

Chapter 9

Indian Families: The Diaspora in the United States and Canada



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Abstract The world's largest democracy, India, has a complex, diverse, and sprawling *Diaspora*. This chapter presents a general profile of Indians in the United States and Canada, identifying resources they bring and challenges they face. The integration of migrants is a slow and gradual process, occurring over decades, and requiring a concerted effort on the part of both immigrant and the receiving nation. The chapter proposes that mental health intervention should focus on the nexus of immigrant and host environment to determine ideal routes to integration, assessing the human and social capital of the former and the opportunities provided by the latter.

Keywords Indian · South Asian · India · Migration · Immigration

Introduction

The High Level Committee of the Indian Diaspora (2014) of India's Ministry of External Affairs described the wide spread of the Indian Diaspora around the globe, and its economic impact, quoting Mauritian poet, Vishwamitra Ganga Aashutosh (Chander, 2006):

No Gold did they find
Underneath any stone they
Touched and turned
yet
Every stone they touched
Into solid gold they turned.

India is a top source country for international migrants, and currently one in five migrants living outside their country of birth have their origins in India (Connor, 2017). Yet, surprisingly, the country has one of the world's lowest emigration rates, at 1% of its population (Connor, 2017), although 1% of over one billion people is

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sizable. As do most voluntary migrants, they move to improve opportunities and enhance the quality of their lives. Indians have always maintained deep connections to the homeland which have strengthened with increased globalization, the ease of travel, and superior communications technology (Rabbiosi, Gregorič, & Stucchi, 2019). The size of the Indian immigrant population in the United States (U.S.) is large, and the migrants from India to Canada also constitute a substantial share of the total number of immigrants to the country (Agarwal, 2019). As barriers to entry in the U.S. grow, Indians view Canada as a more attractive alternative (Pasricha, 2019).

India is a land of diversity and complexity, and despite the fact that a general “Indian” culture binds them together, in reality, regional differences in worldviews, language, script, arts, food, and customs are pronounced vary significantly. Emigrants have also differed over the years, in ethnicity and in socioeconomic status, and have influenced nations around the world in a variety of ways. However, overall, wherever they have moved, these emigrants have tended to significantly improve the quality of their lives.

Because of immigration policies, the U.S. has drawn the more highly educated and skilled individuals (Segal, 2002). This was not always the case in Canada, which in the early years, attracted agricultural and lumber laborers. In the last few decades, these patterns have changed: Indian immigrants to Canada are increasingly likely to be professionals who come on their own merit, while more immigrants to the U.S. are entering under family reunification and may not have the same level of professional qualifications as the majority of the entrants in the late Twentieth Century (Lo, Li, & Yu, 2017).

Regardless of origins and destinations, or background, Indians have generally managed to establish fairly strong communities in destination countries. Even as the culture is modified by successive destination-country-born Indians, vestiges of the homeland culture and norms endure for generations (Bhatia, 2016; Misir, 2018; Myutel, 2016; Segal, 2016a). This chapter presents an overview of the present-day Indian Diaspora in North America, providing a comparison of the populations in the U.S. and Canada. Unlike migration to several other parts of the world, this migration has been relatively recent, with substantial entry beginning only in the mid-1960s (Lo et al., 2017). The immigrant experience, with the associated factors of human capital and resources for integration, affects adjustment and adaptation in the new environment and must be considered in the delivery of mental health services to this, and all, immigrant populations.

Brief Immigration History

While Indians have been known to migrate for the last two millennia, the transcontinental migration of significant numbers of people from the Indian Subcontinent began with the colonial period and persists to the present time (Charney, 1996; Van Den Boogaart & Emmer, 2012). Almost all major migrations from India have been labor migrations and the impetus to move to the U.S. and Canada was no different but began later around the turn of the Twentieth Century. Most early migrants to

both Canada and the U.S. were Sikh men from the province of Punjab in northern India. From agricultural communities and with reputations of strength and fearlessness, these men were ideally suited to join the lumber and forestry business in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and agricultural enterprises in California, USA (Li & Lo, 2012; Segal, 2002).

