Conclusions and Inferences

The world societies are becoming more and more cognate due to the global migration which has become an integral part of human existence. In context of Indians, a large number of them happened to migrate to various parts of the world in late 1800s and early 1900s, as a result of the British colonialism. This includes countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Fiji, Surinam, Southern and East African region and so on. A number of studies have been done related to the past struggle and subsequent success of Indian immigrants, however, not many efforts have been made in the direction of studying the present state of affairs. The bottom line is believed to be that Indians have made it big in these regions and have hundreds of success stories to tell. This was exactly my line of research as well, until I happened to come across enough of criticism of the native Kenyan Africans in all walks of life, by the Indian community in general.

This is when I decided to interview some Africans as well to get their side of the story. Their opinions of Indians are no better either. There is a continuous under current of distrust and a growing sense of exploitation. A large number of Kenyan Africans believe that Indians have exploited their land, ruined their economy and are now packing bags and leaving Kenya in the state of an economic turmoil. Indians, on the other hand, have reasons to believe that they have made money, established their business empires as a result of their hard work through generations. There is no denying the fact that most of the early Indian immigrants were at par with the host Africans, as far as financial status is concerned. And yet, they have risen and sweat their heart out to make it big. However, it would be too naive to believe that their is no hostility against Indians in these parts of the world. Even though Indians have been successful mainly due to their hard work and entrepreneurial skills, it would be too ingenuous to believe that
such a situation is acceptable to the host community which lives in rather plaintive conditions. It is quite volatile to have the presumption that Africans have accepted Indians as the latter are enjoying superior economic and social status due to their hard work. It is too intrepid to believe that the host society does not find anything wrong with Indians making money and moving on, while the Africans are left to bear the brunt of the fast collapsing economy.

Contrary to the opinion held by Indians that things have deteriorated ever since Kenya got Independence and had its African leaders running the show, most of the Africans interviewed by me, blamed Indians for everything going wrong in this east African country. There is so much hostility between the two communities that I was told loud and clear by the Indians not to enter the areas inhabited by the Africans. This deep rooted fear is not all baseless. There have been a number of cases in and around Nairobi where Indian families have been wiped off completely by Africans out of hatred. The newspapers are full of such incidents and the number is on the rise. Thus, when I decided to go and interview Africans I had to go with no wrist watch, no sun shades or even a pair of spectacles. I was advised not to carry any cash. I decided to go with a fourth class employee I had come to know in about three months. On my first visit I could feel tension in the locality as not many Indians ever visit such dilapidated areas. Not many people were very keen on talking to 'an Indian'. Still, gradually I managed to convey to some of them, through my interpreter, that I wanted to hear their side of the story. After a while I also realized that by telling me 'the stuff' they were doing me a favour and so I was supposed to 'pay' them. To my amazement, even a meager 50 Kshillings could bring out answers to any questions. It also meant that crime was on the rise perhaps due to this acute poverty. Many Africans were even ready to tell about their 'drug dealing',

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'where to buy gun' and 'other illegal' activities as well. Thus, getting their views on Indians was not a big deal eventually.

The most common thing was whenever one person started to speak about how Indians have spoiled their country during and after the British rule, almost everyone surrounding started to nod heads in affirmation. Along with Indians, they also blame most of their political leaders for not being strict with Indians, 'who keep on coming all the time'. Here also, I was told that they feel furious as and when Indians treat them as inferiors due to their skin colour. Most of them used harsh words to convey how Indians are imitating the British and insulting the land that is feeding them. All these views and situations reflect that all is not smooth beneath the century old cover of 'multi-cultural society', 'the rainbow culture'.

Thus, the present state of affairs is not as simple as it was when Indians had first landed here and eventually built their empires. Though, like in Fiji and Trinidad, Indians here have been financially successful, however, unlike Fiji and Trinidad, they have not entered the political scene. The one main reason may be that not many of them have ever thought of staying here permanently, though a large number of them eventually have done so. Another factor may be that, eventually most of the Indians have been concentrated in and around Nairobi area, unlike the two island countries where Indians have spread to even far off cities. Also, in case of Nairobi, the number of expatriate Indians has gone up consistently in last three-four decades. The main reason for this may be that Kenya is nearer to India as compared to Trinidad and Fiji. Thus, the number of those who go on contract basis and have to return within a certain time limit, has gone up, while those who either have Kenyan or English citizenship have started another migration to England and other countries. Thus, not many have taken keen interest in the Politics. Still, Indians, in the numerically minority, literally run the country's economy here. This
has brought a lot of bitterness in the relations of host and immigrant communities. Africans believe that Indians manipulate prices to their benefit. This is compounded by the remarkable differences in the incomes of Africans and Indians. Though the economic disparities have been one of the main reason for the social distance between these two communities. However, it has also been a prominent factor for the limited interaction within the Indian community.

Healey elaborates that the minority status has more to do with the distribution of resources and power with simple numbers. He has based his definition of minority on the same lines as Wagely & Harris (1958). According to this definition, a minority group has five characteristics:

1. The members of the group experienced a pattern of disadvantage or inequality.
2. The members of the group share a visible trait or characteristic that differentiates them from other groups.
3. The minority group is a self conscious social unit.
4. Membership in the group is usually determined at birth.
5. Members tend to marry within the group.

Here, the first two that is, inequality and visibility are the most important. Healey sees the pattern of disadvantage as the key defining characteristic of a minority group. This pattern of disadvantage is the result of the actions of another group who tries to sustain the unequal arrangement as it benefits from the same. The minority group can also be called a subordinate group as it has less of what is valued by society. The group maintaining the pattern of disadvantage can thus be called the core group, the majority group or the dominant group (Healey, Pg. 15: 1995). This definition of minority, in case of Nairobi, applies more appropriately to the native Kenyan Africans. They are, though more in number, yet are the disadvantaged group in terms of resources and opportunities. Thus, Indians have done little to modify
the existing system, as far as jobs and income levels of Africans are concerned, as the former benefit from the same. In these terms then, Kenyan Africans are a disadvantaged group, which largely does not control the resources that could be used for their own benefit. Indians thus, are the dominant group. Hence, it is not always a possibility that the people who are numerically a minority, may also be on the rough side of economic and social spectrum.

