

**CULTURE, RELIGION AND TRANSITION: THE EXPERIENCE OF
HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA**

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NOTE

THE SPELLING OF SANSKRIT WORDS IN THIS DISSERTATION HAVE BEEN ANGLICIZED TO FACILITATE PRONOUNCIATION.

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INTRODUCTION

If we are making a genuine effort to recall the whole human experience in religion, it stands to reason that women's experience must become a significant part of this picture. The role of women is a significant part of many religious traditions. Women in all religious traditions are redefining their identity. This is accomplished in the Hindu tradition by exploring history, mythology and traditional roles and images.

Sociologist Leo Driedger among other Canadian scholars has concluded that there are many gaps in ethnic research in Canada, and basic empirical research is still needed (Driedger, 1987). My dissertation discusses the broader experience of ethnicity and religion by describing the experience of Hindu women in the secular and pluralistic Canadian context. The way this experience impacts on the religious tradition will also be explored. The experience is contextualized in the culture in which this religious tradition is situated.

The objective of my research, done primarily through qualitative interviews is to understand the subjects' experience as articulated by them. The presentation of case-studies and other quantified data will demonstrate that an element of culture, developed in India is easily transplanted to Canada.

This is accomplished through association, community identification, and above all through embedded cultural patterns which the identity of Hindu women contains. During the process of acculturation into Canadian society, Hindu women experience conflict, resulting in a reinforcement of their original cultural and religious identity. My study attempts to provide a clearer understanding of the dynamics of cultural adjustment for Hindu women in the multicultural context of Canada.

Although, there have been no dramatic changes in terms of religious affiliation of Canadians, immigration from Asian countries has added a new dimension to ethnicity and religion in Canada. During the past two decades, there has been a significant shift in the ethnic backgrounds of arriving immigrants [Kalbach 1987]. At the time I conducted my study in 1988, the new immigrants included Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Buddhists and each constituted approximately one-half of 1% of the total population [Bibby, 1987]. Even though these Eastern religious traditions have made a definite impact on the world and have numbers abroad in the millions, their importance in Canada is not felt because they are so few in number. Nevertheless, in the present climate they are treated with new respect and interest, and Canadian Churches now look upon them as persons with something worthwhile to say to them about culture and religion. Also, as all Canadians they are struggling to define

a unique Canadian identity; the concept remains elusive, it escapes any compact definition.

In this introduction, I will deal in turn with ethnicity and its impact on religion, the Hindu tradition and in particular on the role of Hindu women; an overview of the immigration to Canada of the Hindu community, a summary of the research methodology and in conclusion an abstract of the chapters.

ETHNICITY

The first set of religious ideas to be "imported" into this country were those of the European churches. Jacques Cartier raised a cross on the Gaspé peninsula in 1534 to signify the claims of France and Christianity over this part of the world. This transplanting of Christianity carried with it the assumptions of the established parent churches [Grant, 1977]. The "transplants" of the Old World into the New developed naturally as off-shoots of the parent culture and parent state [Moir, 1967]. With the British conquest a new dimension was added to the religion of the colony. Although missionaries at first sought only to introduce familiar forms of Christianity into a new setting, they soon discovered the necessity of adapting their approach to the Canadian environment [Grant 1988].

A definite threat to this vision was the massive immigration

to Canada especially between 1880 and the Second World War, when considerable numbers of Catholics came from countries such as Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Portugal or from countries with vast Catholic regions, such as Germany, Holland and Hungary. Among Protestant immigrants were people from the Scandinavian countries and Germany. These immigrants continued to bring with them religious organizations in which ethnic autonomy was stronger than Canadian or international authority [Mol, 1985].

Any discussion of a Canadian identity is made possible only by developing an understanding of ethnicity and ethnic group; for everyone in Canada except an Indian or Inuit was for census purposes, considered to have a non-Canadian ethnic origin. This origin is determined by the cultural groups to which the ancestor on the male side belonged. Ethnicity is then traced through paternal lines, while the maternal line was ignored. "There is no official Canadian ethnicity" [Porter, 1967,p.16]. Since "Canada is not ethnically homogeneous, it may be more accurate to speak of Canadian identities rather than identity" [Elliot, 1979 p. 167]. And, Canada is no exception to the finding that religion often consolidates ethnic roots [Mol, 1985].

During the process of acculturation immigrants discover that the way of life they have taken for granted is now at risk. The process of assimilation requires adjustment to new ways, practices and norms. As "transplants" in a new socio-cultural

milieu they feel the strains of being uprooted, and experience a strong urge to recreate and restore their original roots. Religion becomes a much appreciated ally in this process. Although there may be many more ethnic dimensions with which particular groups identify, culture, heritage and ideology are perhaps the most important [Driedger, 1978].

Ethnicity or ethnic groups are part of every society in the modern world which contains sub-sectors or sub-systems, more or less distinct from the rest of the population. The generic term "ethnic group" is often used to categorize such groups. According to Schermerhorn, it is a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood [Schermerhorn, 1970]. It can be a specific form that such cultural focus can take in socio-religious tradition shared by the group. For Driedger, it is a political or religious ideology, which provides a purpose, an impetus for values which are considered more important than cultural institutions [Driedger,1978].

In response to these broad definitions of ethnicity and ethnic group, sociologists argue that the current usage of these terms is more a matter of convention than analytic precision [Manyoni, 1978]. According to Manyoni the way in which we have

attempted to define ethnicity and ethnic group includes certain key factors, such as - biological, meaning common ancestry and racial origin; cultural, including language, religion and recreation patterns; psychological, which relates to historical experience, common sentiments or consciousness of kind; and finally nationality as in national origin and citizenship.

This comprehensive list of criteria is supposed to show the uniqueness of each of the groups, and help differentiate it from other groups. However, as he has pointed out it ordinarily does not [Manyoni, 1978]. The tendency in discussions of ethnicity or ethnic group has been to confuse conceptual categories with an assumed social reality. Conventional research proceeds on the assumption that visible differences are the criteria for determining ethnicity [Ng, 1981]. Studies done on ethnicity or ethnic groups have continued to draw on observable features such as language, customs, religion etc... while ignoring the experiences and lived realities. Kovacs states that as an identity concept ethnicity may be taken to refer to the quality of "being alike - in the sense that a collectivity of individuals exhibits similar characteristics deemed to be "ethnic". However, "ethnic group" should refer to the entity which may emerge when the recognition of "being alike" is transformed into self-conscious cohesive action by the individuals who share the identifying attributes [Kovacs, 1978]. Thus ethnic identity on

the conceptual/cognitive level denotes psycho-social cultural attributes; and ethnic group on the empirical/structural level is an indicator of action/behaviour. Commenting on the ethnic research in Canada, sociologist Ng argues that there is no interconnectedness between theories generated and the experience of immigrants [Ng, 1981].

For Max Weber, " ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind" [Weber, 1968:389]. Ethnic groups are traditionally mutually exclusive. However, this remains so only insofar as they are consistently endogenous. Also, "the use of the family for ethnocultural transmission requires that groups impress upon their members the value of marrying within their own group" [Porter, 1975:298]. If they do not, they stand to lose the links with their biological, cultural, psychological heritage and national origin.

On the one hand, ethnicity has also been very generally interpreted and understood as having a biological base, sometimes explicitly stated in terms of racial distinctiveness [Parsons, 1975]. Paradoxically, if defined in primarily cultural terms, the concept of ethnicity may place undue emphasis on cultural attributes which may be treated as exclusively ethnic ; also as a dynamic process, culture is inexorably tied to a person's ancestral or national origin [Manyoni, 1978].

The social meaning assigned to ethnicity or ethnic group in the Canadian context generally includes minority status and the experience of subordination, a subordination based on ethnic parameters [Juteau-Lee & Roberts, 1981; Ng, 1981; Manyoni, 1978; Clifford, 1969]. Ng elaborates on the problem of the ethnic phenomenon as "a taken-for-granted feature in Canadian society". Her argument is that ethnicity arises and becomes a visible feature for people when they come to Canada, because people are not always considered ethnic. People become identified as members of an ethnic group by virtue of their "ethnicity" as they enter Canada. She elaborates her argument by discussing ethnicity as a social construction which may be reproduced by members of society as a practical life-accomplishment in every day living.

The development and maintenance of minority communities to a great extent may be dependent upon the attitudes and the behaviour of the majority community [Driedger, 1978]. In this, ethnicity and the ethnic community emerge not as a predominantly "cultural" feature of the society, but as a class organization in which matters of cultural features are contained within the economic organization and are integral to it.

Ethnicity may be linked to class/ethnic stratification and subordination but it is not tied to and produced by cultural differences- any more than femininity is inextricably produced by

being female [Juteau-Lee & Roberts, 1981]. Using the analogy of the socially constructed categories of femininity and ethnicity we can conclude that to "have" femininity or "ethnicity" is to have a special status, it is to be different from the norm, the pattern, the standard. It is to have "otherness" . The term ethnic /immigrant has also been used interchangeably [Ng 1981]. But in the popular level of understanding the term immigrant has specialized applications and implications; referring mainly to people who are neither of English nor of French origin.

ETHNICITY IN CANADA

In the Canadian context ethnicity becomes a factor for most only in their interaction with the larger society. If there could exist equality among the people of Canada, all being ethnic, and immigrant at some point in the history of this nation, any definition of ethnicity and ethnic group would remain only as requirements of an academic discourse. Driedger writes in the preface to his anthology entitled Ethnic Canada, "...some may think the time for ethnic readers is past, and that now we should write an integrated text on Canadian ethnic relations" [Driedger, 1987 p. V]. The move in both the academic community and in popular discourse is toward integrating some of the problematic categories in an attempt to present a more holistic

picture of Canadian society. The problem remains, in that the study of ethnic relations lacks sufficient theoretical integration [Dashefsky, 1987]. There continues to exist a good deal of confusion and a general lack of agreement among researchers, in part due to the different theoretical biases of the various disciplines.

In response to the influx of immigration in the post World War II era and the changing social context, a Canadian multiculturalism policy was adopted by the Parliament of Canada in the early 1970's. The "multicultural character" of the country was acknowledged in the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism [1970]. This report contains a particular philosophy of the concept of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. It further insures a sense of continuity and a preservation of the individual's unique cultural and linguistic background.

The term multiculturalism refers to the coexistence of many different cultural groups within a single geographic and social context. In the examples of Vancouver, Toronto, and Ottawa, a variety of groups claiming many different countries of origin coexist within a single metropolitan area. Some of these ethnic groups are comprised of individuals from : China, Italy, Portugal, Greece and India.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in July, 1988. This Act of Parliament reaffirms Canada's commitment to multiculturalism, as articulated in the policy legislated in the early 1970's and places this commitment within the broader context of the Constitution. The Act has been integrated into the Official Languages Act, The Citizenship Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and Canadian social reality in general. The Act spells out a multiculturalism policy for Canada, and establishes the mechanisms to ensure that the policy is implemented. It states, that the Act is in place to promote full and equal 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 such participation [Sec 3 (10 (c))].

Previous to the creation of a Multiculturalism Directorate in 1971, there were no structural resources available to promote the cultural and linguistic heritages of Canadians. Multiculturalism has become an official ideology - a set of fundamental assumptions about the nature of Canadian society, and encompasses a new definition of Canadian identity . The concept defined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act stands, in actuality, as a contradiction to the concept defined by the "melting pot" theory . The "melting pot" theory which guides American integration policy, for example, encourages a total

absorption of cultural difference into cultural homogeneity. Canadian multiculturalism is a concept which encourages conversely, a variety of cultural differences within one social context.

The school curriculum cannot be "ethnicized" to the point where students of all ethnic backgrounds can retain and promote their own cultural inheritances and traditional values. The behaviours and belief systems recognized and rewarded in the classroom may be at odds with the behaviour and belief systems of an ethnic minority. However, consistent with the concepts of multiculturalism in Canada, Heritage Languages Programs and other Community based programs allow for the teaching of minority languages and fosters cultural activities.

But there seems to remain a big gap between the ideals outlined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and social reality. The concept of multiculturalism appears to succeed when many cultures are encouraged to retain their ethnic difference. However, the concept has proven less successful when it encourages a diffusion of many cultural and linguistic groups into the clearly pre-existing and dominant bi-cultural orientation which is Canada.

Immigrants may manage to resist assimilation and may be able to preserve some elements of their culture, regardless of any failure of ideal policy. The emphasis of the policy since its

inception has been focused almost entirely on the retention of traditional cultural values. The policy does not seem to focus on concepts concerning integration. Instead, integration, is viewed as an issue which remains within the individual's prerogative.

The Canadian ethnic mosaic allows for the survival of ethnic cultures, while each group is integrated but not assimilated into the larger society [Reitz, 1980:3]. This explains the fundamental difference between the "melting pot" policy in the United States where total assimilation is the desired goal, as opposed to the Canadian multicultural policy which aims at integration. Compared with the United States, Canada has a higher proportion of foreign born in its total population [Kalbach 1974]. This is most especially evident in the case of the visibly "different" and religiously "other" traditions.

RELIGION AND ETHNICITY

All religious organizations in Canada arrived with the new settlers. French Catholicism consolidated French identity when New France was colonized. With the British conquest the Church of England established its supremacy over the Dominion. Subsequent immigrant groups from other European countries found

the cultural vacuum largely filled by the French and British; still, there was room enough for all, and economic expansion was more important to the charter races than cultural and religious compatibility [Mol, 1985]. To this day Canadians continue to be classified as belonging to either of the two dominant cultural-linguistic groups, the Anglophone and the Francophone. Mol 1985 elaborates that none of the smaller ethnic groups spoke English or French and their religion almost always proved to be the stronger preserver of their particular native language and culture .

The Catholic Church, the religion of half the population, many with distinct ethnic identities, may be a prime example of the co-existence of a religious and an ethnic identity. The Protestant denominations also include in their membership "ethnic" or "national" minorities. Certain groups, however, may find it easier to ignore their "roots" in the interest of assimilation into Canadian society. As the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1970;96-100) stressed, the relationships between religion and ethnic group cohesion and religion and ethnic origin are complicated. According to sociologist Harvey (1978), immigrants, whether religious before coming to Canada or otherwise assert their ancestral faith once they arrive here . It is well recognized that religious affiliation is a significant aspect of ethnic

subculture [Leuski 1963, Gordon 1964, Abramson 1971 and Lewins 1976].

Some religions comprise the principal or sole basis for ethnic group identity and thereby become their "ethnicity" in Canada. [Herberg, 1989]. Given that religion is a significant aspect of many ethnic sub-cultures, religion and ethnic identity are intervening variables between interests and ethnic group formation [Mol 1978].

In the process of transplantation from one country to another no one among the immigrants is really able to practice the parental faith exactly as in the old world. The changes can be subtle. For example, when the environment changes, the practice of religious ritual become more important and ethnic identity becomes stronger [Herberg, 1989]. My study attempts to explore some of these changes, through detailed dialogue with women who have had formative experiences in India, and who continue to evolve in the Hindu tradition in the Canadian context.

With the arrival of immigrants from non-Christian faiths, there is the issue of building places of worship. In some of the cases lack of trained priests among their numbers further complicates the construction and conducting of ritual observances. Also, in the new environment the religious sites become more than a place of worship - indeed they serve as a

gathering place, a focus for a transplanted ethnic life. According to Bell, ethnicity has become more salient (than class), because it can combine an interest with an affective tie; [Glazer and Moynihan, 1975]. By affective tie Bell refers to a tangible set of common identifications - in language, food, music, names etc. These identifications would obviously include religion.

Most ethnic religious groups work at creating a union of religious devotion and regional linguistic identity, the faith in fact saves language i.e. through hymns, rites, myths. Although, religious identity is often a significant aspect of ethnic culture it is difficult to establish the exact relation between the two, whether religious affiliation is essential to the ethnic community or if religious orientation is only ancillary to ethnic identity (Williams 1988).

As Herberg concludes, to date little has been written about the part religion plays on ethnicity, especially from the perspective of religious affiliations of ethnic group members (N. Herberg 1989). We must continue to investigate and understand the dynamics of ethnicity and religion especially in regard to the visible and religious "other" groups for whom assimilation could be problematic. The detailed discourse in chapters one through four in this dissertation attempts to provide some

insight into the issues of ethnicity and religion from the perspective of Hindu women.

THE HINDU TRADITION

The Hindu community in Canada consists of approximately 200,000 people living primarily in British Columbia and Ontario. Because the majority are first-generation immigrants, the community exhibits a strong identification with the Hindu cultural and religious practices of India. "Hindu" is a Persian word, and the conquering Aryans used it to mean "Indian". Hinduism is therefore the "ism" of the Indian people.

There has existed in India for more than 2500 years a great tradition which embraces within its fold, in a highly sophisticated and systematized form, the various disciplines of knowledge and arts found in ancient classical civilizations: religion and metaphysics, astronomy and astrology, mathematics, grammar, rhetoric, music, dramatics and aesthetics, architecture, medicine, etc.. This tradition has been variously referred to as the Sastric, Brahamanic or Sanskritic. Even though there have been changes in it, the continuity of tradition has been maintained. The faith is sustained in the belief shared by all the Hindus, that the source of all knowledge are the Vedas -the most ancient sacred texts. For instance, all the six major

systems of Hindu metaphysics, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Vaishesika, Purva Mimamsa and Uttar Mimamsa, claim their authority from the Vedas. How far such claims are justifiable is beside the point. Many of the ideas of the metaphysics, sciences and the various arts may have really originated long after the time of the Vedas; but the firm belief in the Vedas as source of all knowledge, provided a strong thread that brought together most of the varied elements in the elite culture of the Hindus-the Sastric or the Sanskritic culture.

The Hindus themselves call their religion Sanatana Dharma-"eternal dharma". There is no way to accurately translate the meaning which this term embodies. The word "dharma" is used in two distinct ways in the Hindu texts.

First, it means that which is set down in the sacred texts; and second, it is said to mean Hindu customary law. In this usage it corresponds approximately to what is called "canon law" in the Christian tradition. It is a "law" that is clearly defined, refined, and ever more minutely explained in the legal treatises themselves. By extension it is used to represent the religious assumptions on which these laws are based. "Dharma" in this sense is not difficult "to know", for it is formulated at enormous length throughout the huge corpus of Hindu sacred literature. Since there is no corresponding word for religion in

Sanskrit, the term Dharma would have to suffice - it is then both "law" and "religion".

"Law" and "religion" are, however, only expressions of something far more fundamental, and it is the eternal law that governs all human and non-human existence. We understand this to be "natural law"-- and it is the law that is "subtle" and most impossible to know. In the natural order there is no difficulty, for it means no more than the laws that operate in nature and are the subject matter of the natural sciences. But how do things stand in the moral order?

Etymologically, the word Dharma derives from the root Dhr meaning "to hold or maintain". It is then the "form" of things as they are and the power that keeps them as they "ought" to be. And just as it maintains the whole universe in accordance with eternal law [Sanatana Dharma] so, in the moral sphere, does maintain the human race by eternal moral law. The dilemma is that this law exists on two levels: on the one hand it is written down in the sacred texts, and on the other it is inscribed in the hearts and consciences of the people. Sometimes the two exist in harmony, and sometimes there is tension and conflict.

Consistent with the belief that the Vedas were the source of all "true knowledge", the Sanskrit culture gave no credit to originality. A scholar or a thinker did not claim to be saying anything new; he only claimed to be interpreting the Vedas or

some other works which themselves were supposed to be based on the Vedas. Even the great Sankaracharya expounded his philosophy through an interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita. To this day religious disputations are merely a hermeneutical exercise- an attempt at understanding the Vedas.

The corpus of sacred literature in Hinduism is enormous. It is divided into two distinct categories of greater and lesser sanctity--Sruti and Smriti. Literally meaning hearing, Sruti comprises the Vedas itself, and is considered to be the eternal "word" heard by the rishis or sages. The sruti tradition ends with the Upanishads also known as the Vedanta or end of Vedas . The concept of the Brahman [Absolute] and the Atman [Self] is elaborated in these texts. The Upanishads point out that the Brahman and the Atman are the same - Tat tvam asi [Thou art That].

Smriti refers to that which is remembered by the people and transmitted down from one generation to the other. The smriti texts include the philosophic texts, the elaborate mythological treatises and the various legends. However, the greatest influence on Hindu cultural and religious experience is the mythology. Hindus identify closely with the events and happenings of the two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Bhagavad-Gita [song of the Lord], forming part of the Mahabharata, is the most luminous of all Hindu scriptures.

Herein, the central concepts of Kama [love], Dharma [law], Karma [duty/action], Artha [wealth] and Moksha [liberation] are expounded, explained and emphasized.

The elite sub-structure of Indian culture displays a rich growth of numerous forms and systems in different fields of knowledge and aesthetics. Some of these achieved an unmatched degree of excellence and refinement. Panini's grand system of grammar is one example. The ancient civilization of India differs from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, in that its traditions have been preserved without a break down to the present day. Indian culture is fully conscious of its own antiquity, and claims not to have fundamentally changed for many thousands of years [Basham, 1967].

Present day Hindu society is a product of many races and many cultures. It is necessary to recognize this fact to appreciate the complexity of Hindu society and religion [Sen, 1986]. The notable attribute in all aspects of the culture of the elite is the high degree of sophistication and systematization. This applies equally to language, metaphysical systems, and the various forms of art: poetry, music, painting, sculpture and architecture. Even the Sanskrit language was consciously moulded, as its etymological meaning implies-cultured or sanctified. The philosophers of arts erected magnificent and elaborate edifices of classical music, dance and drama.

Bharata's treatise on dramaturgy, known as the Natyasastra furnishes a good example of how penetrating analysis, and acute observation can lead to a systematic understanding of aesthetic experience and technique of drama.

Perhaps the most important and unique feature of the Hindu tradition is the caste system. The caste system is conceived of as one that perpetually divides people into hierarchies. It is also condemned as a gross exploitation of labour of the lower castes to the unilateral advantage of the upper castes. But, the caste system in India should be viewed in terms of both its social structure and cultural tradition and "political" implications.

The Sanskrit word for caste is jati, which means race, family, a class, genus, lineage etc. But the term varna [colour] is also used. Max Weber notes that the most important gap in the ancient Vedas are its lack of any detailed reference to caste. He writes, "The Veda refers to the four later caste names in only one place, which is considered a very late passage; nowhere does it refer to the substantive content of caste order with the meaning it later assumed and which is characteristic only of Hinduism [Weber,1968:]. The most important reference to caste and their implications can be found in the Manava Dharmasastra- the Laws of Manu. Acknowledged to be a smriti, the Dharmasastra are revered as the highest authority on Hindu customs. In the

ideal four-fold hierarchy the two highest castes are the Brahman and the Ksatriya. The Brahman is supposed to devote himself to the pursuit of knowledge and priesthood. The Ksatriya is the warrior and the ruler. It is to these two classes that the elite generally belonged. The third caste is that of the Vaisya - the trader. People belonging to this class were considered lower than the first two, but some of the prosperous members could have acquired a place among the elite. These are the three castes that Manu refers to as the "twice born".

In his writings on the caste and class system Weber suggests a "multidimensional model " [Jayaraman, 1981 p.9]. He argues that different kinds of stratification occurs in contemporary societies, and the numerous social strata could be distinguished as intermediates between workers and capitalists. He also acknowledges the importance of economic factors in any system of stratification, but claims that political power is another independent determinant which produces its own hierarchical order. Indeed, Weber believes that the decisive factor that accounts for the stability of the Hindu caste system is the "religious" belief system controlled by the Brahmins [Weber, 1968]. While, the caste system is not part of Hindu ideology it has become the fundamental social principle of hierarchy.

French sociologist Louis Dumont is of the opinion that the caste system should and can be situated only within the context

of the Indian civilization. He explains that "the nature of Indian unity immediately confronts us with a problem of method. It is not merely a cultural unity such as known in other parts of the world - but is the same sort of difference which would arise if we were to consider Europe instead of India" [Dumont, 1970 p. 15]. In a culturally and linguistically diverse country like India, unity is above all in ideas and values, it is therefore deeper and less easily defined. The "unity" is based on the shared "religious" beliefs; in other words the overall orientation is religious. Also, the language of religion is the language of hierarchy, and the hierarchy is necessarily of the pure and the impure [Dumont, 1981]. Power which is the "purest" of all, is held by the Brahmins and counterbalances purity at secondary levels, while remaining subordinate to it at the primary or non-segmented level. It is the sense of "power" and "purity" that has made not only Brahmins but men of all three upper castes superior to their female counterparts.

Hindu ideology is based on a sense of gender equality at least since the time of the Brahmanas [800 B.C.]. The tradition proposes an ideal harmonious union of male and female. Shakti, consort of Shiva is said to have an equal participation in the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. Indians say, "Without Shakti [goddess and female energy] Shiva is nothing". A believers goal is to achieve a balance of the

complementary male [purusha] and female [prakriti] principles within the self. The idea of a world with two aspects namely, spirit [Shiva] and nature [Shakti] has a profound influence on Hindu philosophy, as interpreted in the Sankhya tradition. There is a whole tradition of goddess worship based on the theology of the Shakti cult originating in the Rig Veda Book X, hymn 125 and known as the "Devi Sukta". However, although the theology is well developed and the female presence of the goddess is acknowledged, the interpretation given by scholars who were mostly elite Brahmin males has not consistently affirmed the concept of equality.

There is a growing body of research which suggests that women's position is intricately tied up with the development of the caste and class to which they belong [Liddle & Johshi, 1986]. Class status and gender continues to be a key factor even in Western societies today. In modern India women occupy key positions in both the public and private sectors. This may give the impression that in general they have a relatively high position in society, but the reality is far more complex. Contradictory views have been expressed; the status of women as mother is exalted, but the wife continues to be a subordinate. Also, in the Hindu tradition there is a definite link in the rise of caste status and constraints on women. In other words the hierarchy works to the disadvantage of women [Liddle & Johshi,

1986]. Eminent anthropologist Srinivas describes the change of lifestyle required of an upwardly mobile caste as Sanskritization [Srinivas 1977]. He uses the term "Sanskritization" to describe the influence of the invading Aryans on the indigenous Dravidian culture of India. As a prime example he talks about the Aryan creation of a pantheon of gods and the pairing off of the all powerful Dravidian goddesses as mere consorts. This immuned the goddesses and changed the character of the male/female relationship. But, among the less Sanskritized "low castes" male/female relations have appeared to be more equal.

In the final analysis the social process linking women's subordination to the maintenance of social hierarchy can be seen in its essential nature in the link between the necessity of marriage and the prohibition on employment for women of the higher castes. Yet, education continued to be dominated by the three upper caste males until recent times. Men derive a significant part of their social position from their degree of sexual control held over women.

HINDU WOMEN

The Indo-Europeans contributed a patriarchal social structure which was patrilineal and patrilocal [K. Young A. Sharma 1987,]. The idea of female subservience reinforced the

containment of women's power in the gender hierarchy. In this way, women's sexual respectability determined the social respectability of the men, the family and the entire caste. High caste women's work in a patriarchal caste society is confined to the domestic sphere, the notion of women's domesticity reinforcing women's seclusion.

Historically, the retention of traditional cultural values has been considered more important for Hindu women than for their male counterparts. As dictated in the Manavadharmashastra, ordered by the caste system and sustained in the social reality, women have their identities rooted as part of the family rather than as individuals. Hindu women see themselves as reflections of goddesses and other figures in mythology. Also, there is a definite connection between the special position and manifestations of female deities in the Hindu society. Although, the Hindu woman is supposed to be absolutely devoted to her husband who is respected as an embodiment of the deity, she may also reign supreme in her own domain as mother of her children. While women are consorts or equals, they still must obey men.

Classical Hindu laws defining the role of women focus almost exclusively on women as wives. The basic rules for women's behaviour as articulated in the Manavadharmashastra lay emphasis on the need to control women because of their evil character.

Through their passion for men, through their mutable

temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they are guarded in this world. Knowing their disposition, which the lord of creatures instilled in them at creation, every man should almost strenuously exert himself to guard them.

[Max Muller, 1986], The Laws of Manu

Manu's laws logically continue on the theme of controlling women.

Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males [of] their [families] and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under ones control; her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, and her sons protect her in old age: a woman is never fit for independence. Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling they may appear; for if they are not guarded they will bring sorrow on two families ... She who, controlling her thoughts, speech, and acts, violates not her duty toward her lord, dwells with him after death in heaven, and in world is called a virtuous faithful wife But for disloyalty to her husband a wife is censured among men, and (in her next life) she is born in the womb of a jacket and tormented by diseases, the punishment of sin. And to this effect many sacred texts are sung, also in the Vedas, in order to make fully known the time disposition of women hear now those

texts. [Ibid]

Later Sanskrit texts, vernacular writings, and oral traditions also define the ideal woman as the one who does not break the bonds of control. The wifely role of women in Hinduism is thus one of subordination, devotion, and dutifulness. Even though, the Shakti goddess (feminine energy) is believed to be the equal half of the Shiva (supreme male god) as Ardhanareswara. She does not have an equal share in his wholly perfect nature. Ardhanareswara, or "half woman is a form in which Shiva is represented as half-male and half-female typifying the male and female energy. [Dawson, p. 21]

The ideal is Lakshmi, the benevolent consort of Vishnu the Creator. In opposition stands Kali, the malevolent consort of Shiva the destroyer. In a real sense, Lakshmi and Kali are central symbols of good and evil. The mythical goddesses become symbols which pervade and function in the Hindu cultural imagination.

