METROPOLIS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity

Working Paper Series

No. 13-09

December 2013

SOUTH ASIAN SKILLED IMMIGRANTS IN GREATER VANCOUVER:
FORMAL AND INFORMAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR SETTLEMENT

Habiba Zaman

Syeda Nayab Bukhari

Metropolis British Columbia

Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity

TABLE OF CONTENTS

METROPOLIS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity

Working Paper Series

SOUTH ASIAN SKILLED IMMIGRANTS IN GREATER VANCOUVER: FORMAL AND INFORMAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR SETTLEMENT

HABIBA ZAMAN

Simon Fraser University

SYEDA NAYAB BUKHARI

Simon Fraser University

SECTION I: THE BACKGROUND

Vancouver receives a large number of South Asian (SA) immigrants an-
nually. According to the 2006 census, South Asians comprise almost
ten percent of the visible minority people living in Greater Vancouver.
South Asian, along with Chinese and Filipino, are the top three visible minority
groups in British Columbia (BC), with many having arrived since 2001 (Hiebert
2009). Statistics Canada defines South Asians as people who originate from
Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. After migrating to Canada,
most South Asian immigrants go through a complex and demanding settle-
ment process (Zaman 2012). This report deals with many aspects of South
Asian Immgrants' immigration experiences upon arrival in BC, more particu-
larly in Greater Vancouver.

Some of the major factors that make the settlement process onerous
and time-consuming for immigrants include: (a) education, training, and job
market skills; (b) lack of social networks and lack of knowledge about poten-
tial sources of support; and (c) negotiating a new socio-economic, political,
and cultural system in Canada. South Asian immigrants encounter many chal-
lenges, both socially and economically. In order to successfully settle, they are
expected to acquire the skills that allow them to participate and enjoy their
socio-economic rights. In the immigration literature, many scholars (Duncan
2003; Mitchell 2002; Silver 1995) have framed this issue within social inclu-
sion and exclusion theory focusing on its significance with regard to social
networking. Social networks are based on the social relationships that enable
humans to access the social resources in any society. Social resources can
be tangible, such as money, a car, accommodation, and jobs; and intangible,
such as social relationships, circles of friends and acquaintances, and human

resources. Intangible social resources play a significant role in supporting new immigrants to achieve their goals and aspirations with the formation of social relationships heavily influencing the degree of access to information and social networks (Lin 1990).

Many government and non-government organizations (NGOs) in Canada are designed to serve immigrants, more specifically new immigrants, and to support them in their settlement process. However, these organizations do not collect information and data, either periodically or regularly, about whether and how their services are being utilized by immigrant groups—in this case, South Asian immigrants in Greater Vancouver—or about how effective they have been in assisting SA immigrants' settlement. Similarly, while many studies have highlighted the dynamics and process of social inclusion of immigrants in Canada (Li 2003), there is a lack of research that looks at whether or not SA immigrants are taking advantage of access to support systems and whether their experiences have been positive or negative. It is also not clearly evident that the sources of formal and informal support used by SA immigrants contribute to the success or failure of their social inclusion or to their access to social and economic benefits.

Media is not only a source of information and entertainment, but it also sets an agenda that shapes perceptions and creates realities. Such purposive agenda setting contributes to creating dominant opinions about the different groups living in a society and this includes opinions about immigrants. "Ethnic" (visible) minorities often criticize the mainstream media for tagging them with stereotypes, mostly negative in nature (Fleras 1995; Jiwani 1992; Miller 1994). "Media (mis)treatment has tended to frame Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, and racialized minorities using one of the five frames, namely, as invisible, problems, stereotypes, adornments, or whitewashed" (Fleras 2009,

726). Immigrants and visible minorities, as well as disadvantaged groups, have also made mainstream media responsible for not including their issues and concerns in their agenda. Consequently, these groups, especially South Asian immigrants, have developed alternative media that is commonly known as ethnic media. A study called *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Media in BC* reported that the South Asian community "… has thirty-three media outlets [in BC] for the 210,295 people of South-Asian origin; the majority of which are newspaper and radio, and predominantly Punjabi language beside seven English newspapers and three multilingual radio stations", but there is not a South Asian specialty TV channel (Murray, Yu and Ahadi 2007, 17). In this context, it is imperative to analyze the media's role in the settlement of im-migrants in BC as well as in Canada. This report considers all media—including print, radio, TV, the internet as well as alternative/ethnic media—as potential sources of information for the settlement of SA immigrants.

There are several sources of information available to facilitate the process of settlement for South Asian immigrants, including social, economic, religious, and cultural associations in Vancouver. However, there are few widely acces-sible published works regarding which sources and networks these immigrants consider more appealing, reliable, and relevant to the settlement process—both in the short term for new immigrants, and in the long term for SA immigrants overall. In order to explore these issues, this study posed the following perti-nent questions: (i) What sources of information and social networks are used by South Asian immigrants for their settlement in Canada? (ii) Do South Asian immigrants benefit from immigrant services and programs that government and non-government organizations provide in Greater Vancouver? (iii) What reasons do South Asian immigrants have for either utilizing or not utilizing the

services of these organizations? and (iv) How do available sources of support and information impact the settlement process of South Asian immigrants?

Methodology

The study is based on thirty in-depth interviews with South Asian immigrants and five in-depth interviews with settlement workers and officials, including people working in settlement agencies and religious institutions as well as media representatives. The SA immigrants were also given a questionnaire to collect their profile information and closed-ended responses related to the study. The findings from the brief survey provided a demographic profile to complement the in-depth taped interviews. While the questionnaire asked closed-ended questions, the in-depth interviews provided a chance for the researchers and participants to meet and discuss the information in a context that allowed for more detailed responses.

For the in-depth interviews, a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire was developed; however, participants were free to share their lived experiences. Participants had the liberty to share their narratives, which maintained the originality of their perspectives. Further, five in-depth interviews were held with representatives of non-governmental organizations in order to analyze their services, perspectives, and experiences with South Asian immigrants. For these interviews, brief guiding questions were framed and the discussions were kept open-ended.

Sampling

Using snowball techniques, immigrants from various South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, who are currently living in Greater Vancouver, were selected as study participants. Participants

were enlisted through two well-known immigrant and settlement services in British Columbia—Progressive Intercultural Services (PICS) and MOSAIC--as well as through friends, and through networks developed by the research assistant over years of community involvement. For example, a settlement worker originally from Bangladesh helped connect the research assistant with skilled immigrants originally from Bangladesh. To ensure the privacy rights and consent of the participants the research assistant left her contact information with a note with the concerned community member or settlement worker, who then circulated the study information and requirements among the SA population. Those interested in participating in the research contacted the research assistant.

Another important snowball sampling source was the participants themselves who referred the research assistant to other potential participants after seeking their permission. For the interviews with settlement workers and officials, at least one representative from major identified sources of information (settlement services, the public library, media, religious institutions, etc.) was interviewed to gain his/her perspectives. In this regard, a director at a settlement agency, a librarian who is in charge of collecting multi-lingual books and journals, a director of an alternative media organization for news and current affairs, a director of social services for a religious organization, and a representative of a South-Asian cultural association were interviewed.

The semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with thirty South Asian immigrants—thirteen women and seventeen men—who came to Canada under the Federal Skilled Worker (Professional/Principal applicants) category. Participants were selected from first generation immigrants and were between the ages of twenty-two and sixty years. Other factors, such as length of stay in Canada, were also taken into account when selecting the participants. Most

immigrants for this research had come to Canada within the past eight to ten years, that is, between 2001 and 2010. Whenever feasible, preference was given to participants who had migrated to Canada within the last two or three years, in order to capture their fresher memories and experiences.

Processes

Participants were interviewed between September 2010 and March 2011. The research assistant generally drove to the homes of the participants to conduct the interviews. When convenient, a few participants chose to meet the research assistant at her place for the interview. Two participants met the research assistant either in a public library or in a coffee shop.

The interview consisted of four parts: introducing of the project and its objectives, signing the consent form by a participant, explaining the demographics questionnaire—each participant was given twenty to thirty minutes to fill out the questionnaire. It should be mentioned here that not all participants answered all the questions. The research assistant was available to offer clarification if participants did not understand any question or term. The last interview section consisted of a taped interview to gather in-depth responses. The audio tapes were used for transcribing the interviews; the voices were deleted after writing the report. Participants were given fictitious names for this study. Most interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants because the research assistant is fluent in several South Asian languages including Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Hindko, and Hindi. This facilitated interviews with participants in their preferred language. Interviews with the NGO workers primarily took place in their offices, except in one case, where the participant preferred to meet in the research assistant's home. Each interview took two to three hours.

