Chapter V
Summary and Conclusion

The Background of the Study

The researcher, who is Japanese, first got interested in studying the life of Sikh community in Japan in 2004 when she was still a student in the Masters program in Japan. Her preliminary work (Azuma, 2008a; 2008b) in this area was limited to studying the activities of the gurdwara located in Tokyo. When she decided to continue working on this subject for her doctoral program as well, the focus shifted to analyzing the difference between the social and cultural practices among the Sikhs living in Kobe and Tokyo areas, as also to view it in the backdrop of the life of the Sikhs living in the native (Indian) villages of the respondents in Japan. The rationale was that one could not fully understand the life of the Sikhs living in Japan without considering the society and culture of their place of origin. Hence an effort was made to compare their life in Japan to that in their place of origin in order to ascertain how their migration to Japan had affected their everyday life.

In 2008 the researcher came to Chandigarh and began her research in India by visiting two villages inhabited predominantly by Sikhs, located in Uttarakhand state and Jammu and Kashmir state, respectively, which had sent many villagers to the Tokyo area. Through her experiences in not only the villages selected for research, but also Chandigarh and some other villages in Punjab, it became clear that the research villages have some features that are different from the villages in Punjab. But as the researcher became familiar with the life of the Sikhs living outside Punjab she also realized that despite the differences found among the Sikhs living in Punjab, Jammu area and the Terai area in Uttarakhand, there existed something called the Punjabi
culture. Although Punjab is a named territory and an area which has created a particular local culture called Punjabi culture, since the end of 19th century, due to migration of the people who have roots in Punjab, Punjab has been deterritorialized and the Punjabi culture has spread to other places as well. Even inside India, we can find the spread of ‘Punjab’ outside the Punjab state although there may appear some diversity among the Punjabi community caused by different historical and social background in each location. And as we are well aware, there are Punjabi communities outside India in places as far and as different as U.K., U.S., Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Kenya etc. However, usually when we speak of the many ‘Punjabs’ outside India, more often than not, we tend to refer to the Sikh diaspora. For this study too, we have focused on researching the social and cultural aspects of the life of the Sikhs in Japan.

The main objectives of this research were: 1) to study the social and cultural circumstances that prompted Sikhs to migrate to Japan, 2) to examine the problems these Sikhs have faced as a diasporic group, as well as, the strategies used to cope with them, 3) to compare the social and cultural aspects of the Sikh migrants’ life in Japan with those in their home villages in India and 4) to examine re-creation of culture by Sikh migrants. We used the ethnographic study method for this purpose which involves mainly the process of participant observation since this is the ideal technique to attain our objectives and entails a detailed study of the everyday life in order to gain knowledge about society and culture of the group under study.

Conceptual and Theoretical Basis
The term of diaspora first began with its use to describe the scattering of the Jews from Palestine. However, the meaning of the term has extended from being biblically
defined to a new definition as dispersion of localized people and the culture to other places. Diasporas are now understood in terms of global cultural flows and the transnational migrations and the term is often used in the areas of Cultural Studies and Cultural Anthropology while discussing globalization, migrants and their culture.

Different typologies of diaspora have been offered by various scholars. For instance, Cohen (1997) speaks of victim diaspora implying the exiled groups who are sent away from their homelands; labor diaspora which include the indentured as well as voluntary labor force; imperial diaspora including colonial powers that migrate with the aim of colonial expansion; trade diaspora which implies migrants who shift for the sake of business and trade ventures; and cultural or deterritorialized diaspora which include persons or groups retaining their original culture, retaining symbolic links with their places of origin and sharing concern both for their country of origin and that of migration. Looking at the meanings of each, one can categorize the Sikhs in Japan into labor, trade and deterritorialized diaspora. However, when we consider the difference among the Sikhs in different parts of Japan, it can be said that the Sikhs in Kobe fall in the category of trade and deterritorialized diaspora while the Sikhs in Tokyo are more akin to the labor and deterritorialized diaspora.