These relatively parallel migration streams from the Punjab to British Columbia between 1903 and 1908 (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2000) and to California between 1899 and 1920 (Balgopal, 1995) soon experienced the xenophobia that most Asians were facing in both countries. In Canada, the 1908 “Continuous-Journey” legislation prevented entry of those who did not travel directly from their home countries. Since there was no transportation from India that could cover the distance to Canada without a stopover, the legislation effectively curtailed further Indian migration (Rao, 2013). Likewise, in the U.S., the Johnson – Reed Act of 1924 permitted entry on a national origins quota system, allowing entry to 2% of people of each nationality that were counted in the U.S. census of 1890. Since there were so few people from Asia at the time of that census, it closed all Asian immigration (Office of the Historian, n.d.). Immigration policies in both Canada and the U.S. eased after a couple of decades, however, Indian migration was still sparse.

Recognizing the U.S. need for a larger skilled labor force, President Lyndon Johnson passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, (Hart-Celler Act, INS, Act of 1965, Pub.L. 89–236) which abolished immigration quotas, liberalizing immigration into the country. About the same time, in 1967, Canada moved to the immigration point system that sought to remove prejudice and capriciousness in the selection of immigrants. Points are awarded up to a fixed maximum on a range of categories, and the immigration law eliminated discrimination based on race and class (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006).

As in most nation states, both Canada and the U.S. immigration policies circumscribe the circumstances under which individuals may enter and are based on at least three priority areas, including: (1) to address labor/economic needs, (2) to allow family reunification, and (3) for humanitarian reasons. The U.S. bases immigration opportunities by allocating an annual number of entry visas in these categories (American Immigration Council, 2016). Canada, on the other hand, also identifies these reasons, but eligibility is based on a points system, with a 67-point minimum, that assesses the individuals’ ability to adapt in the Canadian socio-economic environment (Government of Canada, 2017). The primary advantage of the U.S. system is that entrants are expected to have employment commitment, host country-based family support, or governmental funding. Nevertheless, this appears to limit entry to those who already have a relationship with the country. On the other hand, the primary advantage of the Canadian system may be that it does not require a connection with Canada; rather it assesses an applicant’s human capital to readily acclimatize to country norms. However, due to its immigration policies, Canada may be experiencing what is termed the “brain waste” as highly skilled people enter the country but are unable to find employment commensurate with their qualifications (Bannerjee, Verma, & Zhang, 2019; Brezis, 2019).

Removing discrimination based on nationality, these two laws opened the doors to immigrants, particularly skilled individuals, in a manner heretofore unseen. Skilled migrants arrived in both the U.S. and Canada in record numbers from India beginning in the middle and late 1960s. The flow of Indian migrants has continued steadily, and the size of the Indian population in these two nations, both by immigration and by birth, is substantial.

Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity

India is one nation, but it may well be called the “Indian Union.” This union is composed of several cultures, and a myriad of diverse customs, literature, arts, music, and an unparalleled range of landscapes. Several faiths reflect the Indian population, including that which has migrated. While Hinduism is the majority religion (80%), Muslims (13%), Christians (2.3%), Sikhs (1.9%), and others (1.9%) also are free to practice their faiths, and with a population in 2019 of over 1.37 billion (World Population Review, 2019), each religion can boast a strong following in absolute numbers.

There are two official languages in India, Hindi and English, however, there are 21 state recognized official languages. Even more interesting are the findings of the People’s Linguistic Survey of India 2013 report that indicate the existence of 780 spoken languages and 86 different scripts in India. Of these 780 languages, 122 are spoken by over 10,000 people (Hindustan Times, 2013). Thus, it is possible to interact with several Indians who have nothing apparently in common barring the land of their birth, and although all of the ethnic and linguistic diversity found in India may not be proportionately reflected in the *Diaspora*, its profile is much more complex than it appears.