Hindu society continues to also follow the example of the classical myth of Rama an incarnation of Vishnu, and Sita his wife, an incarnation of Lakshmi, in the Ramayana. The Ramayana attributed to Sage Valmiki is one of the two major epics of the Hindu tradition. Here, the concept of "pativratyam" meaning total devotion/submission to pati or husband is elaborated. [P. Thomas, 1964].

Sita, has been held as an example for Hindu women through the centuries to the present day. But, whenever mentioned, the glorification of Sita occurs almost exclusively because of her submission, to the extent that her individuality is annihilated [Dimmitt, 1982]. As a general ideal of perfection, the obliteration of individuality is achieved by men through asceticism or knowledge. But, for women "perfection" is accomplished only through absolute self-surrender to their "male superiors". [detailed discussion in Chapter 2]

Beginning in the nineteenth century, Hinduism came under severe attack, by both Christian Missions and the British Raj. The rationale for change was often sought in the authority of the Vedas if a custom or perception was not found in direct reference in Vedic texts, it was argued that it was later interpretations that should be questioned and perhaps cast out for not being part of the "true" Hindu tradition.

Future Indian political leaders were obliged by the British Raj to seek reforms and with the cause of Indian independence began an era of women's liberation from the more oppressive aspects of the tradition. Hindu women continue to question their role in society and are in the process of formulating their Sridharma (women under Hindu law/tradition) of the future.

It is safe to say that, "women remain the bastions of traditional culture, and religious values, rituals, and

ceremonials; they are the core of family strength" [Naidoo, 1985 p. 339].

IMMIGRATION INTO CANADA

The migration of Indian women [Hindu, Sikh and Muslim] into Canada began only in the year 1920, almost twenty years after their male counterparts [Buchignani, 1977]. By the 1970's, India ranked fourth in the top ten birthplace countries for female foreign born population immigrating to Canada. And, like the majority of all other female immigrants to Canada the Indian women came to this country as "dependents" of their husbands [Table 2]. The need for professional "manpower" during the 1960's and 1970's and the consequent liberalization of immigration regulations in 1967 brought in a much higher proportion of skilled and professional Indians than during the first half of the 20th. century.

The term used in reference to immigrants from India was "East Indian", perhaps in order to distinguish this group from the native Indian population in Canada. However, the term " East Indian" is as misleading as the terms Orientals and Blacks. We use it only as a means of identification and in order to make some generalizations. Those of East Indian origin come from an even wider variety of cultures than Blacks and Orientals in

Canada. Recent immigrants do come from the sub-continent: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. They also come from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the West Indies, and Central and South America. They are distinct from one another by language, religion, and tradition. In no way do they form a single ethnic group.

People from India began arriving in Canada after 1900, and this coincided with the arrival of immigrants from China and Japan. In the year 1904, 258 Sikh immigrants arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia from the Punjab in India. They were joined in 1906 by another 700 Sikhs who came to Vancouver to work on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway [Chandrasekhar, 1986]. Also, by 1907 the first Sikh temple or Gurdwara was built in Vancouver. Asian migrants with their coloured skins, different modes of dress and willingness to work more cheaply as labourers seemed to Canadian workers in British Columbia a threat to their economic future. But, on the other hand the capitalist class, desiring to establish their industries, encouraged Oriental and Indian immigrants. The Ottawa Free Press expressed the fear that these labourers would destroy and drive away the white working classes from the Pacific Coast [Sept. 22 1906]. The attitude in British Columbia was an important consideration for the Dominion government.

The basic policy of the Imperial and Dominion leaders was the exclusion of the East Indians. The Minister for Revenue stated that he favoured a "closed door" policy to races for whom it was impossible to assimilate. Here he admittedly referred to the Orientals, Southern Blacks and East Indians [The Times, Sept.14, 1906]. A British Columbia member of parliament went to Ottawa in the hope of initiating Federal action to prevent the Indian influx into his province [Montreal Daily Herald, Sept.22 1906]. But, an open ban on Indians could create a difficult situation with the possibility of its exploitation by anti-British elements in India. Therefore, the Dominion chose to impose effective but indirect restrictions on immigration from India [Bhatti, 1974].

Even though, the Sikh immigrants were for the most part farmers from the Punjab in north India, the Canadian public was misinformed and remained ignorant of who these people really were. The term "Hindoo" was used rather loosely, and was not restricted to people who were of the Hindu faith but in fact applied equally to all people from India. The fact remained that no more than 15% of the pre-World War I immigrants were from non-Sikh backgrounds; a figure which remained consistent till the 1960's [Chandrasekhar, 1986]. The commentators of that early period as of today rarely saw any differences in the class, ethnic backgrounds, religion or country of origin of these people

[Buchignani, 1977]. An article published in the Canadian Magazine called the Sikhs - "...a class of Hindus, known as Sikhs, meaning the lower class". The author went on to state that these men were entirely dependent upon their physical capabilities and had no set aim in life [Williams, Vol. XXV111, 1907]. In contrast the Ottawa Citizen had published a leading article on the Sikh immigration. It stated that the immigrants were a fine, high spirited class of men, and was quick to point out that they were descendants of the men who had stood by the British [Ottawa Citizen Sept. 20 1906]. Nevertheless, the British Columbia government further deprived the legal Indian resident of the right to vote in their provincial elections held in 1907. The ignorance on the part of the majority of Indian immigrants about the Canadian way of life and their inflexible attitude towards one another and their environments, contributed to continued hostility. Another key factor which perhaps contributed to these misunderstandings was the fact that most of these earlier immigrants were not conversant in the English language. Even though, they were British subjects they were not given any schooling or training in Western disciplines.

In a report published as part of the Canadian Sessional Papers in 1908, the government of Canada was persuaded to prohibit the landing of persons who came otherwise than by direct ticket and continuous journey from the country of their birth or

citizenship. Subsequently, there was the Order in Council of 1908 which contained an amendment to the Immigration Act [Canadian House of Commons Debates, 8 April 1908, pp. 6634-35]. In light of Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour's report the Canadian government issued another Order in Council in the same year, prohibiting entrance into Canada of all Asiatics other than those who had two hundred dollars in their possession at the time of their arrival. All these measures reinforced the principal intention of exclusion and restricted the Indian immigration into Canada. This effective exclusion of Indians from Canada had the tacit approval of both the Imperial and Indian governments. This policy was implemented as part of the Reciprocity of Treatment resolution made in the Imperial War conference of 1918 and remained in effect until 1947.

The only challenge to this regulation was the arrival in Vancouver harbour of the Komagata Maru, a Japanese steamer in 1914. Gurdit Singh a Sikh entrepreneur hired the vessel to transport 376 prospective immigrants from India via the Far East to Canada. The continuous journey clause and the further requirement of \$200 per head proved to be serious obstacles in the way of Indian immigration [Mangalam, 1986]. The passengers on board the Komagata Maru were quarantined in Vancouver harbour and most were denied entry into Canada [Johnston, 1979]. Between

1914 and 1917, Indian immigration to Canada came to a virtual halt.

The primary concern of the Indian men already here in Canada was to gain entry for their wives and children. The new Immigration Act of 1910 had made it impossible for wives and children to gain admission. Although, there were no specific clauses in the Act forbidding them, yet the continuous passage regulation made it extremely unlikely for any dependent to immigrate to Canada. The matter of admission of Indian wives came up in the House of Commons when a member of the opposition asked Prime Minister Robert Borden whether the Indians in future would be allowed to sponsor their wives. He replied that the matter was receiving consideration [Canada, House of Commons Debates, Feb. 1912, 2457]. But, in about three weeks it became clear that the Dominion government was not about to relax the immigration restriction with regard to Indian women [Canada House of Commons Debate Feb. 1912, 4004].

In 1911 members of the Indian community pleaded their case with Ottawa and stated that, such compulsory separation of families was legally imposed only on incarcerated criminals. They added that such restrictions should not be imposed especially against Indians who were after all British subjects. At this time Oriental immigrants (Chinese and Japanese who were not British subjects) were permitted to bring their wives. The

Minister of the Interior Robert Rogers insisted that the clause of continuous passage and the \$200 per head would continue to be enforced [Daily News Advertiser, Oct. 12, 1911].

The Canadian Minister of Immigration was also quoted as saying that each self-governing nation in the Empire had complete autonomy in the matter of admitting or excluding immigrants [Toronto Star, July 31, 1918].

According to the Immigration Department certain changes would become effective in 1920. The proposed changes would place British subjects born outside Canada on an equal footing with all other immigrants [Roberts 1988]. In fact, in 1920 wives and minor children of Indians already in Canada were permitted to enter.

In the years following World War II the Canadian government replaced the policy of exclusion with an agreement to accept a small number of Indian migrants under a quota system instituted in 1951. However, it was not until 1967 that Canada adopted a universal immigration policy. There has been a considerable shift in the countries of origin of the immigrants arriving between 1978 and 1986. The immigration of women has steadily increased over the years. The ratio of male/female adult immigrants entering Canada has undergone a significant change since 1912 [Table 4]. The gap has narrowed to the extent that approximately 50 per cent of all immigrants to Canada today are women [Statistics Canada, Census Report 1984]. Women immigrants

to Canada have contributed to the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of this society. Sociologist Boyd writes that "their contributions as women and as international migrants have enriched the social and economic fabric of Canadian life" [Boyd, 1987 p.5]. Immigrant women in Canada in general and visible minority women in particular have become a stereotypical example of the "different other". However, the popular misconception continues that these women somehow comprise a homogeneous group, with some variations in language and dress [Estable, 1986].

Recent studies show that women arriving from Asian countries have a higher level of education than is the average for Canadian-born women [Commission on Equality in Employment, 1984]. According to Estable these variations in part reflect the changes to the immigration regulations which required the Asian immigrant who was hitherto not especially welcome to demonstrate special skills to qualify in the immigration process [Estable, 1986].

The immigrant women's situation and experiences depend on many variables: status at the time of entry into Canada, educational level, knowledge of one of the two official languages - since everyone is classified either anglophone or francophone, tradition or cultural background, religion etc... Of equal importance is the social organization of Canadian society into which she enters; for example cities like Vancouver with established ethnic communities, and Toronto where almost half the

population is foreign born offer the newly arrived women a different level of informal and organized support.

METHODOLOGY

Ethnic research in Canada has contributed to our understanding of the diversity of the Nation's population [Driedger, 1978, 1987; Kovacs, 1978; Elliot, 1979; Reitz, 1980; Ujimoto & Hirabayashi, 1980]. However, the research parameters must continue to expand to include visible minority groups, in order to better understand Canada's growing multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious character. Noted sociologist Bibby writes,

The participation of Buddhists, Moslems, and Hindus - although not well documented to date -nonetheless appears to be declining as followers and their offspring become increasingly integrated into Canadian economic and social life [Bibby, 1987, p. 22].

This statement indicates an assumption based on perhaps casual observation, and the unavailability of documented research data. Such gaps in research further prompt studies to assess the influence of religion and culture in shaping the Canadian identity. National identity is an issue with which religious

communities have had to wrestle ever since the colonies of British North America first showed promise of developing into a nation [Grant, 1977].

The influence of socio-religious backgrounds on identity issues is part of any study of culture. The primary concern here is not with the "essence" of religion, but with the conditions and effects of a defined kind of social action which can only be understood from the subjective experiences, ideas and aims of the individual [Weber, 1969]. Religion, art, politics, etc..., are simply aspects of one indivisible social reality, the true essence and significance of which has to be grasped and understood. Broadly speaking this method attempts to study "the interrelation of religion and society and the forms of interaction which take place between them" [Wach, 1944]. The influence of religion is seen in all walks of society. Any attempt to understand social behaviour must necessarily include religious behaviour. Max Weber deduces religion as a social phenomenon from individual behaviour. In The Sociology of Religion he states,

The external courses of religious behaviour are so diverse that an understanding of this behaviour can only be achieved from the viewpoint of subjective experiences, ideas, and purposes of the individuals concerned - in short, from the

viewpoint of the religious behaviour "meaning" [Weber, 1963 p. 1].

Like any other aspect of human life, religion and culture are in a state of flux - both historical, evolving in process. The famous scholar of comparative religion William Cantwell Smith writes,

The history of what has been called religion in general and of each religion, is the history of human participation in an evolving context of observable actualities, and in something, not directly observable by historical scholarship [Smith, 1978].

The sociology of culture is an extension of the sociology of knowledge, to encompass not only the discursive thought but the whole gamut of symbolic expression, including religion [Mannheim, 1956]. Following Mannheim and other advocates of the sociology of knowledge, Porter sees the ideological function of society as that of maintaining the value system/culture which gives cohesion and unity and also a sense of legitimacy to the social order; and particularly practices and usages within a given society. To maintain the value system, to ensure its transmission to newcomers and succeeding generations, society must rely upon certain institutions-schools, churches, mass media etc... Porter elaborates on the importance of religion in the structure of

social ideology and in the legitimating of power structures [Porter, 1965].

Culture can also be defined as "cumulative tradition" -the entire mass of overt, objective data that constitute the historical deposits, as it were, of the past religious life of the community in question. The categories employed for the analysis of culture have changed constantly. These changes have come about in part as a result of increased application of empirical methods employed for the understanding of social phenomena. A total perspective into the varieties of explanation of cultural phenomena would bring out the ever changing and cumulative qualities of the categories and abstractions which from time to time lead to a conceptualization of culture.

In order to develop a systematic overview of religion in Canada, we must focus on three units of social organization namely the individual, the group and society in general. The interviews for this study were structured to gain an understanding of subjective experiences in order to interpret the socio/religious behaviour of Hindu women in Canada. My discussions with the forty-five Hindu women has led to a better appreciation of this collective experience. The total number of immigrants from India in Canada by the year 1944 was 6,177; and increased to 204,477 by the year 1983. The distribution of the Asian Indian migrants continue to show a concentration in British

Columbia and Ontario. When I conducted my research there were approximately 150,000 Hindus in Canada living primarily in British Columbia and Ontario [Bibby, 1987 p.8]. The rest of the Indian population in Canada were primarily Sikh and Muslim. Because, the majority are first-generation immigrants, of Indian origin, the community exhibits a strong identification with the Hindu cultural and religious practices of India. However, this Eastern tradition is undergoing transition since it is experienced in a Western socio-cultural context. My work addresses the evolution of this community within the Canadian cultural mosaic.

My focus is on Hindu women in this society. In the broad context of ethnicity in Canada I examine the relationship between religious identity and cultural interaction. As stated earlier Hindu women see themselves as reflections of goddesses and other figures in mythology. The two aspects of Shakti (the feminine principle) are expressed in the various puranas (legends) as Lakshmi and Kali. As a prototype of the good and benevolent creator, Lakshmi exists in contradiction to her counterpart, Kali, the evil, malevolent destroyer. The mythic dualism (Lakshmi/Kali) has both psychological and sociological implications. The fear of transformation from Lakshmi to Kali forms a basis for a psychological conflict which is confirmed in the experience of women [Srinivasan 1987]. This fear is

addressed in the thought of Manu in his Dharmashastra, the influential "Laws of Manu" (AD 200). This idea gains sociological proportions when psychological fear extends to myth, religion and tradition which are fundamental to Hindu cultural logic.

If a dissonance is represented in the Hindu imagination through the experience of conflict for women, there is a further dissonance which develops when this imagination encounters a new cultural milieu. How does this influence acculturation, assimilation and withdrawal? How are women communicating the tradition to the children? And, if this communication is selective, are women emphasizing certain aspects of the tradition while ignoring others? In summary, I am questioning the extent to which the traditional concepts of the Hindu culture are changing, i.e., in transition within the Canadian context.

Margaret Eichler and Jeanne Lapointe write that in order to counterbalance the monosexual tradition of Western thought, it will be necessary, for a considerable period of time, to conduct special studies of women which look at issues from a female perspective [Eichler & Lapointe, 1985]. The tendency in most research still remains to overgeneralize - a term used by Eichler to describe a study which deals only with one sex but presents itself as if it were applicable to both sexes [Eichler, 1988].

Gender therefore must be treated as a socially important variable.

My work focuses on women's' experience as a source of understanding. I am interested in the historical and contemporary features of women's' identity. The questions used in the qualitative research and analysis was framed within the four aspects discussed in the identity theory of religion, which defines religion as "whatever sacralizes identity or a system of meaning "[Mol, 1976]. According to Mol there are four means or mechanisms by which this process occurs, and my understanding of this with respect to Hindu women is developed using certain questions :

Objectification - is when various elements of mundane existence are cast in a transcendental frame of reference where they can appear in a more orderly, more consistent, and timeless way (p. 206), [Questions-1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,Appendix 2]

Commitment - is when one focuses emotion or emotional attachment to a specific form of identity. Mol describes it as an anchoring of the emotions in a salient system of meaning, social, group, or personal, whether abstract or concrete (p.216), [Questions-4,14,19,20,21,22,23,26,27,28,29,Appendix 2].

Rituals - are used to articulate and reiterate a system of meaning, and prevent it being lost from sight. They act out and sacralize sameness. They restore, reinforce, or redirect

identity (p. 233), [Questions-, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25, Appendix 2].

Myths - which function not only to interpret reality and provide a shorthand for basic personal and social experiences, but also sacralize them (p. 246), [Questions-2, 3, 6, Appendix 2].

Beyond providing details on general responses, I proceeded to develop a "close up" of some of the respondents. I chose to elaborate on three particular profiles with respect to certain key themes. This further emphasises my approach of relating to themes in a qualitative manner.

A dialectic exists between adaptation to the new culture and the holding together of "old" systems of meaning. It is at this point of dialectic where the advantages of transition can be maximized, and any disadvantages minimized. Assimilation is feared as a threat to personal identity. Identity, transition, and dialectic are then the three major concepts that form the basic frame of reference for my study [Mol, 1979].

The concepts of culture and religion are synonymous terms for Hindus; these include faith and the cumulative tradition in which it occurs. For the Hindu "culture" refers to a very broad range of activities and relationships. McCormack summarizes this sense of "culture" best as, "the many and diverse patterns of social relationships that develop around the crucial activities of the society--getting born, education and child rearing, work,

marriage, family, sickness, wars, politics, death. It also includes the expressive and symbolic activities people engage in --music, dance, literature, drama, folk arts, song, costume and food habits, holidays and ceremonial rituals" [McCormack, 1982]. All these experiences have special meaning in the Hindu way of life and constitute religion. This negation of the difference between culture and religion, makes it easier to see and accept the changing and diverse historical character of the Hindu tradition. Like any other aspect of human life, culture and religion are in a state of flux - both historical, evolving in process.

Culture here is understood as "cumulative tradition" -the entire mass of overt, objective data that constitute the historical deposits, as it were, of the religious life of the community in question - its art, temples, scriptures, ideological systems, legal and other social institutions, moral codes, myth etc... My investigation of the transitional process studies particular changes taking place as concepts and ideas are transmitted from one person to another, and from one generation to another. In methodological terms I want to inquire into what is in fact occurring in a given situation and not assume a priori any particular interpretation of contemporary development. In this approach, it is an understanding of the meaningful, concrete relations constitutive of the subject matter that is the primary

target of knowledge. This approach is consistent with qualitative psychology and sociology. In its methodological strategy, it is descriptive, reflective, interpretative and experiential in its analyses of human experience.

Qualitative research, allows for in-depth exploration of human experience. There is, in this approach, a fortunate lack of established positions superimposed on otherwise unpredictable subject matter. Assuming the role of the other, for example, is one of the themes in this theoretical approach which emphasizes participant observation/questioning as the preferred mode of data collection. My work proceeds along hypothetical boundaries, and utilizes the interview format as a means of "testing" these ideas against the experience of human subjects - the women involved in this study.

The forty-five women involved in the interviews are of Indian origin and have lived in Canada for a minimum of ten years. The interview protocol was set up in English, but the participants were encouraged to use other Indian languages [Tamil, Bengali, and Hindi] to communicate their experiences. These women are all of the Hindu faith, and represent the cultural and provincial diversity that is unique to India. The subjects for my study were obtained primarily through community association membership lists, and through three key informants who identified women who were not actively involved in the

community associations. A sample was then drawn from this pool. Through a pilot study conducted with a group of ten "other" respondents, I began my field work. Following this I was able to focus my questionnaire and provide a tighter framework for discussion. This was extremely useful to me as the researcher. In a tradition like that of the Hindus limiting a retrospective discussion with an individual respondent, to a few hours and still attempting to cover a variety of key issues was perhaps the most challenging aspect of my work. In presenting the material in this dissertation I have chosen to group certain responses under broad themes, such as ethnic involvement/community participation, degree of social integration, extent of religious and ritual observance, family ties and views on arranged marriage. Only three women who were contacted for this study refused. The interview process resulted in forty-five usable responses. The interviews lasting on average two and a half hours were taped and then transcribed.

Initially, my work begins with simple verbal inquiry -for the way we use words is a significant index of our thinking. Also, more actively, it is a significant factor in determining "how" we think. To understand the world and ourselves, it is helpful if we become conscious of the terms and concepts that we are using to convey meaning. Further, to understand people who have a different linguistic background (i.e. "experience"), it is

requisite that we do not presume uncritically that their meanings for words are synonymous with a common usage. Of course, language may convey meanings which are systematic, literal, significative or symbolic.

In any case, ambiguity is intrinsic to language, more completely complicated in problems of translation. Smith, writes, "A mature history of ideas must rest on a careful scrutiny of new words, and also new development in meaning for old words. Once attained, it may further our realistic understanding of the world itself." (Smith, 1978).

There are five levels that are involved in my approach:

- [1] There are the words people use;
- [2] There are the concepts of which these words are, more or less, the expression of;
- [3] There is the "real" world, some aspects of which the concepts are, more or less, adequate representations;
- [4] There is the world of which both language and observation are unconscious, to which reference is entirely symbolic, i.e., in the Hindu tradition which rests on mythological as opposed to "historical" constructs;
- [5] For the explicit purposes of my research where multi-lingual interviews require translation in the interest of presentation, careful selection of appropriate terminology is critical.

A poignant example of linguistic ambiguity occurs where women, in the attempt to identify with mythological figures, convey a sense of belonging to a different historical epoch - their language changes in an effort to relate their perceptions in a manner which emphasizes the "authentic" relationship experienced by these women with goddesses and other figures in mythology. The normative "reduction" of linguistic ambiguity is not, therefore, in the interest of understanding the experience of these women. Rather, it enhances the "truth" of the experience.

The variables influencing the interpretation of the case studies comprising my research include: socio- demographic profile, extent of religious and ritual observance, family orientation, ethnic community involvement / influence, degree of social integration in Canadian society, and importantly, the length of stay in Canada for each subject.

My research subjects are persons in whom I am interested because their own experience, inclusive of ambiguity and contradiction, provides the codex with which culture and religion in transition is demonstrated. These women, born into a specific historical context enmeshed in the cumulative Hindu religious tradition, are key for the illumination of how their tradition affects their lives and the way they socialize their children in Canadian society. In a non-institutionalized religious system

such as that of the Hindus, it is the participant in whom all meaning accumulates. The believer's testimony is the singular means for excavating non-observable phenomenon that is, nevertheless, valid in and through experience.

The object of this inquiry is the transitional phase where some ideas, beliefs, customs, etc..., are sustained by individuals by and through a change of environment. I am curious whether this cumulative tradition undergoes radical transition, is reinforced, or if it is somehow preserved in its original form: What in fact undergoes transition? Which elements resist transition? Which features are reinforced? The Hindu culture in Canada persists only insofar as it is refreshed each generation anew, by the faith of each of its participants. It is the faith of individuals for the tradition which is dynamically indicative of their attachment, and this in many ways provides an index through which transition may be understood.

The object of the qualitative research interview is best described as one of obtaining qualitative material which demonstrates the subject's life-world according to its own terms and context, and facilitates comprehension of the phenomenon. If the "facts" of observation exist within the subject's world, then the only method for isolating them is to delve into this world: the subject's own experience, environment, perceptions and knowledge. Validity for my research is established within three

frames of reference: self-understanding, common sense understanding, and a relevant use of theoretical understanding. Self understanding refers to my own perceptions and formulations; common sense understanding refers to the logical coherence and factual consistence within a wider context; theoretical understanding refers to the applicability and validity of observations according to precedents established in scholarship. Validity thus can be measured where a consistency can be demonstrated between the three categories: from the subject's own world all the way to theoretical integration.

For example, around the question of acculturation, a common formal theoretical position suggests that a new culture "impacts" upon the individual. My own work seems to indicate that this notion suffers from a serious underestimation of the dynamic, fluid quality of the traditional system. Rather than "impact", the term "encounter" with a new culture suggests a positive approach to acculturation and assimilation which is more true to the experience of individuals. In inquiring about the cultural, religious traditions, we must avoid seeking answers to questions that have been formulated previously, instead, attempting to develop, slowly and perceptively a system which generates responses on their own terms.

My interview format consisted of a two-part questionnaire:
(see Appendix 2)

[1] closed questions - defines characteristics of the subject according to age, marital status, size of family, province of origin in India, languages spoken, duration of stay in Canada, education, occupation, husbands education and occupation. These questions locate the subject within target group.

[2] Open questions -involved a semi-structured interview, which asks the subject questions that pertain specifically to research objectives. The questions were divided into thematic sections including: identification processes, [religious and cultural influences as basis] caste and its implications, rituals and participation, language and other cultural activities, and raising "Hindu" children in the Canadian socio-cultural milieu.

Each interview questionnaire is ideally open and facilitates and encourages the generation of new categories that allow for individual experience to express itself -inclusive of ambiguity and contradiction. In the interview format it is essential that the subjects have free exploration of ideas, permitting innovations, insights and critical self-reflections. The context in which this research is carried out is taken into consideration in all discussions pertaining to method. A deliberate use of "leading questions" and hypothesis-testing is common to human science research. As an example, consider the following question: "Most religious traditions have good/evil paradigms for women. Based on your understanding of the Hindu tradition,

identify one of each. Discuss." However, there remains an implicit demand for objectivity in the sense that statements have only "one correct meaning", and the task of the researcher is to find this "one and only meaning". Contrary to this demand is a hermeneutical mode of understanding which allows for a legitimate plurality of interpretations. In analyses and interpretation of data, (coded O-1 through 15, T-1 through 15 and V-1 through 15 for the respective samples of the three urban centres, namely Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver) linguistic sensitivity and a "feeling" for word references are vitally important. My research process is relatively predetermined in and through a variety of factors within my own experience: woman, Hindu, mother, first-generation Canadian, familiarity with community, linguistic versatility, involvement in cultural and religious activities, etc. My position of researcher is motivated and sustained in and through experience. This unique position provides access to the hitherto unexplored area of the life-world-experience of Hindu women as members of a "visible minority" group in Canada. In their monograph On The Treatment of the Sexes in Research Eichler & Lapointe [1985] state: "It is important to note that studies involving only one sex are legitimate and justifiable. In particular, studies involving women compensate for the many gaps in knowledge, errors and omissions which characterizes the social sciences and humanities."

The experience of Hindu women within the dynamics which the thesis develops is differentiated in three ways relating to the formation of identity : social influences, religious/cultural influences and traditional influences. Social influences contributes to her ethnic identity. Religious/ cultural influences relates to her sense of community identity. Psychological influences impacts on her sense of self.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

Chapter One investigates some ethnic factors influencing the identity of Hindu women. These factors include the phenomena of "acculturation / assimilation" within a pluralistic society. The multi-cultural reality of Canada is distinctive in that it encourages a particular diffusion of many cultural groups within a clearly pre-existing (historical) bi-cultural orientation which dominates Canada. Chapter One also explores the processes of adaptation and integration of Hindu women within the Canadian society, while examining the processes of socialization, such as those exemplified in the training of children, the learning of Canadian social behaviours and a general accommodation of "values." The individual's interaction with the family, ethnic group and community-at-large is investigated within a theoretical

framework of ethnic relations (Reitz, 1980, Schermerhorn, 1970 Anderson, 1980).

Religion and culture interact in order to strengthen a woman's "image" of self in a more comprehensive system of understanding. This fact forms the foundation for Chapter Two. In this Chapter I present a profile of Hindu women's identity from both a historical and a contemporary perspective which continues to be influenced by the caste system. This is achieved by working through a model of "feminine ambivalence" distinct to Hindu culture (the Lakshmi/Kali paradigm). Chapter Two argues that the Hindu woman's identity is informed and rooted in a system of mythology to a point where her identification with a Sita (an archetype of a virtuous, self-effacing "wife") appears to blur a more contemporary reality of the self (the Shakti or "energy" which sustains an impetus for life and activity).