The research assistant's South Asian background and access to South Asian networks facilitated access to the participants. During the interviews, the research assistant experienced touching moments, at times emotionally stressful, especially when the participants spoke of the hardships of settlement. At the same time, many participants discovered useful information in her questions and illustrations. For example, many did not know about settlement agencies and the extent of their various services for immigrants, particularly for new and recent immigrants. Some of them were not aware of the availability of student loans if they wished to pursue their education while some did not even have any information about subsidies for childcare subsidies.

Participants: A Brief Demographic Profile

Among the thirty participants, twenty-two lived in Surrey, four in Vancouver, three in Burnaby, and one lived in Delta. The predominance of participants from these areas may be due to support and collaboration from two well recognized immigrant settlement and services—Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS) in Surrey and MOSAIC in Vancouver. The participants belonged to various age brackets. Of those who reported their age, thirteen were 36–40 years old, eight participants were 31–35 years old, one was in the age bracket of 46–50, and one was in the age bracket of 26–30, while one participant was above 50 years of age. The majority of participants were between the ages of 31 and 40 years.

Out of thirty participants, twenty-four identified themselves as skilled immigrants, while six identified themselves as spouses. It is important to mention that the Canadian immigration system acknowledges only the principal applicant as a skilled immigrant, while the spouse, no matter how highly qualified s/he is, is identified as spouse and is not considered a skilled immigrant.

Among the respondents who marked themselves as spouse, four were post-graduates, while two were university graduates.

Out of thirty participants, twelve were born in Pakistan, eleven in India, four in Bangladesh, and three in Sri Lanka. However, not all participants were residing in their country of birth before they immigrated to Canada. Out of thirty participants, eleven were residing in India, nine in Pakistan, all four in Bangladesh, all three in Sri Lanka, while one resided in each of Australia, New Zealand, and United Arab Emirates before their immigration to Canada.

The participants landed in Canada as immigrants between 2001 and 2010. This decade is also significant, as it represents the post 9/11 period. During this period, the event of 9/11 had an immense impact on geopolitics at national and international levels and it affected the patterns of transnational migration.

Not all participants chose Vancouver as their first destination in Canada. Out of thirty participants four landed in other cities while twenty-six landed in Vancouver. Out of thirty participants, six participants landed alone for various reasons; for example, some were single. In some cases, if they were married, they wanted to first understand and orient themselves to the new system before they invited their families to join them. A majority (twenty participants) came with their spouses and children, while two came with their spouses as they did not have children at that time. At the time of the study, only two participants did not have children, while twenty-eight participants had one to five children.

All participants had a university degree; for example, twenty-three out of thirty participants had a postgraduate degree,[1] while seven were university graduates. Another interesting finding is the variety of disciplines and pro-

grams in their educational backgrounds. Participants had education, training, and experience in commerce, accounting, agriculture, applied science, business administration, engineering, law, medicine, physics, and social science.

A significant number of participants—twenty out of thirty—had received some sort of education in Canada. For example, twelve had taken some kind of certificate program, while four had completed diploma programs. A further four participants completed programs at Canadian universities, with one obtaining a postgraduate degree and three completing undergrad studies. But one-third of the participants—10 out of 30—had not pursued any kind of educational program in Canada.

In terms of religious beliefs, participants' faith was in various religions. For example, eighteen out of thirty participants identified as Muslim; seven participants practiced Sikhism, three practiced Hinduism, while one identified as Buddhist and one as Christian. This demonstrates religious diversity among immigrants from South Asia. Language was another site that reflected diversity among South Asian immigrants. The majority could speak more than one language. In addition to English, the participants could speak Bangla, Hindi, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Singhalese, Tamil, and Urdu. Among the participants, twelve spoke Punjabi,[2] seven spoke Urdu, four spoke Bangla, two spoke Sindhi and two spoke Singhalese, while one spoke Hindi, one spoke Tamil, and one spoke Pashto.

Challenges Encountered

An obvious challenge was the understanding regarding the use of words and terminology used by the research assistant. For example, what makes a cultural association "cultural" or alternative media "ethnic" media? Similar questions arose when the research assistant asked people to share their issues

related to settlement. Perhaps the biggest challenge in immigration studies is to create a consensus on the definition of ambiguous and contested terms because every participant holds a different connotation. In order to address this issue, we tried to gather the definitions of the respondents. Moreover, various terms were explained from our point of view; for example, the meaning of ethnic media in the context of this research was explained to participants.

With all the scheduling required for ethnographic and interview-based research, finding time to arrange in-depth interviews was a difficult task. Even though many participants live in the same municipality, commuting still took time and effort due to the distances between their homes and the often heavy traffic. The spouses of participants also wanted to share their experiences of settlement and it was difficult to turn them down. This consumed much more time in most interviews that the research assistant conducted at participants' homes. The research assistant waited until the participant's spouse left the room so the interview could be conducted in privacy. Some participants had tight schedules and did not allow more than one hour for the interview.

Many participants shared their frustrations and disappointments, and remarked that research produced on and about immigrants is not valuable because they felt that the federal and provincial governments already know their situation but are unwilling to address the issues in effective ways. Some participants broke into tears while sharing their experiences. As the interview process unfolded, SA skilled immigrant encountered tremendous challenges for their settlement and thus, burst into emotions when they were asked to share their immigration experiences.

SECTION II: THE CONTEXT

Sources of Information Prior to Emigration

Participants were asked several questions to identify their sources of information about immigration, and the lifestyle, work, and culture of Canada. (The privacy of the participant was maintained during the interview period.) Participants were given various options to mark their sources of information. These options included friends, family, the Canadian embassy in their country of origin, immigration consultants, the internet, and others. They could choose to mark more than one option. Of the thirty participants, three received their information from the internet, while seven had family in Canada; four approached friends for information; three hired consultants; and one got information from the Canadian embassy in his/her country. The remainder did not seek information prior to immigration. As a secondary source, friends remained top source of information. Among all the options, friends and the internet were the key sources of information, while family in Canada ranked second with respect to where immigrants gathered information. These responses indicate that SA skilled immigrants relied primarily on the internet and friends for information about immigration and about Canada in general.

Participants were asked whether they received any information about settlement at the airport when they landed; eighteen participants confirmed that they had received brochures at the airport, while six did not receive any such information and five respondents did not remember receiving any information. One did not respond.

South Asian Skilled Immigrants: Who Are They?

The professional experience of participants before migration indicates that most of them worked in the service sector; they were either government or private sector employees at middle to higher management levels. Very few had business enterprises. Among seventeen responses (thirteen did not respond to this question), six were teachers, seven served as managers and/or directors, one was a chartered accountant, one was a cashier, one participant was a student, and another was a research fellow in his/her country of origin.

In response to a question about their satisfaction with their professional careers in their country of origin, a majority of thirteen said they were satisfied, while seven were highly satisfied. A further five responded neutrally, while one was dissatisfied. The remaining did not respond.

The data regarding the spouses of the immigrants revealed some interesting facts. A majority of the spouses of the respondents had professional jobs in various fields before immigration. Of these, one had worked as an agriculturist, three were bankers, three were managers, and five were teachers/lecturers, while there was one each of business entrepreneurs, engineers, civil servants, and students. The remaining six spouses were homemakers. It is evident that both the principal applicants and their spouses were skilled immigrants when they migrated to Canada. However, only the principal applicant was categorized as skilled.

Initial Settlement

A majority of sixteen respondents mentioned that their friends came to pick them up at the airport, followed by nine respondents who were received by family members in Canada. The rest did not respond to this question. While

three respondents took a cab, one respondent drove from the USA to Canada in a car. After landing in Canada, eleven participants moved to their own rented homes right away, while ten stayed with their friends for the first few days. A further seven lived with their family members for a few days, while one participant lived in a hotel for the first few days. In-depth interviews with the participants showed that the majority of those who went straight to a new home had received help from their friends or family who had rented a place on their behalf before their arrival in Canada.

In response to their source of support and information with respect to finding rental accommodation, eighteen were helped by their friends, eight were helped by their family members, two found information from advertisements, while one rented an apartment through an internet search. When respondents were asked how they felt about their first residence, thirteen considered their first accommodation fine, while seven did not like their first rented apartment. While five liked their rentals very much, three were shocked to see the poor condition of their residences, and one felt that it was not very good.

There were different responses regarding the availability of the internet in the first few days. For seventeen participants, the internet was available at their first accommodation, while five used the library for internet services. There were six participants who did not have access to the internet, while one used it at a friend's place. In terms of commuting in the city for the first few days, twenty respondents (the majority) used public transport. A further seven had their own vehicles, while two got rides from their friends.

