A man is called a social animal with a reason behind it. It has been observed through various studies that human beings have a sense of belonging to a place, family, religion and even a set of traditions and values. It is important for human beings to have a sense of being attached to deep roots. When happy, a person wants someone to laugh with and when disappointed he wants someone to console him or lend a shoulder to cry on. Human race is such that its best is unfolded in a group. Interaction thus is very important. In other words, we humans need to be identified not just by mere names, but also with a certain race, caste and nationality to go with it. This gives us a sense of pride. It makes us responsible towards others and vice-versa as it is observed that we are not to live as individuals rather our actions and non-actions are governed, directed and scrutinized by the people that we are surrounded with.

In other words a person develops a sense of belongingness with the environment that he is a part of. It is the sense of an individual identity existing within the collective identity of the whole. If we take up Karl Marx in this regard we find that his concept of alienation has a facet of identity or the lack of it attached to it. When an individual finds it difficult to connect himself with the larger whole, or he is estranged from himself and others, alienation sets it. This inability to have a sense of being rooted in a particular social structures gives birth to identity crisis. Marx primarily saw this alienation setting in mainly at a work place where an individual no longer recognizes himself in his product. However as we move on we find out that though many people find solace in their work and derive satisfaction out of economic success, in other words relate to the material growth; these very people still have a peculiar sense of identity crisis when it comes to social,
cultural, ethnic and religious aspect of the society that they live in, but do not feel that they are a part of the same. And there comes a stage thus, when the economic success ceases to be complete in itself, gradually alienating one at the work place as well, as there is not much sense of satisfaction.

Before going any further let us have a quick glance at various definitions of identity as given by various scholars. Jenkins states that ‘social identity is a characteristic or property of humans as social beings. The word ‘identity’ however, embraces a universe of creatures, things and substances which is wider than the limited category of humanity’. (Jenkins, 1996 : 3). Jenkins lays more emphasis on ‘Social Identity’ and passes off ‘identity’ as of little worth. He further elaborates that identity simultaneously establishes two possible relations of comparison between persons or things. These are relations of similarity and difference. He says that ‘identity is not just there’, it must always be established. This adds two further meanings...to classify things or persons, and to associate oneself with something or someone else (for example, a friend, a hero, a party or a philosophy)...Identity can in fact, be understood as process. As 'being' or 'becoming' (Jenkins, 1996: 4).

Richard Jenkins thus defines social identity as the expression that refers to ‘the ways in which individuals... are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals... It is the systematic establishment and signification between individuals... of relationships of similarity and difference. Taken - as they can only be - together, similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identity, the heart of social life’ (Jenkins, 1996 : 4).

Barth defines ethnic identity as ‘a series of constraints on the kinds of roles an individual is allowed to play, and the partners he may choose for different transactions... ethnic identity is superordinate to
most other statuses, and defines permissible constellation of statuses, or social personalities, which an individual with that identity may assume' (Barth, 1969: 17).

Anthropologist Murphy has also given a detailed and touching account of need of an identity. He emphasizes how important the perception of one's own self and that of others can be. He lays stress on the fact that one needs to be able to relate to others and accepted by them as one of them. Murphy himself had a spinal tumour which disabled him to an extent. He writes, 'Alienation from others is thus a deprivation of social being, for it is within our bonds that the self is forged and maintained. This loss of self, however, is inherent in the social isolation of paralytics, who have furthermore become separated from their bodies by neural damage and from their former identities. Their plight is that they have become divided from others and riven within themselves' (Murphy, 1990: 227).

Jenkins has also laid stress on the need of social identity, the absence of which may lead to a crisis. In his words, 'all kinds of people, other than social scientists, have a cause to reflect upon social identity during their everyday lives. A common theme in everyday discourse, for example, is lost or confused identity, about people not knowing 'who they are', about a 'crisis of identity'. Sometimes people talk about social identity; sometime they simply talk about identity... Perhaps the most significant difference between individual and collective identities is that the former emphasizes difference, the latter similarity' (Jenkins, 1996: 5, 19, 20).

In the earlier chapters we have seen how even after independence of Kenya, Indians in Kenya still feel attached to the Britishers, once their colonizers. This is primarily because Indians in Nairobi take the English as their reference group. Indian immigrants down the generations, have ceased to identify with the Indian culture.
and traditions, values and customs. It has become a distant land for the first and second generation of Indian immigrants and the third one could never really relate in first place. On the other hand, they have seen the British, their colonial rulers, as powerful, capable and superior, due to the latter’s economic and political success. Whereas the native Africans have primarily been the tribals and even though cities like Nairobi have been developed to promote and accommodate urban way of life, a majority of Africans still live in tough economic conditions. Thus, most of the Indians, especially the first and second generation may have related to India, but at a later stage began aspiring and following the English way of life. Once Kenya became an independent nation in 1963, Indians found it hard to be politically ruled by economically weak Africans. This has led to various problems over the years. And by the time third generation of Indian immigrants faced the question of ‘belongingness’ and ‘identity’, the situation had already became complex. The Indians were largely unable to maintain a sense of connection with the land of their origin and were equally inept to develop any sense of belongingness with the native Africans. They long to be associated and accepted by the British. Thus, they are looking for a socio-cultural refuge in a distant land.