Additionally, Vertovec (1999, 2000) has outlined three meanings of ‘diaspora’: 1) diaspora as social form, 2) diaspora as type of consciousness and 3) diaspora as mode of cultural production. Diaspora as social form is characterized by a ‘triadic relationship’ between (a) globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups, (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and (c) the homeland states and contexts from where they or their forebears came. Diaspora as type of consciousness is shown by describing the variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity. It further involves two paradoxical emotions – one
negative and the other positive. The first is based on the group’s feeling of loss and alienation in the new set-up and the second is boosted by the feeling of people of the same identity being together. Diaspora as mode of cultural production is related to the globalization process and as a result, described as involving the re-creation of new transnational and social phenomena.

**A Recap of the Findings of the Study**

Through our ethnographic descriptions in previous chapters we have attempted to discuss the Sikh groups in Kobe and Tokyo in the sense of being a social form and having a certain dual consciousness as mentioned by Vertovec. In the second chapter we discussed historical circumstances of the Sikh migrants in Japan and the discussion made it clear that the Sikhs in Kobe and Tokyo have different historical processes of migration. In Kobe, the Sikhs have been living for generations because their migration has been continuing from the time even before World War Two and Indian organizations have worked for local Indians for decades. On the other hand, the Sikhs in Tokyo and its vicinity have appeared since 1990s and while the Sikhs in Kobe are concentrated in a particular geographical area close to the gurdwara, those in Tokyo are scattered in and around Tokyo. Besides the historical situation of their migration to Japan, we found some other differences between the Sikhs in Kobe and Tokyo like the places of origin, types of job, citizenship status and economic situation. The Sikhs in Kobe came from not only India but also Southeast Asian countries where their family networks existed and continue to exist. These networks supported their trading business in Kobe and they could achieve economic affluence in their life. And their successful business made it easy for them to get permanent visas for Japan. Meanwhile, the Sikhs in Tokyo came from India only and they did not have sufficient
networks to help them start their own business and get financial support. They work as manual labor at construction sites or small factories without proper visa. Thus, in the second chapter we found differences in the migration circumstance of the Sikhs in Japan and it was clear that the Sikhs in Kobe built their stable economic and social standing through their long settlement history in Kobe and their family networks, both of which were not available to the Sikhs in Tokyo.

The third chapter discussed the problems which the Sikhs in Japan have faced and the coping mechanisms they have used to overcome these difficulties. We found they have financial, social, psychological, medical and cultural problems. However, as we saw in the case of migration patterns in the second chapter, here also there were differences between the Sikhs in Kobe and Tokyo. Although economic difficulty and problem of adjustment to Japanese society were common among the Sikhs in both places, the coping methods were different. The Kobe Sikhs could get support from family networks and their economic problems did not affect their life seriously. But the financial problems of the Sikhs in Tokyo made their life difficult. Also, unlike the Sikhs in Kobe, sometimes the Sikhs in Tokyo could get support from Japanese instead of help from their family networks. In terms of the adjustment problems, the Sikhs in Kobe still have to make efforts to interact with the Japanese even after many decades since settling in Japan because they have lived an almost ghettoized existence, mixing mostly with the Indians and the opportunity for interaction with Japanese has been limited. On the other hand, the Sikhs in Tokyo have become close to Japanese in a relatively short time because of their work conditions in which they have to be exposed to the Japanese way. The psychological problem of loneliness was mainly faced by the Sikhs in Kobe while the medical problems were more serious in Tokyo. Although the cultural problems which are related to their identity as Punjabi Sikhs
were shared, again the coping was different between Kobe and Tokyo. The Sikhs in Kobe preserved their Punjabi way of life while the Sikhs in Tokyo area struggled to adjust to the Japanese way.

In the second and third chapters we focused on the Sikh diaspora as a social form (Vertovec, 2000) which is represented by historical, social and cultural backgrounds of migration and problems faced by them as a diasporic group. This discussion about diaspora as social form made it clear that there exists a displacement from the homeland under the nexus of an unequal global economic system as a background of diaspora as Parrenas and Siu (2007) explained. Similarly, another point mentioned by them as a feature of diaspora, namely, that there is the sense of collective consciousness and connectivity with other people displaced from the homeland across the diasporic terrain (Parrenas and Siu, 2007) was also proven to be correct. This sort of collective consciousness and connectivity were seen among the South Asians including Sikhs gathered in Pakistani shops in Tokyo as we saw in Chapter Three.