New immigrants require various documents and registrations soon after they land. The most common documents among these are permanent resi-

dent cards—commonly known as PR cards—as well as medical cards, social insurance numbers (SIN), credit and debit cards, drivers' licenses (if they intend to drive their own vehicle), and, in some cases, credentials evaluations. For this research, we asked participants whether they had faced any difficulties in procuring documentation. Twenty out of twenty-nine (one did not respond) did not face any difficulty in getting this documentation completed. However, a considerable number (i.e., nine participants) reported difficulties. Among these nine participants, six reported encountering difficulties acquiring a drivers' license, while two faced problems getting their credentials evaluation, and one participant reported difficulty getting a credit card.

Media: Source of Information

Media are considered major sources of information and news. Among the different and potential sources of information for immigrant settlement, media were also identified by the participants in this study. It was revealed that most immigrants watch, listen, and read media for information regarding settlement as well as news in Canada. Of the participants who responded to this series of questions, nineteen confirmed that they read newspapers regularly, while six responded no; three participants said they read often, while one participant intermittently read the newspaper. With regard to radio-listening patterns, fourteen said they listen to the radio regularly, while nine never listen to the radio, and three listen infrequently. When asked about TV, eighteen participants reported that they watch TV, while three responded no. A further five participants said they watch TV regularly, and three said they watch TV infrequently. Participants were also asked about their use of the internet, which is popularly called "new media". Regarding use of the internet for news and information, twenty-one participants reported regular use; however, two

said they did not use the internet either for news or for information and four participants reported only infrequent use.

Language could be a crucial factor for immigrants with respect to accessing and obtaining information, especially through media. Participants were asked if they would prefer to obtain the news through media in their "ethnic" language. The results show that twenty-one confirmed a preference for newspapers in their ethnic language, while eighteen confirmed a preference for ethnic language radio services, twenty-two expressed a wish for TV channels in ethnic languages, and sixteen would prefer to obtain news from the internet in their ethnic language. It is already evident that the majority of these immigrants speak a variety of languages other than English.

To explore further, participants' opinion about the usefulness of alternative and mainstream media was analyzed. This revealed information: thirteen did not find mainstream media useful, while only six found it very useful; however, eight participants considered it useful, while one considered it a waste of time. With regard to alternative media, there were diverse responses: nine considered it not useful, six found it very useful, and six considered it useful, while two called it a waste of time. Another five participants did not have alternative media easily available or accessible in BC.

Immigrant Settlement Services and Organization

The government (federal/provincial) provides funding and support to settlement service providers and agencies—mostly NGOs—whose mandate is to provide settlement services to immigrants and refugees in Canada. The immigrants were asked about their knowledge and experience of settlement service organizations. Out of thirty participants (one did not respond), twenty-seven participants knew about settlement services, while two did not know of their

existence. Participants were asked about their sources of information about settlement service organizations. For their primary source of information, fourteen learned about the Immigrant Settlement and Services Organization through their friends, only two came to know through family members, while three came to know either through the library or through settlement service providers in a different context, such as social gathering. Some participants had more than one source of information about settlement service organizations. For example, some learned of settlement support services through a settlement service organization, the internet, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), the Member of Parliament's office, a municipal government office, the library, the airport, and the *Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP)*.

Within the first month after arriving in Canada, sixteen immigrants came to know about settlement services, but eight never contacted them. Also, eight participants contacted service providers in the first month, while seven made contact within six months. Participants were asked why they needed to visit the settlement service providers. A majority of fifteen went for job-related information and support, while three participants went for education related information and three went for English as a second language (ESL) program. Thus, settlement services played significant roles in new immigrants' settlement.

Religious, Alternative, Ethnic, and Community Support

South Asian immigrants practice various religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. There are many religious institutions, such as churches, gurdwaras, mosques, and temples throughout Canada. It is a common perception that immigrants visit their religious institutions regularly

and seek help from these religious bodies for settlement, or that these bodies have something to offer to new immigrants for their settlement. But one of the major findings is that the overwhelming majority (i.e., twenty-four participants; three did not respond) did not contact religious institutions to seek either information or support for settlement. Only three participants contacted their religious institutions, and this contact was an effort to make social contact with people. There was neither a direct request for support from immigrants to the religious bodies, nor did the religious bodies offer any information and/or support for their settlement. Interestingly, an interview with a settlement worker revealed that they put up stalls and information booths at religious institutions, but not a single respondent mentioned having seen or used this source of information.

An equally potential source of information and support was identified as the alternative cultural or professional associations and organizations of various immigrant communities. A total of twenty-two respondents neither knew of nor contacted any such associations or organizations for settlement. Some participants knew about such associations/organizations, but they refrained from contacting them. Several reasons were mentioned and the most common reasons were: (a.) not useful; (b.) religious organizations do not offer any relevant information for settlement, especially in terms of job searches and career planning; and (c.) the leaders of these associations and organizations are geared to serve different goals. Some even mentioned their distrust in these associations and organizations because they believe that their personal information would not be kept confidential. Indeed, the participants feared that their miseries and tensions might become the "talk of the town" if they shared them with these associations/organizations.

To further investigate the level of involvement and support from the community, participants were asked if they had received any support from individuals in their communities. These individuals are known community members but not friends to the respondents. Interestingly, eight respondents did receive information and support from their respective community members. It was revealed that, next to friends and family, the social contacts gained after migrating to Canada made up a large portion of support.

The public library is considered a part of the community's life; in some cases, it is even the central place for community activities, as some libraries are part of community centers in Canada. The library was also identified as a major potential source of information for new immigrants. Here, too, the results are worth mentioning: eleven respondents found information and support for their settlement in Canada through a library, while eight found information. It is evident that the majority of participants used the public library and valued the services, whether they used it frequently or rarely. The extensive use and high recognition of the library as a resource may be related to the SA immigrants' higher education, credentials, and training.

The participants mentioned that the library was a useful resource, but it did not offer any direct support or information for the new immigrants' settlement. The libraries display the brochures or information packages from other bodies, but they do not have a specific information package for new immigrants. When this issue was discussed with a multicultural librarian in one of the municipalities of Greater Vancouver, s/he accepted the fact that: "...we discovered that because we are part of the community and people are also part of the community, they have some issues and there is no reason why we cannot expand our role, and sort of work in conjunction with the settlement agencies" (Pam, multicultural librarian). However the majority of people con-

firmed that they visited the library for a variety of reasons; for example, to get access to the internet, to borrow books, to keep their children involved in community and library activities, and to inquire about ESL services.

Employment: A Major Issue

The study revealed that most immigrants defined settlement as acquiring a job in a field or profession related to their skills. Participants were asked questions about their employment experiences before and after immigration. In response to a question about what sources they used for finding jobs, various responses were recorded. Many participants used more than one source. Of the respondents, twenty used friends as their primary source, two used family, while one each used a recruitment agency and the internet. As a secondary source, six used the internet, two used settlement services, while one used Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) and one used the library. Participants were also asked which sources they found useful for landing their first job. The highest number of participants landed their first job through friends, while the fewest landed their first job through a settlement agency.

Participants were asked about their satisfaction with their current jobs, and the responses varied. Overall, eight participants were neutral, while six marked satisfied and four were highly satisfied. On the other hand, seven marked dissatisfied, while three marked highly dissatisfied with their current job. The study revealed that most participants have to change their profession after coming to Canada and that is often the reason they are not satisfied with their current job. The majority were frustrated and disappointed with driving cabs or doing security or janitorial jobs—either the participants or their spouses were doing these jobs. Further, some of them seemed to adjust to their jobs because they were able to make enough money to pay off their

mortgages and provide a decent lifestyle for their families. Indeed, the feeling of loss of their professional careers remained at the top of the agenda in the interviews.

In order to gain a holistic picture, participants were asked to elaborate on the usefulness of the various potential sources of information. Friends stood out as the most useful category for information and support; nineteen respondents considered friends useful, while seven considered them a very useful source, and only one considered them not a useful source. In terms of family, fourteen did not have family in Canada; however, six considered family very useful, while four considered family a useful source of information, and only one considered family a waste of time.

With regards to settlement officers at the settlement service organizations, responses were mixed. While eight respondents considered them useful, and one considered them very useful, six considered them not useful, and three considered them a waste of time. Surprisingly, eight respondents never contacted settlement service providers.

Life in Canada

Respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with their life in Canada. It was revealed that thirteen were satisfied with their life, while two mentioned high satisfaction. On the other hand, nine were neutral, three were dissatisfied, and two were highly dissatisfied.

