers and in lumber industries. They were also employed in the construction of Canadian Pacific Railway. However, the Canadian state became hostile to Indian immigrants as the total number of South Asian immigrants increased by 1908. Hindu immigrants like other non-white immigrants were viewed as unassimilable and a threat to the Canadian culture and, therefore, had been subjected to the racist policies of the Canadian state.

Until 1908, they had been accorded full citizenship, including the right to vote. But the British Columbia legislature in 1908 disenfranchised Hindus and all South Asians from voting in Municipal and Federal elections. They were also prevented from serving as school trustees, on juries, in public service, holding jobs resulting from public works contracts, purchasing Crown timber, or practicing the professions of law and pharmacy. [2] Few Hindu immigrants were also the victims of the infamous Komagata Maru incident of 1914 which was an outcome of the 'continuous journey' legislation initiated in 1908 aimed at restricting the entry of Asian immigrants to Canada. However, the immigration policy was liberalized in 1920s to the extend of

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[1] Harold Coward, "Hinduism in Canada" in Harold Coward, John R. Hinnells and Raymond Brady Williams (ed.) *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p.152

[2] Ibid. p.152

allowing the entry of 'legitimate' wives and children to join their husbands and fathers in Canada. Nonetheless, the Hindu immigration to Canada remained static, affected by the perils of racist immigration policies of the Canadian state, since no formal record of marriages or births were retained by the Indian or other South Asian governments and, therefore, few could prove such 'legitimacy' to the satisfaction of the Canadian government.[3] This continued to be the situation till late 1950s when Canada began to initiate changes in its immigration and refugee policies.

Indian immigrants reached Canada during this period had arrived under severely oppressive economic and political conditions, both at home and in their new destination. They opted to immigrate to Canada because the prospects of economic betterment were greater in Canada than in colonial India. Thus, in the opinion of Jayant Lele two noteworthy features of the old Indian diaspora in Canada were its predominantly working class composition and its colonial experience under British rule in India, before arriving in Canada. As a result of this, he says, they displayed a strong awareness of the complex links between colonial and imperialist forms of capitalist exploitation and developed universalistic revolutionary ideals owing to their complex, across-continents experience.[4] After reaching Canada also these immigrants were not able to get into high paying and well reputed professions but remained as blue-collar workers and had to confront racism even though they were British subjects and lived in miserable conditions.

Hindu immigrants in Canada of this period remained largely unorganized and their relationship with the homeland had also been highly restricted. Even then, the support for Ghadar Party and its movements to overthrow British government in India and its opposition to the racist immigration policies in Canada and the United States were viewed with suspicion by the Canadian state and therefore the doors of Canada remained largely closed to the Indian immigrants. Since all the immigrants from

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[3] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, "The Hindu Diaspora in Western Canada" in T.S. Rukmani (ea.) *Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2001), p. 37

[4] Jayant Lele "Indian Diaspora's Long-Distance Nationalism: The Rise and Proliferation of 'Hindutva' in Canada" in Sushma J Varma and Radhika Seshan (ed.) *Fractured Identity: The Indian Diaspora in Canada* (New Delhi: Rawlat Publications, 2003), p. 71-72

South Asia were reckoned as 'Hindus' in Canada, the estimate of real Hindus of that period becomes difficult due to the unavailability of reliable data.

The New Wave of Hindu Immigrants to Canada

The trajectory of Canadian citizenship and immigration policy began to change since 1960s towards greater openness. This was reflected most strikingly in the repudiation of older, racially biased policies that made it difficult for non-whites to gain admission to Canada, or to become citizens. According to Will Kymlicka this is also reflected in the acceptance of dual citizenship and the adoption of multiculturalism.[5] Thus Canada was gradually abolishing its policy of racially excluding the Asian immigrants and this facilitated the Indian immigration to Canada since 1960s. Canada needed qualified professors to fill vacancies in the rapidly expanding universities in the country and teachers, engineers and doctors were also needed to meet the growing demand for these professions in Canada.[6] In 1961 there were only about 7,000 Canadians of Indian origin. But after the racial discrimination was formally removed from Canadian immigration legislation with the introduction of point system in 1967 the number increased to almost 70,000. This new wave of Indian immigrants brought to Canada more women and migrants from states other than Punjab.[7] This was the time when large number of Hindu immigrants began to migrate to Canada from India.

The first large group of Hindu immigrants from the province of Uttar Pradesh and surrounding regions of northern India reached Canada in the 1960s were accorded warm welcome as these Hindu immigrants fulfilled the required qualifications. They were largely Hindi speaking and urban middle class in background and part of the large group of South Asian professionals migrated to Canada during this period.[8] It was during this time that the Tamil Hindus from Madras area immigrated to Canada.

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[5] Will Kymlicka, "Immigration, Citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links" in Sarah Spencer (ed.) *The Politics of Migration: Managing Opportunity, Conflict and Change* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 198.

[6] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3, p. 35

[7] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.72

[8] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3, p. 35-37

Bengali Hindus began to enter Canada during 1970s. During 1960s and 1970s Hindus arrived in Canada from various parts of the former British colonies that discriminated against South Asians upon their independence. A considerable number of Hindus arrived in Canada from East Africa, South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana and Trinidad speaking diverse languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil, Punjabi, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam and Kannada. While Hindus from East Africa were professionals and business people, according to Buchignani and Indra, those arrived from other areas were mainly blue-collar workers.[9] As the number of ethnic and religious immigrants increased and Canada became a multicultural society, people belonging to different backgrounds and professions immigrated to Canada.

Indian immigrants reached Canada during this period were completely different from the earlier immigrants. Contrary to the first group of Indian immigrants the new immigrants left India under conditions of political freedom and immigrated to Canada on their own volition. Many of them came as students or young professionals, and they were the products of elite educational institutions of India that prospered after independence. They entered Canadian universities, civil service or professions with adequate institutional support.[10] While the early Indian immigrants to Canada were mostly from Punjab, the new wave Indian immigrant to Canada came from different states of the India and most of the Hindu immigrants Canada were part of this new group. Unlike the earlier immigrants they were not subjected to the perils of racism, but were received well in Canada under conditions of official multiculturalism in Canada. As highly qualified professionals and employed in reputed positions they enjoyed equal status in society as other Canadian citizens. But this was not the situation of the early Indian immigrants who had to face severe racism both from the Canadian state and from the society.

Today, Canadian Hindu population has spread themselves across the country and is settled in major cities. Total number of Hindus in Canada according to the 1991 census was 157,010 and concentrated in major cities of Canada as follows: Toronto

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[9] N. Buchignani and Indra, "A Review of the Historical and Sociological Literature on East Indians in Canada" *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (Vol. 1, 1985) p. 212-47, cited in Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3 p. 38

[10] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.72

90,140; Vancouver 14,880; Montreal 13,775; Edmonton 5,815; Ottawa 4,780; Calgary 4,155; Winnipeg 3,150; Kitchener 2,815 and Hamilton 2,800.[11] However, by 2001 the Hindu population of Canada increased to 297,200 with a major concentration of 191,300 in Toronto itself followed by 27,405 in Vancouver and 24,075 in Montreal.[12] This shows that the Canadian Hindu population has been expanding over the years and is spread over the major cities of Canada. This also indicates the nature of Hindu population in Canada in comparison to the earlier Indian immigrants in Canada. Indian immigrants of the early 1900s worked mostly in farming sector and lumber industries whereas the new immigrants are mostly qualified professionals and settled in metropolitan areas of the country.