Demographic Information of Indians in the United States and Canada

In 2017, Indians constituted the second largest immigrant group in the U.S. (Zong & Batalova, 2017), moving from the third spot in 2011 (Whatley & Batalova, 2013). In 1960, immigrants in the U.S. numbered 9.7 million; of the 491 thousand Asians, 12.5 thousand were from India. In 2015, the U.S. reported 43.2 million foreign born individuals, 11.6 million from Asia, and of those 2.4 million were from India accounting for almost 6% of the foreign born (Lopez & Radford, 2017). The numbers of new immigrants to the U.S. from India began slowing, declining by 7.5% in 2018 with restrictions imposed by the Trump Administration (Sangani, 2020). As in the U.S., Canada saw the size of this population grow substantially between 1960 and 2016. In 1960, the total immigrant pool was only 104,000, and the number of

immigrants from Asia was limited, with less than 150 being admitted from India in a given year. By 2016, the immigrant population in Canada had grown to 7.7 million, with 3.6 million being from Asia. Of these, 1.5 million were from India (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In addition, in what appears to be a reaction to Trump's immigration restrictions, and with increased difficulties in getting permanent resident visas to the U.S., Indian entrants into Canada surged from 39,705 in 2016 to 80,685 in 2019, an increase of 105% (Anderson, 2020).

Overall, the Indian subgroup continues to constitute a sizable portion of the minority population in the two countries; the change since 1960 reflects the liberalized immigration policies in the U.S. (1965) and Canada (1967). Furthermore, since these numbers do not include the large population of second- and third- generation American- and Canadian-born Indians, the ethnic Indian citizenry is, in reality, even larger. With ongoing migration from the Indian subcontinent and birth of the second and subsequent generations, the numbers of Indian-origin people are expected to continue to grow.

Indians, as a group, tend to congregate in certain parts of the country and usually in the more urban areas. In the U.S., about one-half lives in the states of California or New Jersey, and one quarter lives in three metropolitan areas: New York, Chicago, and San Jose/San Francisco (Zong & Batalova, 2017). The majority of Canadian Indians reside in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta, and over 75% of the Indian population can be found in the metropolitan areas of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

In the U.S., while only 60% of the native born is of working age, this age group (18–64 years) constitutes 82% of the Indian population. It also has a higher rate of home ownership and health insurance, and is less likely to live in poverty (Zong & Batalova, 2017). The majority evidences strong English language skills, and over 29% of males and 19% of females born in India are likely to work in information technology and business, respectively (Whatley & Batalova, 2013). Nevertheless, the profile of Indian immigrants to the U.S. has changed substantially in the last two decades. Between 1965 and 1987, the wave that immigrated was highly educated, professional, and distinct from migrants to other nations, and even from other immigrants to the U.S.. Under the family reunification provision of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 (PL 89–236), these migrants, now U.S. citizens, are able to sponsor relatives or recruit workers who may not be as skilled as the sponsors. The median income of Indians who immigrated between 1987 and 1990 dipped to one-fifth of that of pre-1980 migrants (Balgopal, 1995; Melwani, 1994). Despite this, the median Indian family income in 2015 was \$107,000, substantially higher than that of either other immigrants (\$51,000) or the native born (\$56,000), and many fewer lived below the poverty level – 7% of Indians versus 17% of all foreign-born or 14% of native-born individuals (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

The profile of Indians in Canada has been somewhat different from that in the U.S. and has changed in the last decade. In 2001, a significant segment of this group lived on low incomes or below the poverty line, and even now, only 2.7% is considered to be of high income (Agarwal & Lovell, 2010). Agarwal and Lovell (2010) also found that Canadian Indians are overrepresented in waste management,

manufacturing, and transportation industries. However, increasingly the present day immigrants from India are highly skilled, professional, and in their mid-30s (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Changes in the immigration point system in Canada in January 2013 was expected to make it more difficult for Indians to migrate and to curb the “brain waste” that several skilled workers experienced in the first decade of the twenty-first Century (Duttagupta, 2013), such as driving taxis when they had professional degrees in their home countries (Migration News, 2005). However, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a major thrust to welcome more professionals from India in 2017 (Bhattacharya, 2016). Overall, Indians who have entered Canada between 2011 and 2016 are now, as are those in the U.S., more highly educated and affluent than the native-born population (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

Although Indians in the U.S. are generally successful and enter the country through legal channels, the Migration Policy Institute reported that between 2011 and 2014 there were approximately 267,000 unauthorized immigrants living in the country (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Moreover, in 2016, 15,000 Indian youth were eligible for the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, but only about 3700 had applied for it (Zong & Batalova, 2017). There is less information about unauthorized immigration from India to Canada, although some blogs and webpages of immigration lawyers indicate entries by Indians seeking assistance in legalizing their presence in the country.

