CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUSION

Immigration as a framework analyses the vast movements and interactions of people in the modern world. Today, migration is receiving more attention in public discourse than ever before. The increased mobility, its emergent transnational character, and the growing linkages between place of origin and place of destination, necessitates efforts from states to offer migrants better incorporation opportunities in the host land. Contemporary global immigration needs to be understood in terms of legal apparatuses, various para-governmental NGOs, human rights monitoring groups, pro and anti immigration lobbies, dual citizenship provisions, government programs for diasporas etc. The direction and the volume of migration to Australia, North America, and Western Europe have increased rapidly in recent times. The emergence of new migration patterns, augmentation in demand for professionals and skilled migrants in specific occupational categories demonstrate the extent and diversity of existing migratory movements in the world.

Both quantitative and qualitative transformations in the nature of international migration have brought migratory movements and their longer-term implications to the forefront in national and international policy discussions. As already noted in the study, the policies of destination countries and of their existing country of residence, non-state policies in addition to community-based and personal contemplations involving family and friends influence the migratory patterns. Thus, the present study had been carried out under a conceptual framework which addresses immigration dynamics through changing social, economic, demographic and political circumstances. A central objective of the research was to highlight the experience of the Indian diasporic people in two liberal democratic settlement societies i.e. Australia and the United States, while examining the entry restrictions imposed by them.

The idea and set of social formations encompassed by the concept of diaspora are extremely multifaceted one. In other words, understanding diaspora practices and identities entails understanding their position in geographical, historical and material
processes. This means that the complexity, specificity and contested makeup of diasporic experiences have not vanished. Diaspora communities, constituted by displacement, are sustained in hybrid historical conjunctures. Disapora phenomenon is ancient and enduring, yet the relative and absolute numbers of modern and incipient diasporas are larger than those of historical diasporas. Nevertheless, they share some characteristics like migrating out of their homelands, determination to maintain their identities that tie them to their homelands, development of communal solidarity etc. Diasporic identity embarks upon multiple modalities in terms of gender, race, class, religion, language and generation. It needs to conquer generational, educational, social and ideological differences and gaps in order to ensure the survival, continuity, and prosperity. They facilitate internal, inter-state, and worldwide political, cultural and economic connections. They are not invented or ‘imagined communities’ rather they constitute real and viable entities. Though the diaspora communities are influenced their by their social and political environments in homelands and host countries and develop certain degrees of hybridity, nonetheless their core groups maintain substantial cohesion and conformity to national religious and cultural mores and rites.

Cultural pluralism has been a characteristic aspect of numerous societies. While pluralism points towards the existence of differences, and tries to ensure legal equality for all the communities, multiculturalism goes beyond this by challenging the prevailing notions of citizenship and tolerance by promoting cultural diversity. The present study examined multiculturalism and the immigrant policies prevailing in the two democratic countries. It throws light on challenges and issues that brazen out many industrial, capitalist societies in dealing and addressing problems related with the migrant population. Countries of immigration have to tackle with more and more plural and diverse character of the population in today’s globalized world. In response to this changed reality, the countries put forward their strategies of refutation and devaluation, or of recognition and affirmation which emerges from time to time.

It is argued that multiculturalism is a postmodern response to issues related with identity and belonging. In America, melting- pot ideal led to a sense of national identity based on idea of nation as a land of immigrants. Assimilation on the other hand, led to loss of one’s distinctive identity. In America, for instance, a prevailing
culture was to conform to a set of national attitudes and values by foreign-born individuals, resulting in pressure to assimilate. However, today the nation has grown from its earliest most constrictive WASP version to a multicultural one that seeks to bring all members into full societal membership. The emphasis of multicultural policy was an approach that stressed unity in diversity. Multiculturalism as government policy emphasized equity and in popular imagining it stressed cultural diversity.

The historic settler states- the United States and Australia- persist to be more heterogeneous and multicultural than their non-settler state counterparts. They are parallel in terms of noteworthy influxes of immigrants from the less developed nations during the latter part of twentieth century. Australia had maintained a constrictive sense its inhabitants for a longer time than U.S.A. owing to the British roots remaining more central to the society. It advances more liberal adaptations of assimilation and adoption of multiculturalism policy that supports maintenance of ethnic identities. This study also points to the fact that American national unity was based on invisibility of racial and ethnic differences unlike Australia. In Australia, racial homogeneity became the basis of nation-building policy. Gradually, it adopted more flexible immigration policies under a perceived perception to ‘populate or perish’. ‘Australian way of life’ was advocated for assimilation of immigrants. However, disappointment from assimilation policy led to the adoption of multiculturalism policy.

