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***Globalization and International Migration of Workers.  
A Study with Special Reference to the Immigrant  
Women from India to the United States of America.***

This research work, by necessity, is an exploratory one because there is no background of established facts or previous works focussing on this theme. We have tried to give a picture of the life of Indian immigrants in U.S. The report is mainly based on the primary data collected by the researchers themselves from a sample of 520 Indian families in the U.S during the period 1999 September to 2000 March. Time series data from INS and U.S. Censuses have also been used extensively. Primary data were collected from four states having the largest proportion of Asian Indians namely, New York, New Jersey, Washington .D .C. and Florida. The report contains many quotations, news items from the media, case studies and even casual conversations, which we thought would give the report a human face.

Our five months long stay in the U.S gave us ample opportunities to understand the immigrant life in all its dimensions. We found that while many immigrants had adapted to their new life style very well, several others were still "strangers on a different shore". Their experiences were unique. Their cultural ethos, their divided identities and their generational dilemmas were ubiquitous. The experiences of those Asian Indian immigrants whom we encountered are filled with stories of success and failure, of ambivalence and nostalgia and of passion and disillusionment. We have tried to portray all these emotions in a small canvass. The report is organised in such a way that we move from macro level statistics to micro level realities. The theoretical framework used involves both the tenets of political economy and the sociological concepts of gender and household.

India has always been one of the largest labour exporting countries of the world and the immigrant population of India was as high as 20 million in 1990. India always had a prominent place in the immigration flows to the U.S. But until 1965, Indian immigrants to the U.S constituted mainly of service workers. But the 1965 Immigration and Nationality act opened up the gates for 'knowledge workers' and their relatives which started a series of chain migration and family migration from India to the U.S of a highly educated and professionally qualified group of people. This was further intensified by the amendment to the Act in 1990 and the globalisation process that was sweeping the world over.

Today, more than one million Indians are in the U.S placing India in the third position next to Mexico and Philippines in terms of the total number of immigrants in U.S.

Perhaps, the most significant aspect about Indian immigrants is that a high proportion of them are highly qualified professionals. As a group they have been successful in almost all fields – engineers, doctors, professors, research workers, computer professionals and business people. The secondary data from U.S Bureau of Census clearly indicate that in terms of educational attainments, labour market performance and average earnings, Indian immigrants are not only better than other immigrants, but also the U.S nationals. It was noticed that three categories of non immigrants from India, students, temporary workers, trainees and temporary visitors regularly got their status adjusted to 'permanent resident' by virtue of the immigration rules in the U.S.

Compared to the other ethnic groups, an important cultural advantage which Indian immigrants seem to possess was their fluency in English. This coupled with strong family net works gave the Indians a strong edge over other immigrants, which may perhaps explain their success in careers and business. A large majority of the sample respondents had come to the U.S at a relatively very young age as students who after obtaining higher qualifications and a good job opted to become permanent residents or citizens.

While the first generation of Indian immigrants were found to be emotionally attached to Indian life style, the second generation were quite indifferent. The second generation appeared to be a confused lot symbolising their nick name **ABCD's (American Born Confused Desis)** Desis means natives in Indian language. Balancing traditional Indian values (insisted by their parents) with American way of life seemed to be the most important confusion. The conflict between the parents and the youngsters were more imminent on issues like marriage, dating and pre marital sex. While the Indian immigrants had achieved a better economic status, their involvement in social and political life in the mainstream U.S. society was very much limited. More over, social and religious involvement had a regional basis and quite often language seemed to be the most important binding factor in the formation of groups among Indian immigrants. The first generation Indian immigrants had close ties with India. But in terms of maintaining the ethnic identity as 'Indians' the post 1990 immigrants were found to be better than earlier immigrants. **It was observed that several of the Indian immigrants were finding it difficult to balance the Indian and American life styles, missing the Indian tradition when he is in the U.S and missing the American comforts when he is in India .**

The experience of Indian women were found to be more profound and sensitive. They felt that immigration to the U.S gave them a new sense of freedom and liberation. But by and large they adhered to the traditional Indian ideology about gender roles, being responsible for cooking, house work and looking after children. Raising children in two cultures seemed to be the most pressing problem for a large number of Indian women. However, most of them were maintaining a good balance between their twin roles.

As trans national immigrants, Indians not only assimilate successfully with the

American life style, but carry back to India the cultural and professional advantages of U.S.A. The association with people of different countries and different cultural backgrounds have given the Indian immigrants a better outlook and a broad vision about the world at large. Moreover, the integration of different cultures nationalities and ethnic groups seemed to have led to the evolution of a new world social order.