Chapter 5
Mechanisms of Integration of Bengali Migrants in NCT of Delhi

The word integration is barely discussed as a ‘concept’, rather, in time and place it has been repeatedly used as a ‘term’ by different geographers (Entzinger, 2003). On a wider scale, integration symbolizes to the characteristics of a social system i.e. society. It suggests that the more closely and intensely the groups and individuals are interconnected with one another, the more a society is understood to be integrated.

Williams (1966) referred to integration as a ‘keyword’: a socially expressive and significant term which not only means differently to different people at different times but is also challenged in political and public debates. Besides, the term integration is also associated with other multiple terms such as ‘cohesion’, ‘belonging’ and ‘diversity’. Thereupon, from the beginning itself, it was difficult to specify the word integration as a ‘term’ to define and as a ‘concept’ to discuss. Scholars like Willett (1998) and Vertovec & Cohen (1999) have tried to define and construct clear boundaries between the terms and used interchangeably with integration. In immigration discourses, however, the terms ‘acculturation’ and ‘integration’ were used as synonyms. In the US literature the term ‘integration’ holds a very vital position. Integration is often seen as an initial stage of assimilation where the newcomers gradually merge within the host society (Brown & Bean, 2006). They also defined integration as a change which is experienced by both, the immigrants and their descendants as well as the society they joined. Brown & Bean (2006) have further elaborated the term integration by stating that a true integration occurs when the immigrant group and the host society start resembling one another and the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of their migration continue through the successive generations of immigrants such as second generation and even beyond. Alba et.al (2012) further unfolded the process of integration elucidating that integration does not only depend upon the social acceptance of immigrants by the host society but is equally dependent upon the participation of the immigrants and their children in major social institutions (schools and markets) of the host society. This further helps in reducing the gap between the immigrants and the native born and in achieving the labels of integration such as residential integration, political integration, reducing social inequality etc. A near universal acceptance has thus been provided to the term ‘integration’ in the international literature over the period of time.
As mentioned earlier, terms like ‘integration’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘acculturation’ are recurrently used interchangeably (Alba & Nee, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) but the term integration differs from the other two both in terms of quality and quantity. Johnston (1969) saw integration as coming together of two cultures; that of immigrants and of the host group. He related the difference between assimilation and integration in two different contexts whereby he explained that in assimilation, the immigrants’ cultural heritage is expected to merge with the host societies while integration is nothing similar to that. In the process of integration, he says that an immigrant not only has the liberty to retain his own cultural heritage but is also flexible to follow the indigenous culture of the host society. In short, it is the well-known ‘melting pot’. Similarly, Berry (2001) and other migration theorists (Grillo, 1998; Faist, 2000; Nauck, 2001) described integration as a form of biculturalism and bilingualism, and assimilation as an absolute transition from an old culture to a new one. They too, like Johnston, suggested that while integration is about preservation, assimilation is about irreversible dissolution of the minority group in the majority.

Correspondingly, Boswick and Heckmann (2006) understood integration as a process of conversation occurring between the immigrant and the host society. For the immigrants, it was established, attaining integration involves many stages such as from the process of learning a new culture to acquiring rights and obligations; from gaining access to social status and positions to building personal relations as well as feeling the sense of belongingness and identification with the host society. On the contrary, for the host society, opening institutions and granting equal opportunities to the immigrants forms the essence of integration process. Subsequently, a number of immigrant scholars have examined the effects of integration and assimilation across generations. Onyango (2010) stated that while integration is quintessential among the first and 1.5 generations (i.e. those who migrated as children or adolescent) or sometimes up to second generation, complete assimilation (if it happens at all) only occurs over successive generations. Furthermore, the process of integration has also been elaborated into three dimensions of socio-economic, cultural and political integration (Boswell, 2003). In this context, socio-economic integration comprises of education, employment, welfare and inter-marriages; cultural integration commissions knowledge of any language and adopting the values of
Figure 5.1

Bengali Migrants in Delhi: Process of Integration and Assimilation

Source: Prepared by the Researcher
the host society and political integration, nonetheless, includes rights to vote and be elected, public employment rights as well as right to citizenship.