The participants were asked whether, in their present capacity, they offer information and support to new immigrants. Their responses indicate that the majority (twenty) do offer information and support. Among these, two said they often offer information and support to new immigrants, and only two said

they seldom do. This shows that, overall, immigrants consciously support new immigrants.

In order to determine their involvement and level of awareness with regard to politics, participants were asked if they take part in any public policy events, activities, or planning that affects their communities. The responses showed that the majority (twenty) did not, while five did take part. A further three seldom took part, while one mentioned often taking part. When answering the previous questions, while the immigrants confirmed that they help new immigrants by offering information and support, they themselves do not take part in any public policy events. In response to another related question, again the majority (seventeen) of respondents did not know the political representative in their constituencies at the local, provincial, and federal levels, while eight recognized them and four vaguely identified them. The in-depth interview revealed that some knew the name of their MP but not the name of their MLA or local councillor, or vice versa. One of the reasons given for this lack of involvement in public policy and lack of knowledge about their public representatives was a "busy life schedule". Participants reported that they were too busy making ends meet and they did not have time to take interest or take part in local, provincial, or federal politics and, consequently, their knowledge of and participation in politics was limited.

When participants were asked whether they thought they were settled in their new country (Canada), a majority of seventeen said they were "still in process", while five said "a little bit". A further three said "yes, fully", while three said "no". Only one respondent said, "it is not possible". They were also asked their opinion about how long it takes to get settled in Canada. A total of sixteen said two to five years, while eleven said five to ten years, one said one to two years, and one said "never".

Gender Roles: Domestic Chores

Many studies point out that gender roles change after immigration, and the settlement process impacts traditional gender roles (Suarez-Orozco 1995; Agnew 1996; Ng 1996; Zaman 2006). The respondents were asked about various daily tasks and sharing of domestic chores between spouses. Various routine tasks were identified to explore the gendered division of roles and labour.

An interesting finding is about the perception of respondents regarding the distribution of daily tasks. The study highlights the difference between how many women and how many men marked "both" in the questionnaire when asked who performs the various household tasks. In most cases men marked "both" more frequently than women.

The current division of labour among immigrant heterosexual couples looks like this: when asked about who takes care of children—feeding, bathing, changing, etcetera—it was revealed that thirteen women and two men perform these tasks; however, eleven respondents said they both perform these tasks. Among those who responded "both", three were women, while eight were men. It is interesting to see how many men consider that "they both perform the jobs" compared to the number of women, in all responses. When asked about who picks up and drops off children for their learning and leisure activities, it was revealed that an equal number of women and men pick up and drop off their children.

Participants were also asked who takes care of the elderly members of the family. It is assumed that SA families have a higher number of family sponsorship cases—particularly their parents; however, the study revealed that fourteen participants did not have an elderly person living with them.

Among the rest of the respondents, three women and one man did take care of the elderly members of the family.

Participants were asked who washes dishes in the home. It was revealed that seventeen women but only one man did the dishwashing. However, nine participants said that they both do it. Here, too, of the nine who said they both do the dishwashing, six were men, while three were women. Housecleaning was also identified as a regular chore. The interviews revealed that eleven women, while two men perform cleaning tasks at home. However, fourteen recorded that they both do it. In this group, nine were men, while five were women.

Like dishwashing and cleaning, cooking is also an essential part of family life. A majority (thirteen) of the women cook at home, while only one man said he does the cooking; however, four mentioned that they both do cooking at home. When asked about laundry, interesting data was revealed. It is important to note that most of the respondents live in basements[3] where the laundry is not usually included in the facilities, so laundry is done at commercial laundry facilities. The survey revealed that eight men and two women do the laundry; however eighteen said they do it together.

When asked about grocery shopping, another routine task identified as a domestic chore, participant narratives revealed the following; seventeen women and six men said they do the grocery shopping, while four said they both do the shopping, and one said other family members do the grocery shopping. Two women and two men said "both". One of the significant household tasks is financial management: bill payments, handling finances, etc. When the participants were asked about this task, very interesting information was revealed. The study found that not a single woman does financial manage-

ment alone; on the contrary, twenty-four men do financial management, while four reported that they both do it. Managing finances is a significant issue that requires exploration in a future study; indeed, this is a gender issue for both short and long-term settlement.

SECTION III: ANALYSIS OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Using in-depth interviews and narratives from the participants—both women and men—this section discusses eight key issues pertinent to their responses. To contextualize the issues and to explain SA immigrants' settlement process, an overview of major reasons for migration is presented. The narrations reveal the reasons for either utilizing or not utilizing the services of settlement organizations, as well as the library, religious institutions, and media. Thus, this section has the following sub-sections, which demonstrate the key roles of various agencies, organizations, and indeed, the internet, in the process of settlement: (I) Reasons for Migration, (II) Initial Settlement, (III) Friends, (IV) Settlement Organizations and Services, (V) Links between Settlement and Family, (VI) Media: Alternative and Mainstream, (VII) Library, (VIII) Religious Organizations, and (IX) the internet.

Reasons for Migration

Most participants cited four major reasons for immigration: (a.) better life; (b.) education for children; and (c.) security that includes economic, labour market, health, employment, and family safety; and (d) living within close geographic proximity of family. These are discussed below.

The first reason—a better life—may come under the category of the International Labour Association's (ILO) "Economic Security" as the concept is comprehensive that eventually encompasses better life (Zaman 2012).

Participants said what they meant by a better life and how sometimes expectations were not met. Mukhtar shared his reason for migration: "I had heard from friends and acquaintances that the future in Canada is good for children. Thus, I came to Canada with the information in the air." While revisiting his reason for migration, Mukhtar later admitted that this reason might have been an illusion, as he stated, "The child has to work hard … or he will do a labour job like we are doing. So, we have enough food here, but if it's only a matter of having food, then we have enough food there, too."

Education and a better life for children are high priorities for the families who have children. As a skilled immigrant, Mukhtar aspires to professional skills, training, and jobs for his children and underrates the value of menial labour.

The third reason, personal security, was also considered to be part of a better life for those interviewed. Several participants noted a deterioration of law and order in their country of origin, which adversely affected personal and family safety and prompted them to apply for immigration. Safia did not make up her mind to immigrate until her personal safety had been jeopardized:

> … snatching-on-motorcycle cases were on the rise. I was coming from the hospital … it was near my house … suddenly some people came on a motorcycle and they took my jewellery at gunpoint. It was so scary for me that I felt everybody on the street was a robber. Until that point, we were not sure about immigrating; then, we decided to move to Canada.

The fourth major reasons for immigration was having a family link and relatives living outside of the country of origin. For example, Asad, who had tried to immigrate earlier but had not been successful, said, "I got married in the year 2000, and most of my in-laws live outside of [country of origin] and it inspired me to go out of the country … the real inspiration came after mar-

riage, as my in-laws were abroad." In addition to having in-laws in Canada, another participant, Nawabzadah, visited cities in the USA and Canada before applying for immigration and settlement.

> Research Assistant: Where did you get information about settlement in Canada?

> Nawabzadah: It was my personal experience. My wife and I came in 1995 and visited

> Washington, Toronto, and Vancouver, and I liked Vancouver. Toronto's weather is harsh.

Nawabzadah's response reveals that prior travel experience in Canada influences some SA skilled immigrants in selecting Vancouver; indeed, most participants, including Nawabzadah, mentioned good weather as an incentive to settle there.

Initial Settlement after Migration: Building Home away from Home

 At the initial stage of settlement, most new immigrants relied on friends or relatives as sources of information. Friends or "friends of very good friends" who were also immigrants received new immigrants at the airport, sheltered them for a few days in some cases, helped them rent a basement suite or an apartment, and drove them to get groceries and other supplies during initial settlement. Raj described his arrival in Canada: "I landed in Toronto. Friends of my very good friends were at the airport to pick me up. I really didn't know them. My friend in [country of origin] just told them what I was wearing." Two women mentioned that their husband had met them at the airport, and one woman was received by in-laws. Raj, who landed in Toronto and then moved to Winnipeg to do his MSc in Natural Science Management, felt that he was building a "Home" by connecting to newly found university friends. As he ex-

plained: "Yes, that was my best time. I met friends and we were in the same boat. One was from Canada, one from Poland, and one from Vietnam. [They] were a source of emotional support [for me]. We were like a family; it was home away from home." Some even consider that friends rather than media provided more realistic pictures of Canada, and, indeed, friends assisted with initial settlement, as Sarath remembers:

> The information I got through my friends was the most realistic. I think some of the information in the media was not very helpful and there was a disconnect between reality and the information. … I came to Vancouver and was received by my friend. He had already arranged for a basement suite and we had a meal at their home and then we moved straight into the basement. It was a nice place--pretty good … it was close to all amenities and exactly what I was looking for, a small place at an affordable price.