Moreover the projections of Canada's major religious groups suggest that Hindu population in the country will become 480,300 by the year 2011 and it will further increase to 583,900 by 2017.[13] This indicates that the growth rate of Hindus in Canada is much higher than many other ethnic groups in the country. The demographic pattern of the Hindus according to the 2001 census suggests that 23 percent of the total Hindu population in the country belong to the age group of 0-14 years. Thus, it is important to note that the Canadian Hindu population will grow significantly through childbirth, along with the continued immigration process. Harold Coward argues that from the religious perspective, this demographic pattern raises the problem of how to effectively pass on the tradition in the midst of a generally secular and materialistic culture of Canada. This is more so because, he says, the general pattern has shown that the children of immigrant parents attempt to distance themselves from the Hindu traditions that are so different from their peers in Canada.[14] This problem has been confronted by a large number of first generation Hindu immigrants in Canada who want their children to be rooted in their home land culture and heritage. This tends the

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[11] Religion (95A), Age Groups (7A) and Sex (3) for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 1991 and 2001 Censuses, Statistics Canada, http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=55822&METH=1&APATH=3&PTYPE=55440&THEME=56&FREE=0&AID=0&FOCUS=0&VID=0&GC=0&GK=0&SC=1&CPP=99&SR=1&RL=0&RPP=9999&D1=1&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0&D5=0&D6=0&GID=431515, Accessed on 23-05-2006

[12] Ibid

[13] Statistics Canada, Projections 2001-2017

[14] Harold Coward, n.1, p. 153-154

Hindu immigrants in Canada organize themselves and associate with the Hindu religious organizations and institutions in the country. This has been facilitated by the official multiculturalism policy of Canada as it provides for the group identification and recognition and rights of ethnic minorities and immigrant groups in the country.

Until 1970s, Hindus in Canada had not been able to organize themselves under any group identity and their religious practices and rituals remained largely at home without any public places for worship. Moreover, Hinduism has never been an organized religion with a common set of practices and believes followed by all its followers even though it is considered to the oldest religion in the world. As there are different sects exists, it is difficult to identify an organized religious structure for Hinduism and religious worship has mostly been individual centric. However, by the 1970s Canadian Hindus began to extend their individual worship to include group prayer services held in people's homes. However, such meetings often remained ethnic specific.[15]

Changing Character of Canadian Hindus

Jayant Lele points out that what existed as worship, rituals and celebrations among the Canadian Hindus was in the form of family events within homes and occasional group prayers. A concrete awareness of Hinduness was characteristic of such group meetings, and they were occasionally visited by speakers, priests and religious leaders from India. He further says that the primary social and cultural links, both in India and Canada, were to small communities made up of networks of extended families and associations based on regional or linguistic affinity. They displayed very little amount of patriotism or national pride either towards India or Canada. Even though there existed some conscious element of their identity as Hindus, there was no feeling of any militancy, activism or severe patriotic sentiments.[16] However this kind of a silent, family based religious identification began to change by the mid of 1970s. Hindu community in Canada began to come out in public with much enthusiasm in its religious practices and rituals.

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[15] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3, p. 39.

[16] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.83

The need for an organized structure and place for worship coupled with the arrival of Hindu organizations began to see the establishment of Hindu temples in Canada. In Canada, unlike India, marriage or death rites were public occasions, and the Hindus also felt the need of this as they did not have any temple to celebrate it. This encouraged large number of Hindus to organize themselves in large centers and to construct buildings for public activities of their religion.[17] The arrival Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) was the major reason for the mobilization of Hindu community as an organized religion in Canada. It was from the United States that VHP reached Canada and its activities in Canada were the replica of what it did in the US. The first major activity of VHP in Canada was to open a multi-use temple with a generalized programme of worship as well as provisions for specific Hindu religious and ethnic groups to use its facilities.[18] The major characteristic of this temple was that it was open to all the sections of Hindus living in Canada without any caste or class differences. Hugh Johnston observes that the members of the Vishva Hindu Parishad, who have been raised in many local Indian traditions, have made practical compromises to create a religious community in Canada; and they have created a place of worship which is as much a church or gurudwara as a temple.[19] However, since then, even though there exists different groups in Hinduism, the number of temples has thrived over the years and the Canadian Hindu community has been actively involved in the preservation of their so-called 'Indian-ness' in Canada and wish to maintain a close association with the Hindu religious organizations back in India and elsewhere in the world.

It is also argued that the political events in India in the 1980s also had its impact on the mobilization of Hindu community in Canada. Earlier, all people of Indian origin, belonging to different religious groups, used to identify them within a single Indian identity. However, this began to change in the 1980s and polarization on the basis of different religious groups secured ground in Canada. Radhika Sekar argues that the

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[17] Harold Coward, n.1, p. 155

[18] Buchignani and Indra, 1985 p. 190, cited in Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3 p.40

[19] Hugh Johnston, "The Development of the Punjabi Community in Vancouver since 1901" *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (Vol.22: No.2. 1988), p. 11

amicable relationship between the Sikhs and Hindus began to deteriorate after the Operation Bluestar and the subsequent assassination of Indira Gandhi and Sikh riots of 1984. She argues that the developments in India following this had its impact on the relationship between the diaspora Sikhs and Hindus in Canada, both the communities began to maintain an identity independent of both. Sikhs began to construct separated *gurudwaras* and the Hindus with their increasing numbers were also able to construct separate temples for them in different places of Canada. Moreover, Indian Muslims in Canada also got distanced from the other Indo-Canadians following the communal clashes in India and they began to construct mosques for South Asian Muslims in Canada.[20] Thus, this also marked the formation of diasporic identity defined in religious terms among the Indian immigrants in Canada. As Hindus in Canada were assisted by the religious organizations working in the United States and their entry to Canada, it became possible for the immigrants to mobilize as a separate community and to build independent temples for them in Canada.