Therefore in the present chapter, the aspects of social, cultural and political integration of the Bengali migrants residing in the NCT of Delhi have been thoroughly discussed and detailed over the six most significant attributes of integration (Figure 5.1). These attributes are: migrants’ flexibility in choice of spoken language; willingness towards inter-marriages; satisfaction based on residential segregation; opportunities for political participation; the sense of belongingness in the new space and most importantly, the adoption of the changes that have occurred over the generations. Since the survey was vast in nature and extensive in prospect and was based on 1200 households, therefore, in order to have an accurate and comprehensive approach, integration score based on six major questions including the attitude and behavior of the host society; migrants’ preference to settle permanently in Delhi; preference of settlement at their native place in future; frequency of inviting the non-Bengali friends and relatives; frequency of visiting non- Bengali friends and relatives and lastly their relation with the host society.

The integration score ranging from 0-12 thus attained was divided into 3 levels of poor (Less than 4), average (4-8) and good (8 & above) integration; in which the category of a ‘good’ portrays a high level of integration. To derive the level of integration that the Bengalis in NCT of Delhi have achieved, selected attributes such as language, inter marriages, residential segregation, political integration, sense of belongingness and integration level across generations are finally cross tabulated with the integration score mentioned above.

Thereby, the aim of the present chapter is not only to explore the concept of integration as discussed by various scholars but also to assess how these aspects are related with the level of integration of migrants in the host society. This may be a modest interpretation of ‘benchmarking’, but it can nevertheless contribute to a better monitoring of migration and integration processes and to a greater effectiveness of policies in this field.

**Language**

For any form of communication, it is important to know the same medium of vocabulary for both the speaker as well as the listener; therefore, language plays a key role in the process of integration of the migrants within the host society (Spencer et al., 2016).
Language is considered to be the first mechanism that helps connecting immigrant to an alien place i.e. places other than one’s own. Scholars have argued that language acquisition of the receiving society is one of the most essential elements towards integration as it is an integral part of the cultural domain of citizenship. Flubacher (2013) presented language as an instrument in a metaphorical rather than political or legal way. He used the metaphor “language” as the key to integration explaining that language is an instrument which not only helps the migrants to achieve integration through smoother means but also helps in overcoming barriers in communication and unsuccessful socialisation. Integration is automatically attainable, he concluded, once these barriers are removed through language acquisition.

Bircher et al. (2012) too talked on similar lines and suggested that familiarity with the language of the host society is a prerequisite for the migrants’ successful integration in many aspects. As having an insufficient knowledge of the local language forces migrants to face a limited access to the environment. In such a scenario, they would need help of the locals to cater their personal interest or to receive any information on cultural, professional, political or social events of the host society. Thus, he highlighted the importance of language towards integration calling it the first step to emerge from a marginal existence to the mainstream life. Interestingly, both language and communication are playing a significant role between migrant communities and the host society, more so often because of globalisation. However, for various other reasons migrant community may still face difficulties to integrate with the host society. Therefore Krumm & Plutzar (2008) put forward language as a precondition for the participation of the immigrants in the receiving society. They also widely recognised that proficiency in the dominant language of the receiving country is critical to both economic and social aspects of settlement and integration. While for Anderson (2006) not knowing the language can create problems in performing everyday tasks and adjustments with the new social setting. He states that knowing the language widens the market opportunities and often conditions to the legal acquisition of the citizenship. Knowledge of the host country’s language, thus, acts as both an indicator and a facilitator for smoother integration of the migrants (Boyd, Vries and Simkin, 1994).

Moreover, elaborating the economic perspective of language among immigrants of Australia, Germany, Israel, Canada and United States of America (Chiswick, Lee and Miller, 2006) argued that knowing the skills of local language is one of the most
important aspects for an immigrant for his inclusion into the working sector of the receiving society. Rose (2004) further established the link between language as well as the social, economic and political integration by emphasizing that in every aspect of the migrant’s life (i.e. social, economic and political) knowledge of destination language is indispensable, especially for understanding work orders, for expressing oneself to the fellow workers, for making social contact, for talking to neighbours, for claiming rights from authorities as well as for seeking advantage of recreational opportunities. Hence language acts as one of the strongest bridges between the immigrants and the natives to help them to reach a satisfactory level of integration (Lo, 2014).

Nonetheless, in the lives of immigrants, the importance of language is not only confined to the process of integration rather, it has a significant dialect discussing the role of the first and the second language. For example, from a psycholinguistic point of view, for children as well as for adults mother tongue is considered to be the most important foundation for learning any other language successfully. For most people, the first language is considered as the base and the only stable element of the migrants’ life. It is the only and only language that provides them with security of personal, social, cultural and religious identity because when they started to realize themselves as an individual person or a family, it was through language that they developed initial values in their lives. That is why, the right to use one’s mother tongue is given as a fundamental right and hence, the more the people leave behind their native place, the more important their first language becomes to them, it appears.