Since no appreciable psychology of Hindu women can be shown to exist in the literature concerning ethnicity, some feminist psychological theories can provide a background for beginning to understand how being a woman influences identity formation. Utilizing standard feminine psychological theories juxtaposed with the unique case histories presented in my research, Chapter Three develops an understanding of how tradition influences the Hindu woman who is situated in a wholly "other" sociogeographic context. This context of otherness, for

the identity of Hindu women includes religion, culture and language (the meaning of self). Gender forms the basis for the investigation undertaken in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three explores the psychological realities of Hindu women. Here, subjective factors relating to identity formation are emphasized as these factors can be distinguished from other influences. Some factors contributing to psychological reality explored in this chapter are : fear, developmental issues, doubt and separation.

However, the focus in this chapter is on the ways ambivalence is sustained psychologically for Hindu women. While Chapter two explains how ambivalence may be constructed in the Lakshmi/Kali myth, this myth may be experienced in the daily lives of Hindu women. Some forms of ambivalence reported by women in my study include: independence versus dependence [the major conflict], fear of loss versus love of tradition and confinement versus participation.

Chapter Four summarizes the research findings and proceeds to outline a model of transition. My model of transition consists of five aspects and involves the interaction of certain elements within the experience of Hindu women born in India and now living in a Canadian cultural context. The individual woman's life proceeds in a spiral of growth best described as going from the discovery of self and knowledge of traditional values to

community/society and place in it. When she is "displaced" as in the migration process, she withdraws into herself and seeks strength in her traditional values. As she begins to acculturate into "Canadian society" and yearns for an identity, she is drawn to her own kind to cope with the differences in the dominant culture. Her life experiences become involved/intertwined with the Hindu community around her which become her social/spiritual and extended familial base. This "community connection" she seeks not only for herself but also for her Canadian-born children for whom she feels a responsibility to facilitate the creation of a Hindu identity. As she evolves and gains inner strength, resulting in her becoming more accepting of her uniqueness vis a vis the dominant culture. Through the years she grows to realize and accept a definite difference which continues to be an underlying cause of tension in resolving cultural differences which prevent her total assimilation in Canadian society.

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The thesis argues for a relationship existing between the identity of Hindu women rooted in personal origin and an identity challenged by social difference. The contrast between personal origin -- including biography, history and culture -- and

difference, including society, religion and values, results in a conflict. This conflict emerges to create a deliberate barrier against assimilation and is experienced as ambivalence. This process of ambivalence/conflict ultimately prohibits complete self-acceptance. This process of prohibition appears to impede all opportunities for a total merging of self with society, where society is defined by "difference" and self is defined by "origin." Paradoxically, however, the identity rooted in personal origin seems to find reinforcement in numbers. This occurs through what Breton terms as "institutional completeness" (Breton, 1978).

The independent existence of Hindu women, sometimes experienced as loneliness and isolation, is compensated through interaction with others in similar circumstances. In this form of compensation the experience of individuals is relativized through a collective solidarity (the formation of groups). This fact appears evident in the study of Hindu women in the three urban centres which the thesis has examined.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIETY AND THE FORMATION OF SELF: SOME ETHNIC FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IDENTITY FORMATION OF HINDU WOMEN

The sociologist Émile Durkheim has written, "If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion...Even when religion seems to be entirely within the individual's conscience, it is still within society that it finds the living source from which it is nourished" [Durkheim, 1916, pp. 465, 472]. In order to understand how religious groups organize themselves around shared meanings, it is necessary to examine several aspects of religion: religious beliefs, rituals, experience and community.

This chapter is a study of the acculturation process of Hindu women and their interaction with family, ethnic-group and Canadian society. Here, an exploration of the patterns of socialization i.e. training children and learning to adapt to the Canadian way of life is illustrated utilizing the information obtained in the interviews. This should provide a clearer understanding of the experience of ethnicity during the period of

transition for Hindu women in Canada. This chapter develops a comprehensive analysis of some of the causes and bases of ethnic identity, both its formation and its understanding by providing a profile of the respondents and an analysis of the research findings.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Most of the respondents were between the ages of 40 and 50 while four respondents were 50 and older and eight respondents were 40 and younger. Only five of the women have been in Canada for more than 25 years, the longest having been in Canada for the past 35 years. Most of the respondents have been here between 15 and 24 years, with a noticeable cluster of women having been here between 18 and 20 years, arriving during the early 1970's.

The overwhelming majority of the sample were women from urban Indian centres. The women came from numerous different regional backgrounds. This is also reflected in the response to language ability. A total of 16 different languages and dialects are spoken by the women who participated in the study. English was spoken by nearly all of the respondents, whereas Hindi was spoken by all but four of the participants in the study. Punjabi, Bengali, and Marathi were spoken less frequently. (For a full profile of respondents see Appendix 2).

With regards to family status, all but one of the respondents are married, the one being divorced. Most of the women come from big families when compared with the Canadian norm of family size. More than half of the women are from families with five to eight children, a quarter come from families with four or less children, close to another quarter come from families with nine and more children. It is on this background that the women's own family size in Canada is somewhat surprisingly small, and may be interpreted as a symptom of shifting values, a sign of acculturation. The families here vary between no children and four children. By far the most common family consists of two children; one fifth of the respondents stated that they have one child; another fifth stated that they had three children. The average household size of respondents is 4.17.

The vast majority of respondents have received some level of secondary education in India. For the most part, respondents held Bachelor degrees and more than a third of the women had obtained a Masters degree; another third of the respondents had taken professional courses. Very few of the respondents obtained secondary degrees in Canada. Most of the courses taken in Canada were identified as "interest courses". However, the high level of education received in the country of origin is not reflected in the occupational status obtained by these women in Canada. This confirms the more general observation made earlier on, that

it is partly a result of the lack of recognition of credentials acquired outside Canada that can pose serious obstacles to resuming a profession (for a profile on respondents see Appendix 2). Only slightly more than half of the women are employed; of those an almost equal number are engaged in full time employment and part time employment. Very few of those that are employed actually work within their own ethnic group.

The data on the spouses educational background and occupation indicates that the sample represents a highly educated population with full employment. The data does not indicate whether the educational qualifications were obtained in Canada or elsewhere. Forty-one of the forty -five spouses have a university education. Most frequently the spouses have a Ph.D.. Many are educated in engineering. One can extract from this profile that the sample fits into a solid middle class economic strata within Canadian society. All, except for one of the respondents' spouses work in what may be labelled as mainstream organizations and businesses. The economic location of the sample combined with the predominantly mainstream contact may have some bearing on the adaptation process of these women.

The profile provided above is that of a Hindu immigrant woman who on average has been in Canada for 19 years, was 24 years of age upon arrival in Canada, is married, has an average of 6 siblings, has two children and is married to a well educated,

gainfully employed spouse. This general profile helps to explain some of the findings with regards to the maintenance of religious and cultural traditions and the means that are employed in doing so.

BACKGROUND

In this context let me situate some of the existing theories on ethnicity (meanings associated with cultural pluralism) in Canada, and relate these to the Hindu woman's experience in this country during a period of transition. By using the term "experience", I am referring to the perceptions, lived reality, community, identifications, conflicts, etc..., of the subjects themselves. Transition refers, specifically to a process of evolution and change which these women undergo when faced with cultural differences in the context of their own "lived reality".

Here, I would like to explore the phenomenon of how Hindu women integrate and adapt to social norms and values; what is the process of socialization i.e. training children and learning Canadian social norms and values; and finally what are the factors that influence her interaction with family, ethnic group and community at large.

The National Association of Canadians of Origins in India [NACOI] uses the term "origins in India" for all people who, by

birth, marriage or ancestry have their origins in India, regardless of the country from which they migrated to Canada. However, for the purposes of my research on Hindu women, I use the following criteria: women of the Hindu faith who have migrated to Canada directly from India, and have lived in this country for a period of ten years, or more.

The Indo-Canadian community (of whom Hindus are a sizeable number) noticed a significant increase in population size between the years 1961-1986. Historically, Indians have tended to cluster more than other foreign-born populations of Canada. With an increase in the number of Indians emigrating to Canada in this period, their population concentration has shifted from British Columbia to Ontario. However, in terms of the population concentration of Indians per 1000/total population, British Columbia still has the highest density of Indian population in Canada. Based on this reality, I have concentrated my research in those two provinces.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Ethnic adaptation for these women can be seen as a continuous process of adjusting to the realities one faces while maintaining a sense of contact with one's geographical, historical, linguistic, religious, and cultural separateness. The Hindu

women in Canada face considerable struggle in understanding and coping with a vastly different culture that frequently challenges these basic perceptions. "Even though we are attempting to change - there is still something within us that is not changing. (T-2)"

As stated in the introduction - Hinduism is not just a series of doctrines, beliefs or books of scriptures. It is an integral part of the Indian culture, a lived reality. Hindus wherever they may live, cannot readily separate their Hindu identity from the way they have been raised in the formative years of their lives in the Indian sub-continent. According to one of the women, "Everyone must have a sense of their past, their family and tradition". (O-14) However, "In India we are more naturally Hindu". (V-11)

The women in this study affirmed once again that being Hindu included such things as caste affiliation, provincial and linguistic backgrounds, basically the way they perceive themselves, and the beliefs that they may hold. Respondents frequently indicate the struggle they experience in this continuous process of adjusting, between the need to preserve their identity and the need to become part of the mainstream:" It is important to have Hindu identity, but do not go overboard, do not be part of ethnic group only, ... be part of mainstream". (O-2) "It is important to keep our cultural/religious traditions at

home It should not overshadow acculturation/assimilation".
(O-5)

Being away from their immediate and extended families in India the women initially often experience loneliness and feelings of alienation. Adjustment to Canadian society is particularly difficult for women who remain at home and retain traditional values. Most of the women who were interviewed entered Canada as dependents of husbands who came to this country as students or professionals. Many of these women had little or no exposure to Western cultures. Often they came directly from towns where little or no English was spoken. Comments including "physically we are here, but emotionally we are there (India) quite a bit" (V-4) articulate the struggle.

These efforts relating to the maintenance of the cultural and religious roots manifest themselves in various forms. A clear indication as to the effort and resources devoted to the maintenance of cultural and religious roots is the frequency of visits to India by respondents. The majority of respondents have gone back to India. The purpose of visits of course are varied, including attempts to better learn the culture, language and art forms. Most parents are anxious to show and share their children with their parents and other relatives in India. They also work hard at assuring relatives in India that Hindu values are being upheld and a conscious attempt is being made to pass on the rich

cultural heritage to Canadian offspring. Visits are seen as necessary to explain a sense of family - aunts, uncles, cousins have great significance in Hindu culture i.e. they are considered as extensions of mothers, fathers and biological siblings. As Indians "[W]e are more traditional, our respect for elders - sense of family has to be communicated" (T-8).

Some trips to India are linked to rites of passage. Hindu Samskaras (rites) mark the transitional phases of life. These rites of passage differ in number according to variant traditions again for the most part differed by province and caste, are the basis for a regulated, defined life in which each stage of maturation is identified. The Vedas expound this knowledge and provide clear instructions on the ritual basis. When the Samaskaras are performed, it is occasion for family celebration. A priest guides the proceedings with active participation of the elders in the family. Almost half of the respondents indicated that this was their specific purpose for going to India. Two thirds of the respondents stated that they had performed rites of passage for their children, either in India or here in Canada. The celebrations are sometimes performed here in Canada, with the Indian side of the family present. As an example, the most significant Samskaras for boys is the Upanayanam, the rite of investiture. This rite which was once performed for both male

and female offspring has through the patriarchal influences become a gender based rite.

A boy entering adolescence, who is also a member of the upper three castes ie. Brahmin, Ksatriya or Vaysia and hence considered "twice born" is presented with a sacred cord, worn from left shoulder to waist, to mark his confirmation. As one mother remarked: "I am conscious all the time of what I must do to keep my religion and culture alive for me and my children" (V-2). This is a celebration of the coming of age for the young man who must now become ready to assume adult responsibilities. He now has the right to perform puja (rituals) at home.

The Upanayanam has continued to emphasize the patriarchal tradition, and for many Hindu mothers in Canada, such a rite poses enormous difficulties as it continues to stress orthodox models of behaviour. It perpetuates and intensifies the pressures for women to conform to a more traditional role and denies her equality.

One eighth of the respondents indicated that their specific purpose for going to India was to visit relatives. There is no doubt, judging by the responses of the sample population, that the preservation of culture and religion are either important or very important to the respondents. "We sent our daughter to live in India for two years - just to get to know our culture first hand - there is no substitute" (T-1).

Generally, points of identification with an ethnic group include, among other factors, religious traditions, ethnic institutions, historical symbols and ideologies. Identification with religious beliefs or political philosophy provides a social/psychological dimension. This could prompt the following question: what is the meaning of these institutions, viz., culture, religion; should these be perpetuated, or changed within the scope of transition?

With the growing number of Indians in Canada, there has been an increase in the formation of several socio-cultural, religious and linguistic based sub-groups. Even though, many Hindu women reported having considerable interaction with Canadian society at large, the majority still maintained that their "close friends" continue to be of Indian origin. "Basically my friends are Indian". (T-9)

However, still most people from India identify with a provincial identity rather than cultural - it is taken for granted. It is interesting that the more older we are growing, the more Indian we are becoming. (V-3)

Examining the data with regard to the level of involvement of respondents in the Hindu community, three quarters of all respondents state that they are either actively or very actively involved in the Hindu community. For many, the organized Hindu

community is a source for close friends, indeed, a substitute for extended family.

If immigrants wish to maintain their identity in the Canadian pluralistic society, they need to pass on their distinctiveness to their offspring [Driedger, 1978, p. 149]. The commitment to the Indian community in some cases is deliberate and it appears to be set up to distract the children from certain aspects of the larger society. As some respondents put it "[W]e respect Canadian society - but we tell children to keep Hindu spirit". (T-1) "It is important to keep religion/culture If you don't then they (children) are nothing". (O-7) "If we don't have pujas and festivals at home, they (children) will lose out. They will be like a boat without anchor". (T-11)

The recognition for the need to pass on the cultural and religious distinctiveness is reflected in the sample. More than one third of respondents indicated that children ought to receive some formal or informal religious instruction. A lesser percentage felt that children should be exposed to both religious and cultural traditions; none of the respondents felt that exposure to culture alone would be sufficient.

Most often, the medium for transmitting cultural/religious traditions are dance and music. In some cases, dance and music were identified as very appropriate because much of Indian mythology can be communicated in an attractive and distinct way.

"The knowledge she (daughter) has gained through dance is amazing - knowledge of the scriptures, values, etc". (T-12)

Of course, text and scripture becomes even more important here because of the environment.

The Indian classical dance traditions have their origins in the Hindu religious texts. The devadasis (female temple dancers) traditionally performed their dance during ritual ceremonies in the temples, under the patronage of the kings. Today, the dance tradition based on Bharata's Natya Shastra a treatise of AD 200 has moved from the temple sanctum to the concert stage. Further, the dance tradition is evolving in Canada. Dancers, mainly of Indian origin, are teaching, learning and practising this art form as part of their heritage experience. The dance tradition provides the second generation population, especially girls, with an intimate understanding of the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of Hindu life. Based on the mythological fabric which is interwoven into every facet of Hindu thinking and experience, the dance acquaints the dancer in a personal way, with the complex system of the Hindu religious tradition.

Language was frequently cited as essential or at least very important, partly because of the added importance of written material in the different environment. "Text and scriptures become more important here - because of the environment". (T-12)

Also, many of the family members in India do not speak English and have problems communicating the second generation Canadian children. However, it was identified as problematic in terms of actual success in teaching children and children retaining the language ability. "We speak to them (children) in Hindi, they respond in English". (V-1) Language thus also received the highest disapproval as a medium to communicate culture.

Despite the number of organizations and cultural/religious activities outside the home, the main responsibility of "passing on the distinctiveness of one's cultural and religious tradition" especially for the non-institutionalized Hindu faith, rests with the parents and the community. This is confirmed by the survey sample. All of the respondents view the family unit as a primary vehicle in the maintenance of cultural and/or religious traditions. "We believe strongly in our culture/religion. Our children are trained, educated with our cultural/religious identity". (T-12) "The girls are getting more exposure and instruction than I got as a child - I feel privileged here". (T-3)

The observed trend regarding the role of immigrant women in general as the primary support in the family's adjustment process, as well as her primary responsibility to transmit the family's cultural and religious traditions is confirmed in this specific sample. Respondents clearly stated that it is assumed

to be the mother who takes on the responsibility of cultural and religious instruction. Only one third of the respondents see it as a joint parental responsibility, whereas two-thirds of the women who responded assume the principal role in passing on religious and cultural traditions. "In India we saw things - grandmother's japamala (prayerbeads), heard stories - you see and learn ... here we have to tell them ... we do and we are successful". (0-1)

In the process of transition there is a certain erosion of ideologies, concepts and practices. In the case of the Indo-Canadians, it is necessary to ask how the women are communicating the tradition to their children, and if this communication is selective, are they emphasizing aspects of the tradition while ignoring others? My concern is whether the selectiveness is the same among all Hindus and, what are some of the accommodations being made in this process of acculturation and integration into the mainstream culture; and in general, what does the experience of identification with Canadian society involve? "We are more concerned about keeping our identity/tradition because we are a minority here". (0-5)

It is very important here - more important here - there religion/culture is all around you. We are responsible to create a Hindu scene here - tremendous energy and effort is required of us as first generation. We have to lay the

foundation. (V-2)

Three quarters of the respondents stated that they had experienced significant or very significant changes in the practice of their religious/cultural traditions. "There are lots of differences to the life here and in India - the routine is different ... We are more involved with the Hindu tradition here". (T-2)

There is a clear recognition as to the limitations of practising those traditions in Canada, partly due to sighted unavailability of objects; the difference in calendar and celebration of holidays: "... children do not have holidays to celebrate our festivals". (T-15) Cultural values will not allow the rigid practice of Hindu religious/cultural traditions. Nevertheless, "I find we are keeping many religious and other Indian things alive here - maybe in different ways". (O-7)

Most religious events which are observed according to the Hindu lunar calendar, are generally put off to the weekend for celebration. A perfect example of this is the Durga/Shakti puja which is a five day celebration in Bengal observed on the fifth to the tenth day after the full moon; it is scheduled here in Canada over the Thanksgiving weekend. The five-day ritual begins on the Friday of the long weekend and ends on Monday afternoon, thereby compressing the observances to four sessions. This obviously allows the community to participate more fully and

provides an opportunity to introduce their children to the customs.

These limitations find expression in other changes. Some Hindus have opted to eating a non-vegetarian from the traditional vegetarian diet, wearing different clothing, performing less pujas [rituals of worship], conforming to a general lack of recognition of Hindu values and symbols in the society at large. However, many respondents indicated that there were no significant changes. "In Toronto there is everything like India". (T-14) The only difference of course is: "In India we are a majority, here we are living Hinduism and 'Canadianism'". (V-12) "Further, I sometimes feel like I am in India - Vancouver with a large Indian community is very comfortable, I don't feel alone". (V-7) In both cases the issue was understood to be a personal one. Neither one of these women felt that they had to make significant changes in their private practice of religious/cultural values. "Hinduism is a way of life - you have to live it. It is a simple formula. 'I' is not important. Its 'we' - we share everything". (V-14)

There were a few women among the respondents who spoke of how their lives in Canada continued to be structured and influenced by the Hindu calendar. In these instances the women did not work outside the home and were in a position to prepare and observe the pujas and the fast/feast rituals.

More than a third of the respondents indicated that the level of intensity and effort required for the practice and maintenance of their religious/cultural values and traditions far exceeded those remembered in India. "Maintaining our very rich culture is essential ... here we have to work hard to teach children - but in India it is part of society". (V-14) Another respondent summarized this by stating that "[I]t is important now, more than in India to be proud of my heritage - If not, I can't succeed as a Canadian". (V-3) Respondents stated that they felt the need to "create a Hindu scene"; "a Hindu atmosphere". In fact, some families in Vancouver "swap" children on Saturdays to teach them language and other aspects of Hindu culture. This arrangement seems to work and provide some discipline and focus to the activities. Children seem to take instructions from parents' friends better and demonstrated that the results are very encouraging to the parents.

This result contradicts the assumption made by many sociologists who have suggested that the longer the period since immigration, the less emphasis will be on the formation of group identity.

Although Hindus in Canada are for the most part first generation, there are pockets of Hindu populations in other continents: Africa and South-America for example, who have continued with their religious/cultural traditions for centuries

over several generations. This is also evidenced by the Hindu populations from these countries now residing in Canada.

The implication of the finding in my study suggests that the need for group identity is not linked to the length of stay of the immigrant but rather to such issues as the perceived need to successfully pass on cultural and religious traditions in a situation of a living cultural entity that involves a group setting. Often, respondents would identify Hinduism as a religion that can be taught, recognizing that it has to be teachable in order to be passed on to a generation that does not experience living it. Frequently respondents stated that they did not remember their parent (mother) formally instructing them: "... in India religion and culture is a natural process that you pick up - my mother never made a particular effort". (V-10)

However, in all cases it was the respondents' children that provided the motivation for these intensified efforts:

"...children must be given some form of instruction".
(O-9)

"...if we do not do things with them they will lose their Hinduism". (T-15)

"We are now responsible to create a Hindu scene here ... we have to lay the foundation. If the children are not exposed,

they will lose out...." (V-2)

It seems that these experiences are not universal to all Hindus in Canada. Judging by the sample, there are few

individuals that did not experience a more intense effort at maintaining the religious and cultural traditions. Of those that did not experience a more intense effort, the most frequent statement was that there was no formal structure reinforcing certain practices. These respondents therefore identified their religious/cultural experience as more relaxed, less dogmatic, less ritualistic. As one of them put it: "I don't believe in rigid form of religion - but I will still like to preserve my tradition". (T-9)

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overall, it has become evident that there are significant changes in the experience and practice of cultural and religious traditions in the Hindu community. These changes are part of the transition and relate directly to the predominant cultural and religious practices of the majority group. The changes vary from a more intensified experience for the majority of respondents on one end of the spectrum to a more relaxed practice of the cultural and religious traditions for a minority of the respondents on the other end of the spectrum. The conclusion is rather simple, "I can be a Canadian and a Hindu". (V-4)

The development and maintenance of minority communities to a great extent is dependent upon the attitudes and the behaviour of

the majority community [Driedger, 1978, p. 279]. As the study revealed, for the most part Canadians are open and tolerant of religious/cultural differences, leading one respondent to say that she faced "No challenges or conflicts to religious/cultural identity - Here they (Canadians) are very open". (T-14) Even though in response to the influx of immigration and the changing social context, the multiculturalism policy was legislated in the early 1970's containing a particular philosophy of the concept of a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society; in reality many of the first generation "ethnics" have, for the most part, continued to remain outside of the mainstream culture.

The Multiculturalism Act in fact further insures a sense of continuity and a preservation of the individual's unique cultural heritage and linguistic background. As Sociologist J. Reitz (1980) has stated the Canadian ethnic mosaic allows for the survival of ethnic cultures, while each group is integrated but not assimilated into the larger society (Reitz, 1980, p.3).

As ethnic identity and group survival are solely dependant on the cultural and religious heritage that is passed on to each new generation, the traditional concepts of Hinduism are retained only inasmuch as this occurs. "In my family I am responsible. In India the continuity is basically continued through the women". (T-1)

As McGuire (1987) puts it "[T]he individuals religion is not a static entity. It develops and changes over the course of one's life. A person is not born with a full blown set of religious beliefs and practices, religion is developed and nurtured (or ignored) in the socialization of the child" (McGuire 1987). The most meaningful aspects of the Hindu religious and cultural tradition are taught/understood at home. This becomes even clearer in the Canadian context, where the larger society is non-Hindu. In most families, the mother is charged with the responsibility which she takes very seriously and tries hard to effectively communicate the religious/cultural heritage. Women spend most of their time and energy in rearing children, almost the same way they experienced attention from their own mothers. Her persistence is often misunderstood by the children who feel the pressure of maintaining dual identities rather strenuous. The mother becomes the focus of rebellion, as teenagers resolve certain differences between the Hindu mother's expectations and western realities. Children, of course, are primary in bridging cultural gaps for the family between Eastern and Western value systems.

The study revealed that many of the respondents even with university degrees, have limited interaction with non-Indians except neighbours and children's school teachers. Most of the interaction is motivated by their children's participation in

Canadian society. However, some of the respondents who have been educated in India and continued working outside the home in careers do move more freely in both Indian and mainstream Canadian society.

Certain hypotheses about the relationship of these dimensions, i.e., culture, religion, transition, have become a part of theoretical discourse on ethnicity. Two categories which need to be defined here are acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation can best be understood as a process of adaptation to the social norms and values of a host community. Assimilation refers to the process whereby an individual takes on the characteristics of the host society. This is accomplished by learning and adopting the languages, customs, values and behaviour of the host society. In majority/minority group contact, cultural assimilation or acculturation would occur first: acculturation may take place even when none of the types of assimilation have occurred; and this situation of "acculturation only" may continue indefinitely. Structural assimilation occurs along with or subsequent to acculturation: all other types of assimilation will inevitably follow. As examined earlier, respondents do indicate a degree of acculturation, exemplified in the changed practice of religious and cultural traditions. As one respondent articulated her sentiments on interaction with Canadian society at large, she

said: "religion is important for one's identity ... if you share common interests you become part of it". (T-4)

Interdependence between the individual and collective processes of identity formation, are discussed in the work of Raymond Breton (1978), where he emphasizes three components of symbolic order in identity, way of life [tradition] and language. [Breton, 1978] In a pluralistic society world views are often in competition.

These concepts are also reflected in the strongly cultural, pluralistic orientation of the federal multicultural policy. The emphasis on tradition and language has resulted in the creation of the cultural heritage grants. All ethnic communities can become beneficiaries of these grants which encourage the setting up of "language and cultural schools" within each ethnic group. An appreciation for Indian culture begins with an understanding of language, art, music, dance, etc. A religion such as Hinduism which is a cumulative tradition, can only be perpetuated through its successive integration, behind which the idea of "immersion" is rooted. Each distinct religious/cultural group of believers must structure itself to maintain the plausibility of its distinctive meaning system. [McGuire, 1987]

The process of acculturation/assimilation is invariably more evident in the second generation population. More than half of the respondents believe that the Canadian born/raised generation

will lose religious and cultural traditions. The mother of Hindu born children from India, raised in Vancouver for over a period of three decades summarizes that her children are very "westernized", their thinking, lifestyle and habits are no different from their "western" friends. But she is also quick to add that in the 1950's while they were growing up, there was no Hindu Community support group in Vancouver. (V-4)

At times respondents, although for the most part saddened by this prospect, also see it as a necessity in the transition to successful adaptation. A number of respondents expressed concern as to the predicament that their children find themselves in:

Our children are caught between two worlds - At home we wish to keep our religion and culture. Outside it is different - they do have to assimilate well to assimilate into mainstream and still have a religious/cultural identity that is different. (T-15)

There is the underlying fear of respondents that offspring should fit in and not be different from 'the Canadian mainstream: "I do not want my daughter to be a misfit". (O-

4)

Hence, at times, the cultural and religious traditions are seen as possible obstacles to the children's success. As well, there is the legitimate concern that the Canadian-born/raised generation have a different image of themselves. Some respondents indicated that their children thought of themselves

as "Canadian", after all "... as he says, he was born here".(V-1)
But as one of the respondents put it, her son's message is "...
you have left your country - you are here now - forget everything
you did there and adopt the values and norms of this country
(0-8)

While discussing the multiculturalism policy and its contribution to developing a "Canadian" identity, Breton states that its main significance lies in its integral contribution to the redistribution of social status among linguistic and ethno-cultural groups. [Breton, 1978] But it is the two important issues of race and language that differentiate the Indo-Canadian. Whereas ethnic identity for most others can be concealed and relegated exclusively to the private sphere of life, the Indo-Canadian remains a visible minority.

The Indo-Canadian situation can best be described in Breton's theory of parallelism where, among other factors, he discusses institutional completeness. [Breton, 1974] In putting forth this theory he discusses the extent to which a person's life can, potentially at least, be absorbed in his/her own community - without contact with individuals or organizations in society at large. "I am not involved with the Canadian community". (V-7)
This results in an institutionally "complete" community. Aspects of this theory are confirmed by the sample. Frequently respondents identified their contact with the Canadian society at

large as limited. Of those respondents that identified their source of contact with fellow Canadians, all were of an involuntary nature, be it through the place of employment or the neighbourhood. Two individuals clearly identified the size of the city of residency as a factor for more or less involvement with Canadians. "If I had lived in a small Anglo-Saxon town things would have been different". (0-3) "Since moving to Ottawa we have only Indian friends ... When we were in Timmins, there were no Indian families - I really did not miss or feel any different ... My Canadian friends are all from Timmins". (0-15)

These experiences confirm Breton's hypothesis as it relates to parallelism. The availability of parallel structures will depend on the size of the community. As has been documented through the 1986 Census material, Indians gravitate to urban centres, enabling the community to establish organizations and structures of cultural completeness. Another aspect confirming the sense of institutional completeness relates to an equal number of respondents feeling that it is/is not their responsibility to make a contribution to Canadian society.