In the fourth chapter we examined the social and cultural practices of the Sikhs in Japan both in Kobe and Tokyo and different aspects of their lives were analyzed in the backdrop of the social and cultural practices in the Indian villages. We compared the practices of Sikhs in Tokyo with those of Indian villages and it became clear that the Sikhs in Tokyo have changed and adjusted their practices to the context of their life in Japan. The process of changing their practices involved the simultaneous experience of alienation and the maintenance of affiliation to both the country of residence and homeland, matching one of the features of diaspora noted by Parrenas and Siu (2007). How much they changed and how they adjusted was decided based on the social and cultural situation in which they found themselves.
It was easy to generalize our findings in the cases of Kobe since the Sikhs living there were a somewhat homogenous group while in Tokyo despite some common features, there also were many differences among the Sikh population. For instance, very few of the Sikhs hailed from Punjab villages and towns while most came from the Jammu and Uttarakhand areas. It seems that while for the Sikh villagers in Punjab, U.K., North America and Europe seemed to be the favored destinations, Japan seemed to attract more Sikhs from the above regions. Similarly, although a large number of the Sikhs are part of the manual labor force, the actual nature of their jobs tends to vary. Apart from some who were IT engineers, restaurant owners and entrepreneurs there are those who are employed by factories as laborers, welders, electricians etc. Others work for construction companies. And then there were those who worked as cooks in different type of eateries. Each of these jobs entails different pay grades, different working hours and different work conditions. Other differences that have already been discussed in the preceding chapter are related to their marriage choices and their appearance. Thus, we found diversity in the practices among the Sikhs in Tokyo because the social and cultural context they live is different from each other.

We concluded the fourth chapter by discussing the continuity and change in the social and cultural practices of the Sikhs in Japan. We found some changes of their practices due to the difference of life style between India and Japan, like the practices related to food, language, recreation, and worship. And some practices related to clothes, appearance and marriage were changed by the Sikhs in Tokyo area who had the problem of visa status because of the practical reasons. However, in terms of the habitus, the Sikhs in Japan shared the habitus related to marriage and worship with the Sikhs in India. In other words, we found continuity in the habitus of marriage and worship between the Sikhs in Japan and India.
Our discussion on the experiences and practices of the Sikhs in Japan makes it clear that in Kobe their identity as Punjabi Sikhs is sustained mainly by imaginary ties to Punjab while in Tokyo they have direct physical experiences and real authentic memories from Punjab which construct their Sikh identity. Or one can say that the Sikh identity in Kobe has been created by the cultural memories about Punjab as their place of origin which enhanced their collective consciousness as Sikhs by imaginary connection with Punjab. On the other hand, the cultural and social practices of the Tokyo Sikhs are related to their individual memory and experiences in India including their habitus. Their change of practices brought the feeling of isolation from their familiar habitus which is the basis of thought and value in their life. Through this discussion we examined the Sikh diaspora in Japan as type of consciousness which implies the migrants’ experiences, memory and practices.

The remaining question then is that as a diaspora, how the Sikh migrants produce and re-create their own culture and what kind of new global culture the Sikh migrants produce.

**Cultural Production and Re-creation of Cultural Practices**

Vertovec (1999), in his well known article in the journal *Diaspora* mentioned that diaspora can be described as involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena. By this he means that in the times of globalization, diasporas do not reproduce old culture but actually re-create new cultural practices. He also holds that the cultural production of diaspora includes features in the life of migrants that are seen in processes of deterritorialization, hybridity, creolization, back-and-forth, transferences, mutual influences, negotiations and constant transformations (2000). Similar thoughts have been presented by many
other studies about the cultural production in these diasporic contexts, for instance by Appadurai (1997), Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001), Shukla (2003) and Hall (1990). Hall has probably explained it best by writing, “the diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (p.235).” Through this approach the emphasis is now on the fluidity of constructed styles and identities among the diasporas. And this new trend is seen especially among diasporic youth who have been socialized in an era marked by the global trends of difference and diversity. These young people are inclined to select and represent facets of culture and identity taken from more than one heritage.