The assertion that the Indian lifestyle and philosophy is highly centered on the integrity of the family continues to hold true, as Census data indicated few families without a husband present or consisting of cohabiting partners (American Community Survey, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2013). There appears to be no large-scale studies on the Indian population in the U.S. or Canada nor are there representative data on the rates of marriage and/or divorce. Yet, observation suggests that marriage continues to be the preferred choice of lifestyle among Indians, and parents encourage their children (especially women) to marry while they are in their twenties. Most first-generation Indians, regardless of when they come, bring their spouses and children with them or return to India to marry according to family tradition (Segal, 2012a). Further observation suggests that the divorce rate among Indians in America is on the rise. However, no studies have yet focused on these topics and other topics such as the perceptions of marriage longevity, which is prevalent among Indian families.

Acculturation

In many ways, because it has experience with colonization and exposure to the West, India has prepared its middle classes for some aspects of the American society. Most Indians who have migrated to the U.S. and Canada in the last two decades are comfortable with the English language, and with a language, one is exposed to the culture of the native language speakers. However, it would be faulty to assume that acculturation or adaptation is ever easy. Different norms, patterns of behavior,

attitudes, and a variety of other less abstract dimensions, such as food, clothing, and entertainment, make adaptation difficult in the best of circumstances. The absence of the traditional support of family, friends, and one's own society, as well as differences in infrastructure, exacerbate difficulties. Nevertheless, most voluntary migrants are highly resilient and develop contexts in which they can survive and even flourish (Segal, 2002; Segal, Elliott, & Mayadas, 2010).

The Indian Diaspora has always been tightly knit, regardless of the country in which its members settle. While Indians in the U.S. have not traditionally developed ethnic enclaves, this is beginning to change; in Canada, there have long been such ethnic communities particularly in Vancouver and Toronto. Regardless of the distribution of place of residence, however, community centers, religious institutions such as temples, health care facilities, have emerged to assist Indians to adapt to their host countries as well as maintain and transmit their cultural heritage. An interesting phenomenon has occurred with the Diaspora, as it does for all migrant groups: the culture maintained by immigrants is that which existed in the home country when the individuals emigrated. Thus, immigrants from India who arrived in North America in the mid-1960s brought with them the Indian culture of that period; those arriving in the 1990s reflect India's culture of those years (Segal, 2002). As a result, immigrants are generally "stuck" or rooted in the culture of their countries that existed when they emigrated, maintaining and guarding patterns of behavior and traditions of that period. When they return to India, they can find that they are misfits in their homeland. With globalization, India's society and its norms have changed, while several emigrants have closely guarded their old traditions, their eating patterns, their clothing, and their expectations of interpersonal relationships. Like many of any country's *Diaspora*, they find that the India they left has changed and is significantly different from the India of the 1960s, 1990s or even the first decade of the 21st Century (Segal, 2016b).

Segal's (1991) seminal article that identified social and cultural differences among Indian immigrants, the second generation U.S. born children, and the majority population continues to be meaningful and relevant. This suggests that researchers and practitioners are still grappling with understanding intergenerational, intercultural, and migration related acculturation issues with the Indian population in the U.S. and Canada (Bornstein & Putnick, 2018; Cionea, Van Gilder, Hoelscher, & Anagondahalli, 2019; Mahapatra & Rai, 2019) and that the extant knowledge on Indian integration is limited. Furthermore, when newcomers enter a country in substantial numbers, they often strain the host country's cultural homogeneity and threaten societal norms (Barni, Cavazza, Russo, Vieno, & Roccato, 2020; Bohman, 2018; Mayadas & Elliott, 1992; Mayadas & Segal, 1989). When native populations believe their norms and values are affected by the newcomers, there can be a nativist backlash, as has been evidenced by the BREXIT vote in the United Kingdom and the rise of the conservatives and far right in the U.S. and Europe. Although Indians in these two nations have generally been professionally successful and well integrated into the workforce, socially they have a tendency to segregate themselves from their American counterparts (Segal, 2002). With the increasing size of the

Indian population and the development of Indian enclaves, xenophobia, of and by, Indians has also become more evident (Segal, 2016a).