Especially in the case of the Indo-Canadian women, these ethnic boundaries are created and sustained, often to their disadvantage. The demands of "old world" traditions compounded by a lack of linguistic and other communication skills necessary

for relating to the "outside" lead to compartmentalization, i.e., resulting in a form of structural completeness.

The position of these women, even among their own ethnic collectives, depends on many variables including socio-economic conditions, educational background, personality attributes, i.e. more introverted, community based or extroverted, integrated into the Canadian mainstream. This could make any form of acculturation or integration problematic - for it is universal for women to face numerous restrictions within society. In the dynamics of social perception the visibility factor, whether physical (different skin colour, eye or hair type, etc.) or behavioral (different customs, dress, social etiquette, etc.) tends to create social contrast effects. Here, the differences are exaggerated, leading to misconceptions. Since one of the bases of effective intercultural relationship is causal interpretation, it is assumed that the customs of the society are truly compatible to the habits of an individual and, alternatively, that a custom is the habit of a typical member of a society.

In India, there are primarily two distinct races [i.e., Dravidians and Aryans] with a small population in the Northeast bordering Tibet/China, of people of the Mongoloid race. There is also a diversity of religious traditions, languages, and even colour. Even though "visible" differences may be minimal, there

are distinct identities which characterize and internally distinguish these people.

However, all of the respondents expressed a generous level of tolerance among various Indian backgrounds. Religious tolerance is extended to include events such as a Hindu wedding in a Sikh temple with Sikh ceremony (V-4), because this allows a higher level of cultural/ religious retention than going outside the Indo-Canadian community altogether. Thus, these early occurrences may be explained by the desire and need to draw from a larger community base in order to establish and support an organizational structure for the purpose of maintaining cultural/religious traditions.

In a multicultural social context the onus is on all members of the society to promote cross-cultural understanding which can be beneficial to all. Most school boards and schools encourage and arrange multicultural events to promote cross-cultural understanding. All respondents made some reference to their children's active participation and their contributions towards this effort. If the desired goal is integration, then any form of parallelism leads to fragmentation of the social fibre, and isolates individuals into ethnic ghettos, which in turn become complicated sub-strata within society. Again, as cited earlier on, the fact that an equal number of respondents stated that they feel that it is/is not their responsibility to make a

contribution to Canadian society provides a limited insight into the level of separateness rather than integration as perceived by these Hindu women. Living in a parallel structure with the mainstream culture can result in a complex duality in the self-identity process, in the commitment and in the behavioral expression of these women.

As some of the studies by J. Naidoo reveal, the identity of the Indo-Canadian woman is not only entrenched in the traditional values of her religious and cultural heritage, but also exhibits contemporary future oriented aspirations [Naidoo, 1985]. The woman is deeply committed to her family and home, but also exhibits the potential for high achievement in education and employment. She might adapt to many forms of behavioral expression of the larger society, but there are forms of expression she feels are an integral part of her unique religious and cultural identity which she retains adamantly. To explain part of what is maintained when this woman encounters a new cultural milieu, we need to understand certain basic concepts which pervade the Hindu cultural imagination and define paradigms for women to identify with. Naidoo emphasizes that it is important in this transitional phase to retain selected aspects of both old and new values and traditions, for the wholesome evolution and integration of the personality. Certain aspects of the "old" values are fostered within the community itself through

elaborate organizational structures for the promotion of culture, language, the arts, including music and dance. The Indo-Canadian community has been extremely successful in catering to the cultural, linguistic and artistic needs within the community itself. However, there continues to be a lack of emphasis in communicating this to the society-at-large. In fact, close to a quarter of the respondents felt that there was a need to communicate and bridge cultures to further cross-cultural understanding.

It is the second generation Indo-Canadian who benefits from the organizational capacity and enthusiasm of the older members of this community. The cumulative tradition [faith & culture] is brought into focus in many ritual observances and cultural schools. Temples and other religious societies continue to grow in number all across the country. The focus of the organized Indo-Canadian community in the last twenty years has tended to shift from mainly "cultural" to a more defined "religious" agenda. Yet all members of the community do not participate in these organizations. In most instances it is the same group of individuals that participate in the various associations, etc... As Breton suggests, it is often the same individual, i.e., socially conscious, that takes on an active role and membership in the many organizations [Breton, 1978].

The large number of organizations is a direct result of the multi-cultural nature of the Indian population migrating to Canada, combined with the number of fairly recent migrants. Even though each of the metropolitan areas of Canada has an umbrella organization, that is an India-Canada Association, there continues to be several other organizations serving certain particular needs of the community.

NACOI is the largest national organization. It claims to have thirty-nine chapters across the country, including 13 in Ontario and 11 in British Columbia. The membership in NACOI is both by individuals and collectives, i.e., affiliate organizations. Between the years 1976-1986, the organization recorded a membership of between 45 and 50 thousand Indo-Canadians. This represents approximately 33% of the total Indian population [145,000 based on 1981 Census].

As in any group endeavour, there are problems that arise and these centre on any number of issues. The composition of the membership, especially the executive - people in positions of authority and the actual "running" of the organization, is similar to any other ethnic collective. What stands to be researched, but is beyond the scope of this study, is the role of women within these organizations - what offices do women hold in these organizations? Are they part of the decision-making body? What is their impact on the collective?

Another important factor to be considered, is the extensive powers of taxation, viz., members of a community forced to pay for collective action. This taxation is not limited to payments of membership fees, etc., but also involves time and voluntary participation. This can also become a significant factor in the integration/acculturation process. For example, if an individual is totally involved within one's own community, it is more than likely that s/he may not have time or opportunity to participate in the larger society. Therefore, even though this individual is seen participating and active in the community, the objective of integration/acculturation may not be achieved.

However, there is some indication from the sample implying that respondents volunteer much of their time to activities relating to 'mainstream' organizations. In fact, three-quarters of the sample indicated that they volunteer with organizations such as schools, day cares, various charities and community committees. The nature of the organizations can be directly linked to activities relating to the respondents' children. This is consistent with some of the earlier findings relating to the respondents' self-perception as primary child care giver. However, the motivation to volunteer is not only that of a parent but also that of a member of an ethnic minority. Frequently the volunteer involvement is linked to multiculturalism days.

In the case of women involved within the community organization, it is evident that most are in support positions. They act as secretaries, form auxiliary groups, and take charge of food committees, all "traditional" roles for women in most societies. The recognition for their services is minimal, but there is always the expectation of loyalty and commitment to one's own group.

Some of these groups are defined by religious affiliation, linguistic and nationalistic features. Nationalistic feelings are an expressed part of the first generation, but subsequent generations may not necessarily manifest these qualities, as previously indicated. Participation in any of these community activities is sustained purely out of the reward of participation itself.

Also, most of the Indo-Canadian community organizations are headed by elite males. These are people with high levels of educational backgrounds, and often higher socio-economic status. In-fighting and male domination are noted as common features among all ethnic collectives [Breton, 1978]. "We are keeping away from the politics...." (T-10) "I do not like getting involved in the decision making there. We are part of the Hindu community, but not too involved". (V-10)

The larger national organizations are, of course, subject to extensive control by the benefactors who could be federal or

provincial government agencies. This control becomes inevitable because all forms of funding are channelled through these agencies. As the research revealed, the vast majority of Hindus in Canada are not actively in the administration/executive functions of ethnic community organizations. Women in particular are selective in their participation.

The struggle continues for these women as they work hard to transplant themselves, their religious/cultural traditions and assume the task of educating their children in the knowledge of the complexities of the Hindu tradition. Since this tradition is so closely tied to India, the image of the religion often suffers from certain stereotypes outside of its geographical context. The women stressed the need to be sensitive and selective in communicating all aspects of religion and culture to their Canadian-born children. Mothers are in a continued state of ambivalence between retention of orthodoxy and adaptation to the new society as they promote a new and altered self-image in Canada. Here, a solidarity with community becomes a strong ally.

Sociologist Roxanne Ng [1981] argues that ethnicity arises for people when they come to Canada, because people are not always considered ethnic [Ng, 1981, p. 98]. She elaborates her argument by discussing ethnicity as a social construction which may be

reproduced by members of society as a practical life-accomplishment in every day living. However, the ethnic identity becomes intensified in a western, foreign context.

The relative cohesion of ethnic identity amongst the Hindu women I interviewed was related to their experiences before they emigrated to Canada; the need to form close knit groups in the absence of family as in India, and the minority status in a country of a Christian majority. Ethnic identity becomes key to coping with resolution of the two cultures they are part of. The impact of the Hindu experience of all the women interviewed prior to their coming to Canada is sustained deliberately in behaviour and identity. Their responses to life situations is greatly influenced by the way they were brought up in India. Identity formation is a dynamic process as these women adapt to "Canadian ways" - rear children born in Canada and become part of their ethnic community. Women continue to view the larger Canadian society as a threat - they feel a need to resist assimilation - acculturation. The consensus is pro acculturation, but strong resistance to assimilation is shown.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY AND THE FORMATION OF SELF: RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IDENTITY OF HINDU WOMEN

In general, there are no extraordinary differences of opinion as to the merits and demerits of the caste system within the Hindu tradition. It has provided hierarchical, structural and inflexible guidelines which have become the foundation of Hindu communities. The caste originally intended to define occupational groups is in many instances retained to this day to provide an identity or a sense of belonging to a particular community. The identity formation, both with respect to self and community for many Hindus is greatly influenced by caste which remains linked to birthright. However, Nobel prize winning poet Rabindranath Tagore described the caste system as "a gigantic system of cold blooded repression", and was of the opinion that regeneration of the Indian people, directly and perhaps solely depended upon its removal [O'Malley L.S., 1974].

In this Chapter I will outline the research findings with respect to the respondents views on a variety of issues regarding caste as experienced in the Indian and Canadian contexts.

Following this, other aspects of the social structure including class and gender are examined. The discussion leads to an exploration of ambivalence and an interpretation using the paradigm of Lakshmi and Kali.

The information gathered from the respondents is subsequently viewed in the Canadian context, where Hindu women are part of a visible minority. The majority/minority group status in Canadian society seems to implicate parallels with the well ordained, defined and practised caste system. The meaning of caste in this context seems to suggest a differentiation of individuals by reason of colour and ethnic origin. While Canadian pluralism subscribes to an ideal of multicultural/multi-lingual/multi-racial/multi-ethnic harmony, when put to the test with a phenomenological vision, is undermined by differences which are difficult to resolve.

Given this reality, does the Canadian experience facilitate the removal of caste barriers for Hindus or create further social barriers? How does the Canadian social hierarchy based on ethnic and racial divisions impact on the identity formation of Hindu women in Canada?

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Some general observations with regard to caste, class consciousness and gender distinctive roles within the castes are reflected in varying degrees among respondents. However, the focus here is on those aspects that vary from the observances in India. Thus, the respondents' altered assessment of the importance of central structures and value systems are examined.

The majority of respondents (63.3%) stated that the caste system had an influence on them in their formative years.

I felt the caste system as a child - ... I went to a brahmins only class The integration came later. We (peers from other castes) would sit in the same lunch room - but our mothers did not know about this. [O-9]

I lived mostly in Dehli ... in urban centres we only see caste as class discrimination towards servants etc. [T-9]
You noticed the difference between the servants and us - no maids in the kitchen ... cleanliness had a lot to do with it [T-11]

When we were young we noticed the servants - our grandparents' treatment of them ... based on purity/pollution. [T-15]

Most often, this influence meant the imposition of values, of certain expectations as members of a particular caste, and

restrictions in socializing with others. There was as well a noticeable aspect of discrimination exercised by adult members of the caste towards lower castes as exemplified in the treatment of servants.

The rigid segregation of people within castes has been sustained by a belief in Dharma (moral law) and Karma (action). The caste system is structured upon these concepts as its bases - one's obligations as a believer in the system which possesses dharmic and karmic implications. With a belief in reincarnation one is told to perform his/her Karma to the best of one's ability; for every birth and rebirth is aimed at the final goal of Moksha, liberation. Since caste is determined by birth, it is conveniently tied in with a system of reward and punishment for action in past-life. This is perhaps the key factor that legitimizes power for the Brahmins. But what has sustained this power?

Weber [1968] says that there is a quest to accept, to find or invent legitimacy as part of a general quest which he seems to think is a universal characteristic. Human life seeks meaning; society is made possible, however precariously, by meaning and value, or the search for them which itself is an embodiment of meaning, since no quest can be undertaken without motivation [Weber, 1968]. The motive for this action is salvation. The essence of the doctrine of Karma is to be found in the Bhagavad

Gita. Here Krishna explains to the warrior Arjuna his karmic obligations as a ksatriya, and his dharmic obligations as a Hindu. Thus, action is preferred over inaction, even though the consequences may be fatal. For Hindus who are familiar with the Gita above all other (religious) texts, this dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna provides ample justification for sustaining belief in the caste system.

There are four basic castes or levels of society, and many sub-castes. The highest caste is the Brahmin. All castes are believed to have their origins in Purusa(Rgveda 10:90), the creator - from different parts of his body. The interpretation is that the Brahmins come from the head of Brahma, and therefore are held to be the voice of the Supreme Spirit, and become the priestly caste. Second in order are the Ksatriyas, the military and governing class. Vaisyas are the traders and agriculturalists, while the Sudras serve as servants and menials for the higher orders. The "untouchables" are a pancama or fifth caste until Gandhi renamed them Harijans or children of God. From this description which is work-oriented, it is evident that women must be classified in a caste all their own, an un-named caste. For, by the year AD 200, the approximate date of the Laws of Manu, women were no longer included in any of the first three occupational descriptions, and were further discouraged from seeking any employment.

Of those respondents who did not feel that the caste system had any influence on their formative years, some were members of the Brahmin caste:

In my family we don't believe. We have many inter-caste marriages in the family. [O-15]

... we were not disallowed from interacting with anyone. [T-4]

... with the newer generation views are changing. [T-7]

I see less (acknowledgement of caste) among Hindus here ... even if they have it in mind - they are not saying anything ... it is getting better. [T-13]

Others had not experienced any limitations be they with regards to obtaining education [T-7]. Here, all adults and children socialize with members of other castes due to their parents' liberal views [T-13].

In all of the above responses it was the absence of the experience of limitations based on the caste system that caused a lack of influence on the respondents' formative years: "When I was growing up in Calcutta, I wasn't exposed to caste and inequalities". [O-5]

The respondents also recall having been exposed to the experience of limitations that caused more than the majority of them to affirm an influence of the caste system on their formative years. "I don't feel much difference ... my activities

including marriage have been in the same caste ... so I don't feel any difference". [V-1]

However, the established influence of the caste system on respondents' during their formative years is to a large extent rejected in their adult existence in Canada. This may in part be due to the experienced upheaval of traditional values and norms during the process of immigration. However, as the results below will demonstrate, there is a curious mixture of aspects that respondents reject outright and those that respondents maintain, although be it in an altered form or for altered reasons.

As well, respondents stated a clear dislike of the caste system. The reasons flow from the many discrepancies in the traditional views which state that Hindu is born, not made, which makes admission to a Hindu caste impossible for outsiders. Even movement within the castes is prohibited, for this system based on concepts of purity and pollution does not allow for any mixing among castes. The Dharmashastra states that caste is to be determined by the paternal line - allowing Brahmin males to marry women of a lower caste on the assurance that their progeny will continue to retain the high caste status. Nevertheless, a woman who marries a Brahmin does not become one herself. There is, therefore, no "upward mobility" within this rigid stratification. When asked how they felt as part of the caste hierarchy, none of the respondents stated that they liked it, three quarters clearly

expressed dislike for the caste system and the remaining quarter did not express a preference either way.

When participants of the study were asked to assess the continued influence of the caste system, 85% of the respondents stated that the caste system had no continued influence in their lives in Canada. This rate of rejection of an entire social construct is considerable, when analyzed on the background that 63% had stated that the caste system had been an influence in their formative years. From a traditional perspective, the invading Aryans (BC 2000) had brought with them a strictly patriarchal culture and religion which meant the decline in the status of women that the matriarchal system of the Dravidians had provided. It is the process that anthropologist Srinivas terms "Sanskritization" (Srinivas, 1977). The invading Aryans held a radically different view of women from that which had prevailed within the indigenous Dravidian culture. They brought with them an ideology which included a pantheon of gods. The once powerful goddesses known to the Dravidians became mere "consorts" of these male deities in due course of history.

Since women were no longer accorded positions of power especially in the upper castes [Buhler, 1886] it left only the Sudra woman with any "real" power or position. It has traditionally been customary for women of the three upper castes to be totally protected and dependent on their male counterparts.

In Hindu society there continues to be three important aspects of the social structure, i.e., caste system, class structure and the distribution of power within it. However, in reality the caste, class and power structures are closely interwoven. Class and power structures are key factors in any understanding of the caste system. For classes are also hierarchically arranged social categories, based broadly upon ownership or non-ownership of means of production. Classes like castes are subdivided in terms of the type of ownership and control, and the types of services contributed to the process of production.

For Weber, the caste system is a particular kind of status group ("German" stand) or estate in the sense of the three estates of the Ancien Régime of France [Dumont, 1981]. Weber describes castes as status groups and contrasts them with classes which he sees as communities. Castes as status groups are defined essentially in terms of styles of life. Property and occupation enter as important elements in the life style of a status group, but they need not be decisive. Social honour in the caste system is very closely tied to ritual values, viz., being able to perform rituals, fully participate in temple activities, and be privileged to have the darsan (seeing the divine image). Another distinctive feature of the caste system in

an order is its extreme proliferation - the multiplicity of castes.

However, classes are not defined essentially in terms of social honour, although class positions do tend to be associated with differential honour. Classes are defined in terms of property, ownership or non-ownership of means of production. Property in the Hindu system alone does not create social honour. For example, the Ksatriyas and Vaisyas who are the "richer" castes compared to the Brahmins, nevertheless do not occupy the primary position in terms of status. Further, classes are in principle, and to some extent in practice, open systems, while castes are not.

The caste system enjoyed both legal and religious sanctions in traditional Hindu society. Different castes were assigned different rights, not only in economic matters but over a wide range of social phenomena. Classes, in contrast, are de facto categories. They do not enjoy the kind of legal and religious sanctions which were associated with caste. It is true that inequalities before the law, which were associated with different castes, have been completely removed - including special privileges constituted for untouchables or "scheduled" caste; nonetheless, old habits of mind conditioned by a legal and religious structure, for centuries upholding these inequalities,

continue to play a part in the relations between castes in contemporary society.

Frequently respondents linked the lack of experiencing attributes of the caste system in their contemporary lives to being in Canada. "At present it has no relevance to me - maybe it is because I am here." [O-12] "...you grow up in those circumstances and accept it. Then you open your eyes to the inequalities. We are now in Canada." [O-6] "Here I do not see the caste system." [T-12]

In India today, there is a certain amount of divergence between the hierarchy of caste and that of class. Both the systems have been undergoing some modifications: the caste system because of the general trend towards Westernization and secularization; the class system because of the extension of a cash economy which is the direct result of industrialization. In traditional society there is a much greater consistency between the caste system and class structures.

Mobility in the caste system has always been an extremely gradual process. To acquire land and move upward in the hierarchy of class always takes several generations. Shifts in the generation of power in the new context, are by comparison, quick and radical by nature. Social mobility, economic change and political modernization lead to the creation, not only of new relations, but of new values, attitudes and aspirations. The

processes of economic change and political modernization have led the productive system and the organization of power to acquire an increasing degree of autonomy. In a concrete context, the overlap between the hierarchies of caste, class and power have been progressively reduced. A new economic order is currently emerging in both rural and urban India which is not based upon the caste or class structure in the same manner in which the traditional order emerged.

In his writings on caste and class systems, Weber suggests a multi-dimensional model. He argues that different kinds of stratification occur in contemporary societies, and that numerous social strata can be distinguished other than intermediates between workers and capitalists. He also acknowledges the importance of economic factors in any system of stratification, but claims that political power is yet another independent determinant which produces its own hierarchical order. Individuals and their families often rise or fall in the social scale by moving out of the stratum in which they originate [Weber, 1968].

However, even those respondents that did not feel a lasting effect of the caste system here stated that, at times, the caste system does become important and/or should serve its purpose at the time of marriage: "Sometimes with marriage, caste becomes important...." [T-14] (A fuller discussion of the importance of

the caste system with regard to marriage will be provided in Chapter 3).

The number of respondents stating that the caste system has no continued influence cannot necessarily serve as an indication of an egalitarian group. In fact, respondents stated that rather than the caste system it is language differences and region of origin within India (provincial) that become differentiating factors and points of reference within the community here in Canada. In fact respondents frequently identify the caste distinction as less significant than provincial/language distinctions: "The distinguishing factor that remains with you is the way you speak: Tamil, Teledu or whatever Indian language". [O-14] "Here we continue to be provincial and linguistic groups but as you continue to stay here other Indians become o.k.". [T-14]

Thus although caste distinctions have been abandoned, for the most part, they have in fact merely been substituted by more practical and commonly accepted variables of group distinctions in the Canadian context.

The message on the role of the caste system within Hinduism is not very clear when judged by the responses. This is in part to be attributed to the reflection of the respondents' experience in a modern India. A number of respondents identify the caste system as an integral aspect of the Hindu tradition based on the

fact that it has been there for such a long time. "It is not essential - by no means- but it has become a part of the fabric - what can they do about it?" [V-13]

Even though caste has always been an integral part of Hinduism, it is not seen as an essential part of it. But are there any advantages for the Hindu society to retain the caste system? Most Hindus are against untouchability as Mahatma Gandhi was, but still favour some aspects of the caste system. The belief is that the caste system has kept the fabric of their community running smoothly by providing a place and a role for everyone. Caste has also provided a sort of "welfare system" at the village level, viz., if people are "in need", they can turn to their "caste cooperatives" for assistance. Most caste groups in a village have a caste council which finds ways to help needy members such as widows and orphans. The government has made deliberate attempts to address the discrimination faced by the untouchables and, as a course toward remedy, instituted quota systems to encourage these scheduled caste people into the mainstream. This is not unlike the equity principles of the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms etc. This has resulted in a type of "reverse discrimination", in some ways compounding the problems of resolving caste differences. This has, in fact, caused many of the caste tensions to resurface that had, previously, been dormant.

Brahmins hold, in some way, power which is "purest" in the Indian context of power; this counterbalances purity at secondary levels, while remaining subordinate to it at the primary or non-segmented level. It is this sense of power and purity, together, that has made not only Brahmins, but men of all three upper castes superior to their female counterparts. Finally, in perspective, the Upanishadic ideology of the equality of Shakti/Shiva (male/female) has had little influence on social reality. The hierarchical polarity created by the caste system continues to remain an integral part of the Hindu tradition and is more evident in rural India. The caste system divides the whole society into large numbers of hereditary groups, distinguished one from another and connected by: Separation in matters of marriage and contact; divisions of labour (i.e. profession by tradition). the subordination of groups according to rigid caste criteria. We can make few generalizations for this order which, by its nature, is totally traditionalistic and "anti-rational" in its effects. However, since the system benefits the upper castes, and accords them social and religious privilege, the caste system will continue to have its "proper place" in the Hindu tradition.

The difference between those respondents that identify the caste system as essential in the Hindu tradition and those that do not identify it as essential is actually surprisingly low. In

fact, one third of respondents did not assess the caste system to be an essential part of the Hindu tradition. One may have expected a higher number of respondents to view the caste system as essential for the Hindu tradition, however, this is not so. This might be the result of respondents' desire to maintain their religious/cultural identity within a social structure that does not tolerate the caste system per se, but nevertheless contains definite aspects of inequality.

When responses are examined as to the degree of relevance that the caste system still has within the Hindu tradition it is again confirmed that more respondents view it as an attribute of the past (12 respondents stated that it was essential and another 4 stated that they see it abolished/changed in the future) whereas only 12 respondents perceived it to still be essential for the Hindu tradition.

The negative view of the caste system combined with the respondents' assessment as to the continued relevance of the caste system for Hinduism explains the respondents' level of communicating the caste system to Canadian born offspring. On the above established background it is thus at first surprising to note the extensive level of passing on knowledge about the caste system. In fact, 76.3% of the respondents stated that their children know about the caste system. For the overwhelming majority, the children are exposed to the idea of the caste

system, not to an indoctrination of its practice. This is reflected in the ways respondents introduce their children to the caste system: "My daughter knows through literature." [O-3] "... children know about it as a historical fact." [O-11] "My children know the caste system through mythology." [O-14] "I have explained it to them as part of their education." [V-10] Thus, although the number of children who are aware of the caste system seems overwhelming, judged on the background of earlier responses as to the like and dislike of the caste system, it is consistent in that it is part of passing on historical information as opposed to passing on values.

In only two cases was it explicit that the passing of information regarding the caste system was intentioned to instill pride: "I will tell my children, they should have pride." [T-5] This apparent rejection of the caste system as established by the analysis of the responses above, is in mild confusion with the responses given in an evaluation of the advantages and/or disadvantages of the caste system. Although 41.1% of respondents evaluated the caste system as having no advantage and no disadvantage, a surprising one third of the respondents stated that they could identify advantages within the caste system. Respondents who indicated an advantage of the caste system were frequently from the three upper castes, and not a member of the Sudra caste. The advantages identified focused on being able to

receive education, being involved in decisions and being privileged.

Among the women interviewed, 14.7% stated that there was no advantage in the caste system compared to only 8.8% who indicated that there was no real disadvantage. However, a small percentage of respondents (5.8%) stated that the caste system had definite disadvantages. Respondents who indicated a disadvantage referred to the limitations that come with the caste system in terms of restrictions of associations with others as well as level of expectation. These identified disadvantages would in part be a result of the age of respondents as well as a reflection of their caste experience in a rural or urban setting.

CASTE AND GENDER

Another aspect relating to caste and of importance to this study is the aspect of gender differences within castes. There is a growing body of research which suggests that women's position in Hindu society is intricately associated with the development of caste and class to which they belong. Indeed, class status continues to be a significant factor, even in Western societies where no "formal" caste structures exist. In modern India women occupy important positions in both the public and private sectors. This may give the impression that women in general have

relatively high positions in Hindu society; but reality is far more complex. Contradictory views have been expressed; the status of woman as mother is exalted, but the wife continues to be a subordinate. In the Hindu tradition there is a definite link in the rise of caste status and constraints on women. In other words, the hierarchy works to the disadvantage of women of high caste. Srinivas attributes the change of life style for women to the process of "Sanskritization" (Srinivas, 1977). This term he uses to describe the Aryan influence which immunizes the goddesses and changes the character of the husband - wife relationship. This may also explain the more or less equal conjugal relationships which are part of the less "Sanskritized" low castes.

If such a relationship between gender and caste exists, what is its basis; in what ways could it help us to understand the positions of male supremacy and women's subordination; and what are the social processes linking the structures of caste and gender?

The patriarchal form of family organization and its associated ideology did not emerge as a universally accepted or natural way of living, but was the scene of a struggle in which the patriarchal form gained dominance without a final victory. Even though patriarchy and caste would seem to be distinct

factors, the ideological concepts underlying these systems held by the Aryans totally destroyed female power.

Responses regarding the tradition of equality for women within Hinduism and the responses regarding the existence of gender differences within castes show signs that would confirm the theory of "Sanskritization." Although the majority of respondents stated that in their view, Hinduism does not include a tradition of equality for women, the more important result here seems to be that more than one quarter of the respondents stated that it did in terms of Hindu ideology.

The responses are difficult to analyze since some respondents refer to direct experiences of inequality; others refer to inequalities experienced in India; yet others refer to the Canadian context; some respondents struggle with the definition of equality as possibly meaning "sameness of doing things." In other words, as is often the case, a clear and concise definition of equality seems to elude the respondents. Thus the discussion remains at the level of interpretation.

For those respondents that identify a tradition of equality it is at times a qualified equality that only relates to the sphere of religion but not to society. However there are respondents that clearly refer in their answers to the question of gender equality to the early history of their country and origin and to the collective heritage of a time where "goddesses

were of real importance " (detailed discussion of mythology and its influence on Hindu women follows in this chapter).

The results regarding the caste system and identifiable gender differences are much clearer. More than two thirds of respondents affirmed gender differences in the caste system.

We are Baniyas (business sub-group of Vaisya caste). I feel more opportunities are accorded to men It is still a male dominated society I have four brothers whose wives are educated but not allowed in the business. [T-11]
Men and women in the same caste are different. Women have certain restrictions as girls we were restricted in movement - it was more cultural. [V-6]

One area that shows definite signs of gender differences is that of religious officiating in the temple. As mentioned earlier on, the membership in a certain caste is tied to the level of ability to perform rituals and the level of participation in temple activities. This aspect of the caste system is irrelevant for the women since the officiating of rituals is exclusively reserved for male members of the Brahmin caste.