It is the general notion among Indians that the Kenyan Africans have spoiled Kenya, misused the natural and man made resources and in general, have contributed towards ever increasing crime and breaking down of the infrastructure. On the other hand, a majority of Africans feel that it is Indians who have corrupted Kenya’s economy. They believe that Indians have looted the Kenyan wealth for decades and now that the economy, polity and society are in a bad shape, instead of giving something back to the society, they are packing their bags and leaving for England. All in all, the social, economic and cultural distance between the two societies has hampered any possibility of their assimilation. Thus, unable to connect with the
natives, willingly or unwillingly, after giving up their Indian identities, Indians in Nairobi face a confusing situation. A large number of them are perplexed and constantly search for an identity. In this chapter, I deal with this issue in great detail. Also, until now researchers have only made an effort to study the history of Indian immigrants in Nairobi, their success in the far off land! Whereas the situation today in Nairobi has changed manifold and Indian community faces numerous problems, identity crisis being a substantial one.

To begin with, the respondents in Nairobi were asked a straightforward question related to identity crisis.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you ever feel an identity crisis (a sense of lack of belongingness)</th>
<th>Punjabis</th>
<th>Gujaratis</th>
<th>Expatriates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At times</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is very much clear from the above data that as many as 42.6 percent Indians in Nairobi feel some kind of identity crisis. It includes 55.3 Gujaratis, 43.3 percent Punjabis and 10 percent expatriates. This, keeping in mind the fact that most of them are pretty well off, is surprising. In other words material success may cease to give the type of fulfillment that it initially gives. Hence, in the early years of struggle when Indians had to strive hard to make both ends meet, it was economy of life that weighed heavily on their minds. But later on, after achieving the material success and making more or less a financially
secure life, the cultural and societal issues begin to attract attention. Thus, there may not be a sense of alienation among these Indians while in their early days of struggle or even at present, at work place, but outside that a series of uncomfortable questions creeps up, like 'who am I', 'what nation I belong to', 'who all accept me and who do not' and so on. And though 25.3 percent respondents, consisting of 20.6 percent Gujaratis, 23.3 percent Punjabis and a high of 51.6 percent expatriates, do not face an identity crisis another 13 percent feel it at times, especially on certain social, cultural and religious gatherings. This includes 8.8 percent Punjabis, 8 percent Gujaratis and 31.6 percent expatriates. The reason for this being that most of the expatriates have in some deep corner of their minds that they belong to India and would return there one day and a large number of them enjoy rather pleasant relations with various groups of the society. However, on occasions like Indian festivals, they do feel alienated. The reasons for or the occasions on which identity crisis is most felt, is dealt with in the next question. Staying on this case, for Kenyan Indians the dilemma is that they have not exactly been able to accept the native Africans as their own and vice versa, and neither have they been accepted by their role model, that is, the social set up of the British. They, especially the third generation of migrants, also find it difficult to relate with the land of their ancestors. In fact, a lot of respondents said that this feeling of identity crisis becomes more prominent when they visit India as 'the society has changed. Certain values have gone, while some have remained the same'. Thus, it becomes difficult for them to adjust to the setup which has changed in some aspect and has not in another. They may have completely different ideas about what is or has changed in India and what still continues to exist in the same manner. For instance, certain notions about the Indian woman may have changed in India, but among Kenyan Indians they still remain the same, 'someone who has to stay at home and look after the children'. While in other
aspects ‘young girls in Nairobi drink and smoke openly in offices and at home without any objection from the parent’ side, while in India though more and more women are going out to work, still certain reservations about drinking, smoking and dating remain the same’, remarks a psychiatrist Charan Shah. Thus, we find extreme situations prevailing simultaneously regarding females in Nairobi. This will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

Another teacher Parul Sethi says ‘most of the Indians have this lack of sense of belongingness as there is not much day to day interaction within the Indian community. This means when in a state of sadness, most of us find our own selves to handle us’. Though eventually everyone has to fight his own battle, she adds, ‘yet we need to be comforted and reassured from time to time, which is missing here’. This very loneliness cuts off an individual and leads to identity crisis. Thus eventually a sense of worthlessness develops as no one feels attached to anyone. It indeed a problematic state of mind because as human beings we feed and survive on emotional strength provided by the family in particular and society in general.

Another 19 percent respondents did not know if they feel an identity crisis. In other words, they do have a sense of being ‘uncomfortable’, ‘misfit’, ‘frustrated’ and ‘irritated’ from time to time but were not sure what to call it. These feelings, they state, ‘come from the inability to accept and be accepted by the people around’. Hence, there evolves a sense of insecurity among these people that they do not have the ‘strings attached’. These strings may be anything from emotional support to the sense of solidarity with a particular social, religious group. In order to be more clear about the whole situation the respondents were asked about how often or on what occasions they felt an identity crisis.
It was surprising to learn that as many as 34.3 percent respondents confessed of facing an identity crisis all the time. This includes a high of 42 percent Gujaratis, 33.3 percent Punjabis and only 16.6 percent expatriates. This was strange given the busy life of the Kenyan Indians. In other words, most of the Indians in Kenya do not have much of a free time on their hands and thus, they are mostly surrounded with friends, family and colleagues. It is thus alarming to learn that even when with the people, most of the respondents did not feel connected to them. Sheela Sharma, a psychologist, narrates that 'this is mainly due to lack of emotional bonding among most of the Indians. Lately, especially in the 90s, more and more relations are guided and controlled by the financial situations. Now, a person who is well off may have a lot of ‘friends’ but it may be due to his or her financial well being. This sense of doubt is very harmful, but it somehow develops by itself and alienates a human being'. Most of the respondents also echo her views. Thus, it seems that there is a constant sense of insecurity among the Kenyan Indians which prohibits them to
have a close relation with the people around them and eventually develops in them a sense of ‘not belonging’. ‘Friends’ mostly turn out to be relations of conveniences and opportunities and thus a constant sense of doubt prevails, prohibiting them to connect emotionally. This distancing of them from their own people makes them uncomfortable and they develop a feeling that they ‘do not belong to these people and this community’.