Some friends even took care of new immigrants for a while, including driving them around the city, as Harbajan indicates, "No, they [friends] helped a lot. I am thankful to Bagwan [God] that two, three families I found here are just amazing, as we don't have car … for outings too." The services provided by friends of new immigrants represent unpaid work. If their services and time were evaluated based on their dollar value, as in a cost-benefit analysis, the sum would be millions of dollars, similar to what Marilyn Waring (1988) found in her book *If Woman Counted*, when she considered the value of unpaid work by women in economic terms. Participants' narratives suggest that a new accounting system is needed in order to pinpoint the economic value of immigrants/citizens' contributions to the economy vis-à-vis settlement processes.

Friends: Finding a Job to Mentoring

Of all the sources of support, friends or personal networks were highly valued for new immigrants in terms of starting from scratch to finding a job to settling in a profession. Throughout the narrations, the participants mentioned the advice, help, and support of their friends, especially in terms of landing a job in a new country. Immigrant friends were a great source of support and strength even prior to immigration. Hakim describes how he procured information prior to his immigration: "[Friends] are in Toronto; some are in Saskatchewan, and some are in Vancouver. They gave me first-hand information: the weather, the infrastructure, the job market, everything here."

Advice from friends ranges from job-seeking tips to going to school to settling in one's own profession. Asad's story shows the extent of the influence of friends in an immigrant's life, even though he was highly critical of his friend's advice. According to Asad, "I came with the mindset that I would not look back. So, the first job I started was as a security guard. It was recommended by my friends, as it's the first job for immigrants who are educated." However, Asad asserted his own view when his friend advised him to change his name: "… I was using my first name, Muhammad. Sometimes my friends would suggest changing my name. But I didn't change it. And people know me by my first name: Muhammad." Asad provided his critical opinion about the role of immigrant friends:

> Your friends give you suggestions according to their situation, without knowing their rights and opportunities; for example, if someone is working in 7/11, they will suggest that you work there. … [E]veryone asks you to join the profession or job they are doing. Two of my friends who were studying at UBC discouraged me from further studies, as they told us that the admission criteria were very high and courses were very difficult. … [T]

hey gave totally wrong information [about university education]; they misguided us. They should have encouraged us.

Jabarjang concurred with Asad wholeheartedly, although he emphasized the role of a mentor in an immigrant's life:

> [W]herever this new immigrant lands … if he stays with a trucker, even if he was a pilot mechanic in [country of origin], the trucker will tell him 'There is nothing like truck driving, you should drive a truck.' If he has come to a person who provides janitorial services, even if the guy was a banker in [country of origin], they will tell him 'Join us and go with us on the night shift and you can make money.' He will remain a janitor for all his life. Similarly, many teachers, lawyers, or whatever … if their relatives were driving taxi-cab, they will get him into this profession. … [T]hey only know about that business/profession.

In contrast, Zaviyar pointed out that the prospects of getting a job are much higher if one has a contact or knows someone in the place where they seek work. He was convinced that even a highly qualified person would not get a job without personal connections, which has been documented in many studies (Zaman 2012; Zaman 2006). The following three quotations from Zaviyar illustrate how his friends helped him, from his first job to a professional position:

> My best friend gave me all the relevant information, like how do you start from zero. He told me that it is not like if you are an agriculturist you will get a job accordingly. Maybe you start from zero, from scratch. So, he prepared me mentally.

> [O]ne of my friends took me to another friend who said 'I don't have any jobs presently.' So he sent me somewhere else … It was just a cash register job … it was a full time job. … It included cleaning the store as well.

> One of my friends from my university was a son of my teacher as well. He started a fertilizer company … so he offered me a job … I was lucky to get this job; otherwise, there are thousands of examples of qualified people [im-

migrants] who are doing odd jobs and could not find jobs in relevant fields after so many years in Canada!

The above narratives demonstrate the painful fact that many skilled immigrants do not end up in their desired jobs. When they do, they consider that it was "luck" that landed them the job, rather than their skills, which should have played a crucial role. The fact is that very few skilled immigrants find their dream job, which is considered a professional white-collar job.

The numerous roles of friends in immigrants' settlement demonstrate that friends act as mentors, knowingly or unknowingly. The value of a mentor was reiterated in Jabarjang's comment: "If I had had a mentor or someone who could guide me, today I would be a lawyer."

Saffinah, an optometrist in [country of origin], was looking for mentoring, and even went to the College of Surgeons in Toronto. Later, she commented, "Luckily I got a reference to an eye surgeon, so I am now working under his license." Saffinah's narration reveals how a mentor and "luck" intersect in a SA immigrant's life:

> I got good information from my family doctor, who was also originally from [her country of origin]. But she studied here; so she guided me to study the [relevant] books … She told me about different websites. … So I started studying, although I was busy with kids, and I passed two exams. That support was really helpful. I read the books she recommended. Basically, her information helped out. In Canada, contacts or references work. My family friend introduced me to an eye surgeon; so I am working with him under his license, not in private practice.

Saffinah's experience confirms that informal referrals play a major role, either in getting a professional job or in entering an internship that eventually transforms into a professional job. In other words, informal networking paves the path for professional settlement.

Immigrants' Settlement Organizations: Various Sources of Assistance

As the major focus of this study is on new immigrants' settlement, questions surrounding immigrant settlement services were asked more often than any other questions. The responses regarding new immigrants' sources of assistance were varied—from extremely satisfied to ignorance of the existence of settlement organizations. Sofia is very positive about the services of settlement organizations because, according to her, "[They] give you some directions where to go," although she never received any help from an organization. Her in-laws helped her with all sorts of settlement issues. Sofia recognized that she had received a lot of information from her early childhood education school/program. This also indicates that entering into a school/program assists new immigrants with information that may counteract their isolation and help them build up new forms of networks that pave the road for settlement. Sadaf never visited a settlement organization, but she knew about them. She said, "One of my friends worked in … [a settlement organization] as an internee and she told me that this is the place where one can learn a lot of new things." Through her friend's experience, Sadaf became quite positive about settlement organizations. Hatim was not aware of settlement organizations' services, and his notion was that these organizations were for unemployed people, but not for immigrants. He had learned of two settlement organizations prior to the interview. Hatim said, "They provide education improvements, resume development, and some interview skills; but I never knew about them for all these years." Hatim's comments reveal that many immigrants may be unaware that settlement organizations and their services exist. Zaviyar never received any help, and he said: " … there is no organization or NGO or … I could not find anybody that could guide me on the right track." Asad eloquently pointed out, "A settlement organization is a guide to

apply for various jobs. The people are not professionals." He continued, "I am a civil engineer. So, any engineer can guide me better to go to BCIT or a bank or elsewhere. They [settlement organizations] give us information that is not specific." Zeenat mentioned that her husband went to a job fair organized by a settlement organization, but businesses were just collecting resumes and there were no jobs there. She even questioned the purpose of collecting resumes if no jobs were available:

> [T]hey were collecting resumes and there were no jobs, so it was just a waste. They were saying 'we will contact you when we have jobs.' If they didn't have jobs, why did they organize this job fair? [A]fter collecting resumes, they could contact the people for interviews and give them feedback. They should have short-listed people for real jobs. Few people would have got jobs through this. What was the purpose of just collecting resumes?

Hebarjan's experience was mixed when she went to a settlement organization fifteen days after landing. They suggested that she could go to stores and apply for cashier jobs. Indeed, the organization gave her two or three references for jobs. Finally, she landed a job with the help of one of her friends.

The narrations by participants demonstrate links between their satisfaction and their ability to find jobs, shelter, and relevant information pertinent to education, schooling, employment, and so on. Shelly was extremely pleased with the settlement organization she consulted, as she found BC Housing through them. As a result, Shelly established a group home for autistic children. Even though her small business is demanding and she has a lot of responsibilities, including twenty-four hours on the job, she is highly satisfied, as this generates "good pay" for her family.