Milton Israel reports that Hindu temples in Canada have been increasing and there now more than 50 Hindu temples and other organizations in Ontario itself.[21] Another important manifestation of the Hindu religious practice in Canada, according to Harold Coward, is the role of the *guru*. Enlightened *gurus* have been an integral part of Hinduism as they are entrusted with the task of interpretation of scripture and tradition and their experience is also acknowledged well by the devotees. They also play a crucial role in the continuity and change in response to new challenges. However, today's *gurus,* for the convenience of the devotees restructure the rituals so that it would work in Canada. Such a restructuring of original religious practices and rituals is also seen in the Canadian Hindu experience of the learning and practice of sacred language and text in daily life. Thus, among the Hindu diaspora community in Canada, there has been a shift away from traditional practices towards the practices

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[20] Radhika Sekar, "Authenticity by Accident: Organizing, Decision Making and the Construction of a Diasporic Hindu temple in the Nation's Capital" in T. S. Rukmani (ed.) *Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 2001), p. 312-313

[21] Milton Israel, *In the Future Soil: A Social History of the Indo-Canadians In Ontario* (Toronto: The Organization for the Promotion of Indian Culture, 1994) cited in Harold Coward, n.1, p. 156.

prescribed by the *guru*.[22] This is done more so because the second generation immigrants may not be able to follow the rituals as practices of the original religion as it is practiced in the home land. Thus, for the preservation and retention of religious identity among the overseas Indians such changes are initiated so that it adapts to the conditions existing in their country of residents which is largely based on secular and multicultural frameworks. As Canada is a multicultural and secular country all the ethnic groups are required to carry out its activities within the broader Canadian identity.

Hinduism, in its original form, does not consider temple attendance as a mark of religiosity. All that is expected is the performance of sacraments which is largely individual centered in practice. Temple worship is generally an extension of the daily personal *puja*. However, diasporic Hindu community attaches great importance to the temple worship and other community events in Canada.[23] They display much vigor and enthusiasm in their religious practices and wish to assert their organized (Hindu) identity in the host country.

The religious life of Hindus has been enhanced at the university level in Canada. Arti Dhand reports that sixty to eighty percent of the Hinduism class of the University of Toronto is composed of Hindus. In her opinion this is the reflection of the active and energetic Hindu community in Toronto, with its numerous and enormous Hindu temples, Hindu cultural associations, the Hinduism lectures broadcast on national television and the large South Asian events and festivals.[24] This is also a derivative of the multicultural policies of Canada as it gives strong support to the pursuance of minority religious studies and promotes their religious identity. However, this gives an opportunity to the indo-Canadian youth to understand and learn the religion of their belief even though they are born and brought up in distant country.

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[22] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3, p.41-44

[23] Radhika Sekar, n.20, p. 313-315

[24] Arti Dhand "Hinduism to Hindus in the Western Diaspora" *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* (Vol. 17, 2005), p. 276

reas the South Asian Sikhs and Muslims face religion based problems such as ing of turbans in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Islamic dress in public schools, Hindus in Canada has evaded the public eye on such issues.[25] Hindus in Canada actively take part in the public debate on multiculturalism and their views are listened by the Canadian public also. Neil Bissoondath who has criticized the Canadian multiculturalism through his best seller, *Selling Illusions: The Cult o Multiculturalism in Canada* is also a Hindu. His writings on multiculturalism, mostly critique of the official policy, have been read widely in Canada. He writes;

> Multiculturalism with all of its festivals and its celebrations, had done-
> and Can do-nothing to foster factual and clear minded vision of our
> neighbours. Depending on stereotype, ensuring that ethnic groups will
> preserve their distinctiveness in gentle and insidious form of cultural
> apartheid, multiculturalism has done little more than lead an already
> divided country down to path to further social decisiveness.[26]

Hindu women as the guardian of religion in Canada

Another important aspect of the Hindu diaspora in Canada is the role of women in th preservation and continuity of Hindu religion and culture. Coward and Botting argu that Hindu women in Canada continue to manifest a strong collective identity an staunch commitment to family duties and responsibilities.[27] However, this has to b seen in the context of a larger Canadian society which is built on the foundations o strong liberal principles. Anne Pearson reports the different sociological studies of th last two decades that have demonstrated the role of religion in the retention of ethni cultural diversity in the South Asian diaspora, and suggest that women are the primar conservators and transmitters of their religious heritage in Canada.[28] These studie

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[25] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3, p.50

[26] Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1994), p.77

[27] Harold Coward and Heather Botting, n.3, p. 49.

[28] Studies by V. Dhruvanraj "Ethnic Cultural Retention and Transmission Among First Generation Hindu Asian Indians in a Canadian Prairie City" *Journal of Family and Comparative Studies* (Vol.24, No.1, 1993), p.63-79, Josephine C. Naidoo, "Canadian South Asian Women in Transition: A Dualistic View of Life" *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* (Vol.19, No.2, 1988), p.311-327, Helen Ralston "Religion in the Life of South Asian Immigrant Women in Atlantic Canada" *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* (Vol.4, 1992), p.245-260, cited in Anne M. Pearson "Mothers and Daughters: The Transmission of Religious Practice and the Formation of Hindu Identity Among Hindu

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shed light on the fact that, like in India, women place importance on the maintenance of the religious practices and the transmission of traditional beliefs and values to the next generation. Primary sources of knowledge about the Hindu religion for the second generation Hindu immigrants, according to Anne Pearson, are familial practices (she says these practices such as *puja* at home, the observance of festivals and calendrical ritual fests are initiated by women), the temple and talks given by the priests or *pandits* and visiting *swamis*, and the courses offered by various universities and other institutions on India, Hinduism, and world religions.[29] Thus, it is to be noted that the role of women in the preservation of religious identity among the diaspora community has been highly recognized and this is more so in the case of Hindu diasopra given the nature of duties and responsibilities 'prescribed' for women in Indian society.

Although women are the major source of religious continuity and transmission in the diaspora Hindu community, pattern of religious practices and the worship have, often, varied among the second and third generation Hindu women in Canada. This is primarily because, while the first generation Hindu immigrant women in Canada were mostly spouses and dependents of those Indian men who had migrated earlier and most of them remained at home as housewives. However, this began to changes as the Canadian-born second and third generation daughters have been brought up and educated in a highly liberalized Canadian social system. This can be well substantiated with regard to the pattern of marriage of the second and third generation Hindu women as they prefer to have a considerable degree of freedom for them to decide and try to evade the traditional way of arranged marriages desired by the family. However, despite the persistence of such differences in perceptions, Hindu women continue to play their role in the conservation of religious identity among the diaspora community in Canada as it is else where in the world.

Immigrant Women in Ontario" in T.S.Rukmani (ed.) *Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 2001), p. 427.

[29] Anne Pearson, "Mothers and Daughters: The Transmission of Religious Practice and the Formation of Hindu Identity Among Hindu Immigrant Women in Ontario" in T.S.Rukmani (ed.) *Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 2001), p.438.