Moreover, Cummin (1984) highlighted the insights of development of first and second language in his ‘development interdependence hypothesis’. He argued that any interruption during a proper development of the first language especially among children (if they do not learn to read and write their first language) is a negative indicator for the proper development of bilingualism. He further differentiates between the basic interactive communication skills (speaking) and the cognitive academic language proficiency skills (including reading and writing); on which he says, a successful development of the second language is dependent upon. He elucidates that for a successful learning of the second language, one must develop important cognitive competence in acquiring the first language i.e. one should know how to read, write and speak the first language properly to fully understand the second language. This means for children, an acquisition of the second language cannot be built on a solid foundation, if
their learning of the first language is interrupted too early. In the present study, it has been examined that the over the process of integration younger generation of the Bengali migrants has learnt to speak a new language formed by the mixture of ‘Hindi, English and Bengali’, secretly known as ‘Cocktail Bengali’.

Therefore, the migrants need to become proficient at least in the language of the host society so as to feel as a part of the society. Besides, proficiency in the language of the host society is also essential for an interaction with the government as well as social institutions and along with the members of the society in various sectors such as work, education, sports etc. Thus, adaptability and familiarity of the host society’s language help in speeding up the process of integration of the migrants and their children in all dimensions of the migrants’ life i.e. economic, social and cultural (Arunachalam, 2016). Among the Bengalis in the NCT of Delhi, however, the process of integration plays a significant role between migrant communities and the host society. The data shows that nearly 60 per cent of the Bengali migrants who are integrated with a good integration score speak a mix of Hindi and Bengali followed by 44.4 per cent of the Bengali migrants who speak a mix of Bengali & English. Such a high percentage in itself is indicative of the fact that this migrant community is highly interactive with the culture of the host society.

However, 52 per cent of the Bengali migrants who prefer to speak Bengali language are poorly integrated (difference significant at p < 0.05) (Table 5.1).

Poor integration belonged specifically to the typically older generations of the Bengali migrants. This linguistic split was, however, further defined by the public-private domains. The use of Hindi and English was limited to the workplace and Non Bengali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Language Spoken (respondents in percentage)</th>
<th>P value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>Bengali &amp; Hindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 85.02, Significant at p < 0.05
Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16
institutions; whereas Bengali was spoken at home as well as within their own socio-cultural gatherings. Among the younger generations, however, the scope of involvement with non-Bengali contacts and associations was far higher. The environment that they grew up was far from being similar to that of their parents or older generations. Their choices to entertain just their own niche were bleak. Moreover, in times of constant interactions across societies and cultures, it became extremely advantageous for them to become the core of the host society. During the survey it was also found that the use of popular Bengali words has become common amongst non- Bengalis also over the course of time. A Bengali respondent pointed out that the impact of Bengali culture is so intense that during Durga Pujo, Bengalis are very often greeted by Non-Bengali neighbours and friends by using Bengali phrases such as “Shubho Mahalaya” (marks the homecoming of Goddess Durga and beginning of Durga Puja). On similar terms Sudipto Pakrashi (49 years old, Bengali resident of C.R Park) says:

"Even though its funny but you know, everything has become part of each other now; basic things such as 'puchka' are often spoken as 'golgappas' and vice versa. In fact my Non-Bengali friends all the time want me to teach them easy and common Bengali words and lines like ‘Nomoshkar’ (Hello), ‘Shundor’ (Beautiful), ‘Kothay’ (Where), ‘Dhonnobad’ (Thank You), ‘Ami Bhalo Achchi’ (I am good), ‘Ami Tomake Bhalobhashi’ (I love you) etc (with a proud laughter)."

The Bengalis in the NCT of Delhi have, thus, emerged to be a community that no longer has to project their existence in the host society while being an important part of it, and language, as discussed above, has a key role to play in the formation of an integrated society with the host and the migrant communities. The mixed up, Bengali and Hindi language of the Bengali migrants in the NCT of Delhi, has not only evolved in terms of a positive adoption of a foreign language but also reflects a rigorous use of it in their mainstream life. Integration through language, thus, in respect to the Bengali migrants in the NCT of Delhi is showing an all progressive outlook, which over the years has converged itself smoothly with the ‘Melting Pot’ of the nation, i.e. Delhi.