In our study, we found the process of cultural re-creation among the Sikhs in Japan in their everyday life. Regarding food, they enjoyed mixing of Indian and Japanese taste. They preferred Japanese cooking style which uses less oil and salt even when they made Indian sabzi. The Indian dishes cooked by Japanese style were served with sticky Japanese rice and Japanese pickles. Indian chai was taken less sweet or even without sugar with Japanese snacks cooked in soya sauce. Conversely, they also enjoyed Japanese tea with Indian namkin. Japanese or Thai curry was served with chappati. They made pizza toast and enjoyed it with coke, thus exhibiting their preference for western food as well. Similarly, in their choice of clothes, the women also showed their mixed styles. They wore the Indian style kurta with jeans or various types of western and Japanese tops with salwar. But then one cannot forget that both the males and females also bought clothes and accessories from global brand shops like Gap, Benetton, Nike, etc. besides Japanese brands and, at the same time went to
India to purchase Indian clothes. For their entertainment the men, especially in Kobe, enjoyed watching baseball and football games more than cricket and hockey and they were dedicated fans of the local baseball team. However, they preferred Indian and Hollywood films and English and Hindi/Punjabi music more than Japanese ones. Thus, we found that their cultural practices are affected by Indian, Japanese, and global culture. In the life of Sikhs in Japan they mixed these different pieces and created their own mosaic of cultural practices.

**Media and Cultural Re-creation**

One important point mentioned by Vertovec and others while discussing cultural production is the role played by media. As Vertovec (1999) mentions, an increasingly key avenue for the flow of cultural phenomena and the transformation of diasporic identity is global media and communications. Appadurai (1997) too explained the significance of the media in the context of cultural production with the term of mediascape. He wrote, “mediascapes refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television station, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media. These images involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic or pre-electronic), their audiences (local, national, or transnational), and the interests of those who own and control them (Appadurai, 1997: 35).

In the life of the Sikhs in Kobe, satellite television programs from India were the significant media which makes an imagined connection to India and Punjab. They were familiar with Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar and were almost transported to it...
while watching the kirtan telecast from there every day. Communication through the internet facilities like Skype and YouTube videos made them feel close to their families living in different countries. In Tokyo the international phone call was used more often to keep in touch and exchange news with those in India. Although the Sikhs in Tokyo could not attend the family functions held in India, they watched the functions on the DVDs sent by their families and felt as much a part of those functions as those who had attended them. Other print media like pictures of gurus, stickers of the Sikh religious symbols of khanda, waheguru written in gurmkhi, etc. were seen in the houses and the cars of the Sikhs in Japan. Some subscribed to Sikh magazines published in India. Thus, the media which are available globally help in reinforcing the cultural identity of the Sikh community even when they are deterritorialized from Punjab, their place of origin.

**Structure and Agency in Cultural Re-creation**

Additionally, Vertovec (1999) noted that diasporic phenomena need to be approached through the concepts of *structure* (historical condition) and *agency* (the meanings held and practices conducted by social actors). Agency is the subject conducting cultural practices with its bodily experiences and creates the perception and meaning of the world including culture as we see in the discussion by the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (2002).

For Merleau-Ponty, the body is more than the vessel or location where thought arises. He writes that the body cannot be treated as merely an object in the world like other objects, but it is the condition of possibility for understanding any object. Without the body providing the center from which one observes or conceptualizes objects, one would never be able to take a position in relationship to any object and
either perceive or conceptualize it. As such, the body is never an object of perception in the way a physical object is since it precedes and upholds all particular experiences. He thus distinguished between the body as an object (Körper), i.e., body as an assemblage of physical parts and one’s lived body (Leib) implying the embodied experience. Merleau-Ponty considers the bodily experiences important as they impose a meaning to all contents and all actions and thoughts and stands in a relationship to psychological and historical structure. This would denote that the body is in a certain psychological and historical context and the bodily experiences in that context compose the perception and meaning. Thus, the body is not just container to conduct practices but conveys meaning from certain contexts. Applied to the meaning of diaspora as cultural production, it would imply that the meanings of the social and cultural practices are given by the bodily experiences reflecting certain historical and psychological structures.