Most of the previous studies have propagated the Indian point of view of a 'rainbow culture' in the countries that they have migrated to over the centuries. However, the May 2000 coup in Fiji against the ethnic Indian Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, by those who want the government to be run by indigenous Fijians, so that the interests of the natives are not overlooked, supports the bitter fact that there has been developing a sense of 'losing-it-all-to-Indians' among the natives in countries like Fiji and Kenya. I believe that for years a simplistic view has been accepted and propagated by writers, politicians and even researchers about immigrant Indians in distant lands. However, all is not well and I am hopeful that my study in this regard can serve as a hypothesis for the future students of socio-cultural research in undertaking projects related to Indians settled in a foreign land.

Here are the main inferences drawn from this research. The phenomenon of Indian migration to various countries in search of better life style has been there from the earliest times. This has been both, forced by the conditions at home (push factors) and due to the better opportunities at other places (pull factors). The British colonialism has played a major role in enhancing Indian migration in the last few centuries. Though Indian traders and merchants have been frequenting East African region since the 12th century AD, yet it was in the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century that Indians were brought here in large numbers. They were mainly brought by the British to work on the construction of
Kenya-Uganda railway. It has mainly been due to the reputation of Indians as being hard working and loyal to their ‘masters’. On the other hand the native Africans were found averse to the idea of doing manual labour for the colonizers. Also, Indians were relatively better skilled than the Africans. It was their persistence and hard work that eventually brought Kenyan Indians success. Most of the Indians came from the Saurashtra region. These Gujaratis were divided into Patels, Shahs and Ismailis. The main reason behind such a large migration by Gujaratis was the decline of the textile industry in Surat and other areas. A large number of Punjabis had also come as carpenters and mechanics. While most of the Gujaratis later diverted to trading in cloth, spices and grocery, a large number of Punjabis turned to architecture, furniture business and tourism. Later, Indians also developed domination over banking services, agriculture and set up their industries in and around Nairobi area manufacturing everything from rubber mats to furniture; virtually every household item. Initially, most of the Indians had gone to Mombasa, Kisumu and other areas. After the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway the British had given Indians the option to either go back or stay back and make a living in Kenya. Many returned while a number of them stayed back as well. Those who chose to stay back were assisted by the British in setting up their small businesses. Also, those who had gone back, carried home stories about this virgin land and possibilities of making it big here. This further increased the influx of Indians.

With increased industrialization, most of the Indians moved to Nairobi and surrounding areas as it was the hub of all the industrial and business activities. In fact, Nairobi and Mombasa were the only two cities in Kenya which could boast of once having a fine infrastructure. However, the conditions are fast deteriorating and the facilities are not enough to cater to the needs of incoming Indian immigrants, native Kenyan Africans and other refugees from the
surrounding countries. This is causing the city’s infrastructure to collapse. As a result, those who can, are leaving Kenya and moving to other parts of the world, while there is still a constant stream of Indian expatriates coming on contract basis to earn some fast money.

The people of Indian origin, settled in Kenya form a complex group. Firstly, the first and largely the second generation of Indians have been trying to maintain their bonds with India. Secondly, they expect to be fully accepted and respected by the Kenyans as their own, while they are themselves looking up to the British for acceptance. Thirdly, they treat Africans as inferior to themselves and thus maintain a significant social and cultural distance. Fourthly, the people of Indian origin have flourished in the land of Africans for centuries, while the natives have found it hard to make both ends meet. This has given birth to bitterness, which has taken the shape of senseless crime against the Indian community, more so, in the last five years or so. Also, the Western and European influences have further confused the priorities of Indians, that of the younger generation in particular.

Another important aspect in this regard, is that for decades a large proportion of the Indians settled in Nairobi had no contact whatsoever with India. This was largely due to their economic engagements. The absence of Indian visual and audio media also contributed to it. Indian visual media was allowed into the lives of the Kenyans only a couple of years back, while the audio media did not get introduced as late as early 1998. Thus, for decades the only way for Kenyan Indians to be in touch with their roots, was to visit India. However it was not possible for everyone. This gap has resulted in two-way impact. A majority of the younger generation find themselves with a ‘nothing-to-do-with-India’ attitude, while their parent generation suffers with a sense of loss, and still feels alienated to a large extent. This is largely applicable to the women folk, most of whom stay at home as housewives. There is another group of Indian
women who are born and brought up in India, but married in Kenya. This group of women is also unable to integrate itself with the Kenyan Indians and Africans.

The data was collected by resorting to multi-stage sampling as given in the first chapter. Samples of Punjabis, Gujaratis and expatriates were chosen on the basis of their actual proportion in the total population. And though there are a large number of Gujaratis and Punjabis among the expatriates, yet it was important to club them in a separate group along with other Indian expatriates as they find more commonality with the latter. They have been studied as one Indian group wherever deemed necessary and as separate groups as and when required, depending on the need and objectives of the study.

Information was primarily gathered from heads of the households male or female, depending upon the availability. This information was supplemented by discussions with other members of the family. While preparing the Interview Schedule it was taken into account that all the aspects of the proposed study are covered in it. Once it was prepared it was pretested on a smaller sample of respondents. It enabled me to know if the respondents understood the questions and what questions they found hard to answer. The element of hesitation on the part of the respondents was also detected through this, as it made apparent if any questions embarrassed them. After putting it to test the flaws or discrepancies, if any, were removed and the inadequate questions were modified or altered and reframed. In order to collect data case studies were also conducted as and when required.

Many respondents were initially hesitant about giving their names and details of family income. However, after much deliberation, persuasion and being sure of the fact that that the information being collected was exclusively for academic purposes, they were ready to talk on most of the topics. Thus, I was able to get the maximum
possible information. It was easier to get information from women, men of second generation and, both, males and females of third generation. Among expatriates there was more a problem of availability of time than implacability. I was not able to locate many people belonging to the first generation of Indian immigrants as most of them have died. Those I was able to locate found it hard to remember. But once they started narrating there was no stopping them. I also took help of various books written on Indians in Kenya. I also went through a number of articles dealing with Afro-Asians in Uganda and Kenya.

Hence, the data reveals that most of the expatriates who go on contract basis, are usually young in twenties and thirties and thus, in their prime years to make maximum financial gains. As a result even the expatriate Indians have a higher income level and better living conditions than the native Africans. Similarly, some of the best residential areas are inhabited by the Indians.