Homeland and Diaspora: A Transnational Perspective

The relation between different diasporas and their homeland has long been identified. However, this emerged as a field of serious academic research only in the recent past. Diasporic connections are becoming increasingly significant in the context of growing global linkages among non-state actors and the resultant decline in the importance of national borders.[30] Transnational diaspora linkages that have become prominent with the development of communication and transportation facilities in the era of globalization have broadly been refered to as 'transnationalism' or 'transnational networks'. The term diaspora itself contains the elements of trans-national social spaces and connections. The definitions given by many scholars suggest that diaspora communities are becoming actively present in transnational social, economic, cultural and political spheres. Steven Vertovec writes that;

> the term 'diaspora' is often used to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialized' or 'transnational'- that is, whose cultural origins are said to have arisen in a land other than that in which they currently reside, and whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe. Such populations, today, are growing in prevalence, number and self-awareness and several of them are emerging as significant players in national, regional or global political economies.[31]

William Safran argues that the concept of diaspora can be applied to denote the expatriate minority communities whose members share some specific characteristics such as; 1) they or their ancestors have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral' or foreign regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland — its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not — and perhaps cannot be — fully

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[30] Karim H. Karim, *From Ethnic Media to Global Media: Transnational Communication Networks Among Diasporic Communities* (International Comparative Research Group, Strategic Research and Analysis, Canadian Heritage, June, 1998), p.1 http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk Accessed on 15 June, 2006

[31] Steven Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns* (London: Routledge, 2000) p. 141. Vertovec has derived this from the writings of Gabriel Sheffer, "A New Filed of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics" in Gabriel Sheffer (ed.) *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p.1-15, J. Kotkin *Tribes: How Race, Religion, and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy* (New York: Random House, 1992) and Robin Cohen *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997)

accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.[32]

Thus according to Safran diaspora communities maintain a notion of homeland in their imagination and try to maintain ties with their homeland which they consider as their 'true' or 'ideal' home. It is argued that diasporas- even though they are geographically outside the state, identity-wise they are perceived (by themselves, the homeland or others) as 'inside the people'- attach great importance to their kinship identity and exert influence on homelands.[33] According to Mark-Anthony Falzon, diasporic imaginary of a homeland can be denoted with reference to 'imaginary' in Benedict Anderson's (1991) culturalist sense because of the ways in which they reproduce the translocal interlinkages which enable them to imagine themselves as being 'in diaspora.'[34] Thus, it is unambiguous that the diaspora communities maintain a sense of attachment with their 'homeland' and wish to sustain a close relationship with it. Such relations are beyond the boundaries of a state and, often, assume transnational character.

Transnationalism is defined as a process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. This process is called transnationalism because many immigrants today

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[32] William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" *Diaspora* (Vol.1, No.1, 1991), p. 83-84

[33] Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, "Diasporas and International Relations Theory" *International Organization* (Vol.57, No.3 Summer 2003), p.451

[34] In his classic work *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Benedict Anderson argues that people with different backgrounds and socio-economic biographies, and who may never actually interact personally, come to see or imagine themselves as belonging to one community which according to him a nation-state. Discussed by Mark-Anthony Falzon, "Bombay, Our Cultural Heart: Rethinking the Relation Between Homeland and Diaspora" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (Vol.26, No.4, July 2003), p. 664

build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. A major element of this process is the multiplicity of involvements that the trans-migrants sustain in both home and host societies.[35] Transnationalism, thus involves multiple levels of diaspora engagement in the activities of homeland and the country of their settlement and at the next stage of development such networks are extended to other countries also. Thus, transnational networks give them the status of a transnational community.

Peggy Levitt argues that the transnational communities emerge out of strong interpersonal networks which are established through the migration process. He has identified the factors responsible for the growing transnational ties among contemporary immigrants. They are; 1) ease of travel and communication, 2) the increasingly important role migrants play in sending-country economies, 3) attempts by sending state to legitimize themselves by providing services to migrants and their children, 4) the increased importance of the receiving-country states in the economic and political futures of sending societies, 5) the social and political mobilization of migrants in their host countries and 6) that migration takes place within an ideological climate that favours pluralism over the melting pot.[36] However, Alejandro Portes points out that the emergence of transnational communities is tied to the logic of capitalism itself. They are brought to play by the interests and needs of investors and employers in the advanced countries. Moreover, these communities represent a distinct phenomenon at variance with traditional patterns of immigrant adaptation and because this phenomenon is fuelled by the dynamics of globalization, it has greater potential.[37] Thus, Levitt attributes the phenomenon of transnationalism to the growth of capitalism and globalization.

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[35] Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Post-Colonial Predicaments, and De-territorialized Nation States* (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach, 1994), p. 6

[36] Peggy Levitt, "Towards an Understanding of Transnational Community Forms and Their Impact on Immigrant Incorporation", Paper presented at 'Comparative Immigration and Integration Programme' Winter Workshop, University of California at San Diego, 19 February, 1999. http://www.migration.ucdavis.edu Accessed on 22, June, 2006.

[37]Alejandro Portes, "Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities" (Princeton University, September, 1997), p.4 http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/portes.pdf, Accessed on 22, June, 2006.

Thus, it is very much clear that the relationship between diaspora and homeland is of great significance in the study of diaspora politics. Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth classify the members of a mobilized diaspora in to three categories; core members, passive members and silent members. Core members are those organizing elites who are intensively active in diasporic affairs and in a position to appeal for mobilization of the larger diaspora. Passive members are those available for mobilization when ever it is necessary. Silent members are those larger sections of the community who are generally not involved in diasporic affairs, but may mobilize in times of crisis.[38] They further argue that the diasporas can influence of the foreign policy directions of the host country and homeland in different ways. In host societies, especially in the case of liberal-democracies, diasporas act as interest groups in order to influence the foreign policy of their host country vis-a- vis their homelands. Disporas can also be active in influencing the foreign policy of their homelands.[39] More over organized diaspora communities are in a position to establish relations with the people of their communities settled in countries other than their own host country and homeland.

Religion and Diaspora: Formation of a Hindu Diaspora

Robin Cohen in his scholarly work *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* argues that religions do not constitute diasporas in and of themselves because religions usually span more than one ethnic group and it does not wish to return to a homeland also. However, he argues that religions can provide additional cement to bind a diasporic consciousness.[40] Judaism and Sikhism are two obvious exemptions to this as Cohen recognizes. However Steven Vertovec argues that it is possible to talk of a 'Hindu diaspora' too, like Judaism and Sikhism. Because Hinduism, like these two religions, and in contrast to religions like Christianity or Islam, is generally not a proselytizing faith (there are certain sects in Hinduism that do proselytize).[41] More over, generally, Hinduism does not seek converts from abroad and because of its inextricable roots in

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[38] Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, n.33, p.452-453

[39] Ibid. p. 453-454

[40] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 188-189

[41] Steven Vertovec, n.31, p.2-3

the social system and land of India. Bhikhu Parekh also believes that such an acute sense of rootedness about the relationship between Hinduism and India makes Hinduism an ethnic religion. [42]

It is argued that even though all the Indians are not Hindus, all the Hindus with an exemption of Nepalese and Balinese, are Indians and for most of the Hindus India is a sacred space where most of the widely recognized gods and legendary humans are believed to have undertaken their most significant deeds.[43] In the words of Terence Thomas, "Bharat is a vital land for Hindus, especially for the twice-born (high-caste) classes and in particular the Brahmans. For such Hindus, Bharat is a sacred universe, the adobe of Brahma, the creator divinity. This is the traditional Hindu view of the world and, though recently it has tended to become less important and less powerful, many Hindus still undergo purification rites on returning to the sacred soil of Bharat from abroad."[44] Thus it is argued that since Hinduism is identified with a special kind of relationship with a spiritual homeland it can be considered as an ethnic category and the Hindus settled outside can be called a religious diaspora too.