This would correspond to the concept of habitus that has also been considered useful for approaching the subject of diasporic cultural practices. In connection with our discussion on the habitus in the preceding chapter, we can say that the social and cultural practices based on habitus which consist of meaning and thought about socio-cultural phenomena are conducted by the bodily experiences related to the historical and psychological contexts.

To round up the discussion we can even hold that historical and psychological context can be thought as social form and type of consciousness in the discussion of diaspora. That is to say, in the context of diaspora, the bodily experiences which relate to social form as diaspora and the consciousness as diaspora create the habitus which prompts the cultural practices with the cultural re-creation.


_Gurdwara as the locus of Cultural Reinforcement and Re-creation_

It is clear that in order to survive and adapt to new situations, the diasporas not only use the mechanism of reinforcement of their culture through cultural reproduction but also that of re-creating new cultural practices. In the case of the Sikhs in Japan, as is found among Sikhs in other countries, we could see that the _gurdwaras_ became the places where both their religious and ethnic identity were strengthened along with their social community linkages. Both in Kobe and Tokyo the Sikhs indulged in the religious practices, rituals and customs such as listening to _gurbani_, singing _kirtan_, chanting _ardas_, having _parshad_ and _langar_, etc., each of these signaling their identity as Sikhs. Side by side, in Kobe the visits to the _gurdwara_ formed part of their social activities since another purpose of their visit was also to socialize with their fellow Sikhs. Here they establish social relationships with others, and learn how to join and contribute to the community. These regular meetings helped bolster the sense of Sikh identity as a social community as well. In the case of Tokyo, although the _gurdwara_ did become a site for reinforcing their religious identity but the Sikhs in Tokyo do not have a sense of community like Kobe because the _gurdwara_ in Tokyo is relatively new and no social activities take place there. Thus, we found that the _gurdwara_ can provide the space to reproduce the religious and socio-cultural practices of the Sikhs in Japan.

However, along with the reinforcement of culture and social identities of the Sikhs, in the _gurdwaras_ we could also witness the _re-creation_ of new practices. As already described in the previous chapter, in Kobe for decades Japanese ladies have been working to take care of domestic work in the _gurdwara_ including preparation of the _langar_, which is served in a hall furnished with dining tables and chairs. The menu of _langar_ includes not only Indian dishes but also Japanese and Thai cuisine. In
Tokyo too, the Sikhs have re-created new practices according to the need of the situation. For instance, the *gurdwara* is in a basement room which is part of an apartment building and the Sikhs cannot put any sign board and *nishan sahib* which is a symbol indicating the existence of the *gurdwara* because the space except for the basement room is shared public space. So instead of *nishan sahib*, the Sikhs have put up posters written in gurmukhi, pictures of Sikh *gurus* and Golden Temple on the walls of the basement room to give it an appearance of a *gurdwara* while only a few those pictures are seen in *gurdwaras* in India. Additionally, the *gurdwara* in Tokyo is a gathering place for not only the Sikhs but also other migrants belonging to other groups such as Hindus and Muslims from South Asian countries, Chinese and Filipino migrants and also some Japanese because the *gurdwara* in Tokyo provides the opportunity to exchange information about jobs, accommodation, visas, etc. and to meet friends whom it was difficult to meet due to the distance between living places. In this sense the *gurdwara* in Tokyo serves almost as a community center for all migrants. In fact, we found that for some people who do not know that the *gurdwara* is a religious place involving some customs like covering of heads with scarves, sitting calmly without making noise, where smoking is prohibited, etc., the Sikhs have prepared posters with these instructions in English and Japanese. Serving *chai* in winter and *rooh afza* (a rose-based cooling drink) in summer with *pakoras* is the way to welcome visitors because the most of them come from far off places involving commuting of around two hours. Hence, the Sikhs in Japan have re-created their own new practices in the *gurdwaras* in terms of their unique contexts that may be somewhat different not only from *gurdwaras* in India, but also those in U.K., U.S., Canada etc.
Thus, as Vertovec (1999) noted, it is clear that diaspora can be understood by the approach involving a) context – which implies the historical context as social form; b) agency – which involves practices conducted entailing a bodily experience; and c) change – which includes the re-creation of the socio-cultural practices and habitus along with adjustment to host society.