Regardless of reasons for emigrating, all immigrants to a new country find adjustment to foreign values, expectations, and environment challenging. Differences in language and culture affect interactions and the development of relationships with native populations, and also interfere in the navigation of institutions and systems in the pursuit of goals, (Mayadas & Elliott, 1992; Ramakrishnan, Barker, Vervoordt, & Zhang, 2018). For those who are phenotypically different, as are those from Asia, assimilation is not possible since they always remain distinguishable and seen as “other” (FitzGerald, Cook-Martín, García, & Arara, 2017; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Wimmer, 2008). Separated from their culture of origin, and not able to truly assimilate into the country of destination, several immigrants who look different experience crises in identity and feelings of isolation and alienation (Baruth & Manning, 2016; Sue, 1973). Such stress results in one of three reactions: (1) close adherence to the values of the culture of origin, (2) over adaptation and rejection of own culture, or (3) integration of aspects of both cultures perceived as most amenable to the development of self-esteem and identity (Sue, 1973). Portes and Zhou (1993) propose an alternative possibility—segmented assimilation—professional integration coupled with social separation that helps maintain the home culture. A study of 105 Indians found that 65% identified themselves as being mostly Indian, 21% preferred a good mix of Indian and American lifestyles, and 7% did not self-identify as Indian (Sodowsky & Carey, 1988).

Traditional Values and Family Life

In many ways, Asian groups are very dissimilar from each other, yet in others, they share several values, expectations, and norms of behavior. At least five beliefs underlie most family relationships: (1) allocentrism, or belief that individuals should subordinate their desires for the larger good (Hofstede, 1980; Segal, Segal, & Niemczyk, 1993), (2) patriarchy, or preference for males who are heads of households and decision makers (Mullatti, 1995; Segal, 2002), (3) filial piety, or obedience and respect of younger family members toward elders (Dutt, 1989; Segal, 2002), (4) high expectations of dependency, particularly of females and their offspring (Saran, 1985), and (5) interpersonal control through an inculcation of a sense of obligation and of shame (Chatrathi, 1985; Sue, 1981).

As with other Asian families, the traditional Indian joint family is hierarchical, patriarchal, and patrilineal, has three or more generations living together, and age, gender, and generation circumscribe behavior and relationships. In the joint family, two or more family groups within a generation may also live together when sons bring their wives to reside in the parental home, where unmarried members of families continue to live. Less likely to be evident among Indians in North America, traditional patterns of joint family behavior and role relationships continue to be preferred, even when homes are separated by great distances. Allocentrism and

subjugation of personal desires and needs are normative expectations in the traditional Indian family. While such traditions bind and control individuals, they also enhance the integrity of the family providing it with a group identity (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988), which also strengthens and supports it (Segal, 1991, 2012a).

Indians in the U.S. and Canada are now facing a new phenomenon. A large number entered these countries when they were of a working age during the period between the mid-1960s and the 1990s. They left in India their parents who were also, at that time, of working age. Now, unable to monitor and care for their aging parents from afar, several adult children sponsor these parents as their dependents, frequently uprooting them from India against their wishes (Subramaniam, 2019). These aging parents, divorced from the culture and the society with which they are familiar, truly became dependent, subsequently losing their traditional status of authority (Sadarangani & Jun, 2015). In addition, the immigrants of the twentieth Century are now aging themselves, however, having aged in the West, they are highly independent, refusing to live with their children and choosing instead to move into retirement communities. Most continue to maintain independent homes and separate lives, relying on their contemporaries and the friendship networks they have developed over the years. As a group, they have not yet thought about their healthcare and the chronic needs that are correlated with the aging process (Shibusawa & Mui, 2010).

The first generation of immigrants to any country begins life anew and must devote much time, effort, and finances in establishing itself. The second generation is much more influenced by the host culture, and is also not charged with beginning a new life in a new country. Most Indians in the U.S. and Canada have been financially and professionally successful, and their children have not directly experienced major financial and social integration struggles. Furthermore, many new immigrants from India are now entering the U.S. to much more lucrative posts than did Indians in the past. Their remittances support their parents in India, without uprooting them, and they do not require their parents' assistance for child care in the U.S. (Bailey, Hallad, & James, 2018). In Canada, where there is a "point system" for immigration, immigrants may find that they are underemployed, nevertheless, the strength of numbers in the Indian community as well as labor shortages provide opportunities that were not available to the smaller Indian population of the Mid-1960s (Joshi, 2019).

