CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

Findings

- The emigration from the village started in 1890s. The migrants who left the village till 1900 were seven persons. Except two migrants from Balmiki caste, all were Jat Sikhs, having land holdings less than five acres. The minimum land holding of a Jat Sikh migrant was six kanals. They were married, illiterate and were in the age group of 20-24 years. All of them went to Australia and from there, three of them reached the USA. Except one, all of them returned to their homes after a sojourn of 10 to 45 years. One Balmiki migrant, who reached the USA, became untraceable. The emigration from the village in the first decade of the 20th century witnessed a change as a group of about twelve Jat Sikh people from the village reached the USA. They preferred the USA to Australia unlike the early migrants. They also came to the village after the sojourn of about 25-30 years. The migration from the village diversified in 1920s and 1930s as a Jat Sikh family and a Balmiki went to Singapore; Ramgarhias along with two Balmiki families reached Kenya and Uganda. Some Jat Sikhs also went to Argentina.

The village study confirms the findings of the earlier studies that the early migrants, migrated to Australia, East African Colonies of the British Empire but no direct co-relation was found between British Indian Army and the early migrants from the village. Further it is difficult to uphold the findings of earlier studies that only density of population, agrarian crisis resulting from the pressure on land and British government’s revenue policies forced migration from the Punjab. Rather better avenues, opportunities and quality of life abroad also attracted adventurous youth with relative scarcity of resources and high ambition. The majority of higher caste Hindu people who possessed cash resources preferred to migrate to major cities in India than abroad.

- One of the migrants to the USA married a Mexican woman and their children grew up as Catholics which upholds Leonard’s findings. It was an exceptional case, most of the early migrants returned to the village to join their families.
Most of the early migrants were teetotalers, who learned the reading and writing skills in Punjabi from their fellow colleagues. They also developed communication skill in English and other local languages abroad. The cultural merits of the host countries were disseminated by them to their fellow villagers.

The liberalization of the immigration policies by the UK, Canada and the USA for attracting labour on work permit and later on allowing them to bring their dependent parents, children and spouses, created flow of migration from the village first to England and in 1980’s to Canada and the USA.

These migrants emerged as a new social class and they created a wave of awareness not only in village Shankar but also in the surrounding area for better avenues and opportunities abroad.

They also have been sending remittances back home which have been used for purchasing agricultural land, agricultural infrastructure, housing, purchasing shops, industrial development, real-estate, investment in the banks, social ceremonies i.e. marriages, death and religious rituals, migration of their dependents, donation to charitable and philanthropic projects in the village. It approves Tatla’s thesis of Sikh diaspora’s socio-cultural and exchange of resources with the Punjabi society. It also approves studies of other scholar’s like Helweg, Pettigrew, Mcloed, Dusenbery, Barrier, Dhindsa, Preet Mohinder Singh holding that Punjabis overseas have been sending remittance back home.

The overseas Shankarians/Shankarites have developed from the labour class to semiskilled, skilled workers and highly skilled professional, own their private business i.e. shops, stores, journalism, farming, transportation and real estate etc. The young Shankarites born and grown up in the host countries are also showing their inclinations to join highly skilled professions i.e. medical, software and hardware engineering, business administration and legal profession etc. Some of them also show their inclination to manage their own private business. The experiences as of unskilled working class now form a part of their history.
The Shankarites abroad have also acquired the understanding of the political culture of the host countries. Two of the Shankarites have been accepted as professional politicians in Canada. Besides protecting and promoting the interest of the host countries, they have been trying their best to develop healthy foreign relations between the country of their origin and the host countries. A few Shankarites in England have also been trying to influence the foreign policies of the host countries and country of their origin. They are also taking keen interest in the religious reforms in the Sikh society living all over the world.

The articulation of the Punjabi identity abroad, transnationalisation of Punjabi culture and Sikh religion have been proved true in this village study.

The 1984 events and its aftermath also revoked a strong reaction from a few Shankarites abroad. The Sikh militant leader like Simranjit Singh Maan and pro-militant human rights organization also received osupport from few Shankarites in Canada and England. The sense of consolidation among the overseas Sikhs as a result of 1984 events, have also been observed among the Shankarites abroad. Causing harassment to the overseas Sikhs by the Government of India by ‘Black listing’ them for their alleged involvement in the demand for separate Sikh state- Khalistan also found true in this study as two Sikh Shankarites were innocently ‘Black listed’ and harassed. One of them was not allowed to visit his motherland for sixteen years. But on the whole Darshan Singh Tatla’s thesis of Sikh diaspora’s search for homeland does not prove true in this village study.

The overseas Shankarites have emerged a privileged class and formed a new elite by replacing the traditional elites. It also justifies the general impact of migration on the Punjabi society.

The re-migration also witnessed in this study as the most of the early migrants to African countries and Singapore again migrated to England, Canada and the USA. Some of the migrants to England have further moved to Canada and the USA. But no Shankarite who migrated to Canada or the USA has shifted to England.
Above 4,000 of the village population, hailing from all sections of the society is living abroad. Some of the migrants belong to the fifth generation.

The major amount of earnings of the migrants from the village Shankar have been spent in the host countries on housing, upbringing and maintenance of their families, education of their children and business, particularly owning shops.

Significantly some women migrants have become entrepreneurs. They have expanded their jurisdictions from house holdings to business and white collar jobs. Besides producing new cultural patterns, promoting the economy of the families, they have accepted the influence of work forces in the host countries. It upholds Parminder Bacchu’s thesis.