Another 10 percent respondents said that though they did face identity crisis, yet it was not always there, but very frequent. There are a large number of people who face an identity crisis only on certain occasions. For instance, 10.3 percent of them feel it on occasions like marriages. Another 9 percent feel it during social and religious gatherings. On such occasions, most of the Indians there exhibit their cultural bonding with India. But having very little or no knowledge of the present day India, its language and culture they fall short of even impressing themselves. ‘This leads to frustration’, remarks Pundit Ramlal. He explains that most of the young, third generation Indians do not know even Hindi language. Thus, when various religious and cultural ceremonies are performed in the Sanskrit language, they are unable to feel the connection with those who do understand it and take pride in the same. This however, makes those who do not understand it, go even farther away from their values, traditions and customs. Very few of them make an effort to know the real India.

Then there is another category who are too influenced by the European or Western culture to even make an effort to understand the Indian culture. However, they have to attend certain religious functions like marriages where they feel completely isolated. In some cases the identity crisis also leads to the mockery of the Indian culture instead of anger and frustration. These young men and women feel that Indian culture is inferior to the European, and so they do not make an effort to know it. However, they are neither accepted by the other
cultures and thus are swinging in the middle. The general view in this regard is that it is the duty of the parent generation to inculcate positive values about the Indian culture among their young children. But this has another angle to it as a large number of third generation Indians study in various colleges in Europe and Canada, away from their families. Thus, by the time they enter the adulthood and come back to work with their families in Nairobi, they already carry certain pre-notions about India and Indians. And the fact that most of the Indians in their parent generation took up the English citizenship does not help much either. Also, quite a few of these third generation Indians hold non-Kenyan and non-Indian passports, thus, ‘when they are not the Indian citizens, why and how can they feel related to India’. But having most of the relatives as Indians lands them into a dilemma. They cannot avoid certain gatherings and functions and at such occasions they face an identity crisis. This also holds ground when they visit the place of their or their ancestors’ origin. This is also true for the second generation Indians who are brought with a completely contrasting picture of India, which of course has changed a lot since the first Indians migrated to Nairobi. The percentage of those who feel an identity crisis on visiting the place of their or their ancestors’ origin lies at 9.3 percent.

Hence, it is very much evident from the situation of Indians in Nairobi that quite a few of them have to deal with some kind of an identity crisis. Their lack of integration into the host society and the inability to carry on with the Indian culture has led them into a peculiar situation, where they find no strings attached to their existence.

This leads us to another significant question about how do these Indians get over the identity crisis. In its response we have come across certain interesting means adopted by Indians.
The table reveals a variety of means employed by the Indians in Nairobi to tackle the problem of identity crisis. 11.6 percent teach or read about their own religion and culture in order to mix up with the people at the community events and have an active participation instead of being a mute listener. Similarly, 8.6 percent lay stress on speaking their own language. This is seen as important particularly by the expatriate Indians. They believe that one’s language is one’s expression of his or her own culture. These respondents widely believe that their language is their identity. They also feel that though it is their necessity to carry out business or job related activities in English and
Swahili language, yet at home or with their friends they make a conscious effort to talk in their own language like Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil and so on. This gives them a sense of solidarity with their motherland and its people. Another 11.3 percent lay stress on following strict norms in marriages. It is a popular belief among these respondents that most of the identity related problems arise only when a person from one community marries into another. Then, boy or the girl is unable to relate to the new way of life and has already left behind the old one. This leads to an identity crisis. It is more painful for those who are previously well knit into their own community and thus never had these feelings of alienation and disintegration. Sushil Majumdar, a member of a social organization says, 'it is very sad to see Indians in these situations as sometimes they do not even know where all this frustration is coming from. And though these issues are raised in the socio-cultural gatherings, no concrete effort has been made to solve the problem'. He added that not many Indians go for the psychiatric assistance as it is considered a place only for those with severe mental disorders.

9.6 percent respondents said that they do not mingle up with other communities in order to preserve their identity. This may be one of the reasons that we find little interaction even within the Indian community as discussed in the earlier chapters. These respondents believe that when one mixes up with people belonging to different ethnic and religious groups, they are bound to be influenced by their thinking and way of life, whether one wants or not. This, according to them, leads to weakening of ties with one’s own community and more often than not it is rather difficult to imbibe the new group in its totality as well. This again results in an identity crisis. It is thus evident from the above examples that quite a lot of Indians face identity crisis at different stages of their lives. It may be when one goes to study abroad in a different society or even after marriage. As many as 8
percent respondents said that in order to get over identity crisis they have ended up giving up their own language or mother tongue. This is in complete contrast to those 8.6 percent who prefer to communicate in their language. However, these 8 percent reveal the fact that they 'do not have any contact with India or Indian culture, so it is better to be accepted either by Europeans or Africans'. How far they succeed in being accepted by these cultural groups is a different matter, but at least they in their own way get over the identity crisis. On the similar lines, 3.6 percent respondents accept values of other religions and cultures and 1.6 percent start mixing up with other communities more freely even in day to day matters. Another 2.3 percent feel that by participating in the community events of other communities brings them closer to that cultural group and a sense of acceptance and belongingness develops. However, contrary to this notion 2.3 percent respondents felt that by increasing their participation in their own community events they tackle the issue of identity crisis. While for the 15.3 percent respondents the issue remains unresolved and as troublesome as ever. They do not believe that they can ever get over it and thus do not make any whetted effort in this direction.