Most of the Indians had earlier migrated with little educational and professional skills. They were mostly traders, workers, indentured labours etc. The trend has changed now, and as a consequence, their migration to other parts of the globe, like America, England, Canada and Australia has increased. Thus, now more and more skilled, professional and well-educated Indians are migrating out. Even in case of Indian immigrants to Nairobi, earlier, most of them were unskilled and semi-skilled. A large number of them went as mechanics, baadis, mochis, darjis and so on. Now, the number of skilled migrants, especially going on contract basis (expatriates) has increased. Most of the Indians, expatriates and others, prefer to go in for diploma courses and other professional qualifications, to augment their chances of getting a job both in Nairobi (in case of expatriates) and in UK and US (in case of Kenyan Indians and those who have British passports). Simultaneously, there is a constant flow of unskilled and semi-skilled
workers as well, who mostly go to work as domestic helpers, office peons, cooks etc. A number of them eventually start working as office assistants, secretaries and so on. Some have even started their own small businesses. Still, there is a general belief that not many Indian expatriates have their first contract as a success. The reason behind this is the absence of a written contract in most of the cases. As a number of expatriates are employed by the Kenyan Indians, there is relatively low sense of distrust. Indians are lured by the high wages and thus, do not generally insist on getting everything done in black and white. However, the cost of living is very high in Nairobi and the working hours are often manipulated by the Indian employers as no written binding is there. Still, a large number of expatriates manage to get other jobs after reaching there. The relations within the Indian society thus, have somewhat become rancid over the years.

There are vast income disparities among Indian Indians (expatriates) and Kenyan Indians, and Africans, which has further distanced these groups. This has had some serious repercussions.

Some sections of Indian immigrants still wish that Indians should live in a closely knit society. Thus, various efforts are being made in the direction of maintaining intra-ethnic cohesion within Indian community. In this context, Indians in Nairobi have formed various organizations to look after the welfare of Indian population in general and other Gujarati, Punjabi and expatriate communities in particular. Various bodies like Hindu Council, Lion's club and numerous other associations are formed by Gujaratis, Punjabis and even Indian women, work towards increasing intra-ethnic interaction to keep the members related to each other.

On the similar lines, a number of cultural shows and musical nights are organized by Indians to keep the participation of Indian families high within the community. The emphasis is thus on the activities that enhance family participation, like musical nights,
community service, religious functions, get together for lunch, dinner etc. However, there is a constant decline in this. Not many third generation Indians are keen on staying in Kenya. They do not relate to India either and thus, are distanced from the host as well as their ancestors’ society. There are sharp differences within the Indian community as Gujus do not normally prefer to work with Punjabis and vice-versa. Similarly, the expatriate Indians are seen a ‘use and throw commodity’ by most of the Kenyan Indians, while expatriates want to match the Kenyan Indians overnight, in their financial status! Over the years the number of South Indian expatriates has also increased tremendously. However, most of them go to the firms which are well established and are better off, as compared to those who go on a verbal contract.

The data further revealed that most of the Indian immigrants have long working hours. This is particularly so in case of expatriates. As they come to terms with the high cost of living in Nairobi, a number of them find it hard to make both ends meet. Thus, they start putting in extra hours, and of course their employers do not mind this. Most of the housewives also follow a hectic and exhaustive schedule as a number of them, especially Gujarati women are active in selling home made pickles, ‘vadiyaan’ and ‘paapad’. This keeps them busy and also does not disturb the accepted socio-cultural set up, where first and foremost they are supposed to be ideal home makers.

People of all age groups enjoy going to clubs, bars and discos, and play pool. This is popular among Kenyan Indians as well as expatriates. Though not many prefer to take their spouses, particularly wives along too often, the gender barrier is crossed as the third generation females frequent clubs and bars, mostly with friends. Still, among the second generation women these are largely seen as forbidden activities. Internet chatting is fast catching up with the younger Gujarati and Punjabi lot.
'Mujra' is another popular pastime among men of all ages. It is fast becoming an addiction though. It is rapidly spreading like a disease and disrupting family life of many. The worst affected in this regard are the women and young children.

It was obvious through various interviews that Kenyan Indians in Nairobi are more or less aware of their better economic status, which is often envied by the native Africans. Here, it is imperative to mention the role of the English colonizers. The British have served as a reference group to the Indians through generations. The powerful economic status of the British, along with their being the colonizers of so many countries, that is, their political power, and the general notion of superiority associated to the white skin by a large number of Indians; all these factors have contributed to the Indian perception of the British being superior! Thus, after achieving economic prosperity, Indians, especially the third generation of immigrants, have been trying to acquire the physical traits of the British, like, light coloured eyes (for which there is an extensive use of contact lenses), brown, red or blonde hair (using dyes) and a fairer complexion (with the frequent use of bleach and other face creams).

Economic conditions affect the direction of assimilation to a large extent. That is why more and more Kenyan Indians are captivated by the British and have a desire to be accepted by them, rather than to the native Africans who live in miserable conditions.

With regard to Healey's perspective of ethnicizing, it applies only partially when attitudes of Indians are studied in relation to Kenyan Africans. Even among themselves Indians are becoming ethnically more aware of their 'own groups'. But when it comes to interacting with the British or any other Western or European group, which have traditionally been more powerful both, in economic and political terms, and are perceived racially superior on the basis of the colour of their skin, Indians do not mind keeping aside their ethnic
identities and values. Rather they are keen to be assimilated with these groups. Thus, inter-ethnic relations in this regard are contextual and situational. They can not be defined and limited in absolute terms. The attitudes of Indians towards assimilation depend on which community is in question. And thus, though they are averse to the idea of assimilating with Africans and even largely with the Indian community as well, they are more than keen to do so in case of British.

In response to another question, most of the respondents, in all three Indian groups under study, complain about men having more freedom, while women are left to face restrictions in every walk of life. This attitude is becoming more salient among the third generation Indians. Though most of the first and second generation Indians and a majority of expatriates take pride in being identified as a Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Madrasi and so on, they are not happy with the present state of affairs.

Most of the respondents were in general, found to be indifferent towards other Indian communities. In particular, they have a sense of dissatisfaction when it comes to Indian community and are driven towards European and other communities, instead of towards other Indian communities. Thus, it is a very complex scenario where Indians who are unable to connect with their own community, are neither able to relate to other Indian communities, nor to the host African society. Instead, they are driven towards the far off cultures and societies of the British in particular for socio-cultural identification and refuge.

Though a large number of respondents denied having been influenced by American / Canadian ways in any walk of life, many of them find their work culture, language, recreational and food habits having greatly influenced. Language was particularly an influential factor among expatriates, while for Punjabis, American family values and traditions are also a major influence along with work culture, the latter being prominent among the Gujaratis as well. Unlike in India, the
Western or American culture has not made significant inroads in the lives of Kenyan Indians. Instead they are more drawn towards the British socio-cultural setup. This was evident from the fact that none of the respondents admitted that his / her family had no influence of the same. In this context, work culture is an important factor, as most of these respondents believe that there is more professionalism in these communities. To talk with English accent is considered being 'elite'. Similarly, their manners and dressing sense are also considered superior and thus imitated.