It is the feeling of spiritual homeland and the centrality of India's sacred geography that is emphasized and played upon by the Hindu nationalists both in India as well as abroad.[45] V.D. Savarkar, one of the early and prominent Hindu nationalists, wrote in this famous work *Hindutva*;

> A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat Varsha,
> from the Indus to the Seas, as his Father-Land as well as his Holy-
> Land that is the cradle of his religion.[46]

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[42] Bhikhu Parekh, "Some Reflections of the Indian Diaspora" *Journal of Contemporary Thought* (Vol.3, 1993), p. 140, cited in Vertovec, 2000, p.3

[43] Steven Vertovec, n.31, p.3

[44] Terence Thomas, "Hindu Dharma in Dispersion" in G. Parsons (ed.), *The Growth of Religious Diversity: Britain from 1945, Vol. 1-Traditions* (London, Routledge, 1993), p.175, cited in Steven Vertovec, n.31, p.3

[45] S. Deshpande "Hegemonic Spatial Strategies: The Nation-space and Hindu Communalism in Twentieth Century India," *Public Culture* (Vol.10, 1998), p. 249-284, cited in Steven Vertovec, n.31, p.3

[46] V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva,* cited in Steven Vertovec, n.31, p.3

Thus, diaspora Hindus are mobilized by the Hindu nationalist organizations on the grounds of an ethnic identity ascribed to them and also, most importantly, on the postulation of a spiritual homeland that binds all the Hindus. Even those Hindus who do not have the intention to return to India are encouraged to become a part of the diaspora Hindu community as it will give them a sense of belonging to the spiritual homeland of their religion. More over, immigrant communities up on their arrival in a new social system look for identities that can distinguish them from the host community and other ethnic groups in the country. For them an ethnic religious identity becomes a distinguishing mark that is recognized by everyone.

Hindu Nationalist Organizations in Canada

It is obvious that the Hindu religious organizations play a significant role in the life of Indian immigrants and take the lead in creating a Hindu identity for them in Canada. While Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been the most important and active Hindu nationalist organization in India, the most important Hindu organization operating among the overseas Hindus has been the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) or the World Hindu Council. Diaspora Hindu movements have been spearheaded by the Vishva Hindu Parishad through out the world.[47] VHP was founded in 1964 by Hindu guru Swami Chinmayanand and other Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leaders of that time. It is claimed to be a Hindu revivalist movement which tries to reach out globally to all Hindus in the world and mobilize Hindus in India. However, in the opinion of Peter van der Veer, it is clearly a movement that promotes Hindu nationalism with an anti-secular and anti-Muslim slant. It is also a movement that is very active globally and one of the prime agents of the globalization of Hinduism.[48] It is argued that there exist VHP branches in all the major countries of the world where communities of diverse Hindu beliefs exist and remain strongly tied to the political impulses of VHP in India while retaining local leadership and structures in respective countries. [49]

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[47] Bidisha Biswas "Nationalism By Proxy: A Comparison of Social Movements Among Diaspora Sikhs and Hindus" *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* (Vol. 10, 2004), p.276 (296-295)

[48] Peter van der Veer, "Transnational Religion" Paper given to the conference on Transnational Migration: Comparative Perspective, Princeton University, June-July 2001, p. 5-7

[49] Parita Mukta "The Public Face of Hindu Nationalism" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (Vol. 23, No.3, May 2000), p. 444

According to Bidisha Biswas central to the ideology of VHP is the belief that India's unity and progress depends upon the subordination of other communities to "Hindu superiority." VHP has established its wings in America, Britain and Canada in early 1970s indicating its interest in the Hindu diaspora community.[50] The activities of VHP and other Hindu organizations have been under serious discussions in the academia and many people consider it to be a militant Hindu nationalist organization with strong opposition to the Muslims and the Christians.

Tapan Basu and Pradip Datta have pointed out three important aspects of the global reach and impact of VHP with its basis in India. Firstly, by going beyond the tight vanguardist structure of the RSS, VHP has made communalism (and communal conflict centered around politically-constructed religious identities) into a mass force. Secondly, VHP asserts itself as coterminous with the boundaries of a varied and differentiated Hinduism and thereby presents its own commands and injunctions as Hindu collective will, thus making the appropriative intrusion of a political formation. Finally, the public religious leaders and the ecclesiastical institutions of Hinduism within the ideology of Hindutva have given it a depth, reach and claim to legitimacy which it had lacked before.[51] Thus, notwithstanding the fact that in most of the countries VHP is registered as a cultural or charity organization, scholars attribute a militant nationalist face for VHP. Moreover, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishva Hindu Parishad and their frontal organization are accused of promoting communal violence against the people of other religious beliefs in India. Therefore, the presence and activities of VHP and other Hindu nationalist organizations among the diasporic Hindus of a secular and multicultural state like Canada is a matter of academic concern.

Jayant Lele points out that the support for the VHP in Canada came form the petty bourgeoisie migrants of the 1970s and 1980s. They were mostly professionals and students and part of those large number of immigrants reached Canada after the relaxation in immigration policy and the following the multiculturalism policy. The

[50] Bidisha Biswas, n.47, p.276

[51] Tapan Basu and Pradip Dutta (ed.) *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993) p. 57-70, cited in Parita Mukta "The Public Face of Hindu Nationalism" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (Vol. 23, No.3, May 2000), p. 443-444

new middle class emerged in India during the new information technology boom became the subscribers of the Hindu Nationalist propaganda of the VHP and Hindu Students Councils,[52] another central organization for the mobilization of overseas Hindu communities.

Hindu Students Council (HSC) was established in 1990 in United States with its branches in Canada. Even though it has become organizationally independent of the VHP, it maintains a close association with the parent body. It draws the support of students from India and the children of first generation Hindu immigrants in these countries. They are active in organizing cultural events, festivals, lectures and camps for the Hindu students and sustain interest in Indian politics. Bidisha Biswas argues that the HSC provides VHP with a socially acceptable way of mobilizing the Hindu immigrants and helps it for the inculcation of a sense of collective pride in unifying Hindu identity.[53] Hindu Students Councils were instrumental in organizing the middle-class Hindu youth in Canada through their electronic networks. This gave impetus to the growth and expansion of Hindutva ideology and the new middle-class Indian immigrants started becoming the subscribers of that. It is argued that this process got momentum and legitimacy with the growing acceptance of Hindutva politics[54] in India in the 1990s and the legitimacy granted by the Canadian state to the so-called minority group rights through its policy of multiculturalism.