Multiculturalism is unavoidable in the contemporary world. The management and governance of multiculturalism is to ensure that there is widespread respect for diversity. It should promote cohesion and shared identity for the diverse groups of people. Multiculturalism illustrates the intricacies associated with cultural and religious diversity in society, and the management of the challenges and prospects such diversity offers. The migration history and the distribution of population are specific to each country. The road to multiculturalism has been and is still one of great complexity in terms of arbitrating relations between diverse groups and their conflicting interests and issues. It is important to relate the particular experiences of multiculturalism to the ways in which issues of diversity and change are perceived within the national context of the society. Practical policy to address this will include legislation that addresses prejudice, discrimination and racism. It is certain that the
issues of multiculturalism will become more urgent and more challenging as the twenty-first century progresses.

The present study aimed at examining multiculturalism as a state policy in two settlement societies and how these policy initiatives affect the Indians in the countries under consideration. Also, an analytical attempt is made to understand the adaptive capability of the Indian diasporic community. A brief reference to the research problems encountered related with overseas Indians will be worthwhile for a comprehensive study. Despite its size, the Indian migration is not thoroughly researched though this is beginning to change. Also, much of the work on it has been quite recent especially in connection with Indians in Australia. There is a dearth of good collection of work on Indians in Australia both from Australian and Indian perspectives. However, this was not the case with the United States, owing to older history of Indian migrations in comparison to Australia. Moreover, cross-country comparative studies were few in number to refer to in this case. In addition to the primary and secondary resources available, this study draws from a web-based survey of 93 respondents based in Australia and United States of America. Though the survey yielded few responses from the community members, yet it is representative of the composition of the Indian diaspora covering students, professionals and older migrants. Nevertheless, the present study examined the following set of issues related with international migration in relation to tremendous increases in cultural, social and political diversity:

• Issues of assimilation vis-à-vis multiculturalism in liberal democratic societies;
• Restrictive or welcoming immigration policies in the two settlement societies;
• Role of the state in dealing with the immigrant population in general, and in particular, with reference to multicultural character of the nation and society;
• Contributions of the Indian diaspora in both host land and home land;
• Issues of citizenship;
• Issues relating to formation and maintenance of Indian identity in host society;
• Linkages between diaspora and motherland;
• Adaptability problems faced by Indians including victimization in the form of unemployment, racism, strict immigration rules etc;
Thus, immigration is a fact of life in the world today and, despite periods of public unease, will remain so. Migration has also become a pressing issue for a range of social actors that include private sector entities, trade unions, migrant and diaspora associations, and intergovernmental bodies. Most of the advanced nations can be identified as multicultural owing to their cultural diversity. However, there are significant differences among these nations, both in terms of levels and source of diversity. Australian state is dedicated to sponsoring and encouraging multiculturalism policy as affairs of official policy. As a settler state, it had to face the impact of immigration and the consequential cultural pluralism. Conversely, in the United States multiculturalism has achieved acceptance with the community but is not a state sponsored program. Nevertheless, similarities between Australia and America can help them to gain from each other’s experiences and understanding.

Debates on immigrants in Australia have centered on arguments about economic development, strategic concerns, environmental sustainability, and issues of cultural identity and xenophobia. Australia’s immigration policy has historically been the most contentious as it had preference for European immigrants, particularly white British subjects. The “White Australia” policy, for example, had its roots in a series of restrictive legislative measures introduced in various Australian colonies from the mid-1850s favouring British immigration. Whitlam Labor Party Government in 1972 abolished the discriminatory aspects of Australia’s immigration policy and adopted multiculturalism policy. It was further endorsed by the Fraser government in 1975. Australia also ratified the International Convention on the elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination the same year. As noted earlier in the study, migration is seen as essential to Australia’s demographic, social and economic future since it contributes to higher living standards, greater income equality and larger government budgets.

Economic concerns lie at the heart of Australia’s immigration policy. There has been an increase in proportion of skilled immigrants in immigration policy to attract talents to benefit Australia economically. Intake from Asia has increased which remains consistent with the diversification country of origin of migrants. Australia however, has moved away from its previous policy of permanent settlement to guest worker migration (guest workers are permitted to change their status if their jobs
become “permanent”). Initially, Australia targeted highly skilled category but today 457 visa category is used to bring in numerous lower skilled workers. The waves of migrant workers, whether those arriving under high-skilled points schemes or low-skilled workers destined for agriculture, manufacturing, construction and the service sectors, have led to the economic migration scheme being restructured, and better border control systems instituted. The United States of America in contrast, often views immigration as a strain on its economy, yet it faces a seemingly unending immigration surge. United States gives priority to admission based on family reunification followed by employment, refugees and other categories. Australia, on the other hand maintains a regular immigration intake based on economic, social and humanitarian considerations. Besides permanent settlement, temporary migration of highly skilled personnel and students is rising notably which has led to changes in ethnic composition of population, modification in recruitment policies, transformation in migration policies etc.

