PREFACE

The Punjabi diaspora has come to play a prominent role affecting Punjab economy and society in many discernible ways. Such interaction has seen the construction of religious places, schools, hospitals, funding of medical camps, popular sports and Punjabi arts. While the Punjabi diaspora has been involved in all such endeavours for almost a century now, more recent trends in such philanthropical giving from religious to developmental projects has come from the Canadian Punjabi diaspora. More recently there are trends towards more inclusive philanthropic projects aiming to transform village environment and infrastructure in the shape of laying sewerage system and provision of drinking water facilities.

This study offers a profile and analysis of Canadian Punjabis’ philanthropic involvement in Punjab – with a historical account of such activities and sociological studies of some typical projects. In examining Canadian Punjabi diaspora’s charitable works in Punjab, this study offers an evaluation of their impact on the Punjabi society. The study takes account of Canadian Punjabi philanthropists’ motives in undertaking such projects, various ways of organising such funds and projects, channels of its implementation, and finally how such projects have affected the local community. This study offers some significant policy conclusions as both the Government of Punjab and Indian state are exploring ways and means of utilizing Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) resources for development.

While working through this study I have sought information, help and guidance from many individuals as also drawing upon resources of several institutions. First of all, I am grateful to Prof. Birinder Pal Singh at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Punjabi University who acted as my guide, an inspiring teacher and always prompt in his suggestions. Among other members of the Department, Dr. Harvinder S. Bhatti deserves thanks for his helpful comments during my presentations to the faculty. Chanchal Manohar Singh introduced me to NRI Secretariat officials while Dr. Darshan Singh, Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University provided early support when I ventured into Sociology as an academic subject.

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