Thus, it is clear from the above facts that Indians in Nairobi take to a variety of measures to overcome identity crisis and what is functional for one, may not be so for the other and vice versa. Another key point here is that most of these respondents said that they have to adopt more than one mechanism from time to time in order to handle the problem of identity crisis. Also, what works one day may not work the next time. Hence, it is a constant and conscious effort made by Indians to eventually develop a relatively stronger sense of belongingness. It is indeed troublesome to think that a large majority of people have experienced identity crisis at one or the other point of time in their life. It implies that the social structure in Nairobi among Indians is not able to cater to the individual needs at emotional,
psychological level. The system there no doubt provides for excellent financial support but the other areas like cultural and social belongingness are more or less missed out. This is both, a cause and an effect of lack of regular interaction among people and communities. ‘More and more people meet only on formal occasions or on festivals, which are only a few days in a year’, remarks Poonam Sachdeva who is a doctor. Her husband Sanil Sachdeva, a bank officer agrees with her and adds, ‘that’s why we are thinking of moving away from here. There is no cultural interaction, no informal get togethers. Once in a while it is there, but then you do not feel associated with these people’.

Another key factor in this regard is the general increase in the crime rate in Nairobi as around the world cities. As it is, in earlier days Indian women were not supposed to mix up with the native Africans. In case of the Europeans, they mostly visited the Indian homes and guests and all Indian women were supposed to do was to cook and serve. Now, though things have changed the interaction among the women folk still remains minimal. It is not advised to Indians, especially women, to walk around freely on the roads or neighbourhood. Most of the women are accompanied by their men counterparts or have to drive themselves. Thus, in cases where women do not know how to drive, there is hardly any interaction among them. This issue will be dealt in appropriate detail in the next chapter.

This sense of identity crisis thus brings us to another issue related to it, that is, integration. In the Dictionary of Sociology\textsuperscript{1} integration is explained as ‘the process by which different races come to have closer social, economic and political relationships.’ However, it has been criticized as ‘implying an over-integrated view of societies, ignoring the possibilities of conflict’ (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1984 : 218). It is evident that when one feels strongly integrated into a social, familial, cultural, religious or even political group, there are fewer chances of his or her facing an identity crisis at any stage of life.
Whereas, those who are not well integrated in any of the above or any other group are more prone to develop an identity crisis.

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Punjabis</th>
<th>Gujaratis</th>
<th>Expatriates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures show that though 34 percent respondents feel that they are very well integrated into their respective families. This is more applicable to expatriate Indians at 51.6 percent, followed by only 32.2 percent Punjabis and 28 percent Gujaratis. A high of 47.3 percent feel that they are poorly integrated. This percentage is only 28.3 for expatriates. In itself this may seem as a high number, but when compared to 51.1 percent Punjabis and 52.6 percent Gujaratis who said that they are poorly integrated in their families, it is safe to call it a low percentage. A modest 18.3 have an average integration with their families. This is again maximum for expatriates at 20 percent.

It reflects that there is a possibility of extreme cases among the Indians in Nairobi. On one end there are those who share a well integrated relation with their family and on the other there are those who feel a void in this regard. However, it is important to note here that there was a higher percentage of Indians among the expatriate group who share a close integration as compared to other Gujaratis and Punjabis. Another point of significance is that though a person may be well integrated in a family, yet he faces identity crisis when he is driven away from the same, for instance, leaving one’s family and country for higher studies. Some of them develop acute loneliness leading to identity crisis if they have to be away from their families for a rather longer period. In other words, ‘they have to depend on their
families for a constant emotional bonding’, remarks A.S. Bindra, a father of two. His elder son is studying in UK and the younger one is in Canada. He points out that his ‘younger son has faced an identity crisis ever since he has moved to Canada. Now even when he comes back, he is unable to adjust and relate to people, events and things here. However, on the same hand he does not want to go back either’. This is thus a typical case of identity crisis where change in one’s socio-cultural environment has led to loss of sense of belongingness. About his elder son he says that ‘during his childhood we had been able to spend more time with him. Perhaps that’s why even when we are not around he knows we care for him and so on. But unfortunately ‘nikku’ did not get a chance to spend that much time with us and thus needs repeated assurances’. Hence, it can be seen that even emotional insecurity plays a major role in leading to identity crisis. This brings to the surface another modern day problem where primarily due to financial reasons both parents have to work, and thus, are unable to devote much time to their children, resulting into various social, emotional and psychological problems. In case of Nairobi there is an added dimension to it as a large number of women, though housewives and thus ‘available’, have their own emotional issues to deal with! This is precisely why I have devoted whole chapter to the issues and problems of Indian women in Nairobi.

Suzy Patel adds that ‘it is not important for a family to spend longer or more hours with each other, rather what is important is the quality of time’. Thus, it does not enhance a relationship or integration if a family sits and watches lets say, television for a few hours each day. Rather, it is more important to carry out creative, constructive activities with the family members even if that is once or twice a month. For instance, reading stories to the kids when they are younger; planning and going for a picnic together as a family; reassuring that no matter what each member of the family can count on the others. Thus,
the quality of time is more important than the quantity of time for a
better and stronger integration among the family members which can
go a long way in avoiding or helping dealing with issues like identity

crisis.