Australia had the largest proportion of Australians born overseas in 2001 compared with other major immigration countries. However, debates over Asians migration have still not entirely vanished, though it remains less racist than White Australia days. For instance, One Nation Party leader Pauline Hanson in 1996 had suggested that the large population of Asian nation compared to the small population of Australia has a threat element. Some tensions and dilemmas like the recent attacks on Indian students in Australia also poses question about the significance and desirability of a multicultural Australia. Though the government rhetoric and policies espouse multiculturalism, there is growth of criticism on its implications and relevance. A multicultural story of Australia has never completely replaced White Australia. Australia is without doubt an ethnically diverse nation where successive governments have experimented with polices of multiculturalism in the hope of making the state a more equitable place for all citizens yet Australia is not free of all systemic racism.

In the U.S.A, multiculturalism is associated with the promotion of non-western cultures, while in Australia it is related more directly to the social position and interest of ethnic minority groups. The politicization of multiculturalism in America has been from the bottom up, whereas in Australia multiculturalism is a top
down political strategy implemented by the government as noted in the study. In America migrants were assumed to absorb into the mainstream society, whereas in Australia cultural diversity was actively promoted by the government. The melting-pot metaphorical approach in America was based on the notion of assimilation and was considered essential for American national identity. Being an American was not identified with specific cultural practices and symbols. The common notion of ‘America as the promised land for all’ attracted more and more immigrants to it. The survey of this study also demonstrates that America remains a preferred destination by most Indian immigrants as it promises to be a ‘land of opportunity’.

One interesting fact is that race has been crucial to American articulation of multiculturalism, unlike Australia where the concept of ethnicity dominates. However, whether multiculturalism is rhetoric of government policy as in Australia or a minority-driven demand for recognition and social advancement for racialised groups as in America, it remains a much contested and debated discourse. Barack Obama, US President, rightly commented on this aspect while addressing the media “Our broken immigration system can only be fixed by putting politics aside and offering a complete solution that secures our border, enforces our laws, and reaffirms our heritage as a nation of immigrants,” (PTI 21 January 2009). The terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 became the focal point around which policymakers and scholars came to address a new set of challenges relating to migration.

The Indian diaspora demonstrates an increasing self-consciousness in terms of historic settlements across the world and successive migrations in the last two centuries. The developments of new technologies and speedy globalization have further triggered this movement. The economic potential of overseas Indians has made them more sought after community not only by host land but also by home land which had neglected its overseas population. It is worthwhile to mention speech of Obama, US President exhorting his countrymen to “buckle up as the Indians and Chinese are catching them fast”, as Americans have now settled into mediocrity (PTI 12 June 2009). According to a study by the Migration Policy Institute, a considerable number of Indian immigrants - 38 per cent according to 2001 US Census figures - have a master's professional or doctorate degree, 89 per cent are most likely to have a
high school diploma, 70 per cent have a bachelor's degree (TNN 6 February 2005). This in itself testifies the contribution that Indians make in the host land owing to their education, skills and hard working abilities. Nevertheless, they remain connected to the mother land by emotions, traditions, feelings and attachment which are carried on to the successive generation of immigrants. This is in line with Safran’s (1991:83-84) argument of a diaspora maintaining a memory, vision or myth about their homeland. Cheap travel, new communication technologies and economic liberalization have further strengthened these linkages. Also, the present study unravels the fact that the relaxation in immigration control since 1960s in both Australia and the United States has proved to be turning point in migration from India particularly of the professionals and educated lot.