Respondents frequently (41.9%) indicated that they see Brahmin males as suitable because of their lifestyle, being vegetarians and their level of education and knowledge with regard to the rituals. "I wouldn't mind a woman who is qualified and willing". [O-11]

However, respondents also frequently indicated that were there other individuals with the same qualification, but not members of the Brahmin caste, that would be acceptable to them as well. "Brahmin male priests are the tradition ... if there are other knowledgeable people then they can do it". [V-7]

In fact, the majority of respondents (58.0%) did not think that it is necessary to have a Brahmin male officiating at ceremonies. Rather, it is often expressed that having a knowledgeable individual is more important than having a member of a certain caste: "Knowledge over birthright." [V-14] This argument in favour of merit versus birthright may be a direct result of the exposure of respondents' to the Canadian value system, which, at least in theory tries to abide by this principle.

More than one third of those that rejected the exclusive officiating function of Brahmin males went so far as to state that they would not mind women officiating rituals in the temple. This might be taken as a further confirmation of "casting-off" that respondents are subject to. Those respondents that were exposed to women taking the place of the Brahmin male objected in part because of the menstruation taboo. In traditional Hindu society women were not allowed to participate in family gatherings or rituals at home or in the temple during their menstrual cycle. Again, this is linked to the notion of purity.

Only one third of the respondents stated that there were no apparent gender differences in the caste system in their lived experience. Frequently it is the observation that women are becoming more educated that is seen as a factor in lessening gender discrimination: "... as people became educated, things began to change. No difference being a woman." [V-4] "Now with girls getting educated, things are changing." [V-9]

As well, it is the mixture of Canadian values with values from the country of origin that make caste and the accompanying gender distinctions less significant: "Gender differences are a lot less noticeable - both have buying power, they have a sense of independence." [T-3]

Thus, the identified lack of gender differences within the caste system can be attributed to an apparent breakdown of the operationalization of the caste system here in Canada. Gender restrictions imposed on women as members of castes are not enforced here, thus young women receive an education that allows them a greater degree of independence from their expected role as dependants on their spouses.

As is evidenced by the above results, respondents are constantly reaffirming or rejecting values and structures that were imbedded in them in their early years in an attempt to resolve conflicts with the values and structures that they experience on a daily basis, here in their adopted country.

Thus we are presented with a profile of Hindu women's identity from both a historical and a contemporary perspective.

FEAR OF FEMALE TRANSFORMATION

The research also attempted to seek responses to the understanding and interpretation of a model of "feminine ambivalence" distinct to Hindu culture (the Lakshmi/Kali paradigm). Woman as Lakshmi is benevolent because her controlled sexuality bestows legitimate heirs for the maintenance of caste, wealth and retains family prosperity within the caste. Woman as Kali is malevolent because her uncontrolled passions are liable to cause impure blood to enter into the caste, and thereby dissipate caste wealth, making a mockery of patri-linear inheritance. The potential transformation of a woman from Lakshmi to Kali forms the basis for a certain fear which is part of Hindu cultural logic (Srinivasan, 1986). This explains severe restrictions which are then imposed on women - to prohibit this transformation in the interest of preserving the caste.

Certainly, differences are reinforced by the role-models which are both imbedded within the imagination and sought in the experienced world. These role-models range from characters in Hindu mythology who are clearly distinguished as "good" versus "evil". The Lakshmi versus Kali role-models are excellent

illustrations of a fundamental ambivalence existing in the imagination of Hindu women. The concept of the female in Hindu ideology presents an essential duality as suggested in the *Devi Mahatmaya* (Dowson, 1982), a treatise on Shakti. On the one hand, as Lakshmi, woman is fertile, benevolent, and the bestower of life; on the other hand, as Kali, she is aggressive, malevolent, and the destroyer.

In the Hindu pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (the creator, preserver and destroyer) have Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Kali as their respective consorts. Lakshmi or Sri, goddess of wealth, abundance and prosperity is the creative potentiality of Vishnu. Lakshmi, meaning a mark, sign or token, had no qualitative significance in Vedic times. Her appearance is that of a goddess elaborately ornamented, sitting on a lotus, and surrounded by female attendants. She is golden in colour like the early morning sun. The mudras (literally a sign or seal) of her four arms suggest giving protection. In the *Mahabharata* and other literature, Lakshmi is personified as the goddess of fortune, and the embodiment of loveliness, grace and charm. As Sita in the *Ramayana*, Lakshmi is associated with fertility, prosperity and abundance. In later texts generally, with the addition of papi (bad) or punya (good) Lakshmi is seen as an object whose mere presence has a good or bad effect. The "bad" Lakshmi has been personified as ALakshmi, Lakshmi's sister.

Kali, the consort of Shiva, is called by many names including Sati, Parvati and Durga. From the mystical point of view, she represents the supreme realization of truth, the state beyond manifestation, the Paramatman. Kali also symbolizes eternal time hence, she both gives life and destroys it. Her appearance is described as a hideous, four-armed, emancipated woman with fang-like teeth who devours all beings. She holds a pasa (noose), khat ranga (skull-topped staff), khadga (sword) and a severed head. The weapons denote her powers of destruction. Kali is also described as black, the colour into which all destruction dissolves. She is eternal night in the midst of which she stands upon "non-existence", the static but potentially dynamic state that precedes manifestation.

These iconographic representations of the goddesses possess a powerful influence on the Hindu cultural imagination. Within each of these two manifestations a secondary duality is sustained. Although Lakshmi is instinctively invoked to give wealth and good fortune, as ALakshmi she retains a potential for bringing grave misfortune. When she is Kali, woman is imagined as fearsome and dangerous, yet she is accorded much respect. For in this aspect she is capable of great vengeance against those who offend her. Kali is part mother (Ma) because she protects her devotees, and part malevolent in her capacity as enemy of evil, capable of immense cruelty and destruction. Herein lies

the root cause of the great ambivalence which is felt by a devotee to the mother-goddess.

According to L. Babb [1975] the benign and malevolent features in the Indian goddess are reflections in the relationship between male and female categories in the divinity. "When the female dominates male, the pair is sinister. When male dominates female, the pair is benign." The domineering Kali, with her foot on her husband Shiva, is a representation of the aggressive potential of the female; whereas female passivity is emphasized when Lakshmi is dominated by her husband Vishnu. Symbolically, if her sexuality is controlled by men, she remains fertile and benevolent (Lakshmi); but the female in control of her own sexuality is potentially destructive and malevolent (Kali).

The feminine principle, Shakti is the Power which energizes the universe; but as Prakriti she embodies Nature which is the undifferentiated Matter of Universe. Prakriti is the female counterpart of the cosmic person Purusha. Shakti (Energy + Nature) not only embodies power but is Power. In the Devi Bhagavatam (Dowson) the Shakti with her three-fold Powers, (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) has assumed an independent position. "Shakti is at her best Sattva guna when she is engaged in the protection of the world. At the time of creation her nature is dominated by Rajas, and at the time of destruction she assumes

the Tamasa form". [Lyle, 1973] This idea is the quintessence of the Devi Bhagavatam. We now begin to understand the emphasis placed on the particular form of Shakti as mother. The most endearing word the Hindus have for woman is "mata", mother. Philosophers and poets alike have described "mother love" to be the ideal love, a love utterly unselfish and boundless. From conception to death, she intuitively and naturally believes in giving with no thought of return. It is motherhood more than womanhood that the Hindus glorify [Preston, 1980]. Paying greater honour to motherhood than to womanhood implies an emphasis on the creative potential rather than the nurturing potential of the feminine principle. But this image of motherhood sustains an idea of control from "without". Although the procreative potential of the goddess is important, it nevertheless does not occur without an element of domination from the giver of the seed.

There is a definite connection between the special position and manifestations of female deities in the Hindu pantheon and the role of women in Hindu society. Though Hindu women are supposed to be absolutely devoted to their husbands who are respected as embodiments of the deity, woman may also reign supreme in her own domain as mother of her children. While women are consorts or equals, they still must obey men.

Classical Hindu laws defining the role of women focus almost exclusively on women as wives. The basic rules for women's behaviour appear for the first time in the Manava Dharmashastra, or the Laws of Manu. (Shastri) The emphasis in this treatise is on the need to control women because of their evil character.

Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they are guarded in this world. Knowing their disposition, which the lord of creatures instilled in them at the creation, every man should almost strenuously exert himself to guard them.

[Muller, 1886]

Later Sanskrit texts, vernacular writings, and oral traditions also define the ideal woman as the one who does not break the bonds of control. The wifely role for women in Hinduism is one of subordination, devotion, and dutifulness. Even though the goddess is believed to be the equal half of the creator as Ardhanareswara [Dowson, 1982], she does not have an equal share in his wholly perfect nature. The interpretation given by male scholars of Ma Kali is of one who protects her children from evil in her terrible aspect. She must be obeyed for fear of rejection. Although the destroyer, her behaviour is not considered proper or ideal. It is nevertheless accepted because she is necessary.

Lakshmi, the benevolent giver too is not without her dark side, Alakshmi, misfortune. This duality suggests that if the mother is offended in any way she might react negatively. This emphasizes a fact that pervades Hindu cultural logic. The "good" Lakshmi can always change into the "evil" Kali. The fear of transformation is based on the idea that any female can, and indeed, does possess the potential to become evil.

In a real sense, Lakshmi and Kali are central symbols of good and evil. The mythical goddesses become symbols which pervade and function in the cultural imagination. They are conceived in personal terms, worthy of adoration and as the centre of a system, as in the case of the Shaktas (goddess worshippers). The system is a rational cadre where the relationship between the goddess, the individual, and the world is so constituted as to ensure the certainty of the expanded awareness of an inner perfection. (Nityabodhananda) The passage from myth to symbol, and then to history, system and tradition is a natural result of the power of the mythical goddess who functions in the unconscious.

The evolution of the goddess in the human imagination sustains her in a constant state of flux. Interpretations from a feminist perspective could influence this evolution within the context of Hindu cultural logic. A recent interpretation by the Sankaracharya of Kamakotipitam suggests that the Dharmashastras

do not contain the personal opinions of their authors, merely the handiwork of Rishis who themselves have tried to interpret what has been said in the Vedas, and that there exists no compulsion to accept these interpretations in 'toto' (Kancheepuram).

Hindu culture has given credibility to the role of woman as mother, indeed exalting this position to one of great esteem. Nevertheless, the attitude to the role of woman as wife continues to retain the dictates of Manu. Unfortunately Hindu cultural logic refuses to acknowledge its irrational fears regarding the transition of woman from one role to another. This irrational fear explains severe restrictions which are then imposed on women - to prohibit this transformation in the interest of preserving the caste.

The subordination of women was crucial to the development of caste hierarchy because male supremacy was both a private and a public notion, viz., at home and in society (subordination of sudras). This in turn prompted the anti-caste movements which, in some instances, became associated also with the removal of constraints on women [Liddle & Joshi, 1986]. The upper caste maintained their supremacy by increasing the social distinction between them and lower castes. These efforts illuminate the historical connection between women's subordination and social hierarchy and provide the basis for strong control over women in a patriarchal society. The impact of foreign domination i.e.,

"Westernization" further reinforces the formation of the social classes and removes women of the high and middle classes into further seclusion. The class structure appears to build on the existing gender division within the caste system, and it propagates a notion of "superior" versus "inferior". It is important to remember that various invasions have made the Hindu defensive, inducing in particular upper castes to retreat into increasing orthodoxy, and providing a rationale for "protecting" women from a foreign invader. The ancient practices of child marriage (betrothal of children) and sati (the suicide of women following the death of a husband) can be seen as a direct result and demonstration of this "need to protect."

Caste supremacy with its emphasis on the social elite and the superiority of the male has not gone unchallenged by women. The resistance arose at various times over the centuries, resulting in some changes, however minimal, in economic and social spheres.

Any changes in the social structure which would result in women seeking new possibilities in change, and a hitherto unknown economic independence, will not be achieved without a direct evolution in the pre-existing social traditions and values. Change will necessarily pose a threat to the traditional organization of society, for women who are economically independent could less easily be controlled. Because of the

crucial position in the organization and maintenance in the social hierarchy, women have the potential to undermine the entire social structure. The status of equality with male counterparts as suggested in Upanishadic literature, but later misrepresented in the Shastras by male Brahmin scholars.

Some consequences of this ambivalence are examined in detail in the next chapter. As this chapter explains, this ambivalence may be resolved through mythological idealization/social imitation while deliberate attempts are also made to compensate for a distinct sense of separate individuality and separate personhood. This poses a sense of conflict, but nevertheless remains a contentious issue translating into something particular to Hindu women in Canadian society.

MYTHOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION

Women participating in the study were asked to identify mythological models of good and evil. Respondents identified 13 mythological characters that represented good values. (See Appendix 3 for a complete listing of choices identified by respondents) Three quarters of the respondents identified Sita as the goddess that encompasses the content of good.

When asked to describe the content of the model of good as personified by the identified characters, respondents described

the content with the following words: devoted; submissive; advanced in the search of truth; equal partner in the pursuit of knowledge; devoted to her husband; sacrifice; selfless in the tradition; determined; soft; patient; living for others; bearing all the injustice.

The identification with a Sita, the model of a devoted wife, appears to blur a more contemporary reality of self. Sita has been held as an example for Hindu women through the centuries to the present day. Whenever mentioned, the glorification of Sita occurs almost exclusively because of her submission to the extent that her individuality is annihilated. As a general ideal of perfection, the obliteration of individuality is achieved by men through the practice of various virtues, or through asceticism and knowledge. For women, this paradigm is accomplished only in absolute self-surrender to their husbands. Even the Manavadharmashastra (AD 200, the Hindu civil law code) bases its dictates concerning women entirely on this ideal.

Cornelia Dimmit [1984] in her article "Sita: Fertility Goddess and Sakti" rightly states that it is not only Rama who acts as the hero restoring and maintaining the powers of fertility, but Sita as a goddess in the mode of Sakti (energy) who actually instigates this action herself, forcing Rama repeatedly into acts of heroism. Without Sita there is no story; not simply because she is a passive victim requiring rescue, but

rather because she is instrumental throughout the epic in making the critical events within the story occur.

These role-models range from characters in Hindu mythology who are clearly distinguished as "good" versus "evil". As elaborated, the Lakshmi versus Kali role-models are excellent illustrations of this differentiation for Hindu women. Still, this differentiation may be quickly resolved through mythological idealization/ social imitation while deliberate attempts are also made to compensate for a distinct sense of individuality and separate personhood. This poses a sense of conflict, but nevertheless remains a contentious issue translating into something particular to Hindu women in Canadian society.

This inconsistency between the virtues advocated by the elaborate mythological system and the values that are espoused by Canadian society are in a constant conflict. Aspects of this conflict can be found throughout the responses given by women participating in the study.

With regard to the model of evil, respondents identified 9 mythological figures. The most frequent choice was Kaikeyi. Respondents described the content of the model of evil with the following words: desire; selfish; demanding; creating problems; ruining the family. It is of interest to note that out of the entire sample only 10 respondents commented on what they saw to be the content of evil.

Kaikeyi is Ram's stepmother but she is also a mother in her own right. Her plot to have Ram exiled to the forest may seem to be an evil act, but the motivation for this action appears to be "noble". Kaikeyi in fact, is persuaded by her motherly instincts and wants the kingdom for her own son. The Hindu tradition is ambivalent towards condoning Kaikeyi's act but is not fully convinced that she is evil.

It is of significance to note the general discrepancy between the ideal of good and the reality of women's aspiration to be, for the most part, anything but conform to the ideal that is Sita. Yet, the characterization of the content of "good" is based on her qualities, whereas this in reality rejected by the individual respondent in her own context. Indeed, many of the virtues contained in the model of good are not viewed as good in the context of the modern society, the environment in which the respondents live. Thus, the responses provided are in conflict with the reality that these women find themselves in. This presents a facet of the conflict and ambivalence that respondents experience in their adaptation process.

Some of the conflictual aspects are confirmed in responses by participants of the study to the question of relevancy of models of good and evil in contemporary lives. Three quarters of respondents state that those models are still relevant to them, whereas one quarter indicated that those models are of no

relevance to them. Respondents that indicated that the content of good and evil is still relevant to them frequently did so in an indirect way: "Whether these characters have a direct influence is hard to say - but our moral values, traditions are to an extent based on them." [O-10] "You appreciate these women more when you are an adult and have lived through the problems of day to day life. Even if Hindu women think of these characters, they do not perform action accordingly." [V-8]

Some respondents remarked on the influence that living in Canada has had on the relevance of these models of good and evil on their contemporary lives: "Values are changing - here our atmosphere is different." [V-14] "When we move over to Canada there is less of an influence from these role models." [T-1] "In today's society such qualities cannot hold - but there are still standard good qualities." [T-11]

Regardless of whether the models of good and evil still have relevancy in respondents' lives, all of the participants seem ambivalent or unclear as to the changes that they have experienced with regards to values that were instilled in them in their formative years.

Some of the confusion with regards to those values surfaces in the exercise of respondent's identifying their role models in the Hindu tradition. Half of those who identified a role model, identified their mother, a quarter of the respondents identified

Indira Gandhi, the late Prime Minister of India as their role model and close to a quarter identified an aunt of theirs as their role model. Respondents identified with Mrs. Gandhi because she was a role model to many of the women participating in the study when they were growing up in India. As well, Indira Gandhi was frequently chosen because of her "motherly" qualities. The virtues identified in connection with the choice of role models were:

- devoted wife
- talented musician
- beauty
- sacrificing
- favoured the disadvantage

as well as:

- powerful
- hard working and organized
- educated
- modern views
- free spirit

Some of these virtues identified by respondents are already in a mild conflict with those submissive and subordinate qualities that form the content of good within the mythological models. These identified changes in the value structure of respondents are further confirmed in the responses relating to the women's role in their marriage as well as in their immediate family.

Although the majority of respondents describe their role within the marriage as that of the devoted and supportive wife, "Indian men would like to see their wives coy and submissive" [O-3], more than a quarter of the respondents (26.8%) characterized themselves as "being an equal partner" within the marriage. As well, numerous respondents that did identify themselves as supportive wife also stated that they were trying for an equal partnership with their husband. "Its fifty/fifty ... some things he can do - I can't do - We are complementary". [T-4]. "I am a wife and mother with equal responsibility ... we both have full time jobs". [T-7]

Within the immediate family, the respondents identified their role as that of a supportive mother. However, as has been evidenced in the literature on immigrant women in general, respondents also clearly feel added responsibility because of their immigrant experience. Most often respondents characterize this added responsibility as a function of mediation and facilitation between husband and children as well as a mediation between Hindu tradition and modern Canadian society. The sense of increased obligation to their children and the pride expressed in fulfilling this role largely defines the respondents function within the immediate family. Thus, within the marital relationship the sample has shown signs of altering the submissive, selfless role of the traditional, mythological model

of good. As well, within the sphere of the immediate family, the respondents have shown signs, by virtue of their mediative role with the children, of assertiveness towards their spouse.

However, in this context of demonstrated changes on the path of adaptation to the values and norms espoused by the receiving society, one cannot ignore the curious twist of respondents wanting to conform to the norms and values of their society of origin. This aspect is most clearly expressed in the sample's responses to their role in the extended family. To begin with, close to 80% of the respondents indicated that they play a role in the extended family. "I have a very important role in my 'sasural' (in-laws family). They like me ... they have come here and lived with me ... they have come to appreciate me more In my father's house girls were always very important". [V-9]

This is a clear indication of the level of continuity with the society of their origin. The role played by respondents within the extended family is their expected role as either eldest daughter, daughter, or daughter-in-law. There is a sense of wanting to please and of wanting to conform to the values and expectations from the country of origin, India. Thus, this need to conform to a value structure that is not uniform to the value structure of daily reality in Canada forms a discrepancy for the respondents and forms a potential barrier in the process of adaptation. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that it is the

extended family ties that keep the Hindu woman connected to her roots in India rather than the value structures of caste, class or religious tradition.

Thus, Hindu women in Canada are subject to a unique situation, aspects of which continuously pull the respondents in different directions: respondents identify Sita as the ideal model of good but do not show signs of living up to all aspects of this model in their own lives. Respondents want to be equal partners in their immediate family, thereby challenging some of the traditional concepts, but maintain their traditional role of caring for the extended family unlike the common tradition in modern western society.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF SELF: SOME TRADITIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IDENTITY OF HINDU WOMEN

While Chapter one examined ethnic influences and Chapter two focused on cultural influences and explained how ambivalence may be constructed in the Lakshmi/Kali myth, and how this myth may be experienced in the daily lives of Hindu women, here, I begin to explore some traditional dimensions. The focus in this chapter is the way Hindu women live with the conflict between their traditional experience India, and their new experience Canada.

Hindu women's experience includes the observance of rituals at home, participation in the Hindu temple activities which have been established in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver over the past decade, and being part of the Hindu community in India and in Canada. The discussion on ritual/tradition is extended to the respondents' views on arranged marriages and the eventuality of the children's own choices of spouses. This information forms the basis of an analysis which determines what constitutes psychological reality for these women. Since there is no applicable psychology of Hindu women, I have used the theoretical

insights of some Western feminist theorists to provide a background in understanding how culture/tradition influences women's identity formation.

SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Although the subject under examination in this study is the Hindu woman, one may be able to extract useful analytical tools from frameworks such as Western feminine psychology. It is the universality of women's experiences primarily as informed by their gender rather than their sense of ethnic belonging that justifies the employment of Western feminine psychological frameworks in developing an approach to understanding the research findings. The examination of various theories of Western feminine psychology reveals common issues as they relate to gender equality; the woman's ascribed role in society; consequences of the ascribed role on the individual and finally the resulting conflictual aspects of women's existence between self and society.

The intricate link between equality of the sexes and the alteration of the content of roles that would have to follow is central in most theories of feminine psychology. A journey from unequal to equal means change in the existing roles that women play in Western culture. In her work entitled Toward a New Psychology of Women, 1986, Jane Baker Miller provides an eloquent

exposition of theories relating to subordination, conflict, and challenges that women experience. She contends that as bearers of tradition, nurturer of humanity and benefactors of man, women's reality continues to be rooted in the encouragement to "form" themselves into persons who will be of benefit to others.[Baker Miller, 1986] Similarly, in discussing the asymmetry between the sexes, Dorothy Dinnerstein [1976] elaborates on the role of woman as the giver. In her highly complicated discourse, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and the Human Malaise, 1976, she discusses the psychopathology of sexual arrangements which has pervaded our culture and terms this as 'human malaise'. Dinnerstein writes:

The human male's tendency to claim one-sided access to a female's tendency to consent to this claim are rooted first of all in infancy, in the differing relationships of boy and girl to the parent who has so far always dominated the beginning of life." (Dinnerstein, 1976)

Nevertheless, she contends that men and women are not simply two separate groups, like Swedes and Italians, for example, who happen to have different distributions overlap so that some of each are apt to be damaged by social categorization which ignores this overlap.

The issue is more involved than that but in its solution women ought not to become "equal" to men, for this would,

according to the controversial analyst Luce Irigaray, merely lead to an imitation of men. In The Sex Which Is Not One 1985, she contends that, the aim is the finding and definition of women's own identity according to its own criteria.

However, before establishing the consequences and possible solutions to the apparent state of inequality among the sexes, it is necessary to examine the origins, manifestations and continued mechanisms employed in maintaining this inequality. All theorists under examination place great emphasis on the biological differences, but more importantly they place great emphasis on the assigned role models in an attempt to understand the gender inequalities. Nancy Chodrow in the Reproduction of Mothering: a Psychology and Sociology of Gender, 1978, attempts to provide an insightful theoretical account of the reasons women have become the prime caregivers in and outside the home. The need for women to mother is predominantly through identification with the prime caregiver, and this results in women's mothering - reproducing itself cyclically. The theme of Chodrow's analysis is the elaboration of the differences in feminine and masculine development. In her account, woman assuming the role of mother bears directly on the early mother-infant relationship which lays the foundation for parenting in children. The differing orientations between sexes is the result of men being socially and psychologically reproduced by women, while women, on the

other hand are reproduced largely (or not) by themselves. Women therefore grow up better prepared psychologically for mothering through the developmental situations in which they grow up. Thus, women's identity development is rooted in their relations in infancy to mother. This influence profoundly affects a woman's sense of self, later object relationships and feelings about mother and women in general.

It may be on this background that one can understand the argument Carol Gilligan makes in her work entitled, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, 1982, with regards to woman's sense of morality as compared to that of her male counterpart and the ensuing consequences for women. According to Gilligan, woman's imperatives are based on "care" and "responsibility" rather than on the "right" and "rules" of males. She elaborates by stating that, women use three basic perspectives toward moral integration: survival, goodness and the reflective understanding of care. Morality for women is seen by Gilligan as the responsibility of the self to other. This extends to the realm of reason as well:

... in claiming rights, women claimed responsibility for themselves ... in exercising their reason they began to address issues of responsibility in social relationships."

(Gilligan, 1982)

Gilligan's observational studies reveal that the capacity for autonomous thinking, clear decision making and responsible actions are still associated with masculinity and are considered undesirable attributes for a feminine self. There continues to be a conflict between femininity and success - a definite dilemma between feminine aspirations and masculine competence. Women's knowledge is an elaboration of her intuitive and instinctive skills, and is seen as a delineation of a critical line in psychological development dividing the sexes. Women bring to the life cycle a different point of view, different priorities, and these differences extend knowledge of self accordingly:

What emerges from women's voices is a sense of vulnerability that impedes women from taking a stand - their inability to judge must stem from the uncertainty about their right to make moral statements, or the actual cost such statements might entail. (Gilligan, 1982)

Similarly, Baker Miller expresses the consequences of the role model on woman's perception of self. Woman, in her traditional role as daughter, wife and mother has been cast in the mould of "nurturer of humanity". She strives to empower others both intellectually and emotionally. Baker Miller sees women's goals as ones that foster the growth of others over their own self-development. Her discussion of woman's subordination describes the unequal status of power in social relationships. As a direct

consequence of gender subordination, women often begin to doubt their abilities and fail to counteract the dominant group. This has led to what the author terms a "lack of consensual validation" - feedback and a chance for the dominant group to correct their actions and expressions.

Elements of the same line of argument are also to be found in Irigaray's work. According to Irigaray, woman's voice is never heard for she has pre-fixed her role in society. She points out that the obvious difference between speaking "among" women and speaking "as" women is one of complying to the male dominance of language - women are subordinated therefore to the dominance of male language. Any change in discourse from a feminine locus must include the questioning of the symbolic order itself.

Man's monopoly of history-making therefore follows from implicitly double sexual standards which repeat these lines of development and thus: "[w]oman stands outside history because man, on balance wants her outside of it. But she stands there voluntarily as well." (Dinnerstein, 1976)

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data collected from the respondents shall be examined on the background of the key conclusions concerning women's self-

perception, the role of woman in the Hindu tradition and what psychologist Carol Gilligan has termed the dilemma between feminine aspirations and masculine competence. The results will be presented on the level of all participants in the study. As well, a selected sample consisting of one respondent from each of the three major urban centres will be examined in detail so as to verify the possible level of generalization.

There are a couple of general observations that deserve mentioning in the examination of the above aspects. Judging by the responses it appears the religious rituals lose in their relative importance as religious experiences but take on a significant role in the cultural maintenance of the individual's traditions. The practice of faith is altered in the transition of environments from India to Canada and relegated to a personal, private sphere of the Hindu immigrant. It thus becomes an internalized aspect of self. Respondents state that the religious rituals are practised in a more relaxed, less rigid manner and that events and rituals are adapted to suit the lifestyle. The most traditional way of performing rituals is the puja performed in the home shrine, mostly by the women. Each family, while maintaining some fundamental characteristics of this ritual, adapt the same to their unique application of the mode of worship.

The second general observation relates to the respondents' involvement in temple activities. It is of interest to note the significant number of hindu women whose involvement with the temple is a direct result of their husbands' commitment. Respondents seem somewhat divided on the issue of women officiating. Those opposed to such a function for women are so opposed on the basis of the menstruation taboo but more importantly, and more frequently, the respondents are opposed because they are not used to thinking of women officiating; and in some cases have never thought about existing arrangements as excluding women from participating.

Respondents indicated overwhelmingly (82.2%), that religious rituals are of importance to them and that they engage in active practice of rituals. The importance of the religious rituals can be measured in terms of the frequency of observance of rituals as well as with the regularity of observances. Of those respondents who stated that they perform rituals, more than half do so on a daily basis, close to a quarter of the respondents celebrate the main rituals and another quarter celebrate regularly but not daily.

I do puja every day - Many rituals we did at home in India cannot be done here.... You don't have to do everything, but it helps to observe some rituals.... Its part of identifying with religion. [0-12]

Rituals are something that can benefit the next generation.... Children will learn the values - the Samskaras (rituals).... [V-4]

Of the women who participated in the study, one tenth stated that they were not ritualistic as a family and another 4.4% stated that their families were not religious.

Rituals are not important for us ... I saw it decline with my mother, and now it is even less. [T-11]

I don't do puja everyday... I guess because my mother didn't do much - I didn't get into it It is too late now. [V-13]

These results demonstrate rather convincingly that the religious rituals, although unique to the culture of origin, can maintain their importance in the lives of the respondents even though the respondents have lived in a rather different environment for some time.

