PREFACE

The Punjabis started migrating abroad in the last quarter of the 19th century. Through the historical processes of more than one century, they have succeeded in the community formation abroad and have established themselves in the socio-cultural, political and business mainstream of the host countries. Significantly the literature on the Punjabis abroad started appearing in the late 1950’s. Western as well as Indian historians, sociologists, anthropologists, economists and political scientists have studied Punjabi diaspora from different perspectives and recognized their importance as an international diaspora. That is what exactly attracted me to take up the proposed work to test the validity of broad generalizations made by the scholars and the historians on the Punjabi diaspora and to understand and analyze general and specific socio-cultural and economic reasons for migration; to underline the context of the Punjabi diaspora historical situation; and its linkages as well as to highlight experiences and consequences of this back at homeland.

In this way an attempt has been made to answer the following questions:

- What does the term ‘diaspora’ stands for in its historical context?
- When and why did the Punjabis begin to migrate to other countries of the world?
- What are the major studies conducted so far on the Indian/Punjabi diaspora and what are their limitations?
- What is the nature of experiences of Punjabi immigrants and what were the main problems faced by them in the initial stage?
- How has the Punjabi identity been institutionalized in foreign lands?
- What is the nature of progress made by the Punjabi diaspora?
- How did the Punjabi diaspora react to the issues emanating from the homeland particularly during the period of militancy and its aftermath?
- What are the linkages of the Punjabi diaspora with the homeland?
- What did cause the people of village Shankar to migrate abroad?
- What has been the impact of the Punjabi diaspora on the people of the Punjab in general and the village Shankar in particular?
What is the response of the people of the village Shankar to the ‘new conditions’ created by the Punjabi diaspora?

The study is primarily an empirical one based on survey work. The data collection techniques such as questionnaire, interviews and personal observations are the main parts of the study. Information was received from 60 respondents through the questionnaire technique and 101 persons were interviewed on the basis of questionnaire. They further referred about 215 cases of migration. About 135 young Shankarites, born and brought up in overseas countries were also interviewed personally and some of them were interviewed telephonically, to ascertain their cultural patterns, linkages with the country of their origin and their relations to the countries in which they are born and brought up. Some senior citizens in the village were also interviewed to know the history of village, social, cultural and economic contexts of the migration from the village to abroad. The personal observation technique of data collection was also used to know the historical evidences i.e. old buildings and their architecture, insights, feelings, emotions of the migrants, their linkages with the homeland and impact of migration on the village. The study is based on information provided by over five hundred respondents.

The literature on diaspora and the Punjabi diaspora has also been reviewed. The creative Punjabi literature on Punjabi Diaspora has also been quite helpful in understanding socio-cultural and psychological dialect and woes of the Punjabi diaspora. The personal collections i.e. letters, bank transactions and postal order records, have also been useful to provide historical evidences. Besides these, the official records such as Census Reports; District Gazetteers, village records i.e. Abstract Note Book Lal Kita, Jamabandi Records and Khanna Sumari Records have also been consulted in the pursuit of this study. Besides Shankar, personal visits were also made to the philanthropic projects and activities undertaken by the Punjabi diaspora. Information was also solicited from the persons attached with these projects.

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