The professional accomplishments of Indians globally and phasing out of restrictive immigration policies have added new dimensions to the migration of Indians to these settler societies. Indians are keen protectors of their religious customs, dress and cuisine, dance and music, reflecting their ethnic identity. They have transplanted the cultural diversities of home in the country of adoption. They continue to observe and celebrate these differences in the new environment. The online survey conducted also testifies this fact as over fifty per cent of the diasporic people regularly celebrate Indian festivals. The role of diaspora has acquired an enhanced significance in view of their adaptable nature. Diasporic identity is also shaped by bi-lateral relations and foreign policy considerations. PIOs have become a strong voting force in host countries like the United States and therefore could act as catalysts of international economic relations too. Indian-Americans have exercised the most political influence through their campaign contributions, and are actively involved in fundraising efforts for political candidates on the federal, state, and local level elections. However, Indian diaspora doesn’t constitute a large population to influence immigration policies in its favour. H-1B visa in United States and 457 business visa category in Australia are facilitating migration of skilled people which confirms only academic and professional achievements of Indians. They are still not very large in number to make a significant mark in political or social echelons of the host society. Future directions for the Indian immigrants will be determined by the extent of continued immigration, public attitudes and policies toward immigrants and
conditions in India. Return migration to India also remains a possibility, which may unravel unforeseen patterns of immigration.

The relationship of the Indian government with its diaspora was an attitude of indifference, and non-interference with their countries of abode for forty years. Due to the IT revolution, India has emerged as a supplier of highly skilled labour force in the developed host economies. The idea of 'brain drain' is increasingly being replaced by an idea of 'brain circulation' and a view of diaspora as a potential option for turning the phenomenon of migration into an opportunity. The importance of diasporic groups in facilitating remittances, investments, cultural influences, funding of developmental works etc. is considerable and on the rise. India has lately been pro-active in establishing enabling legal structures to woo its diaspora like the single window clearance to FDI, joint ventures, and technical collaborations. The provisions like dual citizenship is beneficial to overseas Indians as NRIs amongst the diaspora can take up citizenship of the country they live in and not fully give up their Indian citizenship.

It is noteworthy to note that with improving bilateral relations in the recent decades, the Indian diasporic community finds itself better placed because of growing mutuality of interests between the nations. The findings of this study suggest that migration from India to the western world is in tandem with the economic motivation theories explained by Marxist for undergoing migratory process. Better educational institutes, employment, better standard of living are the main reason for undergoing migratory process from the third world countries. Globalization process and the liberalization of Indian economy have triggered to and fro movement of Indian diasporic people. Information and technology revolution has made Indians a global player in terms of their skills and educational abilities. Indians have substantially contributed to the host society's economy. Respondents in the survey of the present study were asked if what they thought about contribution of Indians in the host society. Nearly 66 percent respondents in U.S.A feel that Indians have contributed significantly, whereas only 33 percent in Australia feels the same. Nearly 54 percent Indian-Australians consider their contribution moderate.

The charm of the western world still maintains its hold on the people of India despite the fact that they have faced disillusionment and disappointment many times under varied circumstances. Indians because of their race and colour can't achieve
under varied circumstances. Indians because of their race and colour can’t achieve total acceptance in the White society that has colour or race bias. Indian culture is also very different from the Anglo-culture. The diasporic community resists and negotiates the social realities of violence, racism and political and economic inequality. The survey conducted in the present study demonstrates that 62.86 percent of the respondents from USA and 44.83 percent respondents from Australia opined that they had faced racial and other discrimination “sometimes”. Moreover, the recent incidents of alleged racial attacks on Indian students in Australia raise questions about the efficacy of multiculturalism policy. Though it is difficult to quantify the difference in levels of victimization in the two countries, one can certainly conclude that Indians like many other migrants face such biases and prejudices in varying degrees.

Treatment of migrants, legislations, enforcement procedures, and other related activities should be evaluated in terms of international commitments to human rights. The immigration policies will also be governed by events like 9/11 which will raise questions about nations’ order and security in wake of increased international migration. The governments of both origin and destination countries should adopt an integrated international migration policy which covers issues like security, trade, development, foreign policy aspects etc. Today, future prospects regarding multiculturalism remain unclear. The viability of multiculturalism is open to all possibilities based on the effects of the debates that are at present taking place. The present study points to the issues highlighted above on a comparative framework besides making a detailed analysis of the immigration policies pursued by the two liberal democratic societies. The key findings of this study based on empirical study and available literature, are briefly summarized below:

- Settler societies like Australia and the United States of America with long traditions of immigration in recent years have adopted liberal and expansive policies of immigration. The two countries differ significantly in terms of legislative, judicial and administrative bodies involved in policy making as well as at institutional levels. Migration to America is more substantial than Australia in absolute terms, but in relative terms the scale of migration to both the countries is similar. Illegal migration to Australia is less than U.S.A.
Though the annual inflows to the two countries as a percentage of their populations are similar, the foreign born residents as a proportion of total population in Australia are more than United States.