Most often the daily ritual consists of a private puja. This is done through the care of a bronze, stone, icon and in some cases framed pictures. The figure is seen as more than a symbol. It comes to signify the dwelling place of the deity, containing the very power of the god or goddess who is embodied in it. Sometimes pujas are a bigger event held at one of the friends houses or a significant event such as Ganesha puja, Diwali puja, Durga puja, Ugadhi celebrations.

Chitragupt puja, Karvachauth are all important I didn't really understand the significance in India... but life will be meaningless without ritual...there are more rituals for women. [V-10]

Festivals are important.... Diwali we close our business. We do things just like in India. We save the fireworks from Victoria Day and use it in October.... We go to the temple, visit elders.... We went to India last year to see Indian Diwali. [T-6]

Sathanarayan puja is a home ritual. I read the Katha (story) in English - when I invite people (children) I like them to understand ... but while doing it (reading in English) I felt "funny" ... the essence is lost, the substance is lost I don't like it. In future generations I imagine the translation will be used ... it won't be Indian. [O-8]

Every year I have an annual puja ... sathyanarayan katha - I invite the priest (from the local temple) ... modified rituals ... but we observe the "thithi" (auspicious dates). [V-11]

It is of interest to observe that for most respondents the practice of their religious rituals had changed. In part the changes were due to a lack of knowledge of details of rituals. This is however not the case for some who observe the Hindu calendar and are fully aware of the various dates when certain

rituals are to be performed. "In our family puja is very important and we observe the rituals as per thithi". [O-3] Sometimes, the absence of a qualified priest to officiate poses problems in conducting rituals or generally because it was not part of their daily routine. "We are as a family not religious ... my husband has turned against all religions, because of what is going on in our world". [O-3]

Other respondents stated that it was the difference in resources be they time, manpower [O-4], the different calendar system [O-13] or the social acceptability of performing rituals [O-12] that had necessitated an adaptation in the practice of rituals to these changed circumstances [O-4]. The adapted practice of rituals frequently led to a simplified version [T-12] that did not include fasting for example [O-14] as well as to a more individualized version of rituals [T-6].

Thus the changes in the practice of rituals show that the practice of rituals becomes more part of the individual rather than the community during the process of transplantation. The rituals that are still very much part of the individual respondent, as evidenced by the high number of participants who still observe rituals on a daily basis, has been adapted to the new lifestyle but is still relevant to respondents.

In terms of passing on the religious rituals respondents clearly identified the maternal side as the primary maintainer of

rituals. Many of the respondents identified either their mothers or other women of the extended family as those performing rituals. Women are responsible for rituals and traditions. [O-9] "My grandmother would encourage us to participate in ritual... my aunt involved us in bhajans and kirtans (hymn singing)". [O-12]

This holds true as long as respondents clearly state that those rituals are performed inside the house, on a frequent basis. Only in isolated instances did respondents identify priests as those who perform rituals. "At home we do Sathanarayan puja and invite a priest to perform the rite". [T-3]

Of the women who were part of the study, more than half stated that their children participate in the rituals or are familiar with the rituals. More than a quarter stated that their children did not participate in rituals, whereas 10.5% added that they now wish that their children had a better understanding of the rituals. One of the respondents indicated that she was quite involved with the temple when her children were growing up, as there was a very small Hindu community in Vancouver. This respondent went on to indicate that her children were not actively participating since they were already grown up and two of them had left home. (V-4)

The connection between cultural rituals as a core component of Hindu identity was identified as important: "Our religion

revolves around cultural rituals: they remind us of our home and ourselves". [0-3]

Respondents clearly stated that the discontinuance of cultural rituals will lead to a loss of Hindu identity. In their estimation, the practice of rituals is crucial in the maintenance of their identity. In the view of respondents the necessity to continuously be involved in rituals is partly a result of the uniqueness of Hinduism, which unlike many other religious traditions does not have any dogmas. "Since we do not have to do certain things, religion does not come with practice." [0-3]

This is an important observation, particularly because the majority assessed their religious rituals to have changed since living in Canada. One may speculate as to whether the change in observance of religious rituals will lead to a change in Hindu identity for respondents. Some possible aspects of this speculation have already manifested themselves in a more relaxed practice of rituals which at times even allows for women's active involvement.

Some of the changes have also affected the celebration of religious rituals in the temple. Temples in Canada as in India generally are dedicated to a major deity, e.g. Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha or Krishna with several other gods/goddesses housed in adjacent shrines. Pujas are conducted by priests sponsored from

India by the community who perform in the rites at appointed times everyday, with the most elaborate forms reserved for auspicious festivals and weekends. Generally, respondents identify the change to consist of a more relaxed atmosphere with regard to the practice of temple rituals. Others have observed distinct features of adaptation to Canada:

... we are trying to adapt - we have created Sunday church rituals. [O-8]

... wearing socks because of weather here ... in the Canadian context we accept things. [O-14]

They have women Jagrathas officiating at temple rituals. [T-1]

Here it is more open. [T-6]

In general, respondents were happy to have some form of ritual practice and influence to educate their children in their tradition.

Although for most respondents these changes seemed rather acceptable, one respondent expressed severe criticism: "... the rituals take almost all Sunday - They are not punctual ... lecture, speeches, announcements take too much time". [V-1] This criticism has to be placed in the context that, in India Hindus visit temples at any given time of the day. There are no set prayer times. The length of one's "stay" in a temple is determined by the individual whereas the Canadian experience of

Hindu women reveals that the temple takes on a more formalized role for social purposes.

As has been demonstrated, changes do occur in the practice of rituals. For the most part these changes are seen as positive or at least necessary in the adjustment from one sociogeographic context to another. The central objective is to preserve the individual's Hindu identity, an identity rooted in a totally different environment.

Some of the changes, however, may be viewed as having a substantial impact on Hindu identity. One such change relates to the significantly different roles assigned to the genders. According to the study almost three quarters of the respondents would either prefer or at least support women in officiating capacity at the temple. This compares to slightly more than one quarter of respondents who would continue to prefer a male officiating at the temple. Within the responses it becomes evident that respondents who have had personal experience of having observed women in supportive roles to priests' function, such as Jagrathas, have been provided with a necessary role model for other women to even conceive of the idea of women in officiating function at the temple. Katherine Young, who has researched women in Hinduism with a particular focus on images of the feminine in Tamil Vaisnavism writes:

Priesthood probably will remain a non-issue for Hindu women

and if ever it is formally practised by them, it will probably occur more as a gradual take-over of a ritualism that men no longer desire nor have traditional training for, much as is occurring with domestic worship (Young 1987, p. 99).

The Hindu woman, even in her passivity is often the beneficiary of an excellent religious and spiritual education due to woman's privilege to be present and listen. Since every girl is a potential mother, every girl is "schooled" in the scriptures because it is assumed that she will pass on the knowledge to her children. Thus the Hindu woman is in a position to awake from her silence when there is an expressed need from the family and/or community. In this study, knowledge or understanding of tradition and rituals can and is placed before gender among the majority of respondents.

Conversely, of those women that stated their continued preference for a male to officiate, the reasons were as follows:

I have not seen it in India - I have not thought of it.

[V-11]

... it is safer for men to be in the temple. [T-6]

... they have asked women to come and serve - but nobody has. [T-11]

Woman priest would be awkward - the reason could be that I have never seen a woman priest. [V-6]

These responses are indicative of the importance of role models. This aspect confirms some of the theoretical discourse found in the feminine psychology. Chodorow as well as Dinnerstein allude to the significance of role models, particularly in early childhood. As has been elaborated earlier on, role models will lead to a cyclical reproduction of the order as it exists as each new generation absorbs the values of the previous via the immediate role models. The respondents' view as to the possible role for women in the celebration of rituals, which has to be viewed as a drastic departure from traditional Hinduism, might significantly alter the structure of the identity of Hinduism here in Canada. However, as the answers have revealed, the existence and the function of role models cannot be underestimated in their purpose to legitimize options.

According to respondents, the activities taking place in the temple range from chanting, religious discussions, celebration of special events, religious classes and music lessons to Hindi language classes. Women have a very definite role in the temple according to respondents. The women that participated in the study identified the role that women play as being one of inferior, secondary nature. This account shows resemblance to Jean Baker Miller's portrayal of society encouraging women to strive on serving others, and supporting and nurturing men and children. As respondent's indicated, most often the woman's role

pertains to cooking for pujas; to facilitate; to assist husbands; to sit at the altar; to sing and dance; to clean; to make garlands; and to organize the various social functions. None of these roles acknowledges women in a position of privilege, power or public authority.

Of those who responded, more than half expressed the desire to see women in positions of responsibility, in primary roles, providing leadership. Some of the respondents clearly signalled a level of frustration with the intolerance towards women's functions. According to respondents, they may appear to be participating in the Hindu tradition, when in fact all their functions are that of a supportive, facilitative nature.

Two of the respondents felt that women's roles within the Hindu tradition were respectable. One of the respondents pointed out that sameness of doing does not necessarily constitute equality. Even though women's roles are of a supportive nature, they are essential and consequently important. This view is consistent with Luce Irigaray who states that women should not imitate men. However, Irigaray goes on to state that the aim is the finding and definition of the woman's own identity according to her own criteria. (Irigaray, 1985)

It is somewhat surprising to examine the number of respondents that are not involved with the temple. Of those respondents that related information regarding their involvement

with the temple, 67.6% stated that they were not involved in temple activities. Those respondents that stated that they were not involved described temple involvement as too political and unsuitable:

... there is too much politics - fighting, fighting.

[V-12]

... people do not like the publicity that goes along with involvement. [O-9]

We used to go, not any more - the politics have scared us.

[T-8]

The remaining 32.3% indicated that they were involved with the temple. Frequently, those that stated that they were involved in the temple were so on account of their husband's involvement. In fact almost three quarters of those who were involved in the temple identified their husbands' involvement as the reason for their participation in temple activities. "My husband has always been involved, so I automatically had to get involved". [V-6]

Despite this weak record of involvement with the temple, 66.6% of respondents felt that the temple was a good institution to have and served a definite purpose. The remaining 33.3% were consistent in reflecting their unhappiness with the temple and going so far as to state that the temple was not necessary for the maintenance of their faith. In the Hindu tradition, the

temple is defined as holy space and is not essential because according to the tradition there is no specific place of worship. Unlike the Christian church, it is not a religious institution, at best it serves the ritual aspect of the tradition where spirituality is conditional on individual experience. In the latter respondents' experience, the temple was merely a place for people to socialize and that, in many instances meant internal politics and having to be part of an "in-crowd".

All of the respondents commenting on their religious experience in India as compared to in Canada stated that they could identify differences. Most often it was the comment that "[h]ere we are more conscious - for the kids sake" [V-8] coupled with the sentiment that "rituals are not as pure here as in India but are only an adapted version" [V-7] that captured some of the reasons and consequences for the differences. Although there are identifiable differences in the religious experience, it is significant to observe the continued importance of the respondents' values from their country of origin.

VIEWS ON MARRIAGE

One aspect of the continued values that respondents cherish relates to their children and the issue of marriage. Here again, the ambivalence with regards to dependence versus independence

experienced by Hindu women becomes evident. On the one hand, they continue to express the need to "liberate" themselves and assert their status within the tradition. On the other hand they show a bias towards maintaining cultural practices with all their gender implications. This is confirmed in the sample's response on arranged marriages. Most Hindu marriages in India continue to be arranged in consultation with a family priest and astrologer. Astrologers provide advice on the compatibility of the astrological stars/signs of the bride and groom and indicate the most auspicious time for the marriage rite to take place.

The marriage of Canadian born offspring to members of the same religious/cultural traditions is viewed as an important link in the continued preservation of the Hindu identity. Thus it is not surprising that more than half of the respondents favour and wish for their children to be married by arrangement. In fact it was only one quarter of the respondents that rejected the idea of arranged marriage for their children. One third of the respondents expressed their doubts as to the practical aspects and realities for arranged marriages to work in Canada. It is of interest to note, however, that among these respondents that were doubtful as to the workings of an arranged marriage in the Canadian context, almost half implicitly stated that they would like to see it: "It is beautiful - I do not think that it will work here. I was raised and prepared for it." [T-7]

Respondents do recognize that there are obstacles for their children to follow the path of arranged marriages. Respondents express an awareness of the different environment and the different value system and influences that their children are exposed to. "It may not apply here, hence they will insist on dating." [V-12]

Frequently respondents state that the meaning of arranged marriage and the degree of rigidity is changing in India. This is often understood as a justification for modifying arranged marriages in the Canadian context: "Even in India things have changed. Arranged, yes, but with mutual consent." [O-8]

To most of the participants in the study, the reasons for their support for arranged marriages relate to a parent's best interest for their child. Most frequently respondents stated that it will be easier on the couple to get along, to make adjustments to each other, to communicate and to be compatible. Other respondents felt that young adults are not sufficiently mature to make such a decision and that parents have the best intentions for their child. Yet others referred to the absence of a "dating scene" [V-13] in India and thus the necessity to arrange marriages. Some respondents stated that the arranged marriage custom is essential to Hinduism and thus needed to be continued. This latter aspect is reflected in the respondents' criteria that are involved in the marriage arrangements. Most often, the criteria revolve

around the spouse being educated; handsome; from India; common interests; at least Hindu, if not member of the same caste.

For those respondents that favoured a departure from the arranged marriage system it was the intricate link between arranged marriages and the dowry system. At times it was strongly argued that the arranged marriage system had its *raison d'être* in the dowry issue. "Arranged marriage is probably necessary for dowry." [T-13] "...the dowry system might die out if people chose their mate." [V-11]

The strong support for arranged marriages for their own children may, at least in part, be rooted in the respondents' personal experience. Of those that responded, 70.5% were themselves subject of arranged marriages compared to 29.5% that were not.

Almost all of the respondents that indicated that they themselves have an arranged marriage state that it has worked for them and that they are pleased with the outcomes. One of the respondents indicated that the freedom in such an arrangement is too limiting and that the individual's opinion does not seem to matter at all.

One respondent who does not have an arranged marriage herself stated that she supports the concept of arranged marriage.

The indication of a preference by the sample for arranged marriages for their children is also consistently reflected in the results regarding the issue of intermarriage. The combined result of those who do not view intermarriage as acceptable and those who will only reluctantly agree to it is 64.3% of the respondents. On the background provided above, such a high indication of favouring marriage within their own cultural/religious group is not surprising. This can be taken as an indication that, although respondents express certain dissatisfaction with specific aspects of Hinduism, they do prefer the familiar over the unknown for their children and thereby indirectly for themselves.

Respondents who are opposed to the idea of intermarriage do so very strongly. Those opposed state that they would consider an intermarriage on the part of their child as a personal failure [O-10].

I am not going to agree to a Canadian, even though we are in Canada. We have family in India, we are part of them [T-1]

My younger son had a Chinese girlfriend - I was uncomfortable. We have not really matured in this Canadian community to the extent that we share everything. [V-3]

This inner conflict has appeared in the examination of several aspects with regard to cultural/religious continuity. It is a conflict of a sense of belonging and a resulting unclarity

as to the nature of social control and norms to abide by that extends beyond geographic boundaries.

Those who did not see any problem with intermarriage (35.5%), frequently state that they just want their children to be happy. Some of these respondents have seen that it is possible to combine aspects of diverse religions, others feel that Hinduism is a very individualistic religion and does not require the spouse to be of the same faith. Others recognize the difficulties for their children to live up to the expectation of an arranged marriage. "My children are all married to Canadians. When I wrote to the family they said "why?" - I said "why not?"

[T-13]

Many of the respondents who reluctantly agree to an intermarriage do so because they do not wish to alienate and possibly lose their children. Intermarriage was for the most part not a desirable option, but because it is the respondent's child participants of the study indicated that would try to learn to live with their child's decision.

Respondents were examined as to gender distinctions with regard to the issue of intermarriage. The overwhelming majority (80%) stated that they had no difference in opinion with regard to the basic issue of intermarriage regardless of it affecting a son or a daughter. One respondent said: "... shock to me - I don't know what reaction I will have ... no difference between

son or daughter (v-010. A mother of two sons said: "If my sons were to marry interfaith I would like them to have both a Hindu and the other ceremony. I would feel comfortable .. I don't know why ... no difference between boys and girls". (0-8)

The remaining 20% stated that the gender of their child would have a bearing on their opinion with regard to intermarriage. "I don't mind daughter (having interfaith marriage) but with son it is different ... the tradition will not stay". (0-15) The results with regard to this indicated gender difference are, however, inconclusive. There seem to be as many respondents worried about their sons in an intermarriage and the continuation of Hinduism as there are respondents who express similar concerns with regard to their daughters.

CONTEMPORARY HINDU WOMEN

Although there are some identifiable preferences and trends concerning the respondents' self-perception, the role of woman in culture and the content of women's roles within their community as well as the community at large, it will be of interest to contrast those responses with a selected sample. The selected sample will consist of one respondent from each of the three major urban centres, Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa. The responses will be examined with a view to their correspondence to

the larger study results as well as with a view to a possible explanation as to the level of generalization of the above identified trends and preferences. Are the respondent's preferences due to such factors as the length of their stay in Canada; the age of the respondents; the number of children and where they were born; childhood experiences in India; the city they have settled in Canada or are their preferences due to their individual personalities? What is the level of homogeneity among the Hindu women that participated in the study? The following four key issues will be examined in greater detail: religious rituals; involvement of respondents in the temple; women's role and the respondents' view on arranged marriage.

In order to place the responses in their appropriate context, it is necessary to provide a brief profile of the close-up sample. The respondent from Toronto is 35 years of age, the respondent from Ottawa is 59 years of age and the respondent from Vancouver is 64 years of age. This contrasts with the overall age spread of the sample being between the ages of 40 and 50. Whereas most of respondents have been in Canada between 15 and 24 years, these three cases vary from 11 years in the case of the Toronto respondent, to 28 years for the Vancouver respondent, to 31 years for the Ottawa respondent.

Consistent with the overall sample is the urban source of the three respondents. However, as was the case with the overall

sample, each of the three respondents comes from a different region within their country of origin. The Vancouver respondent is from Lahore/Dehli, the Ottawa respondent is from Bengal and the Toronto respondent is from Jamnagar/Gujarat. These regional differences are naturally reflected in the respondents' language abilities. Besides speaking the language of their particular region all three respondents stated that they are able to converse in Hindi as well as English.

Again, as was the case with the bigger sample, all three respondents are married. With regard to family size it is of interest to note that the three respondents represent a small family size background in the case of the Ottawa respondent, no siblings, to a medium size in the case of the Vancouver respondent, one brother and one sister, to a bigger family in the case of the Toronto respondent, four sisters and one brother. This variation of family size of the three respondents is also the case with regards to their own families. The Vancouver participant has three children, all born in India, the Toronto participant has two born in Canada and the Ottawa respondent has one adopted child. As is consistent with the overall respondents of the study, the three participants all received some level of secondary education in India. In the case of the Vancouver respondent it was a college degree, the Ottawa respondent had obtained a B.Sc. as well as a M.A. and the Toronto respondent had

obtained an M.A.. Only the participant from Ottawa had obtained a secondary degree in Canada, a diploma from Algonquin College. The Ottawa respondent is also the only one of the three cases in the close-up study that had employment.

With regard to their spouses educational background, the Vancouver participant did not provide any indication as to her husband's education, the Toronto respondent stated that her husband is an engineer and the Ottawa respondent's husband has a Ph.d.. All three husbands are gainfully employed in what can be labelled as mainstream Canadian organizations and businesses which is consistent with the profile of the larger sample of participants.

With regard to the practice of religious rituals the responses of the three individuals under consideration covered the spectrum of those that stated that they observe religious rituals on a regular basis [V-4], to those that celebrate the main rituals [T-5] to those that do not practice any rituals [O-3].

Similarly, when asked to assess the changes in the experience and celebration of religious rituals, the entire spectrum was presented among the three respondents from the major urban centres. Whereas the respondent from Ottawa stated that "...she had fallen out of routine" [O-3], the Toronto respondent clearly indicated modification of the religious rituals [T-5].

However, the respondent from Vancouver was unable to identify any changes and observed that there are "... no major differences between India and here." [V-4] Thus, as far as respondents observations are concerned with the practice of religious rituals there seems no homogeneity within the participants' experiences.

The involvement of the respondents in the temple varies. Whereas the Vancouver and the Toronto respondent state a strong involvement in temple activities, the Ottawa respondent indicates that she does not participate in the temple. To the latter, who has also been in Canada the longest, the temple is an attempt to institutionalize religion. In part, the opinion of the respondent may be rooted in her early childhood experience as part of a particular group within Hinduism. An interesting nuance among the responses by the participant from Vancouver and Toronto relates to the increasing sophistication and regionalization of the Hindu community. Whereas the Vancouver respondent stated that she has been involved in the temple from the very beginning in various capacities, the Toronto respondent stated that she used to attend the Vishnumandir but is now involved in establishing a Gujarathi temple. This realization of such a temple is only possible through a sufficiently large community and is thus a reflection of the growth of the Hindu community in Toronto. The need to further remove oneself from an Indian Hindu sense to a provincial based organization could

possibly be explained by the need to maintain language, modes of ritual, particular celebrations unique to Gujarathi even in the Indian context and the need to retain a socio-religious identity as both, Hindu and Gujarathi. Familiarity and comfort is thus thought through such experiences.

Similarly, when examining the respondents' attitudes towards women's role in religious/cultural setting there is no homogenous attitude to be found among the case studies. The respondent from Ottawa clearly prefers a Brahmin male in the officiating function. This preference is largely based on community tradition and what feels comfortable in the community. The Toronto respondent indicates a desire for women to be involved in an officiating capacity, yet, according to her experience, that personal preference is secondary to the well-being and comfort level of other community members, particularly the elderly. The respondent from Vancouver expresses an acceptance of women in officiating roles, provided the woman is sufficiently knowledgeable. Thus, it is not only the variation in the individual choice that the three respondents have expressed but possibly more importantly the reasons for those choices that vary significantly from the concern on an individual level to the level of the community.

The last area of examination relates to the issue of arranged marriage. The respondent from Ottawa expressed respect

for the system of arranged marriage and weighed some of the advantages and disadvantages. However, the respondent expressed a stronger preference for young women and young men to have the privilege to date rather than find themselves in an arranged marriage. The Toronto respondent did not express a decisive preference either way. However from the response one may infer a higher comfort level with an arranged marriage situation. The respondent from Vancouver is rather clear about her definite preference for the arranged marriage system. These responses may be, at least in two of the three cases reflective of the individual's personal experience with arranged marriage. The Ottawa respondent did not have an arranged marriage and although she can see some merit in the system, the respondent has expressed a preference for the dating system. The Toronto respondent has stated that she has an arranged marriage and does imply in her answer to the question at hand a preference for the arranged marriage system. It is of interest to note the reluctance to state this preference in the case of the Toronto respondent when examined on the background of the respondent's view on intermarriage. As far as the respondent from Toronto is concerned, her view is clearly against interfaith marriage. An interfaith marriage by one of her children would be considered as a difficult situation with which the respondent would have to struggle. The Ottawa respondent's attitude to interfaith

marriage seems consistent with her response to the arranged marriage system: it does not make any difference to her. Although the Vancouver respondent had expressed a preference for the arranged marriage system, she seems agreeable with the possibility of interfaith marriage. In fact both of the respondent's children have married outside the Hindu community but have managed to retain certain aspects as for example Hindu wedding rituals.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Corresponding to the earlier identified trend, the respondents are neither homogenous in their preferences nor in their reasoning. This emphasizes the individuality of the respondents that has to be kept in mind when analyzing the results. I have attempted to demonstrate, certain attitudes, opinions and reasoning 'that can be traced to the individual's life experiences and backgrounds which substantiates the argument that the respondents' behaviour is largely influenced by their roots which have been in a different cultural, sociological and geographical context. However, the second aspect that has also emerged relates to the transition of those values from the country of origin to the country of residence. The pattern here seems to involve a sense of community from which the individual

has originated which is internalized with the result of an intensification of certain values and traditions during the phase of transition from the country of origin to the country of residence. During this internalized phase of transition, the individual yearns for a renewed sense of community to reinforce, nurture and grow as members of a transplanted identifiable ethnic group.

Even though the religious and cultural traditions are individualized and internalized during the process of transition, members of the group will remain distinct from the Canadian mainstream in two ways: the distinctness is partly due to the members' different way of viewing, experiencing and evaluating the world around them since those values continue to be rooted in the cultural and religious traditions of their source country; the distinctness is partly also due to the society of the country of residence, i.e. Canada, to maintain barriers to those individuals who show distinct characteristics of language, skin colour, dress and behaviour.

The distinctness of members of the Hindu community from the Canadian mainstream may be in part contributing to the individual's yearning for a sense of community and belonging. The communal aspect for the Hindu group has only recently begun to be a reality with the increasing number of Hindus coming to Canada. This explains the above identified trend to more

specialized and regionalized community groups within the Hindu community which allow individuals to express their unique identity within the larger Hindu context as exemplified by the respondent from Toronto.

However, the most meaningful part of the "passing on" of the tradition is in the home. This is traditionally and presently the centre of Hindu culture - a place where religious rituals, marriage, traditions affecting caste, language, etc. continue to be celebrated in the ever evolving cultural milieu. Here the role of the woman as wife and mother is defined, lived and expressed. The family network extends to community in temples and other cultural associations which create the context of life for Hindus in Canada.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE, RELIGION AND TRANSITION: THE EXPERIENCE OF HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA

As demonstrated in this study, it appears that women are now in the process of searching out their role in religion and exploring the role religion plays in their lives. This process, seems to be impacting the identity of women in the context of their religious traditions and, more generally, the culture in which these traditions are situated. The roles and images established for centuries within the Hindu tradition are now being examined as they pertain to the bigger context of culture. My research suggests that, within the context of the Canadian culture, the traditional roles and images of Hindu women are challenged and possibly changed by new experience. In the preceding three chapters I have described the ethnic identity, the religious and cultural identity and the personal\traditional identity of Hindu women in Canada. In this chapter I will review the highlights. These findings lead me to develop a model which might help us understand the experience of Hindu women in Canada.

REVIEW

Here I will outline some of the key findings which were elaborated in the preceding three chapters. While I explored the ethnic identity of Hindu women in Chapter 1, the following three aspects became clear:

- It is important to pass on religion and culture,
- efforts must be made to create and maintain an appropriate environment,
- numbers reinforce confidence.

The respondents unanimously agreed that it is important to pass on religion\culture to their mostly Canadian - born offspring. There was a particular emphasis on daughters, confirming the perception that women are the bastions of religion and culture. The daughters were seen as more open to learning the various aspects of religion and culture. They also seem to have increased opportunities through art, dance, music where enrolment of girls in classes is the norm. The girls have exposure through participation in special ritual practices with women in the community.

As described in chapter 1, most women confirmed that they have to be consistent and make tremendous efforts to create and maintain an appropriate environment. Since, the Canadian environment is dramatically different , every attempt to showcase

an "Indian scene" has to be made by mothers, the family and the Hindu community. Also, the need to recreate a Hindu cultural context is more pronounced than for other religious groups whose ethnic identity while different, still finds a bond in the common religion and traditions e.g. Catholics from southern and eastern Europe.

It also became evident that numbers reinforce confidence. Efforts at maintaining an ethnic identity is enhanced by the size of community, the more members, the more confidence and financial means to offer suitable opportunities at appreciating tradition. As one respondent put it:

Since moving to Ottawa, we have only Indian friends. When we were in the north (Timmins) there were no Indian families. I really didn't miss or feel any different. But, I worried about the children, that they might not be learning anything about being Indian The reason for coming to Ottawa was the children. (O-5)

While the respondents were clear on their desire to pass on their religious\cultural tradition, they appear confident in their ability to sustain their ethnocultural identity and more importantly to pass on a sense of this distinctiveness to their children.

In chapter two, as I explored further the religious and cultural identity, the responses suggest the following:

- a distinct need to be equal partners, while maintaining the traditional role with respect to extended and immediate family,
- caste is an integral part of Hindu identity
- gender differences within the caste,
- an ambivalence explained using the Lakshmi Kali paradigm continues to exist in the tradition.

The respondents clearly elaborated a distinct need to be equal partners in their immediate family and a desire to maintain their traditional role of caring for their extended family in most cases still in India. My study revealed that there is a fundamental acceptance that the level of retention of traditional roles, vary from region to region even in their experiences in India. In other words, there is no uniformity of experience. The significance of caste in the Hindu tradition once again surfaced as an integral, interwoven part of the religious\cultural identity. Caste became significant and notable with respect to rituals and in a less defined way in discussions of marriage of Canadian born offspring.

Chapter two suggests that most respondents identify the caste difference as less significant than regional/provincial/language differences. Nevertheless, the

caste system seemed to gain significance in discussions on marriage.

One of the other areas elaborated in this chapter was the issue of women officiating in temples and other rituals. Given the emphasis of caste, almost all the women agreed that it is traditional to have Brahmin male priests. The training required to perform the duties were not yet available to women. Given the menstruation taboo, and other gender related barriers which persist in the Hindu tradition, the acceptance of women as priests was not seen as likely.