Here a surprising finding is that a large majority of Indians especially the younger ones, are influenced by the Africans in appurtenance of food and recreational habits. In this regard most of the Indians are attracted to the African attitude of 'serve and eat anything and everything', while they feel that there are too many restrictions in the Indian society even on food. A large majority of Indians also like to party with Africans as one, they get a sense of superiority, and two, many feel that by spending on Africans during parties, they can make up for the past mistakes of their ancestors who have treated Africans as inferior to them, indicating a shifting attitude.

Thus, all in all we witness a great deal of English influence on Kenyan Indians. The main reason for this, as stated earlier is the proximity of the British with the Indians during colonialism coupled with economic superiority of the former. Many Indians and other Asians believe that after the death of Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of the independent Kenya, things have not been the same. Poverty and crime have grown out of bounds. This has further restrained them in interacting with the natives. Not many Indians hesitate to say that 'kaalon ne ye mulk kharaab kar diya' (the Blacks have spoiled this country). Of course, such an attitude is reflected in day-to-day activities of Indians and does no good to the two already distant communities.
It was further learnt that most of the respondents have only an average interaction with people belonging to other communities. Most of them added that these interactions are inspired by the business or job dealings. Thus, financial interaction would perhaps be the more adequate term. The main result of this financial inter-dependence turns out to be mutual respect and maintenance of some harmony, even if out of compulsion.

The data further revealed that more than half of the respondents are found to be either little or 'not comfortable' with the members of other Indian communities as their co-workers. However a large number of them are comfortable with Indians belonging to different communities like Punjabi, Gujarati, South Indians and so on. Though they do have to work in a collated manner, there is a general lack of trust within the Indian community. On the outset, it appears, given the numerical minority of Indians in Nairobi, that it must be a very closely knit community. However, a closer examination divulges the divisions within the Indian community as a whole.

There are sharp divisions within the Gujarati and Punjabi communities based on financial status and caste. The Gujaratis are divided into Shahs, Patels and Ismailis, while the Punjabis face divisions between 'Jat Sikhs' and 'Bhapes', clean shaven Sikhs and bearded ones, Hindu Punjabis and Sikhs and so on. Similarly, there are also divisions based on financial status of an individual. The rich like to interact 'with their own kind' only.

These divisions within the Indian community were further substantiated by the preferences listed by the respondents under study. It was revealed that while an Indian in Nairobi is ready to accept an Indian of a different community as a co-worker, he would not have him as a family member. Thus, there is social differentiation not only among Indians and other communities, but also within the Indian community.
It was considered rudimentary to study the behaviour of Indian immigrants during festivals, as these are generally believed to be the occasions when people freely mix up and celebrate each other's revelry. In this regard, the data revealed that a large number of Indians in Nairobi want to celebrate Christmas which is associated with Christianity, particularly as Santa Claus is gaining ground among the third generation Indians and their children. The main reason given for this is excessive Western and European media/films and education in non-Indian schools and colleges. Also, its association with Britishers who have almost been like demi-Gods to Indians has driven people towards it as a religion of the rich and the affluent.

Though a larger percentage of Indians do celebrate and take part in socio-cultural events of other communities, yet the events or festivals which have a religious flavour, result into a lesser interaction. Thus, inter-religious meetings are particularly discouraged as it may mean drifting from one's own religious group to another. This is seen as propagation and conversion, which is not appreciated by any Indian group.

Ethnic identity, roots and values remain an important aspect of self-esteem from generation to generation. Thus, there may be divisions based on religion but still the Indian community is seen as one. However, the relatively simple theory takes a turn when the question of assimilating or the preference to assimilate with the Brits arises. A large number of Indians are then ready to abdicate their ethnic Indian identities, attitudes and enclaves even if there is the slightest possibility of integrating with the Britishers.

In case of expatriates, they are more attracted towards the Indian society. Unlike Kenyan Indians (Punjabis and Gujaratis), they do not feel the need to be assimilated with the host society or giving up their Indian identities. The question of assimilation with the British does not arise in their case. They have a constant sense of belonging to
India and firmly believe that eventually, they will go back. So, all in all, very few Indians in Nairobi are attracted towards the native Africans, thus reflecting the socio-cultural distance, besides the economic gap, between the host and immigrant communities.

It was obvious from various interviews that most of Indians are attracted to the rich life style of the other communities. Affluence thus, attracts most of the people. Day to day activities of other groups including dressing sense, manners, eating habits also enchant Indians to a particular community. A number of them are found to be magnetized by the British Royal family and the history of English colonialism which reflects their power and control over the world societies.

As stated time and again, the English served as perfect role models to Indians, who had nothing when they first arrived in Kenya in the early twentieth century. Their dreams and desires, efforts and aspirations revolved around the British. Thus, it appears that the Indians still have a hang over of the 'raaj'. It is also because on the one hand they have got disconnected with their Indian roots and on the other, have not been able to assimilate with the Kenyan Africans. This leaves them hanging in the middle, searching for a socio-cultural refuge, leading to a sense of lack of belongingness.

This brings us to our next topic, that is, identity crisis. A large number of Indians in Nairobi feel an identity crisis, have a sense of being unattached, lack of sense of belongingness. They may or may not call it an identity crisis, but a number of them feel that they live in a lonely void when the question of 'belonging' comes up. One main reason for this may be, that 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 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.

Kenyan Indians (Gujaratis and Punjabis) have mostly acquired British or Canadian citizenship (especially the third generation of immigrants), thus, make a conscious effort to distance themselves from the host Africans. This is clear from the fact that in the early 1990s there were about two lakh Indians in Nairobi itself. During the second half of the 90s, however, due to crime, fast deteriorating infrastructure, inflation and other problems a majority of them has migrated to United States of America (USA), Canada and European countries, mainly England. Thus, the Indian population in Nairobi came down and in 1998 it was estimated to be around sixty to seventy thousand only. In the meanwhile, however, the population of expatriates has increased tremendously. This is the floating population and may or may not come with all legal records.

Thus, a number of Kenyan Indians have distanced themselves from both Indians and Africans, resulting into a sense of lack of belongingness.

Besides this, 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 adds to the 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.

It was found out that 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. Many 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. Many Kenyan Indians blame the parent generation for not inculcating the right values in their children, at the right age.