Those migrants who were born in the village certainly have more emotional links with their place of origin which is clearly evident from their frequent visits, donations for philanthropic projects and keeping their houses and agricultural land intact in the village.

The Punjabi identity and culture of the new generation of migrants which is born and brought up abroad have been tremendously influenced by the lifestyle of the overseas countries. Now they are seeking for separate ethnic identities as Sikhs and Punjabis instead of being labeled as immigrants, NRIs and Asians etc.

Joyce Pettigrew’s thesis that migration has not benefitted the Sikh community is difficult to uphold. Migration has globalised Sikh identity and culture. The Punjabi diaspora has taken keen interest in the development of Punjab by sponsoring and financing philanthropic projects besides sending remittances to their families. The overseas Shankarites have also been taking keen interest in the overall development of their village by sponsoring/financing philanthropic projects.

The socio-cultural heterogeneities i.e. caste, religious rituals and superstitions and patti etc. at the homeland, find strong manifestations abroad, besides strengthening social stratification in the village. The Balmikis abroad have started physically segregating themselves from the higher caste Hindus and the Sikhs by building their own religious institutions, accepting Guru Balmik their
religious Guru instead of lord Rama, Krishna and the Sikh Gurus. They consider themselves as Hindus.

- This study proves that the Punjabi diaspora notwithstanding their strong political, socio-cultural and economic linkages with the homeland, have developed their fundamental loyalties to the host countries.

1. **Verification of Hypothesis**

The verification of the hypotheses presumed for the study is as under:

1.1. **Hypothesis No. 1. The Punjabi diaspora had to struggle very hard to establish itself in the business and political stream of the host countries.**

   The survey of relevant literature on the Punjabi diaspora reveals that the early migrants were sojourns, mainly concerned with earning money and returning to their homes. Most of them were married and left their families back. The spurt of emigration of the Punjabis as a result of amendment of the immigration policies of the UK, Canada and the USA for permitting the entry of dependent parents, children and spouses made the Punjabis settlers from the sojourners. The survey of pertinent literature discloses that on the whole, they started their careers as labourers and semiskilled workers. After one and a half decade of their entry in the host countries, they built up their houses, owned shops & stores, purchased agricultural farms, entered in other business and elevated themselves from unskilled labourers to semiskilled and skilled professionals. A few persons have succeeded in getting elected to the legislative bodies in the host countries.

   This village study also confirms these broad generalizations. The Shankarites abroad have passed through hard experiences in getting themselves established in the business and political streams of the host countries with their cultural identity intact. About 90% percent of the Shankarites abroad have their own houses. They have also elevated themselves from the unskilled labour class to semi-skilled and skilled workers, manage their small private business of shops, stores, journalism, farming, transportation, real-estate etc. Two Shankarites are professional politicians in Canada. All these facts prove this hypothesis to be true.
1.2. **Hypothesis No. 2.** The interaction of the Punjabi diaspora with the homeland has constant bearing on the socio-cultural and economic development of the Punjab.

The brief description in Chapter – I of the philanthropic projects sponsored/financed by the Punjabi diaspora bears witness to their active involvement in the development of social, economic, religious and sports etc spheres in Punjab. The educational, religious, medical, cultural, sports projects, financed and sponsored by the overseas Shankarites in Shankar, described in Chapter – V also confirm their overall involvement in the development of the Punjab. All these facts prove the truth of this hypothesis.

1.3. **Hypothesis No. 3.** It has emerged as an elite at homeland.

The literature on the Punjabi diaspora discloses that the economic progress made by the Punjabi diaspora, has attracted the special attention of the Government of Punjab, political parties and society as a whole. The Government of Punjab has been making constant appeals to them to make investment in Punjab and has also been offering some facilities and privileges i.e. special NRI Department in Punjab Secretariat, NRI fast tracks courts, NRI police station and cheap land for setting up industries etc. The political parties have also started giving them special weightage for mobilizing election funds and visiting them frequently. The privileged accommodation facilities are being provided to the Punjabi diaspora at the religious places like Golden Temple, Anandpur Sahib and other religious places where all are supposed to be treated equally. For improving, religious, socio-cultural, sports, medical, education, facilities etc. in the countryside, the local people approach Punjabis abroad first and the Government later on, the financial contribution for these projects. NRI bridegroom has more matrimonial value than that of I.A.S. or P.C.S. officers or a landlord.

This study also proves that the Shankarites abroad occupy the prime position in the village society due to their financial and academic growth and their financial contribution to the developmental activities in the village. The traditional families which earlier occupied the prime position in the village society have been replaced by the new ones due to their financial positions abroad. All these evidences prove the
truth of the hypothesis that the Punjabi diaspora has also emerged as an elite class at homeland.

1.4. **Hypothesis No. 4. The Punjabi diaspora has articulated the Punjabi identity at global level.**

The formation of the Punjabi diaspora has transnationalized the Punjabi identity in general and the Sikh religion particularly. They have been very successful in articulating the Punjabi identity abroad by setting up gurudwaras, temples and other religious institutions, forming socio-cultural and political associations, celebrating cultural and religious festivals, setting up the Punjabi media, encouraging visits of religious, political, cultural, literary and academic personalities and entering in the active politics of the host countries. The village study also confirms these developments which prove this hypothesis to be true.