**Major Findings**

Through our study we found certain features of the Sikh diaspora in Japan which are similar to the Sikhs settled in other parts of the world. They came to Japan for financial reasons and new opportunities for jobs. They faced the problems related to cultural practices which were not familiar to the host society and employed coping mechanisms which made them adjust to their place of migration. And they re-created their own culture which is different from both their place of origin and the host society.

However, our research on the Sikh diaspora in Japan threw up some new findings as well. In the first place, unlike the Sikhs in other countries, most of those in Japan have not come from Punjab. When we think Sikh diaspora, it comes to our mind that they are from Punjab, India. However, this did not apply to the Sikhs in Japan. The Sikhs in Kobe have come from Southeast Asian countries while the Sikhs in Tokyo have come mainly from states in India such as Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand. The Sikhs in Kobe have lived in Japan for decades and for them India was not homeland but only the place of origin. When the researcher asked about possibility of living in India, the answer usually given was “We can go to India for a short term. But we can’t live there because we were born and raised abroad and are not familiar with the life there, for example, water, food, people, town, etc are different.
from those in our life.” On the other hand, in Tokyo their relation to India is based on their physical experiences and they think India as both their home and place of origin because they were relatively recent migrants. But here too, their connection was with their villages in areas other than Punjab and although they were steeped in the so-called Punjabi culture, yet the term Punjab did not evoke any feeling of nostalgia in them. Clearly, the Sikhs in Punjab state prefer U.K., U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other European countries as places of migration, while the Sikhs from Jammu and Uttarakhand tend to choose Japan because of success stories told to them by earlier migrants to Japan from their villages.

Another thing we found was that the Sikhs in Japan faced different situation from those in other countries where many Sikh diaspora live because there are no ‘ethnic towns’ for South Asians in Japan. The Sikhs in Tokyo area are scattered in far away locations and thus, have very little geographical and physical proximity with each other. And although the Sikhs in Kobe lived near the gurdwara and their community is located there, it is not like ‘Indian Town’ of Bradford in U.K. and Vancouver in Canada. In any case, their numbers are very small as compared to Sikhs in other countries.

A third thing that emerged was that the Sikhs in Kobe are still deeply rooted in their Sikh identity. They do not cut their hair or shave their beards and still wear turbans. They also strictly observed the practice of marrying within the Sikh community. On the other hand, the Sikhs in Tokyo seemed to attach less importance to the external symbols of Sikhism and had come to terms with the acts of cutting their hair for practical reasons. Not only that, among them we came across a number of cases where they had married Japanese women.
Bhachu (1989) had mentioned in his study of the Sikhs in UK who had shifted there from East Africa that they did not believe in the myth of returning to the homeland unlike those who had migrated to U.K. directly from Punjab. Our study also showed a similar trend among the Sikhs in Kobe who had shifted to Japan from countries other than India and those in Tokyo, who had migrated from India. Yet, it was interesting to note that in Kobe, although the Sikhs did not consider India as their homeland, yet they maintained a steady connection with Punjab mediated by imagination mainly through media, while the Sikhs in Tokyo were understandably able to maintain their connection with India, their homeland, in a more direct manner. Thus, while the Sikhs in Kobe have created more of an ‘imagined world’ of Sikhism as described by Appadurai (1989), the Sikhs in Tokyo live in a more ‘real’ Sikh community.

Concluding Thoughts

Sikh diaspora has been the subject of innumerable studies and Sikhs dispersed over a large number of countries have been studied by different scholars. However, there was one lacuna among these studies. Probably because most Sikhs migrated to North America, U.K., Europe and a few other south-east Asian countries, most of the works tended to focus on these areas only. We would like to believe that the findings of our study have significance in the context of Sikh Diaspora Studies because this is one of the few works on the Sikh diaspora in Japan.