Many Kenyan Indians see identity crisis as an important issue and are making a concerted effort to understand and overcome the same. 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 solved.

Keeping in view the fact that a large number of people in Nairobi have experienced identity crisis at one or the other stage of 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 are no two opinions about the fact that immigration 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.

Another fact in this regard is that many second generation Indian immigrants in Nairobi have brought 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!

In response to another question, it was learnt that 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. Though some of them did say that they draw inspiration from their parents and even their own selves, most of others had listed various distant celebrities as their role models. Many respondents agreed that it is not always easy to relate to such distant people.

Another startling revelation is that though very few Indians in Nairobi spend time alone, yet there is a invariable murk of forlornness and separation around them. It is due to numerous factors like, 'opportunist 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.

Whenever there is an interaction among people belonging to different ethnic origins, social classes or value systems, there are evident cultural diversities. Still, because we live in a larger whole these people attempt to live in a harmonious manner, along with their respective cultural and other differences. Thus, as and when such an interaction takes place, certain elements are dropped and certain new ones adopted, while some modified. Others may get revived after some time, in many cases, after a few generations.

In case of any migration, the culture of immigrants has to face the culture of the natives. Thus, change in cultural patterns is brought about. This can be smooth and subtle, harsh and conflicting, partial or complete.

In case of Indian immigrants in Nairobi, it was observed that the second generation of the Indian immigrants is the key regarding the joint family structure. They live together with their parent generation (first generation of Indian immigrants), and their own children, thus housing three generations under one roof. It not only gives them a sense of security to live in larger families, but also increases their ratio in the total population. It is the third generation which has started moving out and living independently, mainly due to academic reasons, coupled with the European and Western concept of independence. The increase in expatriate Indian population has also steadily added to the growth of nuclear family. They prefer to live in nuclear families (in many cases even the wife and/or children are also left in India) as their sole aim is to make as much as money possible in 3-5 years and then return to India.
Many respondents felt that another reason for the large family size has been due to the fact that 'the importance of male child has not deteriorated in Indian society in Nairobi'.

In a number of cases where it is not possible to live in a joint family, some Indian families have retrieved a way to live closer. In these families, all brothers and sons have their own houses in close proximity i.e., they live in separate houses but in a same area.

As stated earlier, Indians have been coming to this East African country in search of better life style. Though most of them had initially gone as workers to build the Kenya-Uganda railway, yet after its completion, many of them decided to stay back. They took up various jobs and started their own businesses as well. Thus, initially some of them took up various jobs, one after the other, depending on the money that they made. Even later on, expatriates have been taking up new jobs, instead of sticking to one for a long time. It may be because of the attitude of the employer or at the time of completion of the contract. Still, Indians are engaged in a variety of occupations in Nairobi like, furniture, textile, grocery shops, engineering, banking, computers, teaching, hotel and medicine.

Many respondents believe that with the increased prosperity, however, there has been a weakening of family ties.

In a response to a question regarding problems regarding the spouse, respondents had a whole lot of problems to cite. Some of them are the drinking and smoking habits of the spouse. Many Indians believe it to be a symbol of 'modernity'. Still, others believe that such cases are on a rise, especially because these are considered as evils by Indian society. So, it is rather taken as a gesture of drawing away from the Indian society, by the Kenyan Indians. On the other hand, more and more expatriates tend to do 'all that they were previously unable to do in India'. The definition of being 'modern and advanced' is quite vague in this regard. There are also those who complain about the
orthodox or conservative spouse also complain about clothes (Indian) and language (mother tongue like Gujarati, Punjabi, Hindi - not English).

Though most of these respondents see household chores as the topmost priority for a woman and fending for family as a husband’s job, yet many of them encourage their wives to pursue other interests in the free time. They also encourage interaction with women of other families. However, this is possible only in the cases where women own their separate cars and could drive around. It is not such a problem in case of third generation of Indian women, but the second generation and females accompanying their expatriate husbands find it hard to manage going around on their own.

While studying the families of Indian immigrants, their opinions about their children were also sought. It was observed that most of the children whose parents complained about drug abuse, misuse of money and freedom, foul language and going to ‘mujra’, belong to Gujarati and Punjabi community. This may largely be attributed to their affluent backgrounds. Also, in many cases it is the attitude of the parents that is contributing to it. Many of them do not like to forbid their children from anything as through them they live their lives all over again.

One of the major problem faced by expatriates is regarding the education of their children. Most of them feel that the education system in India is far better than the one existing in Nairobi. This is precisely why either they have to leave their children back in India or themselves return when children reach the school going age. Though a number of schools in Nairobi are run by the Kenyan Indians, keeping in mind the requirements of Indian society and culture. Still, most of the expatriates prefer their children to have education in India. Though most of the Kenyan Indian have their children studying in various
schools in Nairobi, they like to send them later on, to colleges and universities in UK.

In case of the first generation of Indian immigrants who came to Nairobi in the early 1900s, most arrived as individuals. They either left their respective spouses back in India or later on got married in Nairobi itself. And some did both. These women were happy with their situation as they were rather pre-occupied with looking after the home and helping their husbands, who were busy making the two ends meet. The third generation women are however, aware of the options in career, choice of spouse and so on.

In the middle of these two generations are the second generation of women. They are neither comfortable with the idea of going against the husband’s wish nor want to remain confined to the ‘chardivari’. There is another category of women who have faced numerous problems in Nairobi. They are the ones who come from India, hoping that they are ‘going abroad’, to ‘an open, modern society’.

At various junctures in my research work, I had observed that the interaction among women is at the minimal possible. They have faced numerous reprehensions since the earliest times, regarding whom they could interact with. The increased rates of crime, particularly against Indian community, have further deteriorated the situation. Thus, most of them have to spend their time within the ‘secure walls’ of their homes. However, there are ever increasing cases of depression due to this acute loneliness.

Many women and even their husbands consider household work as a full time job, and thus do not like to call themselves ‘unemployed’. A number of Gujarati women are into making and selling home made snacks like ‘chevda’, ‘papad’, ‘wadi’ and so on. In quite a few cases this home made stuff is sold by husbands in their grocery shops. Thus, these women are employed but not paid. Many other are also into stain glass painting, embroidery etc., and these
things are also for sale in the husbands' and sons' showrooms. Similarly, some women do the catering business as well, that is, supplying home made food to various offices.