Criticism of settlement organizations came from a number of angles. Based on participants' educational skills, qualifications, training, and credentials, it

is evident that some skilled immigrants have higher expectations and need more than basic information and initial settlement support such as resume preparation and direction to low-paid jobs. Amar visited two settlement organizations and was disappointed with the services. He felt that the personnel lacked knowledge of his field:

> [T]hey would say 'learn computers,' or 'do a security job' and they are just passing time. I could not get any real information from them." Amar continued: "All employment centers are there to help, but the truth is that no one accepts our qualifications and experience and we have to start from scratch. Secondly, because at this age, I am over fifty, there is only one profession left for me; that is security: select it or reject it!

In Amar's case, his age prevented him from landing a job that matched his educational level. Raj was also dissatisfied with the settlement services, and his expectation was for more than help making resumes. He said:

> I am not very impressed with them … they are basically helping people who are not skilled or educated. … it is just a monotonous job, and they are not doing anything new. … They are just telling people to go somewhere and giving them a brochure, and teaching them how to use the internet and computer, which is not their job. They should be doing more than that, like finding jobs for people or training them. They should provide some settlement not just making resumes … like financial support or finding a job for them … fine to have a couple of employees make the resumes but not twenty people just making resumes for people.

Jabarjang went further and questioned the settlement organizations' services, and even asked the government to act responsibly by providing checks and balances.

> There is so much duplication of programs. It's not that different agencies are focusing on different needs of the immigrants; rather, the settlement agencies get money from the government and run the programs in a very ineffective way. The people who work there—counsellors and mentors—they

themselves are not adequately qualified. So, either the government should take charge of this task themselves, or these so-called non-profits should be investigated fully. [Our] government becomes free of responsibility once the money is disbursed to these agencies. There are no checks and balances to see whether the money is spent properly or not.

It is evident that while some were dissatisfied, most women expressed very positive feedback or were satisfied with the settlement organizations' services, while men frequently questioned both the quality and quantity of services. This indicates a gendered opinion about settlement services. The interviews also determined that settlement organizations are catering to a very different group of immigrants in the 21st century: skilled, experienced, and professional immigrants who are eager to know more than how to get a simple job or prepare a resume. Their demands for specialized knowledge and specific training require more highly trained professionals in these settlement organizations.

One of the participants who had been living in Greater Vancouver for more than twenty-five years eloquently described the complexities and chal-lenges of the settlement organizations:

Some of the agencies are doing good work; but the problem is that they are all after the same government funding. Sometimes the focus might be more on being competitive and the larger issue is lost. … Some of the programs overlap as well. … I know there is some kind of competition and whenever you get that, someone is going to suffer and it's going to be the client. I am not sure what kind of training their counsellors have, that might be part of the problem as well. Like, one of my clients in a workshop on Monday men-tioned to me that 'I have gotten more concrete information sitting here than I did at ongoing sessions at the agency because,' he said, 'they are too gen-eral. There, it is more like a classroom situation. You are sitting in front of the screen watching multimedia slides, here is a job search website, here is another one', he said. 'We know how to use the internet and find this kind

of information, but,' he said, 'what about doing something more concrete? Okay, if these are the jobs available, connect us with the employers'. So yeah, there is this kind of disconnect.

One of the participants expressed clearly that settlement organizations should be action oriented rather than process oriented. Participants want to see more concrete results, such as landing jobs, getting low-cost housing, receiving information about professional jobs and educational institutions, rather than making resumes and being directed only to entry level jobs with low pay.

Settlement: Integration or Family Disintegration?

Amar's wife, who was an engineer in India, immigrated to Vancouver while keeping her job in India. She shared a story about getting an entry-level job through the internet, only to be fired after three months for no known reason. Leaving her two daughters with Amar, she went back to India to continue working at her engineering job and to look after Amar's small business. From this account and others, it is evident that gender roles after immigration change dramatically, and the family had been separated to keep the household financially floating in Canada. Amar confessed that immigration to Canada and his wife's return to India were both his decisions, as his wife always considered they had a better and more comfortable life in India. India's economic boom and its role as a major player in the world economy endorse Amar's wife's perspective. Guida Man (2007) eloquently analyzed how immigrants to Canada from China and Hong Kong experience disintegrated family lives. Researchers have barely focused on South Asian families. In this study, narratives from participants also revealed that many families move from one province to another; for example, from BC to Alberta, and from Ontario to BC. One family member left Canada for Saudi Arabia to gain economic security; another re-

turned to his/her country of origin, Pakistan; and, in one case, a woman returned to India. This study demonstrates that immigrants' settlement should be considered in a holistic way. Young skilled women without children do far better professionally, provided that the husband/family is supportive. Lack of adequate and government sponsored childcare services force many immigrant women to sacrifice their careers and professions, and they either stay home as homemakers or do part-time flexible work for a significant portion of their immigrant lives due to desperate economic need. One participant, out of frustration, remarked, "Do your homework before coming."

Zaika's husband, who was working in a car dealership, moved to Edmonton from Vancouver to pursue his education; Zaika and their young children accompanied him. After returning from Edmonton, Zaika opened a daycare, and her husband started to work in a car dealership, instead of getting a job in his own field. Later, when Zaika's husband got a job and moved to Saudi Arabia, she handed over her daycare to another person so she could take care of her children. Zaika confessed that immigration to Canada had affected their conjugal life, as they did not have time for each other. Indeed, her husband's move to Saudi Arabia for job security interrupted Zaika's own entrepreneurial business, as well as their family life.

Sadaf was a lawyer in Pakistan. Because she does not have children, she was able to move to Victoria to upgrade her credentials, while her husband stayed in Vancouver to work. After returning from Victoria, Sadaf joined a law firm in Vancouver under the supervision of another lawyer. Sadaf acknowledged her husband's continuous support for her profession. Indeed, she seemed to be very confident, which was reflected in her own statement, "There is a lot of difference in today's Sadaf and the past Sadaf." Her comment demonstrates that a woman who does not have children has the flexibility to move

to another city. Immigration to Canada has disrupted family lives, transformed gender roles, and women with young children are at a disadvantage professionally. In other words, immigrants' settlement is an individualized process and each immigrant has unique experiences that may sometimes resonate with each other. Another participant pointed out two options for immigrants: "First to adapt to life [in Canada]; and second, to regret your decision forever."

Media: Alternative versus Mainstream

Participants pointed out the significance of "ethnic" media in their settlement, and further added that mainstream media hardly focus on immigrants, especially regarding settlement of new immigrants. Of all media, South Asian radio was mentioned as providing some relevant information to new immigrants. Participants also mentioned that the Hindi newspaper or the Punjabi newspaper include a lot of advertisements about whom to approach and how to get settled and where one could procure information. Raj mentioned that he watches mainstream news and reads their newspapers, but information on settlement is not apparent. Ali listens to the South Asia radio channel that focuses on settlement issues and he tries to assist new immigrants. Baljit eloquently summarized the role of South Asian media in terms of settlement:

> Recently, South Asian media have developed a lot and many people now
> listen to and view Indian and Pakistani programs. I feel in the last seven
> or eight years, there are three or four radio stations that have become
> very popular among [South Asian] people and in the lower mainland and
> Vancouver. They have attained a large audience and they bring the new and
> latest things. I cannot say that we are equal to English radio, but we have
> crossed many miles successfully and nicely. We have newspapers in our
> languages; they are also bringing new stuff for awareness-raising. TV pro-
> grams are focused on entertainment as such, except one channel with news
> bulletins in our language. They don't have large audiences, but still there is

a difference. These three mediums [print, radio, and TV] are giving a lot of information to the ethnic community, and the community also depends on these sources; as a result, awareness has increased and the main issues have come to the forefront.

Another participant with firsthand experience in the media supported Baljit's experience:

I have been running a hotline/open line program for the last ten-eleven years, where people from different countries, such as India, Pakistan, South Asia, Fiji, call and tell about themselves. I have a few dedicated programs for immigrants as well … [W]e promote and inform about new programs for immigrants. I speak to government representatives, ministers at the provincial as well as federal level … I come to know about various things. For example, most of the taxi drivers belong to India and Pakistan, and are highly qualified and skilled. The Canadian government couldn't take advantage of their skills. They [taxi drivers] couldn't find direction; wherever they found odd jobs to at least fulfill their basic needs, they joined them.

The above narration also demonstrates that many taxi drivers in Greater Vancouver are skilled immigrants whose credentials were not recognized during their settlement years, and eventually have eroded their original skills. One of the participants pointed out the significance of immigration, saying:

Immigration is a double process; only immigrants don't benefit from the process. This country [Canada] is a new country. As compared to our countries [South Asian countries] it is a new country, hardly 100 or 125 years old. For its development, skilled immigrants could contribute a lot. … If you look at Canadian people, especially from an educational point of view, Canadian domiciled people are not that educated.