The discovery led to history, and mythology which continues to play a very significant role in the Hindu tradition in all cultural contexts. As stated in Chapter two, most respondents identified with Sita, heroine of the Ramayana. Sita is seen as the ideal, and the one whose personal characteristics are a primary influence on them as Hindu women. However, the research also revealed that these modern Hindu women identify and wish to emulate not only the gentle, nurturing, and giving side of Sita, but also her sense of self, determination, unquestioning faith and sense of equality. Here, we saw that they were in fact willing to abandon some of their traditions which have suppressed women, and the practices which discriminate and isolate them. Also, the ambivalence which has come to characterize the Hindu

imagination is founded on the fear of female transformation from the benevolent Lakshmi to the malevolent Kali seemed to persist.

Chapter three focused on the following:

- impact of rituals in preserving a sense of self,
- Children's response to ritual activities,
- caste system in the context of marriage of Canadian-born offspring.

The traditional identification with and the impact of rituals in preserving a sense of self was obviously critical . It was evident that religious rituals can lose importance. Even though they lose religious significance some aspects become part of cultural tradition. This may be due to rituals becoming less important in terms of meaning, significance and particular practice. It appears that they get translated into the cultural context. The easing off is perhaps deliberate, for anything that is less rigid and strictly codified becomes more acceptable and adaptable and easier to maintain.

Most women seemed concerned that their children were less than enthusiastic to take part in rituals and other temple activities. However, they appear confident that there are opportunities for learning and participation through the practice of some rituals at home.

The chapter described women's involvement in rituals at home and her participation in community and temple rituals. The experience outside the home in most cases was as a result of the husband's commitments and participation. Women were generally in support functions. It is in the privacy of her home that the Hindu woman takes charge in performing pujas and other annual rituals.

Respondents expressed that, they perceived certain advantages with respect to the caste system and marriage of their offspring. The rationale was that the caste system provided a common base of customs for the couple.

THE MODEL OF TRANSITION

As described, my study of forty-five Hindu women in three urban centres in Canada confirms the inextricable influence of religion/culture, both in its faith and ritual aspects. In order to explain the experience of Hindu women as described in this research, I have developed a model. I have called this a Model of Transition. The model covers the experience of Hindu women from the time of emigration from India to the development of a sense of belonging in Canada. Basically, the model is constructed to describe the experience of these women with respect to the impact of Hinduism on their lives, impact the women have on the

tradition and subsequently their experience is contextualized in the Canadian culture in which this religious experience is situated. This simple model constructed in sequential chronological steps could readily be applied to study the experience of women, particularly from the eastern traditions who have emigrated to Canada.

The Model of Transition is comprised of 5 aspects:

1. Origin aspect
2. Arrival aspect
3. Challenge aspect
4. Adjustment aspect
5. Outcomes aspect

The model of transition can also be displayed as a pictograph:

Origin Arrival Challenge Adjustment Outcomes

1. Origin aspect - consisted of making the decision to leave India. Most of the respondents were married in India and prepared to accompany their husbands to Canada. The formative years spent in India provide the basis for a future in another geographical context.
2. Arrival aspect - is the way Canada is first experienced by Hindu women. This aspect may include feelings of disorientation, and an acute awareness of difference.
3. The Challenge aspect - comprises obstacles encountered by Hindu women in the new culture. This aspect includes, women

experiencing feelings of alienation, insecurity leading to difficulties acculturating in a western society.

4. Adjustment aspect - involves trying harder with the hope that things will work. An effort to retain religious and cultural identity manifests in a more deliberate attitude.

5. Outcomes aspect - is when a certain consciousness develops. This could result in insecurity. The women seem preoccupied with maintaining the culture, and finding ways of passing on a religious and cultural identity. Given the organizational structures which have been created by the Hindu community in the three urban centres, the persistence with which the Hindu tradition is practised at home, the women believe there is hope for Hinduism in Canada.

THE MODEL OF TRANSITION APPLIED

1. Origin aspect

The main aspects which characterize this consist of the identity formation of Hindu women with respect to their ethnicity, religion and culture. When Hindu women in my study came to Canada an average of eighteen years ago they appear to have had a national sense of "belonging". They were Indian and came from the majority group in India - Hindu. A woman's identity primarily was through her family, caste, region/province, the language she spoke, the good habits of her

family which in most cases was vegetarian and above all a sense of security in belonging to the majority of her country. It appears that many of the women spoke some but not fluent English. However, as one respondent stated "when I came to this country I never felt hesitant to talk to unknown people ... even with the English I knew" (0-3).

The national identity for many of these women was developed through living in an era when the British rule in India was coming to an end, and India was emerging as a "new" independent nation. There was great pride and a sense of reclaiming the glorious past. The women cannot separate their Hindu identity from that they have been brought up as Indians. Hindu and Indian are interchangeable terms for these women.

Most of the women who participated in this study were from the three upper castes i.e. Brahmin, Ksatriya and Vaisya. This had a great impact on their good habits as they were growing up in India. Many Hindus are strict vegetarians. Meat, eggs, and animal by-products are considered impure and not eaten. However, it is safe to assume that all of them do consume milk, cheese, yoghurt and other dairy products. Most Hindus who arrived in the 1960's and 1970's have found it difficult in Canada to find food that conforms to their vegetarian diets. Before the popularity of health food stores and Indian grocery stores, many of these women struggled to preserve the strict dietary traditions. The

respondents did acknowledge that they compromise to varying degrees in maintaining traditions in the case of their children. Strict patterns of vegetarianism break down in these instances.

Regional or provincial identities among Hindus from India continue to persist in Canada. As one woman stated: "Within the community (Hindu) our diverse Indian (provincial) backgrounds make things less uniform" (0-10). In India each province has its own identity, among others are language, art, music, dance, fabrics, architecture. The customs and traditions are varied and the interpretation of common Hindu rituals are different. All languages except Tamil spoken in Tamil Nadu, about 29 Dravidian and tribal languages are based on Sanskrit, as part of the Indo-European system of languages. The scripts are different, and the vernacular of each language has many variations.

The provincial identity is integral to the family identity, as the surnames would indicate. Also, differences exist between women from urban centres and rural India. Within the Indian context many of the women in the study would not have necessarily developed an appreciation of another provincial/regional culture, but in the migration process they are exposed. In the large urban centres in Canada linguistic and cultural association of Bengalees, Telegus, Gujarathis and other regional populations have become commonplace. Interaction between the communities is growing in an attempt at developing an Indian/Hindu environment

in their communities. One respondent summarized this aspect of being hindu in Canada by stating that "here we even know more about other Indians ... people from other provinces" (V-9).

Many of these women have a deep appreciation of the Hindu samskaras which mark the transitional phases of life. These rites of passage, which differ in number according to various traditions, are the basis for a regulated, defined life in which each stage of maturation is integrated into an ideal pattern of behaviour based on the sacred vedas. The most ancient, constant, and readily observable part of Hinduism are rituals.

Even though, the basic belief system for Hindu women seems uniform, their understanding and participation in rituals varies. Each of the major festivals in India like Diwali (festival of lights), Durga Puja, Ganesha Puja, Sankaranthi, Holi etc. have regional interpretations. The importance for rituals is shared best when one of the respondents concludes " the children will be Hindu only by birth ... not in their lifestyle without ritual" (V-5).

Temples, the abode of the gods are a common phenomenon in India, one with which all Hindus have great familiarity. However, the attendance varies and the involvement in the actual "institution" is limited. Visits to temples are not necessarily a regular occurrence "We don't go to the temple regularly" (T-12). However, temples are gathering places where the community

unites in prayer and ritual and comes together as one. The Hindu temple has survived the ravages of countless invasions of the Indian sub-continent. It has outlasted periods of economic decline. It has persisted because it is part of the religious, cultural, and economic fibre of Indian society.

Most Hindu women who came to Canada in the 1960's and the 1970's were dependents of their husbands. The primary considerations for a marriage in India include the economic well-being of the family, the dowry and the caste affiliation. The aim is to assume a match which will be a harmonious association in which each of the two families coming together through their son and daughter will be satisfied. Everyone in India knows their caste and its role in their lives. Caste is integral and tied to everything in the Hindu tradition. The significance of caste affiliation is weakening and its real impact is relegated to certain spheres only. The women in the study came to Canada with a certain understanding and appreciation: "I have seen my grandmother and her sense of 'acharam' [purity] ... it bothered me the discrimination. I had to change my clothes before entering the house. I couldn't bring some of my friends home" (T-3). This comment was from a woman raised in South India. Also, "In Delhi we did feel the caste system. You don't socialize with the untouchables ... there are gender differences, women have more restrictions" (T-1).

In independent India caste issues have surfaced from time to time causing great tension between the upper and lower caste. The women generally appeared to treat caste affiliation as another part of their Hindu identity with no real impact for their daily lives in Canada. As discussed in earlier chapters, art, music, dance and mythology are all essential parts of the Hindu identity. Many of the women in my study had received some formal training in the arts as part of their education in India. Their understanding of the faith its mythology and rituals is based on the art they saw on temple walls, music they sang in a religious (bhajans and kirtans) and secular context, dance they either participated or watched and the variety of literature they were privileged to read, which had for most part basis in the rich mythology of India. The stories their grandparents and parents told them, the dance and music lessons they took or simply participating in community life in India offered them a grounding in Hindu culture. In India, children are a source of great pride and their education in matters of tradition is of tremendous importance.

Education in all its varied aspects is regarded as the love of existence in the Hindu way of life. This is not restricted to formal schooling, but encompasses all learning obtained through observing, participating and actual instruction. The rich oral tradition of India has ensured a knowledge base even to those we

may consider illiterate. "We got our own education ... it was a priority ..." (T-1).

Since marriage brought most of the women to Canada, the institution of marriage is obviously important. Almost all of them had arranged marriages. Today, "Even in India things have changed ... arranged marriage yes ... but with mutual consent" (O-8). Even though, arranged marriages were the norm, not everyone supports it - "I don't believe it ... its not necessary ... it is probably necessary for dowry" (T-13). The women obviously had a lifetime of preparation in accepting this form of marriage - it is part of the socialization process that all Indian children are subjected to. A strong extended family which is ensured by arranged marriages is assurance that family tradition will be respected. Once the marriage has taken place, the family network maintains firm links with the young couple. This is a connection that most women count on even though continents separate them. Some telling comments went as follows:

Mine was an arranged marriage. I had not seen him before. It works sometimes ... but the worst part is the woman has to make the sacrifice ... she has to make compromises ... she is supposed to take the lower position (O-13).

and, "Fine as far as I am concerned" (V-13).

Family is the core of Hindu life, and the women's sense of family is very strong. The extended family in India continues to have a distinct role, and they in turn have certain expectations of the nuclear family that has been set up in Canada. As these women prepared to come to Canada, there was obviously no doubt in their minds of the links they will continue to maintain, even though they were moving away. After years of being in Canada many women talked about their family ties - "We still have contact with extended family ... I visit my family once every two to three years ... distance has not separated us "(T-9). One respondent went on to say "We have maintained close ties ... nineteen visits in twenty years ... We take every opportunity to either visit or bring someone over" (T-4). But for many the reality is "I have connections ... but not quite involved ... I cannot visit every year" (T-7).

The role of women in the Hindu tradition over the course of its history has undergone many changes. The basic institution of family has been effected by women seeking equality in Hindu society. Evidently, woman as mother molds and develops the character and personality of the children and exercises great influence in her husband in the maintenance of the tradition. In the tradition-bound Indian society, the tradition is to present an idealized picture of the women substantiating their claims on the references to the position of woman in the Vedas, mythology

and other classical Sanskrit literature. But, reality as experienced by women in the study suggests gender was a significant aspect of their socialization. The interpretation of their role in society varies: "Man is a man, ... there are gender differences ... I don't want to be like man" (T-6). One respondent said "There is a gender distinction, ... in my socio-economic standing I felt privileged ... women in the labour class perhaps are more liberated, the middle class is always in a fix" (V-3). Most respondents concluded that as women there were differences but they respect the tradition and are convinced equality can be achieved.

2. Arrival aspect

The most remarkable aspect in this phase is the discovery by the women of their minority status and racial difference. As discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter Hindus are the majority in India, and even in secular India the Hindu cultural tradition is dominant. The Muslims, Sikhs and Christian minorities have all been influenced. Women who grew up enjoying this status take much for granted. Their identity is assured by the large numbers they represent and the values and norms of their religious\cultural traditions are the basis of their society. As immigrants to Canada the women encounter many differences, but most importantly they are different from the

majority population of this country. For those with no relatives here, the difficulties have been harder to overcome. The support systems for the most part were non-existent. The population in Canada of Hindus in the 1960's and the 1970's was small with some community strength in the larger urban centres.

The visible differences are more tangible. The women realize differences in looks, the way they sound. Even those able to speak English realize they have a strong different accent. They often have to repeat themselves to be understood. Their differences extend to food, music, art and many other social customs. They are alerted to yet another caste system within Canadian society. Hence, one respondent said: "I have connection with the community at large... but its not as much. In Vancouver we have so many Hindu families... I prefer to socialize among us" (V-6).

Hindu women as part of a minority realize they have limited accessibility to roles and activities central to the economic and political institution in Canadian society. The dominant cultures continue to hold real power. However, to summarize their thinking on being Indo-Canadians with one respondent's thoughts "here because nobody is 'original Canadian' everybody is equal ... we are a multicultural society ... therefore there is a sense of equality" (T-5).

A basic difference which is perhaps the most difficult to reconcile is the "majority mentality" which is part of all these women's life experience growing up in India. Even in secular India it is safe to say Hinduism is the national religion. Hindus, especially of the three upper castes, in all provinces dominate. There are few barriers to exploring and achieving whatever one sets out to do. The assumptions of the Hindu community even though largely unspoken, nevertheless is what Indian society is structured on. Large extended family networks give a sense of solidarity and security. There are few unknowns. The home and external environment seemingly have much in common. The value structures are interrelated. The women were socialized to assume the traditional role of Hindu women in the context of their own families and that of an in-law family which was the ultimate eventuality. There was in other words little need to adjust or adapt.

This challenge of adapting to the larger Canadian society has been a difficult one, even for Hindu women who have been in this country for a long period of time. They stay within the safe boundaries of the Hindu community in the cities where they live. "I am not involved with the Canadian community. I have one or two friends ... but the majority of my friends are Indian" (V-7).

When Hindu women come to Canada they appear to bring their religious/cultural identities. Hinduism to them is not just a series of doctrines, books of scripture or beliefs. It is part and parcel of Indian culture. To be Hindu is to be born into the faith and into the caste system. Their lives are based on the Hindu philosophical system which among other things believes in dharma (the law) and karma (action). Doing good and just things in this life is essential to this group of women who believe in reincarnation. The most meaningful part of Hinduism they have absorbed are the ritual, prayer and devotion that were conducted in their homes. The home is the centre of Hindu culture - a place where customs are maintained.

One common feeling among Hindu women in Canada is that religion has to be taught at home, "If parents feel strongly, they should give children religious education" (0-3). Their comments range from:

I am not that religious, but I do puja every day. I don't force my family - Many rituals we did at home in India, cannot be done here. My mother never did puja but my grandmother would encourage us to participate in rituals. My aunt involved us in bhajan and kirtan - You don't have to do everything ... But it helps to observe some rituals ... its part of identifying with religion (0-12)

to

I do puja, even for five minutes every day - If I don't I feel something could go wrong. Holi, Diwali, Janamastami are all celebrated My son has to know these rituals as part of knowing our background. We ourselves need to keep in touch ... Karva Chauth (fasting for husband's longevity) among us women is important... Our son after shower will do his gayathri mantra ... I feel very confident that there is somebody up there who gives me a sense of peace (V-9)

Many of the respondents came to Canada with some formal education, which in some cases include post-secondary training. However, everyone of them has a grounding in their own language, had the life skills to raise a family and be contributing citizens. Some were privileged to have a "Western" education provided by the missionary schools in India. They were educated in curriculums which are very similar to the Canadian and had an understanding of Canada as part of the British Commonwealth. It is safe to say they were not in any deliberate way prepared for the process of immigration and even more importantly raising young children in another land. From the involved responses to the questions I put to the women in my study, I would like to suggest that all the women valued education and many of them had the benefit of a good education in India. With regards to professional achievements, it became apparent that the lack of

recognition of credentials acquired outside Canada makes it extremely difficult for most of these women to have careers. Some of the women in the study worked outside the home but not necessarily in jobs they were trained for. In exceptional cases women continued in their professional careers and have realized their career goals.

Often, a distinguishing feature of the Hindu woman who comes to Canada is her dress - the Sari. Most Indian women wear saris, starting as adolescents, and this together with the tilaka (red dot on forehead) become the fundamental external identity. Most of the respondents, it appears, continue to wear saris, but it is restricted to special occasions and community affairs. When they came from India, most of them had never worn any "Western clothing" unlike their male counterparts. The severe winters in Canada are one of the primary reasons why many of these women contemplate changing into Western dress for daily wear. The other necessity to change comes when women begin working outside the home. The inner and outer manifestation of the Hindu tradition in these women speaks to a rootedness in the culture, "our roots are still in Hindu thinking" (T-1). "I dress the kids in Indian clothes to make them feel part of it" (T-7). However, the richness of the Indian textiles in colour and design of the clothing prompt many to keep in touch with Indian fashions.

3.Challenge aspect

The most striking aspects here are: the loss of roots, realization of different customs and most importantly the anxiety associated with raising their children in the new environment. Often there is a clash of value systems between the two worlds which often results in confusion.

The problems of adjustment which is often tempered by constant support of extended family members who remain in the native country seems to negatively affect immigrants of both sexes. One of the consequences of separation from family members is a traumatic loss of affection and nurturing. This loss often leads to loneliness, isolation and marginality. Women from the traditional cultures tend to form more intimate family networks than men, and are therefore more devastated by the loss of family. Language barriers often prohibit contact with non-Indians. Women who do not work outside the home develop few friendships with local Canadians. Even after years in Canada they feel as outsiders to the host society. Few women from India speak languages other than their own mother tongue, and because of the dissimilarity of languages most Indians communicate with one another in English. If the woman does not speak English, she finds it difficult even to interact with others from India. However, some women who have been highly educated and trained as doctors, writers, nurses and other skilled professions are able

to move relatively freely in both Indian and non-Indian communities in their urban centres.

The vastness of the country and the winters in Canada make it particularly difficult for most people to interact. Since, many of them save money to make the expensive trips to India periodically to visit their families, they have less incentive to visit other cities and people in Canada. The winter driving and other related hazards keep women home over extended periods of time.

Many Indian men expect their wives to behave as they would in India, and it is only over a period of time that they begin to become equal partners in their relationship. Most women were discouraged from working outside the home, since the mother as nurturer is seen as having total responsibility for raising her children.

There is also constant pressure from family back in India, which is concerned about how Hindu values and customs are influencing the life of the family in Canada. Hindu women continue to feel a tension and experience loneliness and feelings of alienation. They basically have had little preparation for living in a Western culture. One respondent talked about raising her daughter. "When we brought our eight-year old daughter to Vancouver, she felt insecure because of racism in that society. She was called 'Paki' in school and was miserable. The social

situation with the boys and girls interacting (overt sexual behaviour) ... she went back to India ... she insisted" (O-9).

Vegetarianism continues to be a challenge. As the same respondent added, "working with younger women and not being able to eat meat or drink alcohol is difficult in social situations" (O-9). For many who came in the late 1950's and 1960's there were no community support systems.

My children were all born in India but are very Westernized ... their thinking, way of living, they like the West ... when they were growing up here we didn't have a Hindu community or support group ... we tried to teach ... (V-4).

But most important of all and the one aspect that dominated my discussion with the women was the anxiety surrounding raising children in Canada. Their conviction is well founded, they believe strongly in maintaining religion and culture, they are convinced that culture and religion are the basis for ethics, values and provides the anchor for existence. They realize that they have to make a particular, sustained effort and teach children everything they know about the religious/cultural traditions. The challenge of raising responsible well-adjusted children, who will grow up with a Hindu identity preoccupies their lives in Canada.

The women spend large amounts of energy with respect to rearing their children in the same manner as would be expected in India. Since she is responsible the mother also receives a brunt of the rebellion, which is directed at the way of life she so proudly embodies. One mother of two sons aged 21 and 15 said "the boys tell me that you have left your country ... you are here now ... forget everything you did there and adopt the values and norms of this country ... this is difficult, it is like abandoning our identity" (0-8).

4.Adjustment aspect

As we reflect on the experience of Hindu women during this phase in their lives, we begin to appreciate how they compensate in every way possible for what they believe is lacking in their lives in Canada. In general, there is an intensified effort at retaining what they believe to be Hindu religious/cultural tradition in all aspects of their lives in Canada. Their understanding and appreciation of Hindu/Indian culture is frozen in time, the time of their immigration to Canada. The dynamic evolution of Hindu culture through the decades they have lived away appears to have no relevance. The intensity is evident in their deliberate attempt to keep language, food, music, dress, rituals and building temples at great costs to the community.

We make every effort to teach them. Our kids have to learn... we must maintain to continue ... When we are gone the kids have to be in a position to carry on. We both are involved ... My husband teaches Hindi and reading the Ramayana, I teach them rituals and prayers ... Nobody taught us ... we just picked it up ... Whole atmosphere is different ... The overwhelming influence of Christian practices has to be countered (V-15).

Activities of all kinds that demonstrate the Hindu tradition are seen as key. There is a firm belief that they have to show and tell. They are conscious about getting the children to 'buy in' to this retention process.

When I came to Canada there was a major culture shock ... big adjustment. It s very important to preserve our religion/culture in this country ... Our children are learning both Kathak (dance) and piano. We both are responsible, we teach them Hindi at home ... My children are comfortable wearing clothes ... they even taught Hindi in -school on multicultural days ... we must provide some show and tell for the children ... we go to India every three years to expose them to our religion/culture ... we have a responsibility to teach them (V-5).

We didn't get religious/cultural education in India. But maybe here because we don't live in a Hindu society - it s

necessary (T-11).

Not every parent is confident that they can impart all the knowledge necessary to their children. Most are willing to direct their children to individuals in the community who are more familiar/knowledgeable about different aspects of Hinduism. One mother said "In India religion/culture is a natural process, you pick it up. My mother never made a particular effort. Here I am more conscious. I will try my best ... in the end I don't know what they will remember" (V-10).

The belief that most of the women share is that more is better. Women try to remember every ritual their families practised, expose children to the different rites of passage. Many go through great expense in going to India every two or three years, where they perform elaborate rites of passage for the children. Besides visiting extended families in India many of the respondents said that they visited other parts of India with their children in order to learn themselves the richness and variety of the tradition.

Children must be acquainted with tradition. They must have the knowledge of religious texts ... the Mahabharata/Ramayana ... to provide basic values ... language, culture, dance helps a lot, knowing language helps ... we go to India often ... have performed Upanayanam of our son (O-11).

The Hindu samaskaras are observed with more rigidity and regularity. The Hindu calendar based on the lunar cycle, is followed closely and every ritual is observed in as authentic a form as possible. The home is where the most of the tradition is passed on. Women talk about how hard they try to remember everything they observed, learnt and participated in while in India.

Since the 1970's as the Hindu community in these large urban centres in Canada settled into comfortable lifestyles their attention focused on solidifying their presence and tradition in their new home.

Several community organizations were established which catered to the cultural and religious needs of the community. This has been extended to temple activities. Many members of the community have contributed time, energy and financial resources to set up organizations to promote Hindu/Indian culture and religious tradition in Canada.

I do like to go to the temple ... my husband and I are very active ... my husband is the chairman of the Board of Trustees ... the Board is all male ... they have asked women to come and serve ... but nobody has till now (T-11).

The cultural organization invites scholars and artists from India to deliver lectures and perform dance and music recitals

for the enjoyment of the Hindu population and more importantly as a deliberate exposure for Hindu children growing up in Canada to their rich cultural heritage. Sometimes the individual families extended invitation to their Canadian neighbours and friends to attend Hindu religious/cultural events as a way of sharing their heritage. One of the respondents said: "I feel fortunate to be able to be the bridge between our community and others ... I feel we need to communicate ... If and when the opportunity arises, I like to assist and sensitize about our tradition" (V-3).

"Communicating with others is important ... We must tell people about ourselves" (V-5).

As discussed earlier the frequent trips to India and inviting extended family members to visit Canada and spend time with the family at great financial costs is seen as a priority and valuable in keeping the connections to family, religion and culture alive.

I am involved with both sides of my family, mine and my husband's ... we give them proper respect and regard. We visit them regularly and have also brought them over to visit us here (T-1).

The Hindu immigrants to Canada continue to compensate for denying themselves and their children the 'true' Hindu experience as it is lived in reality in India. Most women echo the following sentiment:

As a community we should be putting in volunteer efforts to educate our children in our samaskaras ... With the older people among us, we can use their talents and knowledge in teaching the children (V-8).

The enhanced efforts at performing elaborate rites of passage, building temples at great costs to the community, inviting and hosting several brahmin priests to officiate at the temple and devoting extraordinary amount of personal time to maintaining culture/religious tradition is evident in all three urban centres. Lifestyles have been structured to compensate on ways of adapting as much of the Hindu tradition if resources will allow. This has often resulted in isolation and alienation from community at large, "I am not in contact with too many Canadians ... but involved in neighbourhood groups and school ... not much because our community takes too much time" (T-6).

We have limited interaction with Canadians ... partly because of time ... we have no energy or time to interact or party with them ... I have work, home and Hindu community (O-14).

The major challenge that faces the community as a whole is how the Canadian born off-spring will develop and retain a Hindu identity. As efforts to develop a Hindu identity are being deliberately engaged in, the issue of marriage of Canadian born off-spring becomes integral to retaining and continuation of

Hinduism in Canada becomes the preoccupation. Most respondents who married through the arranged system in India acknowledge that it was appropriate for the time:

It (arranged marriage) was right, when I got married.
We believe marriages are brought about by a past life -
karma ... everything is changing ... customs are evolving,
even in India (O-6).

At this stage in their lives their appreciation for arranged marriages is changing: "I am neutral. It has merits ... it is good ... but I am not rigid" (T-1).

Even though they have similar views on arranged marriage, when I review the responses of both these women (O-6) and (T-1) with respect to interfaith and marriage by choice of their offspring it goes as follows:

If my daughter finds a Canadian
(interfaith/intermarriage) its o.k. I would be comfortable.
Even if there is a divorce etc. they will learn from it ...
daughter or son, I see no difference ... I think limited
attitudes, closed mindedness will make you really sad ...
(O-6).

However, her counterpart in Toronto said:

I wouldn't go for that, I am not going to agree to a
Canadian ... son or daughter no difference ... religion is
important. If attitudes, opinions, culture/religion are

same it is advantageous, it is easier ... Even though we are in Canada we have families in India ... we are part of them ... they are concerned ... we are not one with family ... our roots are still in hindu thinking ... You sometimes 'deliberately' bring about connections ... try to move in a certain group, it is a way of insuring that our religion is kept alive ... (T-1).

Some conclusions may appear from these descriptions, most Hindu women compensate in many ways and face the challenges of living outside of a Hindu geographical context with determination. They are convinced it will work, if they try harder, provide more opportunities and sustain their deliberate efforts at socializing their children in the traditional Hindu way.

5. Outcomes aspect

Having traced the experience of Hindu women through the various stages, her origins in India, realizing she is a minority in this country, the challenges she faces and the adjustments that occur, I will now move on to describe the resulting reality which characterizes the experience of Hindu women in Canada. The main aspects of this experience include a consciousness of their religious and cultural identity, insecurity and deliberate efforts at maintaining the Hindu religious tradition.

First a certain consciousness emerges in the transplantation process. According to a respondent "I am more conscious here than I would have been in India" (V-1). There is a sense of security in the belief that one is born Hindu which minimizes the fear of loss of identity. However, the community as a whole is conscious of their key role on maintaining this traditional identity. Their knowledge of the Hindu cultural/religious tradition varies. Some observed and learnt a great deal while in India. They paid closer attention to details were from families that practised rituals and observed Hindu customs. Others had a 'casual' upbringing with no particular learning. They knew they were Hindu and part of a vast majority of Indians, "my mother was not religious, I am more religious here" (V-5). The majority feeling is captured in this response. "Here I am more conscious, I will try my best ... in the end I don't know what will happen ... but I will try" (V-10).

There continues to be insecurity regarding both the ability to hold on to the culture for herself and also passing on the culture. The tension relates to constant fear for themselves and the children. They are concerned about becoming too Westernized. Western culture is seen as a non-caring, materialistic culture, where each is for her/his own, where family ties, obligation are not necessarily strong - it is seen as too individualistic. There are pressures to assimilate which are resisted. These

women are never totally comfortable with themselves, "Physically we are here, but emotionally we are there (India) quite a bit" (V-14). Statements like "His (her husband's) mind is still in India ... he has decided to retire in India " (V-5) are comments which describe the ambivalence.