In modern times the world economy has changed, in turn affecting the economics of relations. In other words, more and more women in Nairobi are associating their work, financial security, status and contribution to their self worth. Young girls and women aspire to have a career in order to see themselves on the equal footing with their men. The root cause of this attitude is that though bringing up children is seen as a full time job by women in Nairobi, still, they do not feel appreciated. This tempts them to contribute financially to get the desired appreciation as 'only when you bring home money, you are really treated as important and given respect'. Many respondents conform to this view. Thus, it would be safer to conclude that more than the will to work outside the house (especially, in case of the females belonging to well to do families), it appears to be a struggle to get appreciated. Hence, not many of them are keen on going out and work given they get appreciation for their day to day work. During these interviews, it came to the surface that a number of men and women feel that women should only go in for teaching as 'it serves their ego that they want to work as they are modern. And it does not disturb the rest of the family either'. On the contrary, there are also those who feel the need to assist the husband and children, and decide to make some extra money.

Initially, I had not taken up the role of women and their problems as a separate issue in my research. But as I stayed on I realized that this is one aspect that has long been neglected. In most of the earlier studies, the contributions made by women have been largely ignored as Indian community has been studied as one group, instead analyzing the women's issues separately. In 1996, however, Dana Seidenberg made an effort to highlight their role in success of Indian
and devoted a whole chapter on them entitled, *The Forgotten Pioneers: Asian Women* (Seidenberg, 1996: 93). In order to fund my research work, I had taken up a job at a radio station. Thus, I came in contact with many Indians as a radio presenter from India, ‘who belonged to their land, spoke their language, played their songs’. Many of them, thus, took it for granted that I would understand their problems as well. Many of them, especially women started calling me up in my office, without even knowing my correct name, age and purpose of visit. More than the show or the movies, they often talked their heart out, simply because I spoke Hindi, their language. Many of them felt lonely, distant and cut off from not just from their families, but from the whole of the world. A few also narrated how at times they had contemplated of committing suicide. They developed a sense of association with me only because I was from India. This prompted me to take up the issue of Indian women and separately.

In many cases, when I met many of them as a student from India doing a research rather than the radio jockey, it took them a while to open up, especially in person. It appeared that they were more comfortable talking to me as an unknown Indian radio presenter, who would never meet them! In many cases, when I was able to get the required information during interviews, women used to request that their family members should not come to know of it! They insisted that their real names should not be used and so on. It reflected that though they had things to talk about, they were not really sure how right it is to do so! At this point, I got in touch with a few women activists. Some of them are associated with women’s organizations, while many are working on their own. With their help I was able to get in touch with a number of Indian women who have faced specific problems. They also assisted me in conducting some case studies. Thus, eventually, additional fifty women were purposely selected and interviewed to get a distinct women’s perspective. This included women activists,
housewives, working women, those facing problems and now working with various associations. This enabled me to probe into various issues related specifically to Indian women in Nairobi.

Thus, it was observed that a large number of girls are married off before even reaching the age of 21. The main reasons for doing so was observed to be the idea that 'it is easier for her husband to mould her according to his likes and dislikes and family traditions'.

Many women in Nairobi suffer from depression caused due to loneliness. The earlier Indian women were busy in looking after the family. This took up most of their time. Men were busy in tackling the financial insecurities which took up most of the time. Thus, spending that extra bit of time with family to nurture emotional bonding, did not arise or was not a major botheration. The priorities were different. But now, especially the third generation girls and women find it hard to live in solitude. They feel the need to have social interaction and also spend quality time with the husband. Those who go from India, thus, face a more critical vacuum as they supposedly go to a more open society.

It also came to the fore that there is a major attitude problem. A large number of women feel that most of the men have a typical 'Indian view' about how women, in this case wives, should or should not behave. They, on the other hand, consider it important to move on with the world, be modern and so on. And nefariously enough, modernity for them is punctuated with activities like 'going to mujras', drinking hard drinks, using drugs, coming home late, spending more and more time with friends and making endless money. Undoubtedly, there are those who help their wives with the household chores, devote time to children and are content with all this. But then, they are a rare species and did not qualify to make subject matter of my research. I was more keen on exploring more general attitudes and issues.
Response to another question revealed that not only girls are married at an early age, but also the age difference between the two spouses is relatively large. This is due to a couple of factors as edged by the respondents. Firstly, it is believed that it is easier to handle the younger girl. Thus, most of the men in Nairobi go for girls who are quite young. Secondly, in case of girls who are born and brought up in India and married in Nairobi, 'the craze for going abroad and having a rich husband is too much, especially in the interiors of Punjab'. Thus, there is usually not much deliberation about something as 'trivialous' as age.

Though most of the girls get married at an early age, yet there are a few exceptions. In case of Kenyan Indian women, it is mostly their choice of career that delays the marriage. In many cases, marriage is also seen as a juncture where one 'has to handle' a few responsibilities and capitulate a part of individual identity and freedom.

Another disturbing conclusion was that many Indian women in Nairobi have husbands who have already had one or two marriages. This is particularly problematic in the cases where girls from India come to know about these facts after spending a few months or even years in Nairobi. But by then, they already have a child or two of their own. In some cases Indian men were found to have married twice or thrice as they have not got a son from previous arrangements. In most of such cases, parents of these girls have refused to take them back. They are mostly unemployed and thus are left completely helpless and dependent on the husband.

Though a large number of Kenyan Indian women were found to be employed, yet not many of them continue doing so after marriage. Indian born were found to be even more reluctant as 'Not only it is seen as an insult to womanhood or wife or motherhood, but also unsafe for Indian women to go out and work among the Africans',

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Another disturbing factor was that not many women in Nairobi were found to be happy even by their own admission. Though 'happiness' itself may be a very relative word, but it is disappointing to learn that a number of women admitted of either being unhappy or unaware about their own state of mind. And that is what bothers me the most as a human being, a student and a researcher of Sociology. Hence, it was no surprise, under the given governing factors that not many women showed interest in getting married to the same person all over again, if they were given a chance. Most of women, though said that they were well aware that their parents would not be very keen on helping them in their lives, still, it made them happy as and when they visit their parents or brothers. Most of them even confessed that they enjoyed flaunting their expensive jewellery and 'other foreign stuff' when they visited their parents in India.