Peter Vander Veer explains the popularity for right-wing Hindu nationalist forces among the overseas Indians in the light of migration conditions. He says that the experience of discrimination faced by the Indian immigrants in North America has led to the growth of nationalist activities centered on India.[55] Immigrants, around the

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[52] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.84

[53] Bidisha Biswas, n. 47, p. 276-277

[54] The term *Hindutva* or Hinduness implies, the movement has several facets. Apart from the explicitly political aspects, it lays stress on the greatness of Hinduism and Hindu culture, on the importance of Hindu unity, and on the need to defend Hinduism and Hindus against discrimination, defamation and pressure to convert to other religions. This is the source of its power and appeal, enabling the movement to recruit even apolitical supporters. For more details see, Prema Kurien, "Religion, Ethnicity and Politics: Hindu and Muslim Indian Immigrants in the United State" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (Vol.24, No.2, March 2001), pp.263-293

[55] Peter Vander Veer *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (California: University of California Press, 1994), p.117

world, move to different parts of the world in search of better material and social conditions of life which is not available in their home country. However, as the conditions in the receiving country may not be satisfactory to their expectations, there develops a sense of dissatisfaction towards the host as well as home country. This arises due to their condition in the host country and the feeling of abandonment by the home country. The attitude of expatriate to his home land, writes Shashi Tharoor, is that of the faithless lover who blames the women has spurned for not having sufficiently merited his fidelity. That is why the support of extremism is doubly gratifying: it appears the expatriate's sense of guilt a not being involved in his homeland.[56]

Hindu Children and their Religious Education

One of the major problems faced by the diaspora Hindu community in Canada is the task of transmitting the religious belief and cultural values to the second generation Canadian-born children. In this connection Ajit Adhopia writes that the Hindu Canadians are extremely worried about the moral standards and sexual behaviour of their Canadian-born children and watch the behaviour of their children like hawks.[57] The first generation Hindu immigrants consider themselves to be highly rooted in their religious and cultural heritage and desire that their children are also brought up in the same manner. However, there often exists a contradiction of interest as the children of the immigrants who are born and brought up in a new social environment aspire to lead a Canadian way of life. This is manifested mostly with regard to the marriage and Adhopia says Hindu parents are generally successful in convincing their children that an inter-religious marriage would cause conflicts in their marriage life and in the future this will create a serious identity crisis among the children of a mixed marriage.[58] But the problem for the Hindu immigrants with regard to the cultural and religious embeddedness of their children continues to exist and it is

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[56] Shashi Tharoor, "Growing up Extreme: On the Vicious Fanaticism of Expatriates" *Washington Post,* 25 July 1993, p. C5

[57] Ajit Adhopia, *The Hindus in Canada: A Perspective on Hindu-Canadians' Cultural Heritage* (Mississauga: Inderlekh Publications, 1993), p.65

[58] Ibid. p.81-82

argued that children are often forced to hide their social life from the parents to avoid confrontations.[59] Diaspora Hindus send their children back to India for assimilating Indian cultural values and Hindu religious traditions, but according to Adhopia what they witness in modern and urban India is the blind imitation of North American pop culture and they recognize that sending their children for cultural orientation to India is of no use.[60]

The solution to this problem has, therefore, been offered by the Hindu nationalist organizations working in Canada. Left with no other option diaspora Hindus encourage their children to join these organizations so that they learn more about their parents' religion and culture. However, Jayant Lele points out that what is offered as knowledge by the Hindutva organizations is a systematically distorted and glorified account of Indian history and also largely disgracing narratives of other cultural and religious traditions in India.[61] They also try to create an intentionally ambiguous[62] and yet sufficiently homogenized view of a tolerant and syncretic Indian tradition and culture, as Hindu. As the parents do not have sufficient time to impart religious and cultural education to their children Hindu organizations take this responsibility and it is packaged to attract the middle-class Indian immigrants in Canada. This is also an opportunity for these organizations to spread their Hindutva ideologies and it is operated through *geeta* reading groups, *mahila sabhas,* temple based functions and *pujas,* informal baby-sitting groups, cultural evens of various kinds and summer camps.[63] The major group operating among the Hindu youth in Canada with this purpose is Hindu Students' Councils. Students also join the Hinduism classes in different universities and the distinguishing feature of the majority of Hinduism studies students in Canadian universities is their Hindu identity.

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[59] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.91

[60] Ajit Adhopia, n.57, p. 65-68

[61] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.98

[62] Brian Smith, "Re-envisioning Hinduism and Evaluating the Hindutva Movement" *Religion* (Vol. 26, 1996), p. 127, cited in Jayant Lele, n.4, p. 98.

[63] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.98.

Arti Dhand points out that, there are cases where children from few non-religious families also observe ritual practices and wear some mark of Hindu identity on their person such as an *aum* pendant strung in a necklace. Most of the Canadian Hindus attend temple services and religious festivals are celebrated with great enthusiasm. Students also assert a good knowledge of the tradition, some of them confess to have a narrow understanding of their tradition and express their eagerness to comprehend the grand narrative of their heritage. [64] Thus, it is interesting to notice that notwithstanding the fact that the second generation Hindu children wish to have a Canadian way of life which is contrary to the interest of their parents, they display a great degree of interest in exploring and understanding their religious tradition and cultural heritage. However, the difficulty involved here, as mentioned above, is the presence of Hindu nationalist organizations as providers of knowledge to the diasporic youth in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Long-Distance Nationalism of Hindu Diaspora [65]

It is argued that since the mid 1990s with the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power in India, the relationship between the Hindu immigrants in Canada, like in the US and Britain, and the Hindu nationalist politics in India has become increasingly explicit.[66] In August 1999, Hindu associations in the US organized a *"dharma prasaar yatra"* a pilgrimage to spread the message of *dharma*. *Yatra* passed through nine major cities of US, and it was claimed that around fifteen to twenty thousand Hindus participated in this. However, on August 23, *yatra* reached Canada for a special programme at the Vishnu Mandir in Toronto. The religious leaders and the *gurus* participated in the *yatra* emphasized the need for the Hindu temples to be places of learning, worshipping and spiritual nurturing rather than being merely centers of

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[64] Arti Dhand, n.24, p.278

[65] Concept of 'long-distance nationalism' is used by Benedict Anderson in his book *Long-Distance Nationalism:World Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Centre for Asian Studies, 1992) Anderson argues that there are two powerful phenomena in advanced capitalist societies that make long-distance nationalism possible, they are; mass migration and mass communications. This is possible when members of a national group, after moving to other countries or even other continents retain their sense of 'Old World ' identity and more ostentatiously play important roles in their homeland's political scene

[66] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.89

social gathering and entertainment. They also accentuated the necessity of unity among different sects of Hinduism.[67] Thus the most important objective of the Hindu organizations has been to bring all the people of Hindu belief under one single identity of an organized Hindu religion.

The attempt to modify Hinduism as a homogeneous organized religion should be understood in the context of the right wing nationalist politics in India. The ideology of the Hindutva politics is built on an attempt to provide Hinduism a universalistic and nationalistic character with a dangerous opposition to other religious practices. The RSS and their associates such as Bajrang Dal, Hindu Jagran Manch etc. claim Hinduism to be universal religion and seriously attempt to prove its universal and modern character. VHP defines Hinduism as a civilization rather than a religion.[68] The objectives of portraying Hinduism a homogeneous religion is to evade the differences within Hinduism, bring the different caste groups under the Hindu religious identity so as to expand the reach of Hindutva politics in the country and to mobilize the support of overseas Hindus who belong to different sects of Hinduism.