The insecurity leads to a holding on of notions of culture and romanticizing a past which they can never have. Some accept that the level of retention of traditional roles vary from region to region even in their experiences in India. In Canada there is another layer of variables that one must consider i.e. size of Hindu community in which the family resides, age of the community, the infrastructure including what organizational structures exist for upholding the tradition, the children's acceptance and participation in developing a Hindu identity and the length of stay in Canada. The insecurity sometimes limits interaction with the host Canadian community at large. Women fear that children exposed to Western values may not accept traditional Hindu values readily. Women showed great concern for their children's lack of enthusiasm to take part in temple activities. There was little recognition that even in India the community does not necessarily play an active role in the temple. They basically go to the temple for darsan (seeing the divine image) and prayers. For some families in India these temple visits are infrequent and happen only on certain occasions. The

ancient temples were built by the kings, so that they would have and abode for their favourite gods and goddesses. It was also the centre of artistic and cultural activities.

Here in Canada it is the community which has taken on enormous responsibilities of building temples and maintaining the very intricate ritual patterns with the help of brahmin priests invited to Canada. These kinds of activities are a new phenomenon for the tradition. In India, over the past forty years, since independence, wealthy families have begun to build temples and are benefactors of the rich cultural tradition. They sponsor many art, dance and music festivals for the communities to participate and enjoy. This model is being adopted in the various countries where Hindus have emigrated. Even though in Canada fundraising for community initiatives is done with the entire community, the primary investment and control and administration of temple activities is still in the hands of an elite group of individuals. They are mostly males who have made a substantial financial contribution to facilitate the construction of the temples. If parents are concerned about the lack of enthusiasm of their children, the question remains why and how will the institutions that are being created by Hindus in Canada be maintained.

The commitment and involvement in the temple activities is not consistent for all members of the Hindu community. Some of the comments were:

We don't go regularly, the Durga puja happens at the temple, our son likes that (V-13).

Temple means politics ... I had donated money, no record, no acknowledgement ... it is an 'in-crowd' ... ladies go to the temple to socialize ... few get involved in the temple committee ... I don't think women should officiate either ... to be a Pundit (priest) you need training, I haven't seen it in India ... I haven't even thought of it ... priests should be brahmins (V-11).

I have never been to the local temple. We are not involved (O-7).

The basic consensus is that home is the primary place for children to learn. This is a natural environment for practising the Hindu way of life. Community is stressed to the extent they believe that children learn by seeing others, that they will develop a group identity.

Leading from the "we have to be better than in India" mentality which seems to pervade the Hindu community some self-supporting infrastructures have been created in all the urban centres settled. There are numerous Indian stores selling everything from groceries, to sari, renting videos of the popular

Indian cinema, kitchenware, audio cassettes, books etc. The community associations have mushroomed to include different provincial, linguistic socio-political groups. In Toronto for example, I was told there were over a dozen Gujarathi associations. This is at least on the surface one group, from one province in India, speaking one language. Even temples have begun to multiply. The samskaras of the northern and southern Indian traditions are being catered to in different temples. In the process of adapting the rituals to a Canadian lifestyle the struggle continues to be authentic. Most cities in Canada have Indian language schools which boast healthy attendance. Parents seem ready to take every opportunity available to compliment their personal efforts at home. Basically the attitude and thinking is summed up in the following statement:

If there are no observances of Hindu cultural/religious activities the children will be totally lost ... the children at some point realize that they do not belong in the Christian world ... then where do they belong? They will question parents. It is therefore our duty to explain (0-5).

PLANNING : HOPE FOR FUTURE IN CANADA

As the dissertation reveals, the Canadian environment offers little or no natural scope of affinity to maintain the Hindu religion/cultural traditions. The individuals and the Hindu community are making attempts to retain the Hindu faith and showcase Hindu culture in a most deliberate manner so as to influence their Canadian-born off-spring. The Canadian experience leads to a more intensified identification with what is perceived/understood as a Hindu identity. The size of the ethno-cultural community becomes critical to sustaining many aspects of the tradition while, the collectivity brings power through emotional bonding, expanded knowledge base and fiscal resources which facilitate the creation of parallel institutional structures. Most Hindus seem to derive confidence in their ability to sustain their identity from others who are in a similar situation.

There is a feeling of security in the belief that one is not made but born Hindu. The fear or loss of identity is minimized by this birthright. However, the identity is not taken for granted as the compensatory actions would suggest. An interesting example of the need to preserve language and culture is seen in the Vancouver Punjabi community where there are more Sikhs than Hindus. Here the Hindus for the most part, are

willing to set aside the religious affiliation to draw from a larger cultural and linguistic population base.

Some of the responses to sustaining identity and aspirations for the future brought forward a discussion of the perceived understanding of the Jewish community. From the limited knowledge most of these women had, they seem to conclude that Jewish people were an example that had maintained its religion and culture and yet adapted and assimilated in Canadian society, without compromising the essence of its identity. The values regarding education, good habits, sense of family and community, are not appealing to emulate for many Hindus. They hope the Jewish model can be duplicated and its unique ability sustain and survive in this country holding on to religious/cultural values is seen as an example and source of strength. Some of the responses seem to suggest that if they (Jewish people) can do it, so can the Hindus. Women in general seem comforted, as one respondent stated "I have done my best ... I have given the values, it is up to them (children)" (O-12).

Part of the planning process includes introducing the children to others in the community with the hope that as they grow up they will find a match within the community "You sometimes have to deliberately bring about associations ... try to move in a certain group ... it is a way of ensuring that our religion/culture is kept alive" (T-1).

Here in Canada/USA we have established a Maharashtrian Sabha - We get together every other year - the younger generation loved it and in fact they have encouraged parents to get together. One of the aims was to give the children a chance to meet ... in fact a report of the get-together published later announced the marriages of couples who had met at similar gatherings. (O-15)

The hope for a future in Canada is based on a relatively positive experience thus far for many of the respondents. The feelings as expressed are that "at times I am involved with the Hindu community. I also like to make a contribution to Canadian society ... Whatever we can do ... share our values etc. ... I feel if you live in a country you have to become a part of it ... Everything this society provides you are through peoples efforts ... you have a share in that responsibility too" (V-2).

For women working outside the home contact with mainstream communities is more likely than for those who are homemakers. In their efforts to maintain religion/culture, much of their interaction is within the Hindu community. Nevertheless the thinking is "we are involved with the Canadian community ... we should assimilate ... our children are more Canadian ... but of course they are different" (O-5). There is a constant acknowledgement that Canadian born children are and will be different. As a mother of two teenagers put it "I sometimes feel

like I am in India ... but with the children there is a gap ... the children don't mingle ... you can see the generation gap" (V-7). She was referring to the fact that the size of community and all the institutions in a city like Vancouver offer a sense of home for the parents whereas the Canadian born children continue to experience the usual generation and sometimes cultural gap with their parents.

The research suggests that most of the women have a sense of confidence about how they are communicating their religion/culture to their children. They know they are selective in some instances of how and what they present to the first generation Canadian Hindus. They are conscious of the need to adapt their thinking and the observances to their lives here in Canada. The consensus is that everything that is imparted in the name of faith and culture has to have relevance to the younger generation, the parents, must establish credibility through consistency but most of all the richness of the tradition and its supposed impact on the children's imagination is what parents seem to count on for continuity.

I would like to submit that there are obviously other issues not identified in the primary research that is part of the Hindu women's experience in Canada. The study was confined to three urban centres where there is community strength and organization. Language, culture, temples and other forms of

community connections are relatively accessible and form the foundation for the Canadian experience. This of course leads to some questions: Whether for people confronted with new experiences outside urban centres do old experiences get eroded; is there a feeling of alienation, isolation or loneliness? Also, as a consequence of these circumstances there could be a weaker identity, sublimation to dominant culture and lack of hope in the potential for the subsequent generation to sustain a Hindu religious/cultural identity.

The experience of Hindu women in Canada can be understood by using the Model of transition, through the five aspects as described. My research revealed that Hindu women are never totally comfortable with themselves. After prolonged stays in this country an ambivalence and insecurity leads to a deliberate holding on to culture. This tension around resolving cultural differences could prevent total assimilation.

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APPENDIX 1
ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

ÉCOLE DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES ET DE LA RECHERCHE
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

April 14, 1988

Vasanthi Srinivasan
Department of Religious Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

Dear Ms. Srinivasan:

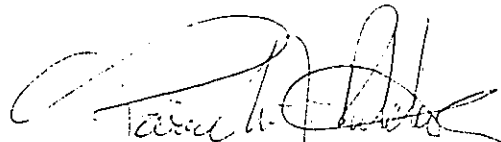
It is my pleasure to inform you that the University Human Research Ethics Committee studied your project entitled: "Hindu Women in Canada: An Investigation" and concluded that it met the appropriate standards of ethical acceptability.

I hereby attach a copy of the certification of Ethics Approval.

This certification is valid for a period of one year from the time of issuance. I would also like to remind you that, in accordance with the policies of the University Human Research Ethics Committee on research conducted using human subjects, it is your responsibility to notify the Committee of any major changes in the use of human subjects in this research.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you success in your project.

Yours sincerely,



Pierre L.-J. Ritchie
Chair

Encl.
/cu

SERVICE DE LA RECHERCHE
RESEARCH SERVICES

115 WILBROD, OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA K1N 6N5
TEL.: (613) 564-5804 TELEX: 0533338 FAX: (613) 564-5952



UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

ÉCOLE DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES ET DE LA RECHERCHE
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Certification of Institutional Ethics Review Committee

This is to certify that the Institutional Ethics Review Committee of the University of Ottawa

..... has examined the research proposal by
(name of institution)

Vasanthi Srinivasan entitled Hindu Women in Canada:
(name of applicant)

An Investigation
(title of project)

acludes that, in all respects, the proposed project meets appropriate standards of ethical acceptability

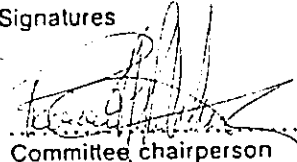
Members of the Committee

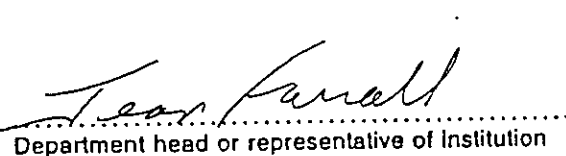
Name (optional)	Position held	Department or discipline
<u>A. Baumann</u>	<u>Professor</u>	<u>School of Nursing</u>
<u>A. Denis</u>	<u>Professor</u>	<u>Sociology</u>
<u>W. Hendelman</u>	<u>Professor</u>	<u>Anatomy</u>
<u>B. Morse</u>	<u>Professor</u>	<u>Common Law</u>
<u>P. Ritchie</u>	<u>Professor</u>	<u>Psychology</u>
<u>B. Wickett</u>	<u>Member at large</u>	<u>Elisabeth Bruyère Ctr.</u>
<u>J. Farrall</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Research Services</u>

Signatures

April 14, 1988

Date


Committee chairperson


Department head or representative of Institution

SERVICE DE LA RECHERCHE
RESEARCH SERVICES

115 WILBROD, OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA K1N 6N5
TELEPHONE: (613) 564-5904 TELEY. 0533338 FAX: (613) 564-5952

APPENDIX 2
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA: AN INVESTIGATION

INFORMED CONSENT: HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA: AN INVESTIGATION

When a doctoral research project that studies individuals is undertaken by a student of the University of Ottawa, the Ethics Committee of the University of Ottawa requires the written consent of the participants. This does not imply the project is risky; the intention is simply to assure the respect and confidentiality of the individuals concerned.

My doctoral research project intends to study the religious and cultural experiences within the Hindu families living in Canada through a series of interviews.

In order to successfully complete this research project you are asked to agree to an interview in your home which will enable me to understand the role of men and especially women in the Hindu tradition as it is practised in Canada. The interview will be tape-recorded, and will take between one (1) and two (2) hours to complete.

I willingly agree to participate in this study, on the understanding that my participation will be limited to one (1) interview. Also, I may choose to withdraw my participation at any time during the interview, or I may choose to not answer any question during the interview. It is understood that although my answers may be quoted at length, they will remain strictly confidential, and that I will not be identifiable in the presentation of any of the results of this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Vasanthi Srinivasan,
Doctoral Researcher
Tel: 723-8366.

Dr. Robert Choquette,
Research Supervisor
Tel: 564-2300.

Department of Religious Studies
The University of Ottawa
177 Waller, OTTAWA K1N 6N5
Ottawa Canada

HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA: AN INVESTIGATION

Socio-demographic Data

Region of Origin in India: Urban, Rural, State.

Language[s] Spoken:

Date of Birth:

Date of Arrival in Canada:

Marital Status:

Size of Family: Number of siblings,
Number of children,
Current household composition,
Variations in household composition since
coming to Canada.

Education: In India
In Canada.

Paid Occupation: Full-time, part-time, not applicable
Job title,
Employer - Within ethnic community
- Other.

Husband's Education:

Husband's Occupation: Title
Employer
Works primarily within ethnic
community: yes/no.

HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA: AN INVESTIGATION

Questionnaire

1. Do you feel that Hinduism includes a tradition of equality for women?
2. Can you identify with a role model in the Hindu tradition; if yes, who? Why?
3. Most religious traditions have models of good and of evil for women. Based on your understanding of the Hindu tradition, identify one of each. Discuss:
 - a: their content;
 - b: their pertinence to you;
 - c: their relevance to contemporary living.
4.
 - a: How do you see your role in your marriage;
 - b: within the family [both nuclear and extended];
 - c: the Hindu community;
 - d: and Canadian society-at-large?
5. How did you as a woman feel as part of the caste hierarchy?
6. Were there any particular advantages or disadvantages in belonging to your caste?
7. Did the caste system figure during the formative years of your life? Does it continue to have any effect on you at present?
8. Do you feel that the caste system is an integral and essential feature of the Hindu tradition? Discuss.
9. Have you explained the caste system to your children. If yes, what are some of the aspects which you have discussed with them?
10. What is your opinion about caste within the Hindu community in Canada, i.e., its effects in socio-religious rituals, and its manifestation in other activities of the community, etc?

HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA: AN INVESTIGATION

11. How do you feel about the level of participation of women in puja (worship service) and other rituals: In Hinduism today; in the Canadian context?
12. How would you feel about women officiating in community pujas, etc?
13. Is it necessary to have only Brahmin males officiate as priests in community rituals and other rites of passage, such as marriage, death rituals, etc?
14. Do you feel it is important to preserve your cultural and religious tradition? Who in your family is responsible for contributing to this? How?
15. What are some of the changes or differences you have observed between religious practices in India, and here in Canada, within your family and in community contexts?
16. How important are ritual observances (as per the Hindu ritual calendar) in sustaining your cultural identity? Why?
17. Are pujas (worship service) in your home a daily occurrence?
18. How important are ritual observances within your family?
19. Do you feel it is necessary to provide religious instruction for your children?
20. Who do you feel is best qualified to do this: a: you, another adult at home, or, b: heritage language schools? c: Hindu temple?

HINDU WOMEN IN CANADA: AN INVESTIGATION

21. Do you as a family use Heritage language schools and/or Hindu temple on a regular basis?
22. Apart from the Heritage language school and the Hindu temple, do you believe there are any other potential outside institutions through which religion/culture can be communicated? If yes, what are some of the "ways" you use?
23. Are you and your family involved in the temple activities in your city? How have your children responded to this relatively new phenomenon in Canada?
24. Do you continue to, or have you in the past, taken your children back to India to perform certain rites of passage, example, mundan ceremony (the shaving of the head), upanyanam ("sacred thread" signifying caste) and marriage, etc?
25. Do you feel there would be a loss of the Hindu way of life if your children failed to observe certain rituals on a daily basis?
26. Is there any particular way you feel the Hindu tradition can be "taught" to children growing up in Canada?
27. What are your views on the "arranged marriage" situation in the tradition?
28. How would you feel about an inter-faith marriage of one of your children? Differences between son and daughter?
29. As a Hindu living in Canada, have you encountered any particular challenges or conflicts to your religious identity? If yes, what are some of these?
30. Comments.

APPENDIX 3
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

SAMPLE BY PROVINCE OF ORIGIN

Kerala	1
Rajasthan	3
Tamil Nadu	3
Mysore	1
Orissa	2
Bihar	6
Bengal	6
Maharashtra	3
UttarPradesh	6
AndhraPradesh	1
MadhyaPradesh	3
Punjab	4
Dehli	6

LANGUAGES SPOKEN:

Punjabi 8	Hindi 41	English 45	Tamil 5	Malayalam 7
Kunkuni 2	Marathi 7	Kanaada 1	Gujarti 5	Urdu 2
Sindi 1	Oriya 2	Bengali 8	Telegu 2	Bhojpuri 3
Rajasthan1				

SAMPLE BY YEAR OF BIRTH:

AVERAGE AGE OF RESPONDENT: 43

Year of	Number
1928	1
1931	1
1933	1
1939	1
1942	3
1943	3
1944	4
1945	3
1946	3
1947	3
1948	3
1949	4
1950	2
1951	5
1952	3
1953	1
1957	1
1958	1
1959	1
1961	1

YEAR OF ARRIVAL IN CANADA:

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN CANADA: 19

Year	Number
1957	1
1961	1
1963	1
1965	1
1966	1
1967	2
1968	2
1969	3
1970	4
1971	3
1972	4
1973	7
1974	8
1975	1
1976	2
1977	2
1978	2

SAMPLE BY AGE UPON ARRIVING TO CANADA:

AVERAGE AGE UPON ARRIVAL IN CANADA: 24

Age	Number
13	1
17	1
19	1
20	6
21	5
22	1
23	4
24	7
25	5
27	1
28	6
29	2
30	1
32	1
33	2
34	1

SAMPLE BY MARITAL STATUS:

Married: 44
Divorced: 1

OF SIBLINGS:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SIBLINGS: 6

0	-	2
1	-	2
2	-	2
3	-	4
4	-	5
5	-	12
6	-	6
7	-	4
8	-	2
9	-	4
10	-	1
11	-	1

OF CHILDREN:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 2

0 - 1
1 - 6
2 - 29
3 - 7
4 - 2

EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS:

Education received in India		Education received in Canada	
B.Sc.	7	None	
B.A.	14	Library Technician	1
M.A.	14	M.A.	2
College degree	1	Ph.D.	2
Professional courses	16	Diploma	2
up to 2 years university	3	Certificate	1
M.Sc.	3	Interest Courses	7
Ph.D. (USA)	1	Language Courses	2
B.Ed.	2		
D.M.L.T.	1		
B.T.	2		
B.A.Hons.	1		

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

<u>FULL TIME:</u>	13
<u>PART TIME:</u>	14
<u>NOT APPLICABLE:</u>	18
<u>EMPLOYER WITHIN ETHNIC GROUP:</u>	4
<u>EMPLOYER OUTSIDE ETHNIC GROUP:</u>	23

OCCUPATIONS:

Computer Operator
Travel Agent
Dieting Cook
Sales Wendy's
Recruiting and Marketing Merchandise
Senior Teller
Office Agency
Bank
Clerical Data Entry
Real Estate
Clerk
Heritage Language Instructor
Heritage Language School Principal
Childcare
Library Technician
Counselling
Programmer
Business
Salesperson
Research Technologist
Secretary
Optician
Research Scientist

HUSBAND'S EDUCATION:

B.A.	2
Engineer	12
Architect	1
B.Sc.	4
2 years accounting	1
Hotel Management	2
Real Estate	2
M.A.B.T. (Type A)	1
Ph.D.	13
College	2
M.Sc.	2
C.G.A.	1
Dentist	1
Veterinarian	1
M.A.	1

EMPLOYER:

Sun-life
Elks
Ontario Hydro
City of Scarborough
Superior Fuel Injection
Self Employed
Scottish
Century 21
Hamilton School Board
McMaster
Toronto General Hospital
University of Toronto
Energy\Mines and Resources
Carleton University
Health and Welfare
Atomic Energy Control Board
Environment Canada
Remax
Bell Canada
National Research Council
B.C. Tell
Burnaby School Board
Agriculture Canada
Province B.C.
Ford
Ministry of Transport
Life Insurance Company
Simon Fraser University

WORKS PRIMARILY WITHIN ETHNIC GROUP:

YES: 1

NO: 44

APPENDIX 4
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS

RESULTS RE: CHAPTER 1

Respondents assume major role for cultural continuity in family:

Total number of respondents to question: 27
Ambiguous responses : 18

Yes: 18 (66%)

Joint Responsibility: 9 (33%)

NO: 0

Experience of being Hindu in Canada:

Total number of respondents to question: 28
Ambiguous responses: 17

Positive: 18 (64.2%)

Negative (direct experience of discrimination): 5 (17.8%)

Negative (indirect experience of discrimination): 3 (10.7%)
(2 responses do not relate to question)

Importance of preservation of culture and religion:

Total number of respondents to question: 36
Ambiguous responses 09

Very Important	Important	Not Very Important
10 (27.7%)	24 (66.6%)	2 (5.5%)

of those:

2 respondents indicated that cultural preservation was more important than religious preservation.

2 respondents indicated that religious preservation was more important than cultural preservation.

General Note: It seems difficult if not impossible to separate cultural traditions from religious traditions in the responses.

Views On Acculturation/Assimilation re: Children

Total number of respondents to question: 23
 Ambiguous reponses: 22
 10 (43.4%) of sample assume direct responsibility for teaching children rel./cult. traditions.

Children should be taught about

a) religion: 9 (39.1%)
 b) culture: 0
 c) both: 7 (30.4%)

Medium For Transmitting Culture

Total number of respondents to question: 37
 Ambiguous responses: 08

Medium	Very Appropriate	Appropriate	Not Appropriate
Dance	23 (62.1%)	2 (5.4%)	2 (5.4%)
Music	23 (62.1%)	2 (5.4%)	2 (5.4%)
Rel. Instruc.	6 (16.2%)	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)
Language	12 (32.4%)	1 (2.7%)	3 (8.1%)
Stories	2 (5.4%)		
Visit to India	2 (5.4%)		
Food	3 (8.1%)		
Movies	3 (8.1%)		

Second generation will loose rel./cul. traditions

Total number of respondents to question: 23
 Ambiguous responses: 22
Yes: 14 (60.8%)
No: 5 (21.7%)

Adaptation of rel./cul. content in the process of acculturation

Total number of respondents to the question: 35
 Ambiguous responses: 10

Identified Change:

Very Significant	Significant	Not Significant
17 (48.5%)	8 (22.8%)	2 (5.7%)

Experience of increased intensity/effort regarding cul./rel. values and traditions:

Yes: 13 (37.1%)
No: 6 (17.1%)

Note: General observation of respondents stating that they must make an intense effort here to "create a Hindu scene"; "a Hindu atmosphere".

Family Contact

Total number of respondents to the question: 27
 Ambiguous responses: 18
 Regular contact with family members: 24 (88.8%)
 Irregular contact with family members: 3 (11.1%)

Level of involvement with Hindu community

Total number of respondents to question: 32
 Ambiguous responses: 13

Very Active	Active	Not Active
7 (21.8%)	17 (53.1%)	8 (25%)

Volunteer Involvement

Total number of respondents to question: 22
 Ambiguous responses: 23

<u>TYPE</u>	
School	6 (27.2%)
Community commit.	2 (9.0%)
Day Care	1 (4.5%)
Charities	3 (13.6%)
Kinsmen	1 (4.5%)
YWCA	1 (4.5%)
Salvation Army	1 (4.5%)
UNICEF	1 (4.5%)
Indian Activities	2 (9.0%)
Her. Lang. School	2 (9.0%)
Dance Group	1 (4.5%)
Music	1 (4.5%)

Mainstream activities: 16 (72.7%)

Indian community activities: 6 (27.2%)

Tradition of Equality:

Total number of respondents: 36
Ambiguous responses: 9
Yes: 9

Yes: 2 in contemporary time
Yes and No: 4
No: 20

Role model in the Hindu tradition:

Total number of respondents: 16
Ambiguous responses: 29
Mother: 8

Aunt: 3
I. Gandhi: 5

Virtues espoused: devoted wife
educated
musical model/ talented musician
warrior
queen
beauty
favoured the disadvantaged
modern views
hard working and organized
free spirit
mother figure/ house wives
power
sacrificing

Content of models of GOOD:

respondents described the content with the following words:

devoted; submissive; advance in search of truth; equal partner
in the pursuit of knowledge; devotion to her husband;
sacrifice; good= selfless in the tradition; good-sacrifice.
determined; soft; patient; living for others; bearing all the
injustice; selfless.

Out of a total of 24 respondents, 18 identified SITA as the Goddess that encompasses the content of good, 21 respondents gave ambiguous responses.

Content of models of EVIL:

Respondents described the content with the following words: desire; selfish; evil=demanding; creating problems; ruining the family.

Out of the entire sample only 10 commented on what they saw to be the content of evil. The definition of evil is a consistent mirror reversal of the image of good.

Relevance of models of good and evil to contemporary lives:

Total number of respondents:	32
Ambiguous responses:	13
Yes, it is still relevant:	24
No, it is not relevant:	8

Role in Marriage:

Observations:

- respondents take their roles within the house very seriously.
- most identify themselves as being in charge of the internal sphere - anything relating to the operation of the house and families.
- 11 respondents characterized themselves as "being an equal partner" whereby the remaining 30 identified themselves as either supportive/devoted wives/mothers or as trying for an equal partnership with husband.

THEREFORE: most often women still describe and perceive their role as that of primary nurturer and care provider - supportive/ facilitating.

Role in immediate family:

- mediation/facilitation role between husband and children becomes added responsibility.
- increased obligation to children.
- most of the respondents consistently value their role as provider for children, passing on values to children etc.

- note: the pride expressed in fulfilling this domestic role
- role in immediate family is defined through respondent's relationship with children.

Role in extended family:

Yes, play (major) role in extended family: 14
 No, do not play any (minimal) role: 4

How do you feel as part of the caste hierarchy?

Like it: None
 Do not like it: 7
 Do not know: 3

Gender difference in caste:

Yes, there is a gender difference: 15
 No, there is no gender difference: 7

Influence of caste in formative years:

Yes: 19
 No: 11
 Total number of respondents: 30
 Ambiguous responses: 15

Continued Influence of Caste system on respondents:

Yes: 4
 No: 23
 Total number of respondents: 27

Caste System as part of Hindu tradition:

The caste system is essential for Hindu tradition: 17
 The caste system is not essential: 10

The caste system is essential and will remain so: 12
 The caste system was essential but is not so any more: 12
 The caste system will disappear/change in the future: 4

Children and knowledge of caste system:

Yes, my children know about the caste system: 29
 No, my children do not know about the caste system: 9

Advantages of the caste system:

No advantages : 5
 No advantage/disadvantage: 14
 No disadvantage: 3
 Advantage: 12
 Disadvantage: 2
 Total number of respondents: 34
 (multiple responses)

Opinion about caste system and celebration of rituals to be performed by members of a certain caste:

Need Brahmin male for religious rituals:
 Yes: 13
 No: 18
 Need someone who is knowledgeable: 9

Religious Rituals:

Observance of rituals:

Yes: 37

No: 8

Total number of respondents: 45

Person to pass on religious rituals:

Respondents clearly identify the maternal side as the primary maintainer of rituals. Ten of the respondent identified mothers or other women of the extended family to perform rituals. "Women are responsible for rituals and traditions". [0-9] This holds true as long as respondents clearly state that those are rituals performed in the house, on an everyday basis. Only in a couple of instances did respondents identify priests as those that perform rituals.

Changes in the religious rituals:

Religious rituals have changed: 20

Religious rituals are the same: 3

Children and religious rituals:

13 respondents stated that their children participate in the rituals or are familiar with rituals; 5 stated that their children do not participate and 2 added that they now wish that their children had a better understanding of rituals.

Total number of respondents: 19

Ambiguous responses: 26

Activities at temple:

Respondents indicated that the activities at the temple are as follows: chanting, religious discussions, marriages, Bhajan, Siva, Ganasha, religious classes, music, Hindi language classes.

Involvement of respondents in temple:

Respondent is involved:	11
Respondent is not involved:	23
Total number of respondents:	34
Ambiguous responses:	11

The role of women in the temple:

Would support/prefer woman officiating:	13
Would prefer male officiating:	6
Total number of respondents:	24
Ambiguous responses:	21

View of temple by respondents:

Temple is good:	6
Temple is bad (unnecessary):	3

Views on arranged marriage:

Respondents in favour of arranged marriages:	16
Respondents who do not care for arranged marriage:	11
Respondents doubtful of the working of arranged marriages:	13
Total number of respondents:	40

Personal experience with arranged marriages:

Respondents with arranged marriages:	12
Respondents without arranged marriages:	5
Total number of respondents:	17

Gender difference with regard to interfaith marriage:

Respondents that show gender differences in their concerns:	4
Respondents who do not show gender differences:	16
Total number of respondents:	20

Views on intermarriage:

Yes, intermarriage is acceptable:	16
No, intermarriage is not acceptable:	17
Reluctantly agree to intermarriage:	12