One key issue that came up in the very beginning of my work and refused to die down, is the issue of 'mujra'. It is the term used for the song and dance sequences performed by young Indian girls. They are normally in the age group of 12-16 years. These girls are primarily brought from Mumbai, India for a contract of 3-6 months, after which these 'batches' are replaced, by the 'fresher' ones. It is an activity much inspired by Hindi films, where young girls dance to the tunes of Hindi film songs. These songs are sung live with all the musical instruments. Girls often indulge in obscene gestures with the 'customers' to make maximum possible money. These gestures are mostly vulgar, but girls try to out do each other, as these 'tips' are exclusively for girls and the contractor has no share in it. Liquor is widely served at these joints and the items are performed well up to 4 am. This is a major cause of concern among Indians in England as well, where Scotland Yard has discovered it to be a cover up for a flourishing flesh trade. Even more disturbing was the fact that visits to such joints is considered as being 'modern', by many Indians.
Thus, another fact that emerges from this discussion is how debased the words like marriage, happiness and relations have become. For instance, being successful means having lots of money, big house, good education and so on. In other words, there is a belief that an individual’s happiness and success is to be judged by the society, that is, people around you. And if one does not qualify in their books, one is not really happy! As stated in an earlier chapter, there are certain set parameters of judging a person’s happiness, by the society and everyone tries to come into that limited definition. It is like cutting and chopping one’s persona to fit into the frame defined by society as being happy. However, this approach limits an individual to be happy on only 10-15 occasions, like getting good education, having a big house, good spouse, big bank balance, a couple of kids, marrying them off and so on.

Thus, the tragedy lies in the basic attitude that is being passed on one generation after another. It is important to imbibe the value of happiness, mental peace and spiritual bliss as unattached from the occasions. Happiness exists even without these occasions. The latter are there to enhance it. But by attaching everything to certain predetermined guidelines, we as a society, are contributing to the growing frustration around us. Also, on a scale of 1 to 10 points, if a person is happy at 3 points, why do we have to call him a failure, just because it is at least 8 points, which we define as being successful. All this has given rise to cut throat competition and a number of Indians are struggling day in day out, not because they lack anything in their lives, but because others have more! It is indeed a pity that human relations and values have become so debased and ill-defined. All this when we are the society ourselves!

Thus, in the given controlling factors, those men in Nairobi, who do not have the ‘guts’ to visit ‘mujras’, or spend lavishly on friends and throw weekend parties, are the ‘poor guys’ who have been ‘total
failures! Or those women, who do not get married, seek divorce, are not rich, have to work, supposedly fall in the unhappy or ‘bechari’ category! These problems are faced by the second and third generation of Indian immigrant women, who aspire to go out and be financially independent; and by those who are born and brought up in India and have got married in Nairobi. The rest are ‘happy’ though may be ‘forgotten’ as termed by Dana.

Indians have thus, stayed in this part of the world for over a century now. It was thus, quite natural for me to analyze their interaction with the host community. It became all the more mandatory when a large number of Indians blamed Africans for spoiling this country, after the British colonizers left in 1963. During the course of this research work I also discovered at various junctures, that not many Indians are keen on mixing up with Africans. Thus, I decided to include a few questions to make an assessment about the Afro-Asian relations in this part of the world. Quite a few respondents agreed that Indians discriminated against Africans on various accounts, including, race, that is, the colour of their skin. Indians, who have themselves been the victims of racism at the hands of British during colonialism, and perhaps still face it in different parts of the world, are themselves practicing it in Kenya. Not many Indians, even after decades of stay here, take it to be their country. This problem had first come to the fore in a rather blunt episode, at the time of Kenya’s independence. A large number of Indian had then taken up British citizenship, while staying on in Kenya to make as much money as possible. Even the respondents themselves believe that Indians have not done anything to improve the conditions of the natives. Many believe that it is because the Africans themselves do not want to work and that is why Indians were brought by the British, in first place. They also believe that if they decide to pay better wages to Africans, the latter will rob and kill them in order to get the ‘easy money’. Africans, on the other hand, feel bitter as they believe
that Indians have exploited them to the maximum and still do not respect them a wee bit. It appeared that most of the Indians here judge things in terms of monetary gains. For instance, in a response to a question on language, most of them said that they do not like Swahili language as it is of no use. Instead, many Africans have picked up Gujaratis and Punjabi words. And though many Indians do use Swahili words from time to time, it is the disrespect that they show about the language and people that has enraged the Africans the most.

Theoretical Implications:

Gordon, like so many others, propounded the classical view where assimilation is seen as a linear, step by step process marked by generations. He has identified seven sub processes that make up the overall process of assimilation. They are:

- **cultural assimilation** (acculturation - change of cultural patterns to those of the host society);
- **structural assimilation at secondary level** (integration - entrance into public institutions and organizations) and **primary level** (entrance into cliques, clubs and friendship groups of host society);
- **marital assimilation** (large scale inter marriage);
- **identificational assimilation** (development of sense of peoplehood based on host society);
- **attitude receptional assimilation** (absence of prejudice);
- **behaviour receptional assimilation** (absence of discrimination); and
- **civic assimilation** (absence of value conflict).

Healey, however, does not agree with the fact that assimilation occurs in a series of steps. He accords that in many cases it was seen that some groups integrate before they acculturate, others become more committed to their ethnic and/or racial identity over generations but are no closer to full integration. Hence, it has been witnessed in
different societies that ethnicity remains an important aspect of self-identity and pride from generation to generation. It has been learnt from the experiences of various societies that ethnic and racial identities may become more prominent and stronger as the generations pass by. Healey has cited the example of American society in this regard. He writes that the first generation - the actual immigrants - settled in ethnic neighborhoods (Little Italy, Chinatown, etc.). They made limited movement toward acculturation and integration. They were mainly concerned about their own family and social relationships girdled within their own group. He observed that the first generation lived and died largely within the context of the old country which had been recreated within the new. However, the second generation, or the children of the immigrants, had to deal with a kind of psychological or social marginality. They were born in America but in households and neighborhoods that were ethnic, not American. Thus, they tended to move out of the old neighborhood. Their geographic mobility was often motivated by social mobility. They were much more acculturated than their parents, spoke English fluently, and enjoyed a wider range of occupational opportunities and choices. Then came the third generation, or the grandchildren of the immigrants. Healey accords that they were born and brought up in nonethnic settings. English was their first and often their only language and their values and perceptions were thoroughly American. Though ethnicity for this generation was relatively minor part of their daily realities and their self-images, yet their family and kinship ties with their grandparents and the old neighborhoods often remained strong. Healey gives the pattern of assimilation by generation as follows:

1. The first generation began the process of assimilation and were at least slightly acculturated and integrated;
2. The second generation was very acculturated and highly integrated; (at least in the secondary sectors of the society.)
3. The third generation finished the acculturation process and enjoyed high levels of integration at both, secondary and primary levels \((\text{Healey, Pg. 127, 128, 1995}).\)

Thus, \textit{Healey}, in part, also stresses upon the ethnicizing capability of the immigrants communities. In case of Nairobi also, the first generation of Indian immigrants was busy in earning two meals a day and lived in rather homogeneous socio-cultural setup, whereby, most of the Indians were keen on interacting among themselves. The second generation was, however, anxious about expanding its social circle. Thus, they had more interaction, not with the host community, rather with the British colonizers. They learnt English language and also developed a sense of association with them. Here the case of Indian immigrants takes a turn away from the theory of assimilation, as by the third generation, Indians drifted even further away from native Africans and also from their own ethnic Indian culture. Hence, 'melting pot' theory, whereby, eventually, the host and immigrant communities accept each other at various levels and assimilation is seen as the end result is not applicable in case of Indian immigrants in Nairobi.