In August 2001, K.S.Sudarshan, the RSS leader, visited Canada and US. In Toronto, where he was the chief guest at a workshop on "Listening to the Voices of Our Lands" organized by the Canadian Native Centre, he described Hindutva to be a spiritual movement and appealed to the native community of Canada to interact more with Hindus to regenerate the ancient wisdom.[69] VHP, Hindu Students Council and the other so-called cultural organization provide a platform for the South Asian Hindus to express their identity through the medium of cultural nationalism. For the overseas Indians this is an opportunity to identify themselves with the social, religious, political problems back in India in which they can not, otherwise, have a direct involvement. Diaspora community who has lost the direct participation in the culture, religion, society and polity of their mother land find their close association with the nationalist forces an alternative to this feeling of alienation. Vishva Hindu Parishad and other religious organization find grounds for their ideology and politics on this

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[67] www.hindunet.com/vdpy/yatra.htm cited in Jayant Lele, n.4, p.89

[68] Peter Vander Veer, n.55, p.134

[69] *Organizer,* 2 September 2001, cited in Jayant Lele, n.4, p. 90

alienation felt by the diasporic community as they become more susceptive to it. Thus, according to Peter Vander Veer, the task of VHP, like other Hindu organizations, is to attract the Hindu population around the world and create a monolithic Hindu identity, which is a prerequisite for the establishment of a hegemonic upper-caste exclusivist Hindu Rashtra.[70] Hindu nationalist politics, like any other forms of fundamentalist politics, has been nurtured on the postulations of hatred towards people of other religious believes, and argues that India has historically been a Hindu state. However, this has been identified as a thereat to the secular constitution of the Indian state.

While speaking at a Hindu temple in Toronto, K.S. Sudarshan argued that the lack of self-confidence, absence of nationalistic outlook, and ignorance of the glorious period of Hindu history contributed to the subjugation and domination of Hindu society for five hundred years by the Muslims and for about a couple of centuries by the Christians.[71] Thus, the objective of the nationalist Hindu organizations working among the diaspora communities is to mobilize support for the creation of a unified Hindu identity for India which is highly exclusive in character.

However, what is important for our understanding is the diaspora politics[72] of the Indo-Canadians, especially Hindus, in the context of a well established Hindu nationalist organizations working among Canadian Hindus. Here it can be stated that the remittances made by the Canadian Hindus through the nationalist and religious organizations in Canada have been channelized for activities of various kinds in India. By placing this in proper perspective, it can be argued that the money collected from the diaspora Hindus in the name of charitable and developmental activities has been used by Hindutva organizations to pursue their politics of religious fundamentalism in India. This argument has been placed by Benedict Anderson in his writings on long-distance nationalism of the South Asian communities abroad and states that the Hindutva politics in Canada has been a multi-million dollars business.[73] The Hindutva

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[70] Peter Vander Veer, n.55, p.132

[71] Jayant Lele, n.4, p.90

[72] Here the term 'diaspora politics' is used to denote the attempts by the diaspora community to influence politics in their home land.

[73] See Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparison: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998)

politics as it is manifested today has been based on the assumption of supremacy of Hinduism and Hindu religious traditions. Hindutva forces have been accused of promoting religious fundamentalism and their involvement in different communal tensions and violence in India. Canada has also been concerned about this and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada reports that the growth of Hindu fundamentalism in India would be an obstacle to the development of bilateral relations between India and Canada.[74] More over, the Hindu diaspora community in Canada has also been active in transnational networks involving India and other countries of the world where People of Indian Origin (PIO), especially Hindus have migrated to. Hindu diaspora is very prominent in USA, U.K. and other economically advanced countries. They attempt to create the transnational networks with Hindus of other countries including Canada and this makes Canadian Hindus more significant as far as the diaspora politics is concerned.

Multiculturalism and the Hindu Identity formation in Canada

Multicultural policy of Canada has facilitated the mobilization of Hindus as an organized religion in Canada. According to John Rex multiculturalism accepts that there are institutions which are essential to the modern nation state which will either be entirely secular or based upon shared values, yet at the same time recognizes that there is value in giving limited recognition to minority cultures. It also provides minority communities a psychological and moral home between the family and state.[75] He further argues that multiculturalism tends to enable the minority members to act collectively and not merely individually to fight for their rights; just as class based organizations have been an essential part of developing modern democracies in the past. As the multiculturalism recognizes rights of the individuals of minority groups, immigrant communities often try to organize themselves to enjoy these rights. But Rex says that minority rights are protected not through the power of the immigrant organizations alone but also through the paternalistic actions of indigenous

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[74] Reeta Chowdhary Tremblay, "Canada and India: Broadening and Deepening the Relationship" (Toronto: Foreign Policy Dialogue Series, 2003-04), www.asiapacific.ca, Accessed on 26th May, 2006.

[75] John Rex " National Identity in the Democratic Multi-cultural State" *Sociological Research Online* (Vol.1, No.2, 1996) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/1/2/1.html, Accessed on 17-05-2006

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mobilizing the members of one particular community and defining their identity in the host country. They provide the diasporic Hindus with different Indian art forms, films and music, make the interaction with renowned professional Indian artists, cultural and religious leaders possible, organize Indian cultural and religious festivals etc. to make them rooted in Indian, especially Hindu, heritage in a distant place away from India.

Hindus in Canada also benefit from the multicultural character of the state as the ideology and practice of the official policy makes it imperative for the immigrants to define and identify themselves with a group so that they are also reckoned as an ethnic group in the country. More over, while racism and discrimination of immigrants are abolished at the public policy level, varying degrees of racism, alienation and discrimination exist at the societal level in Canada. This induces the immigrants to reinforce their Indian-ness so as to define a distinctive identity in the host country. This becomes easy for them as they are rooted in the essential values and culture of India. Assertion of a Hindu religious identity becomes the extreme manifestation of group identity for the Hindu immigrants in this process. Thus, religion becomes the center of identity for the immigrants as it forms the most reliable source of collective identity for them. Collective religious identity helps the diaspora not only in maintaining ties with India but also in the active pursuance of their religious practices and rituals in Canada. This also helps the first generation Hindu immigrants to ensure that their children are also getting rooted in Hindu religion. Framework of an organized Hindu religion becomes essential for the attainment of these objectives which is facilitated by the nationalist Hindu organizations working Canada. These organizations give the ideological support for this process and in return they are benefited from the material support given by the immigrant population for the pursuance of Hindutva politics back in India and elsewhere.

Hindus in Canada have emerged as a unified disapora from a community that had to face severe racism in the initial years. This was made possible as majority of the Hindus immigrated to Canada after the introduction of point system were highly

[6] ibid

qualified and were economically placed well in Canadian society. This gave them a comparative advantage over other immigrant communities in Canada. Moreover, they were assisted by the activities of international Hindu religious organizations and the multicultural framework of Canada.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

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The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was set up in 1963 with the mission of examining the identity of Canada on the basis of its dual character. The Commission intended to define Canada's character in accordance with three variables: an English Canadian majority, a French Canadian (national) minority and a culturally diverse group of immigrant population and naturalized Canadians who had not assimilated to English or French language.[1] Setting up of the Royal Commission itself, was a testimony to the conviction of Canadians towards the management of their cultural diversity. However, the report of the Royal Commission was slightly different from what was expected to be the responsibility of the commission, which is to define the character of Canada in the context of two founding cultures. The main reason for the constitution of the Royal Commission was the growing tensions between the French and English Canadians in the 1950s and 1960s. It was expected to examine the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to make recommendations for the better functioning of Canadian confederation on the basis of partnership existed between the two founding nations at that point of time.