Secondly, when we began this research, we started with viewing the Sikh diaspora all over the world as a homogenous category with similar backgrounds, motivations and experiences. However, as our work progressed and we studied the Sikhs living in Kobe and Tokyo, it gradually became obvious to us that not only were
the Sikhs in Japan different from those in other parts of the world, but there existed clear differences among the Sikhs living in the two different locations within Japan itself. These dissimilarities emanating not only from the differences in their ‘routes’ but also in their ‘roots’ have been discussed in the earlier chapters. Our study shows that even in one country there exist different diasporas which cannot be categorized as one group. Hence, it would be pertinent to emphasize that diaspora should not be seen as a homogenous category and there exist not just Sikh diaspora but ‘diasporas’, each with their own singularities. This corresponds with the idea given by Raghuram, Sahoo, Maharaj and Sangha’s (2008) who distinguish between ‘integrated’ diaspora and ‘diverse’ diaspora.

The third thing that this study has made abundantly clear is that in the analysis of diaspora both the concepts of structure (or context as Vertovec calls it) and agency are relevant. As our study showed, the different features among the Sikhs in Japan were affected by the different social and cultural contexts among them. This implies that their features as diaspora were formed by their structural surroundings. However, recent migration studies focus on diaspora as agency, we also studied dynamics of culture which is re-created by practices of diaspora as agency. And here the definition of diaspora as a mode of cultural production becomes applicable. Diaspora are to be seen as not only deterritorialized groups who are placed in an alien setting and suffer from the ‘dual homeness’ syndrome (Ben-Rafael, 2010), i.e., having a feeling of attachment to its local environment, and also wanting to ‘return’ to the homeland, but they are also active, thriving, entrepreneurial groups who learn to survive and succeed in the ‘hostland’. As J. D. Cohen Shaye and Ernst S. Frerichs (1993) put it, the central question for diaspora peoples is adaptation: how to adapt to the environment without surrendering group identity. It is in this context that we speak
of the re-creation of new cultural practices by the diaspora through which they achieve the dual purpose of preserving their cultural traditions and also adapting to the new conditions.

Finally, in conclusion we would like to point out that in the era of globalization the understanding of diaspora needs to undergo some change. Cohen (2008) explains four aspects of globalization which relate to mobilization of diaspora, namely, 1) globalized economy and expansion of enterprises, etc. that permits greater connectivity that changes but also creates new opportunities for the diaspora, 2) new forms of international migration that have transformed the very nature of migration by encouraging limited contractual relationship, family visits, intermittent stays abroad and sojourning, as opposed to permanent settlement, 3) the development of cosmopolitan sensibilities in many global cities, both among the native population of the hostland as also among the diaspora, and 4) the revival of religion as a focus for social cohesion through dispersal and translocation resulting in the development of multi-faced world religions connected in various and complex ways to the diasporic phenomenon. This clearly shows that even the diaspora who can be categorized as trade, labor, imperial and deterritorialized diaspora, are living under the influence of globalization.

Our study also indicates that the diasporas today exist in the social and cultural context of globalization. We have found that the life of the Sikhs in Kobe is based on globalized business and family networks and cosmopolitan sensibility and their religious practices contribute to make Sikhism as one of the multi-faced world religions. The Sikhs in Tokyo also migrated to Japan under the context of globalized economy and they are the new breed of international migrants who may or may not aim for permanent settlement in the host country.
As Cohen (2008) has mentioned, each of the above four aspects of globalization has opened up new opportunities for diasporas to emerge, re-emerge, survive and thrive, we have studied and found the Sikh diaspora in Japan who survive and thrive successfully in the host society and manage to sustain their own culture by re-creation. Thus, we have studied the dynamism of culture through the process of the social and cultural practices which re-create the culture of diaspora in the era of globalization. The diasporas both offer a multicultural landscape in the host society as an agency and also themselves become multicultural entities under the influence of the host cultures on their dispersed communities.