This situation, where there is persistence of ethnic enclaves, ethnic strife and resurgence of strong ethnic values and identities, calls for a different perspective. In this regard following observations have become prominent:

1. The impact may not always be one way i.e., from host community on immigrant community. It may be the exact opposite of this and also both ways.

2. Immigrants may continue to live in their ethnic enclaves, practice their own monopolized occupations and so on, even after centuries.

3. An immigrant group may be assimilated but not integrated with the host society or vice versa.
4. An immigrant minority group may not always be the disadvantaged one.

The empirical situation in contemporary societies, therefore can be better explained by the non-assimilationist perspective, which lays emphasis upon the ethnicizing capacity of the immigrant group through generations. However, Healey's perspective of ethnicizing can also not be accepted in entirety in case of Indians in Nairobi. It would be too simplistic to believe that by the third generation partly there is assimilation and partly ethnicization. The case of Indians in Nairobi presents a different scenario:

1. The 'melting pot' theory did not take place in Nairobi as the Indian immigrants did not take host community to be a role model. They were never interested in imbibing the elements of the host African culture. One main reason for this may be the fact that the hosts lived in even worse conditions that the Indians. Thus, Indians never looked up to them as a 'reference group'. They preferred to live in their own ethnic enclaves and maintained strict social and cultural distance with Africans.

2. Though the first Indian immigrants were keen on maintaining their links with Indian and mainly identified themselves as Indians, the trends started to change by the next generation. Though many second generation Indians continued to take pride in their ethnic Indian origins, they also started picking up the English mannerisms and aimed to be assimilated with them. They were seen as more powerful, both economically and politically. Indians also associated racial superiority with them due to their White skin.

3. The third generation Indians, instead of reviving their ethnic culture, are more driven towards the English. Thus, they have neither assimilated with the host community, nor made an effort to resuscitate their own ethnic roots. Instead, they are dangling in the middle where they have not reached the society of their choice (the
English in this case) and neither have they made any efforts to accept or be accepted by the society that they are living in, that is, African.

4. Hence, neither assimilation nor ethnicizing could be applied to the situation of Indian immigrants in Nairobi in absolute terms. They are rather contextual. For instance, it appears that Indians are ethnic in their approach as and when their interaction with Africans is taken into account. They appear to be averse to it and take pride in the fact that they are all Indians. However, as soon as the question of assimilating with the British arise, they are ready to renounce their ethnic Indian identities and point out that India is a very distant society for them. Thus, they can not relate to it.

Here I would like to make a mention of Noel's idea of 'contact situation'. His basic idea in the study conducted in 1968, is that if two or more groups come together in a 'contact situation' then some form of racial or ethnic stratification will result. He accords that the contact situation is characterized by:

1. ethnocentrism, that is, the human tendency to judge others by standards of one's own culture. He does not see it quite the same as racism or prejudice, rather terms it as a creation of social boundary line that enables groups to recognize and refer to people as 'us' and 'them'.

2. competition, that is, the struggle between groups over a scarce commodity. Thus, the group that wins the competition becomes the dominant group and the losers become the minority group. Healey elaborates that competition may center on land, jobs, housing, educational opportunities, political office, or anything else that is mutually desired by both groups or that one group has and the other group wants.

3. differential in power, that is, the ability of a group to achieve it's goals even in the face of opposition from other groups.
If a particular contact situation has all three of these elements, some system of inequality between the groups (a dominant-minority group structure) is created. (Healey, Pg. 75, 1995).

In context of Indian immigrants in Nairobi, it is no hidden fact that Indians, though numerically a minority, do enjoy a superior socio-economic status. Many of them consider themselves as racially superior as well, due to the darker skin colour of Africans. Thus, in this contact situation, it is the Indians who have better access to resources that may be desired by both, immigrants and natives. They have more and better opportunities of education, which in turn enhance their job opportunities. They have been able to control the economy of this country for decades and usually manage to turn things in their favour. This has been a major factor in the continuing socio-cultural and economic distance between the two communities, that is, Indians and Africans.

Most of the Indians are also aware of the fact that Africans are more dependent on Indian than otherwise. This has not done any favours to already bitter relations between the two communities. Thus, it was not surprising when most of the respondents under study said that they could work with Africans only if the latter work in their subordination. A large majority were also averse to the idea of having an African as their neighbour. Thus, having them as a family member is a forgone conclusion. Though most of the respondents said that they maintained this social distance with Africans due to parental, peer and community’s pressure, yet there are also those who believe that the Africans’ darker skin colour is a ‘symbol of impurity’. Many have pre-notions that the Africans are selfish, untrustworthy and so on so forth. However, this socio-cultural distance virtually disappears at the time of partying out with Africans. The main reason for this is given to be the fact that with Africans Indians get to eat absolutely anything they want to, including beef, giraffes, snakes and even ‘drink blood’. Some
also pointed out that drugs were an easy access while in company of Africans.

On the contrary, a few also felt that Africans have long been exploited by Indians. Thus, by having parties with them they do their bit to reduce the distance between the communities. They also feel good by spending money on Africans, who themselves can not afford much.

It is this small group of people that gives me the belief that things would move in a better direction in future. The relations between the two communities are at its lowest ebb, thus, the only way to move, is to move up, move ahead. Thus, it is heartening to know that, however little their number be, there are Indians in Nairobi who want the relations to improve between the two communities. They are the ones who have ascertained the fact that it is in the best interest of both the communities to accept each other's presence and develop a sense of mutual respect, to create harmony and peace. And by making an effort to analyze and understand a given situation, I believe, it would be easier then to resolve it. It is well said that once you know the enemy, you can defeat it.