Normally, from previous studies dealing with the notion of
'melting pot', it is believed that duration of stay in a country is
positively associated with integration, that is, the longer one stays in a
country, the more integrated one is. In case of Indian immigrants in
Nairobi this theory does not hold ground. This is mainly because:

1. The first Indian immigrants did not make much effort to integrate
with the host society as their primary concern was to make both
ends meet. There were even more restrictions on women, who were
not supposed to interact with the native Africans. As mentioned
earlier, Dana writes, if social mixing between Indians women and
men of different Asian sectarian groups or Europeans was thought
to be an abomination, no two groups were farther apart on the
sociological spectrum than Asian women and African men. This is
still very much in existence especially in the older generation.
David Maillu even published a novel depicting an East African
version of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, a love affair between
Tochi Kabra, an Asian woman and her African lover named Moses

2. The second generation of Indian immigrants were quite well off as
compared to the first. Thus, they were the ones who were able to
think beyond economics of life. A number of them still related to
India, but not many got a chance to visit the land of their ancestors.
Thus, though they were away from India, they related to it and
continued to maintain their distance from the host Africans.
Simultaneously, the number of those Indians also increased who
were unable to relate to India just because their parents had come

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from that country. It was too distant place, society and culture to belong to. And being unable to relate to the Africans, who were poor and did not serve as an appropriate reference group, these Indians started identifying with the British.

3. By the time, the third generation arrived, a large number of Indians had distanced themselves from their Indian or Asian identity. The socio-cultural and economic distance between Indian and Kenyan African communities persisted like always. The British, with whom a number of Indians had developed a sense of belonging, had left Kenya in 1963 (Kenya got independence in 1963). Though a number of Indians took up the British citizenship, they were unable to relate to another distant society either.

4. Thus, in case of Indians in Nairobi, the integration has not taken place even after a century of stay. This is precisely why the problem of identity is such an acute one here.

Table 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well integrated are you in your community</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjabis</td>
<td>Gujaratis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A large majority of respondents confess that they are poorly integrated in their respective communities, that is, 47 percent, having 52.2 percent Punjabis, 52.6 percent Gujaratis and 25 percent expatriates. In quite a few cases it was felt that most of the respondents feel that not only there are very few occasions when people get a chance to interact as a community, but also, there is not much to tempt and interest people towards these events and gatherings. Thus, most of the people either stay away, or even when they go, they go with certain pre-notions about whom to talk to, whom to mix up with, which is mostly
guided by one’s social and financial status. It is as though people carry along with them their closed compartments even to the social gatherings. This is disappointing as on one hand Indians try to settle into a society that is not their own, and on the other they go on distancing themselves from their own people. It especially has adverse effects on the young minds who are in a way taught from the beginning that they are in a society where they can not associate themselves with others, at least not without a thorough scrutiny. This attitude has gone a long way in moulding the perceptions of the third generation of Indian immigrants, who find themselves to be in no one’s land.

As discussed in the earlier chapters, though there is mostly a rudimentary thought of friends being selfish and conditioned by one’s financial status, yet, more and more Indians in Nairobi spend longer time with their friends as compared to their families. Thus, it was deemed necessary to analyze their integration with their friends.

Table 5.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well integrated are you with your friends</th>
<th>Punjabis</th>
<th>Gujaratis</th>
<th>Expatriates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results are startling. Though Indians keen on spending more and more time with their friends, yet it does not mean that there is deep integration. In fact, the responses in this regard were found to be at the extreme corners with 35.6 percent respondents having a very well integrated relation, while 42.6 percent being poorly integrated. The remaining 21.6 share an average integration. However, it is the expatriate group that enjoys a more integrated life even in case of friends as 60 percent of them said that they are very well integrated.
while 20 percent responded as enjoying average integration, leaving only 20 percent who are poorly integrated.

It is important to realize here that an individual when experiences a certain degree of unrelatedness, be it towards the family, community or the society as a whole, he develops an identity crisis. In other words he ceases to connect and identify with the social norms, ideas, traditions, set up and so on. Let us briefly look at the concept of social identity as given by Hogg and Abrams. According to the duo, 'social identity approach rests upon certain assumptions concerning the nature of people and society, and their interrelationship. Specifically, it maintains that society comprises of social categories which stand in power and status relations to one another. Social categories refer to the division of people on the basis of nationality (British / French), race (Arab / Jew), class (worker / capitalist), occupation (doctor / welder), sex (man / woman), religion (Hindu / Christian) and so forth, while power and status relations refer to the fact that some categories in society have greater power, prestige, status and so on than others. Categories do not exist in isolation. A category is only such in contrast with another. For example, the social category Black is meaningless unless it serves to differentiate between who are Black and those who are not - that is, a contrasting category. Any individual is at once a member of many different social categories (e.g. a male Buddhist Australian surfer), but is unlikely to be a member of a mutually exclusive categories, such as Protestant and Catholic in Northern Ireland'. (Hogg and Abrams, 1988 : 14). Hence it is clear from the above note that people right from the birth are associated with different social categories, based on which they identify with the fellow members of the society. The exact opposite of this, that is, the situation where people fail to relate with these assigned categories, the identity crisis creeps in.
It is important to note that identity crisis not only results from a reduced participation in the social, political and cultural events, but also, leads to further reduction. "Sociologists, from the early days of Emile Durkheim, have employed his concept of anomie to refer to the individual's lack of integration into the structure of the community. Contemporary sociologists refer to anomia as a social-psychological characteristic reflecting feelings and attitudes of individual disorientation, anxiety and isolation" (Freeman and Jones, 1970:208).

