CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Background of the study.

A large number of Indians from the various parts of India have migrated to the United States in recent years due to the liberalization of the United States Immigration laws. The fact that Indians come from a cultural background which is different from that of the native-born Americans in America provides an opportunity for research in the areas of the effects of cross-cultural contact on the interacting groups.

In the present study, the following phenomena were investigated:

1. Changes in the perceptions of Indians in America about Indians in India.
2. Changes in the perceptions of Indians in America about Indians in India in accordance with their length of residence in America.
3. Changes in the perceptions of Americans about Indians.
4. Changes in the social distance assigned by Americans to Indians.
The plan of the study.

The three distinct groups in this study consisted of 200 subjects each, 100 females and 100 males randomly chosen. They were:

1. Indians in India (I-I), the control group.
2. Indians in America (I-A), the experimental group.
3. Americans in America (A-A), the group used as an indicator of socialization and adjustment of Indians in America to American culture.

The three research instruments used were:

1. The Rutgers Social Attribute Inventory (RSAI).
2. The Checklist Scale.
3. The Bogardus Social Distance Scale.

The first two instruments were administered to all the three groups, while the third was used only on the A-A group.

The statistical methods mainly used were analysis of variance, t ratio and chi square.

Limitations of the study.

This study was limited in scope by its design. Since our samples were large and from the two countries, the instruments - The Rutgers Social Attribute Inventory and the Checklist Scale were preferred over the Interview method. These instruments in spite of their refinements, have obvious short-comings in exploring the dynamics of subjects which can be sensitively picked up by the interview method. Our
basic data was provided by the individuals in the three groups and the conclusions drawn are supportive of some of the previous findings of the cross-cultural studies. However, on the basis of this study, we cannot make similar inferences pertaining to the other ethnic groups in the United States or about Indian immigrants to the other parts of the world.

Main Findings

1. Perceptions of Indians in America have changed as a result of cross-cultural interaction.

2. Overall changes in the perceptions of Indians in America are in the positive direction -
   a. Significant changes in the positive direction in the perceptions of Indians in America are on the following attributes:
      (1) Indians are perceived as more - intelligent, responsible, thrifty, good looking, slightly modern and slightly rich.
      (2) Less number of Indians in America perceive Indians as backward.
      (3) More number of Indians in America perceive Indians as cultured and sentimental.

b. Significant changes in the negative direction in the perceptions of Indians in America are on the following attributes:
   (1) Indians are perceived as less submissive and
less masculine.
(2) Less number of Indians in America perceive Indians as brave.
(3) More number of Indians in America perceive Indians as homesick and opportunist.

3. The changes in perceptions are not in the same direction during the various lengths of residence of Indians in America. In the initial stages perceptions change in the positive direction which is followed by a change in the negative direction further followed by a change in the positive direction.

4. The changes in the perceptions of Indians in America are not in direct proportion to their length of residence in America.

5. In general stereotyped perceptions of Indians in America about Indians resist change despite cross-cultural contact. This is true of females more than of males.

6. Perceptions of native-born Americans about Indians have changed from predominantly negative in the past to predominantly positive in recent years.

7. The social distance native-born Americans assign to Indians has decreased in recent years when compared with the past.
8. Perceptions of females in general are more positive than the perceptions of their male counterparts with the exception of the perceptions of Indian females in India on the Checklist Scale.

Supplementary Findings
1. On some attributes Indians in America show a shift in their perceptions in the direction of the perceptions of Americans in America.
2. On some attributes the changes in the perceptions of Indians in America do not indicate a shift in the direction of the perceptions of Americans in America.
3. Stereotyped perceptions of Americans in America about Indians differ significantly from that of Indians in India and Indians in America.
4. Direct contact with Indians has not made statistically significant difference either in the perceptions of Americans about Indians or in their social acceptance of Indians. However -
   a. Perceptions of Americans who have come in direct contact with Indians are slightly more positive than those who have not.
   b. Americans who have come in direct contact with Indians assign slightly lesser social distance to Indians than those who have not.
5. American females assign slightly lesser social
distance to Indians than American males.