In a number of interviews, the participants expressed their disappointments and frustrations:

> One of the immigration ministers told me that he was surprised to see that so many talented people were driving cabs! Although they have made many changes for the skilled immigrants, there are still so many hindrances for doctors, nurses, and medical professionals. The College of Physicians and Surgeons is behaving like a strict watchman who doesn't let new doctors from Pakistan and India enter its gates. Same for college teachers who are also guarding their doors and don't let the great teachers [immigrants] enter their doors. How can you [immigrants] work until you become a member of these bodies?

Participants compared alternative media with mainstream media. The following narration demonstrates this:

> No! Mainstream media has no interest in this regard; they will only highlight negative news about immigrants. If our children do get some success; for example, become a renowned doctor or win an international title for Canada, their news will be published on the twenty-fifth page of a newspaper. But if someone commits a mistake or gets involved in some criminal activity, their news will be published on the front page with banner news. With much sorrow, I have to say that until now [mainstream] media has done nothing for the immigrants' settlement. … But where do we go? This is our home now, our kids have made Canada their home; where will we go back to? We tell people in Punjabi and Hindi that the English media are talking about us. The politicians here used to do same thing. They would say something on our media, and in the mainstream media their statement would be different. There was no matching of their statements here and there. With the development of our ethnic media, the situation is changing now; with our greater understanding of languages and systems, English media now need us because we are the newsmakers now. As a result, we have eight to nine representatives in the Parliament now. Our people do vote in elections because we give them awareness of the power of the vote. Our votes are in blocks, they know now that wherever the Muslim or Indian community votes, that candidate will win, so we have become a reckoning force. As a media force

as well, we have become a bridge between white [mainstream] media and South Asian media, so politicians cannot give us double statements.

The above narration highlights the failure of mainstream media to play a supportive role in the settlement process. On the other hand, the alternative media is geared to SA immigrants and is transforming the role of media by trying to bridge the gap between South Asians and the mainstream media. Further, the role of the South Asian vote during elections—federal, provincial, and municipal—is clearly noticeable.

As many SA new immigrants are skilled workers and professionals, the mainstream media should be innovative in terms of providing news regarding settlement for this demographic, perhaps featuring a special column in the newspaper, for example, on issues especially pertinent to new immigrants. For example, the Canadian economy has been relying on immigrant labour since the nation-building process, and Canada has been fiercely competing in the global economy to attract and retain skilled immigrant labour. Canada is a major immigrant receiving country, and settlement issues require routine examination in print, radio, and television, and require to be featured in a holistic and positive way.

The Library: Transforming Role in Settlement

To our surprise, the library was a very good source of all sorts of information for new immigrants. They sought information ranging from referrals to journals to ethnic language books to English as a second language (ESL) materials to information on settlement. Indeed, participants cited many examples of useful library resources, including flyers that give various ideas, books, and guides for children, and community activities. Their experience with library staff was very positive. Hamnat noted his positive experience

with library staff, and continued to mention the journals available for new immigrants. Asad did not visit a library as a new immigrant, but his comments showed its role in immigrants' lives:

> From the library you can borrow books to improve your conversation, but I didn't get a chance to think about these options. I was so busy with work. However, I strongly feel that new immigrants should know about all these options. Especially in the initial stages when you are waiting for your PR [permanent resident] card or health card.

The role of the library has been transformed due to the large number of Asian immigrants in Greater Vancouver. Pam, who has been working in a library for twenty years, pointed out the library's continuously changing role and services to the immigrant community. The library has contacts with settlement organizations, has greater focus on South Asia—although her library has hired a Chinese-Canadian who can speak Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese)—and serves the community. Indeed, Pam is aware of growing numbers in the Filipino community. Pam is also aware that Pakistani immigrants have been forming a growing community, as many of them are requesting Urdu magazines and materials. She adds that there are very few Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, or Nepalese around the library; as a result, no new books/resources are available in their languages. However, some resources in Gujrati, Hindi, and Punjabi are available.

> We definitely buy materials in their own [immigrants] language and if we feel there is a specific need, then, we try to meet that need. So for Korean, for instance, we will partner with one of the settlement agencies who have their own Korean outreach workers and we will do a joint program so the program might be based in one of our branches… or any other agencies will help us because they have a language specialist.

Pam eloquently summarized the library's changing roles and the importance of settlement agencies and community groups:

> More and more … people are looking for settlement type information. We often act as a referral service … we are not a government agency. We cannot do counselling; however, we have contacts with other settlement agencies, community organizations. We are able to refer people to them. … You [new immigrants] don't know about settlement agencies … may know about libraries … this is often or sometimes their first stop, rather than the settlement agency … so many people are coming here and they are not looking for novels, they are looking for ESL materials. So we have very good collection of ESL that's pretty basic when they come here. We do referrals. We discovered … they have some issues. … There is no reason why we cannot expand our role and sort of work in conjunction with the settlement agencies. Because settlement agencies can't do everything … they also have limited funding, their staffing, and so on. … Our role as educators and teachers has expanded since—probably from the last six to eight years. For instance, we used to put on these job workshops for everyone. We got some funding from HRDC to put on job-search workshops … we found that a lot of people attending are the new immigrants.

Pam is empathetic to new immigrants and understands the complexities of the skilled and highly educated immigrants who have become the stream of the twenty-first century. The following is an extract from the interview that provides a clear picture of the needs of new immigrants:

> Research Assistant: You are training eight people in one month. How many of them get jobs?

> Pam: Well, we told them in the beginning that you are not here to get job and we cannot give you jobs. We are giving you the information. … This workshop is information and orientation about how libraries work. I also give them a list of libraries in the town so that they know it [this] is not the only public library. [T]here are many other libraries; for example, hospital or cor-porate or law libraries. … Judging from their feedback, they say it is very useful information. Because of small group training, they get one-on-one at-

tention. Lots of them are highly educated people. They already know about job search websites. They say this is not what they want to know; they want more concrete information.

This interview extract reveals that the library has expanded its services due to emerging needs of the immigrant community, and the new immigrants, who are both skilled and highly educated, expect more than simply resume making or general information.

Religious Organizations: Do they Matter in Settlement?

The participants, irrespective of religion, mentioned that they did not receive assistance from their own religious organization for their settlement in a new country. Indeed, they pointed out that they visit their religious organization for peace of mind and not for settlement help. Some said that religious institutions are for networking and to build up social contacts. These perspectives dispel some popular myths and negative images about religious institutions. It should be noted here that people belonging to the same faith-based group are diverse, sometimes divisive—right wing to moderate to left wing. Asad pointed out the financial problems his mosque was facing. The following is an excerpt of Asad's narration:

Asad: The problem with mosques is that they have their own financial problems. There is no government funding. They are always emphasizing donations. I used to go for *Jumma* prayer, but didn't hear any offer of help for new immigrants.

Research Assistant: Do you think that religious places like mosques, churches, or gurdwaras can help immigrants in settlement?

Asad: Yes, surely they can help us. When you come here you feel connection with religious institutions. Whenever I go to mosque I feel good that people wear the same dress as mine. But they are not giving the message that they

should be giving [about settlement of immigrants]. Moreover, religious in-
stitutions in Vancouver are mostly managed by Arabs [Arabic speaking] or
other people, not Pakistanis [Urdu or Punjabi or Sindhi or so on speaking].

The above narration indicates that the mosque is a place for various linguistic
groups that hinder creating a broad-based alliance based on religion only.
Indeed, many mosques relay messages in Arabic, which South Asian immi-
grants are unable to comprehend.

Raj found a different scenario in the temple. He shared his own impres-
sions: "… We just went to temple to build some contacts, have some social
life. Temples are more like social clubs in [country of origin]. Here [it is] rather
a place for worship, that's what I feel." Amar visits a gurdwara on Sunday, but
there is no help or information pertinent to settlement or professional employ-
ment. But Hamnat suggested that the temple could be a model of counsel-
ling for new immigrants' settlement. "… [I]f the committee of mandir or the
ethnic committee of the temple does some formal presentation, in that sense,
that would be more helpful." Participants revealed that they have the fewest
expectations from religious institutions for help with their settlement. Further,
gurdwaras, mosques, and temples are neither interested in new immigrants'
settlement nor in their religious commitment.

Internet: A Great Source of Support and Networking

Participants used the internet vis-á-vis websites extensively, from job
searching to professional upgrading. Not a single participant was sceptical
about the use of the internet. Indeed, participants' knowledge and use of the
internet challenged, and in many cases surpassed the services and activi-
ties offered by settlement organizations. Zakia read all the books supplied by
the Citizenship and Immigration department when she migrated. She even

mentioned that these books and sources helped by providing the addresses of websites, which she and her family searched on the internet. Ali's narrative describes the internet as a source of all sorts of information that fulfills many skilled immigrants' short- and long-term requirements for settlement information:

> I had access to the internet, so I kept browsing their immigration site. Other than that, I never bothered to search any other website because I was not interested.