Identity crisis has always existed in human society. It has however become more common and a complex phenomenon in the modern societies. Primary reason for this appears to be the increased demands on an individual from the society on the whole. It is not always possible to maintain proximity with numerous sections of the society, be it a social organization, cultural gathering, office place, a community or even a family. This leads to creation of distance of an individual from one or the other section of the society. And more often than not these are the very sections that an individual tries to remain attached to. The end result is invariably a sense of isolation leading to an identity crisis. Also, in modern times, as individual needs multiply at a rapid pace, it is not often possible for one to interact with the people around. Again, this alienation or gradual distancing leads to identity crisis, where one can not relate to people and their actions around him. There is no doubt that migration contributes to the increase in identity crisis. It is even more difficult for a person to establish ties with people and relate to their activities in a new country, with a different cultural and social set up. And as time goes by, one also is automatically driven further away from the homeland, due to the physical distance. This situation, where one is unable to have any kind of emotional, cultural, social bonds with the host society and fails to maintain the same even with the motherland, leads to identity crisis. This exact situation exists among Indians in Nairobi. These
respondents who experience an identity crisis, have basically failed to integrate both, with the other Indians who have migrated as well as the native Africans, and their is no continuation of relations with India either. This has left them in a lurch, where they feel frustrated and not belonging.

It is more prominent in Nairobi, as compared to Indians in the United States or United Kingdom, as there either Indians have merged into the host society to an extent or have continued their ethnic separation. These views are expressed in Healey’s study where he refers to Chinese community in America. He states that there is a gradual assimilation of immigrant society in the host society. This may take three to four generations. The immigrants may acquire some traits of the host society, while continue with some of their ethnic attitudes. Thus, he does not agree with the ‘melting pot’ theory. Rather he lays stress on ethnicizing. He accords that by the third generation a sort of revival takes place, when the immigrants start looking for their cultural roots. This assimilation may be due to the fact that in these cases the host community is better off than the immigrant community, and thus, serve as a role model or reference group. Thus, assimilation may take place to an extent, while some form of ethnic separation may continue. The lack of assimilation of Indians and Africans has been due to the latter being poor and even more undeveloped than Indians. Thus, not serving as an appropriate ‘reference group’ which can aspire others ‘to be like them’. There are also cases where immigrants, after decades and generations, have been able to maintain strong socio-cultural ties with their place of origin. They are very much aware of their place of origin and feel related to it even after generations. During my interaction with the Indians belonging to Trinidad, West Indies these observations have been made. Indians had though first migrated more than 150 years ago, yet, they have been able to maintain their culture and traditional social values. It was experienced there that the Indians who were taken as
labourers, were thorough Indians till they died. The next generation was much impressed by their British Colonialists and adopted much of their life style, same as the Indians in Nairobi. In both the cases the children of the migrants had embraced the life style of the much better off British rulers. It was observed in Trinidad by the third generation however, that by giving up their basic socio-cultural and religious values they did not attain much in life as far as peace of mind and spirit was concerned. This very generation initiated the change. It was accepted then, that either they should integrate with the native Africans, or revive their own Indian culture. It is not surprising then, that a large number of men from this third generation decided to become 'pundits'. Thus, their ethnic identities have strengthened over the years. They have revived their Indian value-system. And though they have modified certain aspects of Indian social and cultural setup to suit to their needs, yet they have basically realized that if they can not integrate with the native Africans, there is no way that they can be accepted by the Britishers and vice versa. As a result Indians in Trinidad have lesser sense of unbelongingness as compared to the second generation. Unlike Trinidad, this trend has not taken place in Nairobi. One of the main reason for this may be that though Indians have a good hold over the economy here, yet numerically they are very much a minority. In case of Trinidad almost 40 percent of population has its origin in India, though they have the Trinidad citizenship. Another key factor is that most of the Indians in Trinidad have a sort of understanding that they have to live and die in Trinidad. So, they try to create the best suitable conditions for themselves and so, if they are comfortable by following the Indian way of life, they continue to do so. However, in Nairobi, most of the Indians (Kenyan and English citizens) feel that 'when things turn very bad, we can pack up and leave'. They live and bring up their children with the pre-notion that eventually they will be settled in UK or Canada. Thus, Indian values
are not revived; they are not able to integrate into the Kenyan society that they live in; they have not yet reached the society that they want to. All this, is in one way or the other connected to identity crisis and either leads or adds to it.

Indians in Nairobi thus make a very unique study as unlike migrants, Indians and otherwise, to other countries; neither have they been able to accept the native Africans, nor have they been able to maintain their original identities. Even Africans have accepted them as their own due to the differences in the financial status. This will be detailed out in the chapter dealing with nature of bonds established by Indian immigrants with local Kenyan culture and emergence of a composite culture.

Another factor that brings to the surface the existence of identity crisis is the question about the role model. This particular question was asked to examine how many people here identify with the people around them or take confidence in themselves for inspiration. It is thus, not in the sense that a person intends to copy, imitate and be like the role model in the actual sense. Rather it is the stimulus, hope, happiness and strength that is drawn from the role model that really counts. The results were startling.