Immigrant Identity and America–Born Offspring

For decades, researchers have explored issues of acculturation, identity, and cross-cultural difficulties within the immigrant families. Acculturation, or the process of learning a new culture and integrating its norms and values into one's perspectives and lifestyle is a function of a number of factors. The closer the host and the immigrant backgrounds, the easier the transition. Thus, the more westernized the Indian

immigrant before entry into the Americas, the more readily s/he is acculturated and able to function comfortably in North America. This may, or may not, affect perceptions of self and identity, however, when immigrants return to the home country, regardless of the country from which they hail, they find they are perceived as outsiders by those in their country of origin (Segal, 2016b). They are all substantially and substantively altered by the immigrant experience and must reassess their own identities. Thus, in the West, they are identified as Indians (or Indian Americans/Indian Canadians) and in India, they are seen as Americans.

The experience of the second generation frequently does involve the dilemma of establishing an identity. This is a group that is American, but of Indian origin. Its members may never have been to the home country, but because of phenotypic characteristics, they will always be identified as Indian, even when they do not so self identify (Drouhot & Nee, 2019). Most function well in the majority culture, yet at home, several experience a culture that is distinctly different (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Sinha, 2010). This is probably not unusual for any ethnic minority in any country as it learns to balance the norms of the majority culture with those of its own. While the second generation is economically as well placed as the third generation (Tu, 2010), literature has suggested that the third generation has fewer identity conflicts than does the second, and that, in fact, it is usually quite assimilated into most of the norms of the host culture, although, the phenotypically “different” migrant is always perceived as being foreign regardless of its place of birth (Sandil & Srinivasan, 2018).

The first generation also has few identity conflicts, for though it may have to reassess how it is perceived by others, it is usually clear that it is Indian living in another country (Sinha, 2010). The second generation stands with one foot in each culture and is strongly influenced by the identity of its parents, even as it attempts to forge a new one of its own (Segal, 2002). The effect of the home culture is diluted for members of the third generation that are born into families that may be more American than Indian, and regardless of how others perceive them, they usually perceive themselves as American having left home country norms and traditions behind or having greatly modified and adapted them (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Sinha, 2010).

As second generation individuals stand firmly planted in two different cultures, they may engage in conflicts over a number of issues with their immigrant parents. These disagreements may range from preferences in use of language, daily food, and attire to issues of freedom and curfews, friendship, and dating (Segal, 1991). These differences may persist as these children grow to adulthood and affect decisions about career choice and life partners. Such issues are more difficult perhaps for children whose parents migrated in the Twentieth Century, as there was, in the U.S. and Canada, very little precedence of how to balance host and home country norms (Berry & Hou, 2017). It appears that Westernization has become commonplace in India with increased global communication and has mitigated some of the difficulties in adaptation for new immigrants from India, allowing them to better understand the desires and expectations of the second generation. Hence, although

cultural differences between the two groups may still be evident, they may not now appear as dramatic or as insurmountable as they may have felt in the past.

The messages Indian parents give their children may also, inadvertently, be mixed. For example, they are instructed by parents to assume leadership roles in school and speak up, yet at home, they are expected to be docile and obedient. They are told that, in this country, one can be whatever one wants to be, but when they begin selecting a profession, they are directed toward medicine, engineering, or business (Segal, 2012a). Nevertheless, one finds the second generation of Indians selecting careers that may not have been preferred by Indian immigrant parents. While a large number continues to prefer professions in medicine, engineering, law, or business, an increasing number is choosing careers in the fine arts and social sciences. Some individuals in the second generation do allow parents to arrange their marriages, but these arranged marriages are substantially different from those of the past (Segal, 2016a). Usually the young couple, while understanding that the plan is for them to marry, spend some time getting to know each other to determine if they think they will be compatible.

Online dating services are flourishing as young people are seeking and screening their own life partners without parental involvement until they are ready to make a decision. In addition, the frequency of dating and its acceptance by the immigrant generation has risen. The outcome is that partners may be outside the regional group of the family or may be non-Indian. In fact, literature has shown that Asians, including Indians, are proportionately more likely to out-marry than are those of African or Spanish origin (Fryer, 2007). Discussions of dating and sexual restraint that haunted Indian immigrant families two decades ago may be passé with the youth of the Twenty-first Century. The world is becoming more accepting of dating and premarital sex, and norms are changing even in India (Cionea et al., 2019; Spittel, 2018). Indian parents often cope with this reality by sticking their heads in the sand and not acknowledging, even if their children are dating, that they could be sexually involved.