6. Perceptions of Americans in America about Indians are more positive than perceptions of Indians in India.

7. Perceptions of Indians in India about Indians are least positive in all the three groups.

Some broad generalizations emerging from this study are as follows:

1. Changes in the perceptions of Indians in America about Indians are selective. Some perceptions change and some resist change. This phenomenon makes Indians in America a distinct community of individuals who differ from Indians in India and at the same do not change so as to become identical with Americans in America.

2. Indians in America in the long run become more appreciative of some aspects of Indian culture as a result of cross-cultural interaction.

3. Increased contact direct or indirect between India and America has resulted in the positiveness of American perceptions about Indians and decrease in the social distance Americans assign to Indians.

Suggestions for Further Research

In recent years, due to the increased facilities of transportation and communication, and growing appreciation
of the interdependence of the various nations, a large number of people from various parts of the world are coming in contact with one another. This has increased the scope of research in the field of cross-cultural interaction.

Empirical observations reveal that changes occur in the individuals of different cultural backgrounds who come in contact with one another. In order to investigate this phenomenon scientifically the present research was undertaken. This has opened avenues for further research.

1. Since cross-cultural contact is a two-way process, it implies a diffusion of two cultures in which both the cultural entities are affected in varying degrees. However, due to the limitation of time and the enormous nature of the task involved, it was not possible for the present investigator to explore perceptual changes in all the interacting groups. Therefore, suggestions for further research are offered.

a. Comparison between the perceptions of Americans in India and the perceptions of Americans in American about Indians.

b. Comparison between the perceptions of Americans in India and the perceptions of Indians in America about Indians.

c. Comparison between the perceptions of Indians in America and the perceptions of Indians in India about Americans.
d. Comparison between the perceptions of Americans in America and the perceptions of Americans in India about Americans.

e. Perceptions of Indians in America about Indians on the dimensions of age, type of education, level of education, residence - rural versus urban, religion and caste.

f. Comparison of the social distance assigned by Americans in America and Americans in India to Indians on the dimensions of age, type of education, level of education, residence - rural versus urban, and religion.

g. Comparison of the social distance assigned by Indians in America and Indians in India to Americans on the dimensions of age, type of education, level of education, residence - rural versus urban, religion and caste.

2. Data for the present investigation was collected prior to 1971 at which time the relationship between India and the United States was congenial. It is felt that recently the relationship between the two countries has become somewhat tense on account of the following events: India's role in the emergence of Bangladesh, India's non-aggression pact with Russia and increase in unemployment figures and
competition of foreigners for jobs in the United States. Therefore, a follow up study under the present conditions would throw light on the impact of changed circumstances on the perceptions of Americans about Indians.

3. In order to investigate the relative impact of the parental values versus the values of the society in which an individual is reared further research is suggested in the area of the comparison of group perception and social distance as follows:

a. Perceptions of the first generation Indians who are born and brought up in the United States and those that have migrated to the United States after adolescence.

b. Social distance assigned to Americans by Indians who are born and brought up in the United States and those that have migrated from India to the United States after adolescence.

4. Since Indians have migrated to many countries in addition to the United States of America, we have the opportunity to investigate how Indians perceive themselves and how they are perceived in these countries differing in their cultures, scientific and technological advancement and political ideologies.

5. In addition, an investigation of those factors which contribute to the resistance of two cultures diffusing
and the possible ways of overcoming them, will aid us in evolving a new culture which will assimilate the good in both cultures.

6. Several findings of the cross-cultural studies, especially of student exchanges have already been reported. It is felt that the findings of the present study along with the findings of the studies in the suggested areas, may contribute to the developmental research that is concerned with what happens to an individual over time in an environment that is culturally different from that of his upbringing. Some future theoretician may penetrate into the results of various studies and arrive at some generalizations to explain the phenomena of change in the cross-cultural context.