Table 5.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Model</th>
<th>Punjabis</th>
<th>Gujaratis</th>
<th>Expatriates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Friend</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Diana</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Mandela</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sachin Tendulkar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Jockey</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one to look up to</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is clear from the table that not many respondents are able to associate with the people around them. As many as 47 percent responded that they had absolutely no one to look up to. These respondents often felt lost and lonely when confronted with emotional, financial and other problems. This reflects that most of the Indians in Nairobi do not know how to handle certain problems and whom to approach. It was heartening to know that when clubbed together, 18.6 percent respondents disclosed that they had either their parents, or a friend or themselves as their role-models. However, 34.2 percent, clubbed together, named Princess Diana, Nelson Mandela, Sachin Tendulkar and a radio jockey as their role-models. Those who named Diana as their role-model had nothing to do with the charity. It was more because ‘it was so sweet, she had a fairy tale kind of life’, ‘she was so beautiful’, ‘she was so lucky’, ‘she was so unlucky’ and so on. In case of Mandela, it is still a little better, as the respondents naming him want to do something for the society and the native Africans. ‘It is sad that we are living in their country and ill-treating them’, said one of them. But such remarks are very rare.

Similarly, in case of the cricketer batsman Sachin and a radio jockey, it seems more of fantasy ride where a distant individual is taken to be a source of inspiration. However, it has gradually brought to the surface a realization among the people that they need to connect. These seem more like aspirations rather than true sources of inspiration. It is indeed tragic as most of the Kenyan Indians in Nairobi fail to relate to the very real people around them. However, even a distant flicker of something Indian makes them realize that somewhere deep down they are still Indian. Those who do have this realization eventually move towards overcoming identity crisis. For instance, 13 percent respondents end up naming of a radio presenter as their role model. These respondents are mainly those second generation Indians.
who have the hope of returning to their country of origin. The programme presented to them in the afternoons in Hindi language drove them towards identifying with the language and eventually with India. ‘Hum to katipatang ki tarah jee rahe the’ (we were living like a stringless kite), remarked and emotional woman in her mid-fifties. Another factor was that most of the songs that were played during this afternoon show were the songs that were famous in the 60s and 70s, to which these second generation Indians immediately identify with. As the very first 24-hour radio station was launched in Nairobi in Feb. 1998, it has given the Indians residing in this city a source of identifying with the Indians and Indian culture. Thus, firstly, the Indian songs of particular decades and then the presentation of these songs in Hindi language made the show popular as more and more Indians tuned in. ‘It feels like we are somewhere in India’. Similarly, Sachin Tendulkar is pointed out by the respondents for the reason that ‘he is the best Indian cricketer’. Here, the word Indian holds the key. These respondents may hold non-Indian passports but still when it comes to cricket they support Indian team. ‘It is only during the cricket matches that I feel I belong to India, or at least some place in the world’, said a small restaurant owner.

Though some of the distant celebrities, it appears, have helped Indians in search of their own roots, most of these are short-lived and too distant to always connect with. In other words these choices by the respondents have neither helped them to proceed in a particular direction in life, nor helped them identify or relate to a particular community or a nation. Hence, it does appear that the concept of role-model has not contributed to the progressive growth of these Indians towards handling their own situations and conditions. Whereas those who take their parents or themselves or even their particular friends as their role-models were seen to be well integrated, or moving in the direction of integration into their families, community or the society.
The cardinal reason for this seems to be the realness or the easily approachable nature of their role-models. Though they are inspired by them, their handling of life and problems, ideas and values and yet at the same time, they can walk up to them and establish a conversation. This makes one comfortable and develops a feeling that there is at least one person who understands him or her. This leads to gradual integration with the larger whole.

Thus, the above examples suggest that a lot goes into a human persona to enable him to adjust into a society. The kind of socialization that is meted out to the people goes a long way in handling the issues of identity crisis. ‘The process by which a person acquires knowledge, skills and disposition that makes him more or less an able member of the community is referred to as socialization. While one often thinks of socialization in terms of the period from birth to late adolescence, clearly the process of being socialized continues as long as one lives...In addition, shifts and changes in the normative patterns of the society require adjustments and adaptation on the part of community members throughout their lives’ (Freeman and Jones, 1970: 40). Thus, as stated earlier, identity crisis can develop at any stage of life. It thus requires the society to socialize its members, young and old, men and women, constantly in a way that they are able to adjust with the changing social scenario and do not feel isolated. It is of immense significance for the individual to be able to connect to the society all through his life. Proper socialization and its continuation attaches one to the set up that he is a part of. This enables him to refer to a particular group, community or ethnic enclave as his own. This reference in turns help him relate to the people around him. It is very important for the continuing existence of any society that its members are able to feel connected to it.
Freeman and Jones further point out in their book 'Social Problems: Causes and Controls', that most of the social problems are products of a socialization process only, as it can not be entirely successful. It is important to bear in mind that social problems, including that of identity crisis have existed at all times, in all the different societies. The ratio or the degree varies. It is because after all human perceptions of a situation and actions to handle it can not be flawless. Certain discrepancies are inbuilt. Thus, no society can be perfect, rather, the definition of what is perfect, what is not, varies from society to society depending on its value system, culture and tradition, to name a few. Hence, one just can not afford to be judgmental in this regard. However, one does need to address various problems in a society. This calls for adoption, evolution and modification of the measures existing in a society to solve these problems. People adopt different means to reach a solution. For instance, to fight identity crisis, some Indians in Nairobi try to revive their or their parents' and grandparents' culture based on Indian value system. They encourage use of Indian languages like Hindi, Gujarati and Punjabi. They lay stress on intra-caste marriages and so on. While there are also those who encourage giving up of mother tongue and more use of English language. They exalt the British and American civilization as compared to the Indian. Thus, just like definitions of right or wrong, good and bad, even the means to overcome the bad also differ from person to person and community to community. But as long as they are functional, the social equilibrium is maintained and existence of an individual as a part of a larger social whole is perpetuated.