**Inter Marriages**

One of the most customary indicators of immigrants’ integration with the host society is the proportion of the intermarriages i.e. marriage between group of members and individuals from outside the group, taking place in it. The greater the number of
intermarriages, the exceptional is the community’s integration with the host society. Therefore, intermarriage is examined as one of the most conclusive measures of discontinuing of social and cultural barriers and therein of unifying social and cultural integration, because it is the result of close social interaction between people of two different ethnicities (Bean & Steven, 2003).

Many scholars have viewed, ‘ethnic intermix’ as a way leading to a strengthened social cohesion and narrowing down the social distance between groups (Alba, 1995; Alba & Nee, 2003). This ethnic intermix of cultures is measured by intermarriages, as it breaks down the ethnic exclusiveness and helps in mixing various ethnic groups more effectively (Price, 1982). Besides this, past researchers have based the extent of intermarriages on several factors whereby they suggested that, ‘size and gender balance’ of a migrant group are significant factors in determining the extent of intermarriage. If the size and the gender composition are not considered as barriers for finding the partner then the probability of marrying outside the ethnic group is related with the distances between various ethnic groups i.e. distances based on social, economic, cultural and religious factors (Giorgas & Jones, 2002; Penny and Khoo, 1996; Jones, 1991).

Not only the attribute of ‘intermarriages’ when compared to any other social process helps in breaking down the ethnic exclusiveness but it also affects the social and cultural identities of the second generation who have multi ethnic origins (Price, 1982). Even studies in United States of America considered intermarriages as an essential element in the ‘melting pot’ theory of assimilation (Drachsler, 1994). Hart (2002) saw intermarriages as a bridge that reduces the differences between two different ethnic groups and called them as a key indicator of a socio-cultural integration in the host society. Apart from reducing the gap, intermarriages also help in increasing contacts between different groups which enhances meeting and consequently marrying each other (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1977). Thus, intermarriages are regarded as the promoter of integration as it is believed that marrying outside the group makes the process of integration easier (Sterckx, 2014). Intermarriage is not only an indicator of integration but also sheds light on the progress of multiculturalism in ethnically diverse societies. Intermarriage seeks opportunities for social interactions between people of different ethnicities which is usually facilitated by various factors such as employment opportunities for people belonging to different backgrounds, equal rights to education, similar training space and freedom to participate in community activities irrespective of
their ethnic backgrounds. Thus, all the afore-mentioned social, cultural, religious and political factors enhance the rate of intermarriages.

However, there is a difference of opinion among various scholars regarding the relationship between intermarriages and social network of the migrant in the host society. On one hand, Gordon (1964) argued that integration of the immigrant into the social networks of the host society comes first which then leads to intermarriages and on the other hand Scott and Cartledge (2009) and Luken et al. (2015) contradictorily argued that it is intermarriages that happen first and subsequently results in an opening of the wider social networks for the minority members of the society. Thus, intermarriage is considered to be one of the important indicators in the process of integration where the first generation seldom completely integrates but by the second generation, a majority of them accepts the change as a part of their lives i.e. they fully accept the concept of marriages outside their community as their own. A survey of Bengali migrants in the NCT of Delhi has validated Borrie’s observation on similar trends. The study established a significant relation between integration and intermarriages (Table 5.4). The Bengali migrants in the NCT of Delhi have not only become a part of its mainstream life as if they were never new to it but have also expressed happiness and satisfaction with intermarriages.

The survey has highlighted that 50 per cent of the Bengalis who are well integrated with the host society are relatively showing a greater tendency towards inter-marriages outside their community (Table 5.2). Marriage is an institution where integration becomes indispensable. Marriage is seen as coming together of the two separate beings and then of their respective families. Through ages, marriage has been read in terms of adjustment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Marriage Preference (respondents in percentage)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own Community</td>
<td>Outside Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor (Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 18.78, Significant at p < 0.05
Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16
and reliability in changing yet near similar surroundings; degree of which increases in
the case of inter marriages because of two different cultural and social backgrounds and
belonging. Though traditional yet the concept of inter marriages has been considered as a
key factor for progression towards a positive integration.

Over the course of time, the Bengali migrants have become not only flexible towards
cross community marriages but they have also not displayed many reservations in
performing ‘mixed customs’ during marriages (Table 4.4). The survey highlighted that
the culture and traditions of the Bengali residents were mutually accepted by the Non-
Bengali friends to the extent that even cross community marriages were performed and
the cultural gap between the two communities thus got reduced. The credit for such a
pleasant and friendly integration goes thus to the Non-Bengalis who have accepted and
on many occasions promoted such cross-community marriages.