Traditional gender roles are also being modified. The male continues to be the primary wage earner; however, the female is increasingly working outside the home and is also a more equal partner. New immigrants and young people in the second generation are more likely to have a relationship in which both partners contribute to the daily functioning of the home, to child rearing, and to decision making (Yeung, 2013).

Indian parents in the U.S. and Canada are finding that subjects such as dating and sexuality, that have traditionally been considered taboo, must now be faced. Perhaps this is not a change in culture but a generational change worldwide. As one considers issues in the selection of life partners, it is time for Indians in the U.S. and in Canada to also recognize that there is a sizable lesbian, gay, and transgender Indian population (Yue, 2012). Even as the population is coming to terms with interracial marriages, it is beginning to face variations in sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Little academic, and particularly empirical, research has focused on the Indian lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ) populations, perhaps because it is difficult for them to so self identify and the difficulties

they may encounter as double or triple minorities in the U.S. and Canada. Indian news is now covering the LGBTQ community in North America (Haniffa, 2019), but social workers and counselors are ill prepared to work with them and their families (Sandil & Srinivasan, 2018).

Implications for Mental Health

The literature on immigrants and the second generation is vast, and mental health practitioners are becoming more knowledgeable about the unique issues facing these families. It is important that service providers move away from placing the responsibility of adaptation solely on the shoulders of the immigrant and the immigrant family. When immigrants choose to enter a new country, they are not truly aware of all the ramifications of the move; it is usually seen as an economic opportunity. Likewise, when a country accepts immigrants, it pays little heed to the reality, as Swiss novelist Max Frisch famously quipped, “We wanted workers, but we got people instead!” It is the joint responsibility of the immigrant and the host country to ensure a smooth integration process.

For voluntary migrants, such as most Indians to the U.S., there may not be many programs or services that are either available or accessible to provide them tools for adaptation. Canada, on the other hand, has purposefully, systematically, and successfully, developed its immigrant integration programs (Griffith, 2017). While, in the U.S., there are numerous organizations that work with refugees and others that provide protective and supportive services for those without the requisite visas, the majority of authorized Indian migrants do not fall into these categories. There are few, if any, orientation programs for voluntary migrants in the U.S., particularly those that are publicly funded, and these migrants usually navigate the new culture, its norms, and its infrastructure on their own. Few programs proactively aim to mitigate the loneliness of new immigrants, to help them to connect with others from their home country, to learn about cultural differences, or to socialize with the host country’s natives. While some ethnic groups have developed community centers and programs that can serve this function with their own populations, they are not established for this purpose. Most voluntary immigrants to the U.S. are not prepared for the social and cultural differences between them and the host country, and when they become apparent, immigrants may neither have the tools to cope with them nor know where to turn for assistance (Potocky & Naseh, 2019). In Canada, many programs and services have been found to be very effective in enhancing integration of both voluntary and involuntary migrants in smaller communities, but the actual quality of services provided is generally superior in metropolitan areas where integration is more spotty (Chadwick & Collins, 2015). Reasons for this are unclear, but it appears that opportunities for greater interaction provided by programs in the smaller communities enhances mutual acceptance and integration.

The mental health profession increasingly recognizes the significance of context and the impact of environment on human behavior. Frequently difficulties in

adjustment occur at junctions at which the client, whether it is an individual, family, or group, intersects with its environment. This may require that the client changes or the environment change, or both. Keeping this in mind, social workers may need to assess what levels of social work require their attention – the individual and family level, the organizational and community level, and/or the policy and societal level – to help them provide effective intervention services to their clients of Indian origin (Segal, 2012b).