In order to further observe the amount of time that an individual often spends by himself I had put the question related to spending time alone.
The above data reveals that 47.6 percent respondents spend nearly 8-10 hours alone in a week and most of these come during the traffic hours. Thus, not many people get time to sit back and think, though they have a deep perception of loneliness. In other words, in their mind and spirit, mentally and emotionally, they are alone to a large extent. Most of them are always in a rush. 'Most of Indians do not have time to sit and assess the present situation, their problems, things that affect them etc. And by the time they do realize that there is a problem, it is normally too late', says Janish Patel. It appears that whole life is a big hurry for most of the Indians here and somewhere in between they get confused and lost.

This brings us to the end of this chapter. The findings of this part are summed up as follows;

- A large number of Indians in Nairobi feel an identity crisis. In the early years of struggle when Indians had to strive hard to make both ends meet, it was economy of life that weighed heavily on their minds. But later on, after achieving the material success and making more or less a financially secure life, the cultural, societal issues came in focus. There is a general acceptance of lack of emotional bonding among the Indians, by the Indians and most of them lack a sense of belongingness all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Spent Alone, Besides Work / Sleeping (Hours in a Week)</th>
<th>Punjabis</th>
<th>Gujaratis</th>
<th>Expatriates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4 hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 hours</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 hours</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the time.
However, expatriate Indians are better integrated among their families, friends and community in general, as compared to the Kenyan Indians, that is, Gujaratis and Punjabis. This is because expatriates have a feeling that one day they will go back to India. Thus, they feel related to Indian culture, values and traditions. They do not feel a need to make an effort to integrate with or distance themselves from the host society.

Many Kenyan Indians (Gujaratis and Punjabis) have acquired British or Canadian citizenship (especially the third generation of immigrants), thus, making a conscious effort to distance themselves from the host Africans. Even those who have Indian passports do not have plans to migrate to India. Thus, they distance themselves from both Indians and Africans, resulting into a sense of lack of belongingness.

There is a constant sense of insecurity among the Kenyan Indians that prevents them from having a close relation with the people around them. ‘Friends’ are mostly seen as self-seeking and friendship as a relation of conveniences and opportunities. This hinders them to connect emotionally. This distancing of them from their own people makes them harsh and they develop a feeling of ‘not belonging’.

In some cases the identity crisis has led to the mockery of the Indian culture instead of anger and frustration, or an effort to relate to it. These young men and women feel that Indian culture is inferior to the European, and so they do not make an effort to internalize it. However, they are not able to get connected to other cultures either.

A large number of third generation Indians study in various colleges in Europe and Canada. By the time they come back to work with their families in Nairobi, they already carry certain
pre-notions about India and Indians. And the fact that most of the Indians in their parent generation took up the English citizenship does not help much either. A number of third generation Indians hold non-Kenyan and non-Indian passports, thus, 'when they are not the Indian citizens, why and how can they feel related to India'. But having most of the Indian relatives lands them into a dilemma. In this regard it is the parent generation that is held responsible by the Kenyan Indians, for not inculcating the right values in their children, at the right age.

A number of Indians in Nairobi are making a concerted effort to overcome identity crisis. For this numerous means like teaching and spreading one's own culture and religion, speaking in up mother tongue, following strict norms in marital relations, attending community events, are taken up.

In contrast there are Indians who feel that giving up their mother tongue, encouraging mixing up with other communities, accepting values of other religions and cultures as more effective ways to overcome their identity crisis.

There are also those who do not feel that the issue of identity crisis can be resolved.

A large number of people in Nairobi have experienced identity crisis at one or the other point of time in their life. It connotes that the social structure in Nairobi among Indians is not able to cater to the individual needs at emotional, psychological level. The system there no doubt provides for excellent financial support but the other areas like cultural and social belongingness are more or less missed out. This, both, influences and in turn, is influenced by the lack of regular interaction among people and communities.

There is no doubt that migration contributes to the initiation and
increase in identity crisis. It is difficult for a person to establish ties with people and relate to their activities in a new country, with a different cultural and social set up. And when one is automatically driven further away from the homeland, due to the physical distance, the situation becomes more complex. This situation, where one is unable to have any kind of emotional, cultural, social bonds with the host society and fails to maintain the same even with the motherland, leads to identity crisis. This exact situation exists among Indians in Nairobi.

Indians in Nairobi bring up their children with the idea of settling them in UK or USA, thus, Indian values stand no chance of revival. They still have not reached the society of their choice, but have spoiled their relations with the one they are living in, while giving up on the one that they once belonged to!

- Most of the Indians in Nairobi do not have a role model, that is, they do not have anyone to look up to. At times when they feel low and beaten, they have no source of inspiration and hope. It is because they are unable to relate to their families, friends and the community that they are born in. It further distances them.

- It is a startling revelation that though very few Indians in Nairobi spend time alone, yet there is a constant gloom of loneliness around them. It is due to numerous factors like, 'unworthy friends', lack of integration in family and community, inability to relate to any particular society and culture. This actuality, keeping in mind the success story of Indians in a distant land of East Africa, is indeed a matter of both concern and disconsolation.

- Interaction among women is at the minimal possible level. They have always faced numerous strictures and the increased levels of crime have further deteriorated the situation. Though most of them spend their time trying to be 'ideal home-makers', there
are ever increasing cases of depression due to acute loneliness. This and a whole lot of other issues that the women folk face are dealt with in the next chapter.