The Bengali migrants community in the NCT of Delhi, therefore, has emerged to be a
community which was once alien to the culture of its host society but has now become
willing to be a part of the whole. The Bengali migrants have thus travelled from being an
‘outsider’ to be a fellow resident of the NCT of Delhi. Today, they are no less than an
integral part of the society.

**Residential Segregation & Residential Integration**

Massey and Denton (1988) have defined ethnic residential segregation as “a degree, to
which two or more (ethnic) groups live separately from one another in different parts of
an urban environment”. The concentration of ethnic or socio-economic groups in
particular neighborhood of a city or a metropolitan area is also seen as a residential
segregation. In literature, the debate over residential segregation has been addressed in
three major questions: Is segregation occurring? What are the casual factors and how
does it matter? and What are its effects?

However, Residential integration, according to Gidley (2013) includes two key elements
to consider. Primarily, the nature and quality of the housing that minorities occupy is
scrutinized in terms of its tenure; overcrowding and disrepair plus the pattern of their
residence in the host society in respect to clustering and its absence. Secondly, it is
usually seen in opposite to residential segregation and perhaps is considered as a
foundational dimension of the process of migrants’ integration.
According to the observed patterns, migrants often choose to live in areas nearby their family members or even to those belonging to the same place of origin. Reasons behind such a choice are several including an easier access to shops and services that meet their special needs, to jobs (through migrants’ social network), to place of worship and in case of emergency for better physical security. However, tension arises only with the reduced opportunities of social mobility which usually happens with the concentration of one or more minorities in such a way that they have minimal social contact with the members of the majority group. Urban sociologists have regarded residential segregation as an antithesis to the successful integration of the immigrants within the new society. Different residential patterns of the ethnic groups are seen as a reflection of visible social distance; which is considered as a sign of a poor social cohesion.

Knox and Pinch (2000) pointed out that though residential segregation helps in maintaining the ethnic identity of the migrant group, it also decreases the chances of assimilation with the wider society. In other words, “geographical isolation”, they argued, “leads to social exclusion and economic marginalization”. Hence, to gauge the exact extent to which these migrant ethnic groups live in diverse neighborhood outside their traditional enclaves; over time and across generation is extremely difficult. The researchers however, find it extremely crucial to examine the residential patterns of such ethnic minorities.

Conversely, Buck and Gordon (2004) have argued that the positive or negative aspect of residential segregation depends upon its actual and perceived consequences for both the migrant group and for the society as a whole and therefore, the group settled as a community is more commonly represented in various social and economic spheres. Kalra & Kapoor (2009) suggested that although the term ‘residential segregation’ is often explained with negative connotations, especially among politicians or policy makers but for us, it is a mutual concept which highlights an unequal distribution of a population group over a particular piece of land (a city, for example). Phillip (2010) too has noticed that in European political discourse, residential segregation of the minority ethnic groups is clearly suggestive of a lack of integration. In Sweden, Anderson (2006) points out, that official standpoint in the market is considered responsible for the segregation of minority ethnic groups. In Netherlands, Kempen and Ham (2008) point out that the ethnic segregation is related to the lack of socio-economic assimilation which can be combated by altering the uneven distribution of residences in affordable housing. The lack of
socio-economic assimilation in residential segregation was replaced by the lack of acculturation in Germany. In Turkish neighborhood, in Germany, for example, ethnic segregation is considered as a clear expression by the Turkish immigrants to refuse to assimilate with the German society (Gruner, 2010). Peach (1968) however argued that in most European countries, United States, Canada and even Great Britain the second generation immigrants choose more ethnically mixed neighborhoods to live in comparison to the first generation immigrants highlighting their assimilation. Furthermore, Musterd (1998) unfolded evidences from Amsterdam to argue that minorities in similar degree of segregation too vary in their performances on other indices of integration such as education, employment, socio-cultural values and political integration.