> … in my little bit of research about Canada, I figured out that the human development index shows that Vancouver is one of the best cities, with better living conditions, so I thought "if we are going to Canada, why not Vancouver?"

> … [M]y entire information source was the internet and the biggest source was government websites, and I don't think any settlement agency could give me as much information as I got from these websites.

> Despite extensive use of the internet, Ali used settlement services during his early years of settlement and shared his opinion:

> Research Assistant: What was your experience with the settlement agencies?

> Ali: Well … it depends on what you are looking for … Yes, I was satisfied. They fulfilled it [needs] in quite a comprehensive way. They told me how to make a good resume. The resource person was so kind. She would sit with us after workshops for as long as we wanted and help us with resumes. But if you think they will help you acquire a job or give useful tips to get a job, forget about it. I don't think any settlement service can do that and it's not their fault because there are no such tips or such things on how can you get a good job in Canada. There is no way you can know that.

Ali has succinctly summarized the kind of support and services that immigrant and settlement organizations are geared to. His comments point out the significance of the human and personal touch, more specifically, one-to-one service. Finding professional and skilled jobs is beyond the purview of immigrant settlement organizations' financial capacity and goals. The process of settlement is still an individualized and disjointed path. It is evident that a number of different agencies and organizations play significant roles in settlement.

Success in Settlement Requires Institutional Assistance

Participants named several organizations that had assisted them in initial and long-term settlement. Immigrants appreciate and acknowledge any help with gratitude, and they preserve this throughout their lives. Asad shared the role of WorkSafe BC in his life:

> Right now I am doing a job as an engineer in the government sector. When I switched my job from security, at that time I started my education again. I got a student loan and all the help from the system. … Later, through my doctor's recommendation, the company was asked not to send me to the bank again as I was [terrified] working in the bank after the robbery incident. At that time … my doctor gave me a note and said: 'you don't have to return to your job again.' WorkSafe BC helped me at that time. I got income assistance for one year. I did all the courses relevant to engineering. WorkSafe BC also motivated me to take different courses and upgrade myself. Before financial help from WorkSafe BC, I was paying from my own pocket. I never had idea that the government could also assist you to upgrade your education or that there was any organization that can help you get this information. When WorkSafe BC stepped in, I was a bit scared. … I was thinking, what if I lose my job as well and don't even get support from the government, how will I survive? Here in Canada, if you are unable to pay your mortgage for a month, the next thing you know, you are on the street.

Asad's narrative indicates that a number of agencies intersected in his life that transformed him from a commercial bank's security personnel to an engineer. Of all the organizations, he most fondly remembered WorkSafe BC and its role in his professional life. Aware of the consequences of failure to make a mortgage payment, he overcame his fear and various sorts of insecurity through institutional help. Asad's story also reveals that strategic institutional help is necessary for this century's skilled immigrants.

Section IV: Conclusion and Recommendations

This report establishes that friends play a major role in SA skilled immigrants' settlement. The roles of immigrant and settlement services are also valuable, as they provide a human touch and personal and telephone services that help alleviate financial constraints and lack of resources. South Asian skilled immigrants are internet savvy and explore media beyond the well-established recognized media. Thus, the library and alternative media received more attention in the findings and narratives. Countering popular images, religious institutions are for spiritual development and making connections with the immigrant community. South Asian skilled immigrants try to the fullest extent to make Canada their home. The widely used concept of integration is not useful in examining settlement; rather, SA immigrants' settlement should be viewed in a holistic way, where different actors, including agencies, organizations, institutions, and the larger society play lead roles.

The study results are very informative and have much relevance to policy pertinent to skilled immigrants. The following should be considered, based on the study's findings:

- Settlement organizations need more personnel and financial resources to provide information about professional organizations to new immigrants.

- Whether in person or over the phone, person to person service is very much appreciated, as this gives a human touch. Front-line workers at settlement services are invaluable personnel. Also, service by telephone is still valued. Prompt telephone service may enhance the overall services, providing a personal touch, and facilitating the settlement process.

- Set up a mentoring program that has a number of resource people, including experienced and trained community people who are eager to mentor new immigrants. Tap the community resource personnel, as they may be interested in giving back to the community in a formal way.

- The importance of informal networks in settlement and adaptation should be duly recognized by the policy-makers and immigrant settlement organizations and services.

- Recognize the role of libraries in settlement and boost the funding geared toward immigrants' settlement.

- Mainstream media—print, radio, and TV—should report on racialized immigrants in a positive way. In other words, they should avoid using words and news that perpetuate stereotypes and negative images about racialized groups.

- Recognize the role of alternative/ethnic media in immigrants' settlement.

- Lobby the provincial and federal governments to recognize immigrants' credentials. Currently, the process is individualized, isolated, and alienated. A Canada-wide universalized system may facilitate recognition of the credentials of immigrants.

NOTES (ENDNOTES)

1 Postgraduate refers to a Masters level of education, while university graduate refers to undergrad degrees; this includes professional degrees as well, such as engineering degrees, because they are treated as undergrad programs.

2 It is significant that Punjabi is spoken both in India as well as the Pakistani Punjab (in the provinces and also elsewhere in the countries). The Punjabi spoken in both countries—India and Pakistan—has different dialects but can be easily understood in both countries; however, the scripts are entirely different, so Indian Punjabi speakers and Pakistani Punjabi speakers might not be able to read each other's written Punjabi.

3 A basement is usually a small ground floor suite, usually rented spaces in Metro-Vancouver. An average sized basement includes one or two bedrooms, usually one bathroom, and a small living and kitchen area. It is a small version of a full sized house, with less (or almost no) storage space and/or one to two parking spots available. The basement rent, in most cases, includes utilities such as water, heat, and electricity.

References

Agnew, V. 1996. *Resisting Discrimination: Women from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean and the Women's Movement in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Caidi, N. and D. Allard. 2005. Social inclusion of newcomers to Canada: An information problem? *Library and Information Science Research, 27*(3):302–324.

Duncan, H. 2003. Social inclusion, social capital and immigration. *Canadian Issues: Themes Canadiens, 4*:30–32.

Fleras, A. Please adjust your set: Media and minorities in a multicultural society.In *Communications in Canadian Society*. 406-431. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1995

Fleras, A. and J. Kunz,. 2001. *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada.* Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.

Fleras, A. 2009. Theorizing multicultural media as social capital: Crossing borders, constructing buffers, creating bonds, building bridges. *Canadian Journal of Communication 34*(4):725-729.

Hiebert, D., and K. Sherrell. 2009, November. *The Integration and Inclusion of Newcomers in British Columbia.* Metropolis British Columbia: Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity.

Jiwani, Y. 1992. In the outskirts of empire: Women of colour in popular film and felevision. *Aquelarre*, Fall:13–17.

Lin, N. 1990. Social resources and social Mobility: A structural theory of status attainment. In R. Breiger (Ed.), *Social Mobility and Social Structure*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Man, G. (2007). Racialization of Gender, Work, and Transnational Migration. In *Race and Racism in the 21st Century Canada: Continuity, Complexity and Change* edited by B. Bolaria, H. Singh, and P. Sean. 235-252. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Miller, J. 1994. How Canada's dailies shut out minorities. *Media Magazine 1*(2).

Mitchell, A., and R. Shillington,. 2002. *Poverty, Inequality, and Social Inclusion.* Toronto: Laidlaw Foundation.

Murray, C., S. Yu, and D. Ahadi. 2007. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Media in BC.* Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. Q: Please identify the formatt: presentation?

Ng, R. 1996. *The Politics of Community Services: Immigrant Women, Class and the State.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing

Reinharz, S. 1992. *Feminist Methods in Social Research.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Silver, H. 1995. *Fighting Social Exclusion.* Belfast: Democratic Dialogue

Suarez-Orozco, C. and M. Suarez-Orozco. 1995. *Transformations: Migration, Family Life and Achievement Motivation Among Latino Adolescent*s. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Thobani, S. 2007. *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Zaman, H. 2006. *Breaking the Iron Wall: Decommodification and Immigrant Women's Labor in Canada.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books (A Division of Rowman and Littlefield Publisher).

Zaman, H. 2012. Asian Immigrants in "Two Canadas": Racialization, Marginalization, and Deregulated Work. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.