- The United States is more prone to migration pressures than Australia because of its land borders with many sending nations and the powerful attraction that its economy and culture exert on potential migrants. U.S.A. remains a preferred destination for Indians also as it is considered 'land of migrants and of opportunities'. Australia becomes the second choice for people who desire to migrate to America. Though Indian migration to Australia is recent compared to U.S.A., there has been a significant surge in the recent years. Australia however is more influential in formulation, adoption and implementation of policy changes than America as is clearly evident that Australia officially pursues multiculturalism policy. Australian governments are relatively freer from pressure groups than America in deciding policies.

- Asian migration to the two liberal democratic societies remains a highly contested issue. Public opinion even in liberal democratic societies regarding immigration remains conservative and favours restrictive measures. Immigration is believed to be making positive contribution to economy and future of American society, whereas the public opinion in Australia concerns threats posed by immigration and multiculturalism for national identity.

- Social and economic reasons are primary reasons for Indian migrations in search of better job opportunities and standard of living. There is a significant increase in migration of students and knowledge workers to the developed countries.

- Multiculturalism both as a term and a concept engenders debates regarding its relevance and vitality in reference to the recent developments across the world. The strategy of full assimilation into the host societies is not favoured by the diaspora community who are keen on protecting their ethno-national
identities. Hence, multiculturalism policy remains a preferred form of incorporation in comparison to assimilation or integration.

- The Indian diaspora has undoubtedly acquired a distinct global identity. The Information and Technology revolution has added to the intricacies and complexities involved in patterns of migration. The exodus from India comprises not only the fully trained and educated workers going abroad for employment, but also students pursuing higher education in onshore as well as offshore universities of the developed countries. Indians have contributed to the host society in varying degrees. Indians have achieved unprecedented success in various fields so much so that they are dubbed as a “model minority”. Indians celebrate and preserve their ethnic identity in host land. However, Indians don’t constitute a significant force to influence host land’s policies in its favour.

- Indians like other migrants are also not free from victimization in the host land in the form of prejudices and biases like racism.

- Indian diaspora acts as a strategic asset between India and the country of destination by being cultural and political ambassadors. Though Indian government has made efforts to woo its diaspora by providing various incentives, a lot needs to be done to foster stronger bonds between the two. Both home land and host land use the diaspora community for their own political purposes in terms of promoting its foreign policy agendas. Overseas Indians maintain familial and emotional linkages with homeland.

The global presence of Indian diaspora is a matter of great pride for India. Their spread all over the globe helps in having linkages in the fields of culture, education, civilization and other areas. Despite integrating with the host countries in most cases, they still maintain their ethnic identity and cultural values, and also a sense of connection or belonging with the mother country. This preservation of ethnic distinctiveness and cultural traditions have bound them to the original roots in India. This aspect has been appropriated by development planners and thinkers in India by strengthening the ties in order to draw on the rich human resource capital and wealth.
in the economic advancement of the country. Indian state has shown policy shifts and attitudinal changes in dealing with its diaspora.

Migration poses challenges not only for policy-makers, but also for scholars who are seeking to understand it and the impact of changing patterns of diversity in society. Throughout the twentieth century the focus of the social science research on migratory movements was on the New World countries of immigration such as Australia, Canada and the United States, which were committed to national development based on extensive immigration. The focus of theorising was on patterns of settlement and incorporation and the related issue of interethnic relations and ensuring an absence of social conflict. One of the most challenging tasks will be to determine the cultural compatibility of prospective citizens or migrants with the dominant population. The transnational and globalisation paradigms are closely related to migratory movements as they unravel key dimensions of mobility and incorporation as potentially multiple and ongoing process. Transnational paradigm also focuses on policy formulation and issues of adaptability dealing with migration and incorporation.

The ubiquitous Indian has, of late, become a subject matter of intensive study and research. The study of Indian diasporic community, offers a framework, to initiate work on this challenging and potentially fruitful area of research. One of the major factors which have influenced recent theoretical developments has been the growing recognition of the importance of ties and linkages with the country of origin. The present study suggests a number of potential directions for future research, particularly since the research on comparative variables is very limited. Such comparative studies may yield some generalizations of wider significance and also specificities across time and space. There is immense scope for future scholarship on migration and on Indian diasporic population in particular. The profile of Indian diaspora consists of a sufficient range of factors and elements that can lead to new hypotheses which can serve as a basis for further comparative studies. Further serious explorations on the issues discussed in the present study will be beneficial for understanding the role of Indian diaspora and multiculturalism as precursors of globalized political systems that occupies a central place in twenty-first century.