Mental health practitioners working with Indian immigrants and their offspring must become knowledgeable about the immigrant experience as well as get a broad overview of the Indian culture; immigrants are, themselves, a good source for this information. Counselors should also remember that while they are being culturally sensitive and aware of the unique characteristics of particular groups, regardless of culture, human beings share more similarities than evident differences. Focusing too much on dissimilarities may cause one to lose sight of common human needs, erecting barriers to mitigating difficulties. However, as practitioners address issues in working with Indians in the U.S. and Canada, focusing exclusively on immigration related concerns will provide a skewed perspective as are assumptions that all presenting problems are correlated with migration. It is important that in the process of addressing integration into the host culture, universal needs, such as economic security, housing, health, education, general welfare, and family integrity not be overlooked (Segal, 2014).

Future Directions

It is time for the mental health profession to move beyond discussing issues of adaptation, child rearing, dating and marriage, and career choice. It is striking that Segal's 1991 article is still cited frequently in the year 2020. There is little new in the immigration literature that has emerged in recent years, and several of these concerns are similar for all migrants, regardless of country of origin or of destination. It is time to identify what the profession can do, including: (1) prepare existing programs and services to meet the needs of immigrants, (2) provide orientation programs to help new immigrants integrate into the country, and (3) develop opportunities for longer established immigrants to adapt to emerging issues as they care for their aging parents, cope with their own acute and chronic health needs, or plan for their own retirements. It is time to move away from focusing only on child rearing, the academic achievement of children, and parent-child relationships. With the sizable Indian population, one must address problems related to economic security, health and well-being, conjugal violence, aging, retirement, healthcare, and end-of-life issues. Thus, the focus must be on the immigrant lifespan. These emerging concerns have received little research attention. Furthermore, no attention has been directed to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Indians or to their families, and there have been no outreach efforts to these individuals who are finally beginning to openly express their sexual orientation and/or gender identities.

Still seen as the “Model Minority,” Asians are inadvertently precluded from mainstream services in the U.S., as they are not perceived as having significant needs. Thus, ethnic organizations emerge to take care of their own, resulting in the duplication of services and poor use of limited resources. In fact, in many geographic areas, there are neither human nor monetary resources to either start or sustain such services. During the 1960s and the Civil Rights movement, Indians, along with other Asian Americans, received the dubious distinction of being dubbed the “Model Minority,” not because of their achievement and success, but because these groups were identified as models for African Americans to emulate as they were seen as being passive, less visible, and unlikely to make waves (Petersen, 1966). Services and programs for Indians in Canada are substantially greater than for those in the U.S. Services in the former are available through Indian organizations as well as Canadian migration services. Li and Lo (2009) provided a systematic comparison of Indian migration to the U.S. and Canada and found, particularly among the skilled workers from India, the services for Indians were lacking in the U.S. while Canada’s recognition of the social services needs of these migrants led to the development of integration programs for them in Canada. Perhaps this is based on differences in the implicit perspectives of the two nations toward immigrants. Canada’s immigration and immigrant policies are welcoming and inclusive, while those of the U.S. appear to have, under the current administration, moved to policies of enforcement, border security, suspicion of entrants on work visas (Lo et al., 2017). With increasing numbers and visibility in the U.S. and Canada, Indians are experiencing overt xenophobia and the emergence of anti-Indian violence, sometimes precipitated by memories of the terror attacks in the U.S. on September 11, 2001. This is a relatively new occurrence that has received little research attention, however, media reports provide evidence of hate crimes against Indians in both Canada and the U.S. (Ngo, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2017b; Yam, 2018). Future research may focus on emerging issues and differences of Twenty-first Century Indians from those of the Twentieth Century, with changing implications for the education and training of mental health practitioners.

Conclusion

The area of mental health has begun to appreciate the presence and impact of globalization and immigration in the northern hemisphere and to recognize that these also have substantial implications for research, education, and practice (Bhavsar, Zhang, & Bhugra, 2019; Potocky & Naseh, 2019). Workers must be prepared for the growing immigrant population, whether it be from India or from elsewhere. This chapter has presented an overview of the Indian-American and Indian-Canadian populations and has indicated that globalization’s infrastructure and existing immigration policies in both the U.S. and Canada will continue to encourage the entry of individuals and families from the Indian subcontinent. The chapter has identified

some of the more general characteristics of the Indian immigrant population, particularly in these two nations of North America, and explored some concerns facing it. Now is time to integrate this into raising the awareness and enhancing the training of professionals in mental health as they are being prepared to work with minorities with relatively recent histories in North America.

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