However, the Commission devoted Book IV of its report to other ethnic groups and recommended their integration in to the Canadian society with full citizenship rights and equal participation in country's institutional structures. Thus, the initial argument of biculturalism was rejected and multiculturalism was introduced in Canada based on this commitment to diversity. Eventhough bilingualism continued at the official level multiculturalism gave recognition and equal status to the immigrant and other minority communities in the country. The immigrant communities who had never been accorded favorable conditions of entry and integration in to the society were acknowledged and recognized as integral part of the Canadian state and society. Multiculturalism also offered funding for minority cultural practices apart from the special recognition granted to them. Constitution Act of 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms also extended

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[1] Louis Dupont and Nathalie Lemarchand, "Official Multiculturalism in Canada: Between Virtue and Politics" in Grant H. Cornwell and Eve Walsh Stoddard (ed.) *Global Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives on Ethnicity, Race, and Nation* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC. 2001), p. 317-318

certain rights to the members of the minority communities that could be exercised collectively through their institutional arrangements. Thus, with the introduction of multiculturalism immigrant and other cultural minorities became a recognized and crucial component of Canadian social system and polity that could never be neglected by any of the political parties, public institutions and policies of the country. Over the years immigrant communities became prominent actors of Canadian polity as their numbers and percentage in relation to the English and French kept on increasing. Different people on their arrival in Canada began to look for identities that could give them group recognition that would differentiate them from other cultures of the Canadian mosaic and at the same time will remain as an important component of the society and polity of Canada. However, with the increased significance attained by the immigrant groups, they began to assert themselves and took different manifestations and dimensions in this process.

Indian immigrants in Canada have also benefited largely from the multicultural character of the country. Canadian immigration policy, which blatantly discriminated the early Indian immigrants, underwent serious changes in the 1960s and the Indian immigration to Canada was precipitated solely on the basis of that. Prior to that all the non-white immigrants in Canada were considered to be contrary to the Canadian identity and were treated as second class citizens and even the government policies were oriented on these lines. Indian immigrants were also subjected to the racially selective immigration policy of Canada for a long period of time and the infamous Komagata Maru incident still remains as a black mark on Canadian immigration history.

Growing demand for immigrant population to meet the economic goals of the country necessitated radical changes in immigration policy and this was manifested in the 1967 point system for the accommodation of immigrants. As the percentage of immigrant populace kept on increasing, Canada began to look for ideologies that could integrate the immigrants with full citizenship to the Canadian society. This was reflected in the multiculturalism policy of 1971. Policy on the one hand was intended to integrate the immigrants to the larger Canadian society while maintaining their distinctiveness and, on the other; it was instrumental in making Canadians aware of their cultural diversity and the need to 'celebrate' that. This helped the Indian immigrants to enjoy favourable social conditions in Canada and to emerge as a prominent diaspora community of the country.

Over a period of time, Indian diaspora started taking active roles in Canadian society and polity. They also took interest in the political developments in India and began to involve directly or indirectly in these affairs. This was possible through the establishment of transnational networks connecting their homeland and fellow diaspora population across the world.

Hence, it can be stated that the character of India diaspora in Canada underwent substantial changes in the late 1960s and 1970s with the relaxation in immigration policies and introduction of multiculturalism policy. Prior to that most of the Indian population in Canada were Punjabi Sikhs or people from the surrounding areas. Apart from that Indian immigrants in Canada had been settled mostly in the province of British Columbia and in the city of Vancouver. However, the geographical dispersion of Indian immigrants in Canada changed considerably as the people from regions other than Punjab also got immigration clearance. They were mostly Hindus from the regions of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and other parts of North India, and settled in major cities of Canada. Hindu immigrants in Canada formed a separate ethnic and diasporic identity, which was different form the Sikhs and other South Asians, on the basis of their religious character. Canadian Hindus were largely unorganized and their religious practices remained within their families. However, this was changed significantly as they were successful in organizing themselves on the basis of their religion and constructing number of temples in major cities of Canada. Temples became the public places of worship and organized religious practices and activities. This was facilitated by the Hindu religious and nationalist organizations that have strong support in India and working among the overseas Indian communities around the world. Hindu immigrants in Canada started attaching great importance to their collective Hindu identity and showed interests in the political, social and religious affairs in India. Here it is argued that the process of mobilization of Hindus in Canada as an organized ethno-cultural and religious community in Canada and the expansion in their reach of activities have been facilitated by the multicultural character and policy of Canada with its special recognition and support to minority cultures in the country. Because it has already been pointed out that the multicultural policy was instrumental in making the immigrant communities a significant and influential component of the society and polity of Canada.

The existence of a prominent Indo-Canadian community has its impact on both Canada and India. Canada has been benefited by the presence of large number of India professionals who are highly qualified and they contribute significantly to the Canadian economy. Apart from that and more importantly, Indo-Canadians contribute significantly to the cultural diversity of Canada and they also have brought to Canada different religious traditions which further expands the multicultural character of the country. Indo-Canadians actively take part in the Canadian politics and few of them have been elected to the Canadian House of Commons and Provincial assemblies. Some of them have also occupied ministerial posts at the Federal Cabinet and a first generation Indo-Canadian was elected as the Premier of British Columbia. Indo-Canadians have been very much concerned about Canada's policy towards South Asia and especially towards India. They have been actively involved in issues like immigration of their fellow country men, cultural exchanges with India, opening of Canadian consulate in different parts of India, Canadian stand on India-Pakistan conflicts and India's position in other international affairs etc. From the Indian perspective it is argued that the large influx of qualified professionals to Canada has caused the 'brain drain' on Indian economy, the value of which is beyond an exact estimate. However, India is benefited from the huge remittances made by the diaspora community and Indo-Canadians are also prominent in this. Foreign remittances form a considerable portion of India's Gross Domestic Product and a major source of foreign exchange reserves of the country. Thus, on a broader basis, foreign remittances by the Indo-Canadians compensate for the loss in terms of brain drain as far as India is concerned. They have also been engaged in influencing the foreign policy directions of India towards Canada. It is imperative for them that India has a cordial relationship with a country where they are settled in.

Diaspora politics of Indo-Canadians, especially the Hindus, under the framework of Canadian multiculturalism is important for our understanding. All the arguments have been based on the dynamics of a Hindu diaspora in Canada and their transnational character. This is more significant in the context of the role that the Hindu religious and nationalist organizations occupy in the lives of Hindu-Canadians. This phenomenon is analyzed in the light of Hindutva politics in India and the way diaspora Hindus have been linked to it. This further elaborates the importance of Hindu diaspora community around world and makes it a prominent area of academic research.

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