Residential segregation across the globe is seen as one of the most visible and potentially troubling side effect of urbanization and large scale migration. Even though, there is no agreement in the literature on whether the segregation is negative for migrants or ethnic minorities (Musterd 1998; Simon 2003; Bolt and van Kempen 2002) yet it is the correlation between ethnic segregation and deprivation which appears as the problem (Harrison and Phillips 2003). According to scholarly researches, level of segregation varies in degree from moderate to extreme, whereby a particular group of immigrants is represented in some parts of the city while the same group is under represented in the other areas (Peach, 2009). An exposure of the minority population to the ethnic majority is another dimension of residential segregation which is assumed to increase the assimilation process in other domains of acculturation and socio-economic mobility. Minority sometimes self-segregate the studies of residential segregation. As discussed earlier, segregation occurs on a number of bases including housing, market discrimination, the decision of the majority population about the choice of their place of living etc. Meanwhile, the dynamics of segregation for long lasting minorities differ from the immigration related segregation. It is seen that new arrivals are keen to choose ethnic enclaves to settle down because of similar social networks. However, they (and their children) are most likely to move on or relocate once they have better socio-economic status and information of their neighborhoods. For such reasons, it has been observed that the children of these migrants tend to choose the neighborhood which has mixed ethnic conditions making them more integrated migrants; than their immigrant parents.
Even psychologists, centuries ago, discussed ‘change’ in lengths and depths. Parmenides (1994) suggested that ‘change’ can only be a gradual process. He stated that ‘something’ or ‘anything’ can never suddenly transform into ‘something completely different’ or opposite. In the same year another psychologist Empedocles supported him and highlighted that any kind of change, for that matter, could only take place over a defined course of time. He also added that the only way to understand these transformations without losing reasons is to accept that existence can only be maintained through a constant change in the chain of events. Furthermore, he extended his thought to state that only ‘love’ and ‘acceptance’ can help in joining the elements to whole bodies because they consist of binding forces.

Among the Bengali migrants in NCT of Delhi, the residential segregation has a similar story to tell. In the initial stages, when the Bengali migrated to NCT of Delhi they formed their segregated separate colonies within the localities including Timarpur, Gole Market, Kashmere Gate etc. as discussed in Chapter 3. The role of residential segregation in influencing the lives of the in-migrants as suggested by literature also, was initially connected to their psychological comfort that allowed them to cope with the initial amount of changes that migration brought into their lives. However, once these migrants settled in these areas of residential segregation, they evolved with the passage of time and got integrated, to a large extent, with the host society.

It is interesting to notice that Chittaranjan Park of South Delhi has eventually emerged to be the most preferred choice of residence for the Bengalis in Delhi. However, this choice does not work on similar grounds with the younger generation of Bengalis.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Preference to live in Ethnic Neighbourhood (respondents in percentage)</th>
<th>P value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor (Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td>Elsewhere: 45.23, Undecided: 17.64, In this Locality: 7.14</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td>Elsewhere: 21.63, Undecided: 27.45, In this Locality: 3.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td>Elsewhere: 33.14, Undecided: 54.91, In this Locality: 89.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 33.14, Significant at p < 0.01
Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16
The study of the relation between integration and preference for the ethnic neighbourhood is highly significant (Table 5.3). It was found that the Bengalis who were highly integrated within the host society did not prefer relocating themselves in other places in NCT of Delhi. However, Bengali migrants also admitted that with the present lifestyle, the younger generations do not find it hindering to move to new places of residence. As Sudeep Chakraborty (89 years old) one of the oldest Bengali migrants settled in Chittaranjan Park, puts it:

“Residing in C. R. Park for a Bengali is like choosing the most comfortable seat in the room. It gives us an inner satisfaction and a feel similar that of being in Kolkata. When we came here, the foundation of our community was already strong, interaction was easy and the ambience was friendly which made fitting in effortless. But, this has changed for our children since they are born and brought up here, so they do not seek comfort by just being in a Bengali clasped environment.”

The words of Aparajita De (48 years) and Anindita Sarkar (62 years old), residents of C. R. Park in the same context were:

“We find everything here - from fish, to spices, to a Bengali newspaper, to an ambience which is overall similar to that of Kolkata. This does not, in any way, mean to our segregation; we do not feel separated from society, we are very much a part of it. Though C. R. Park is a Bengali hub but today you can also find people from other communities living here too. This is because: our Bengali children working or studying outside are constantly changing their place of residence. But we are totally satisfied living in our own ‘Mini Kolkata’. We experimented change when we came here. I think our children are doing the same (he laughs). We have no complaints.”

Residential segregation, thus, should not be considered as a concept that makes migrants marginalized or integration difficult. In fact, in the present study a colony was chosen by the Bengali migrants, which was in a way segregated and distinct in its own way, as it was occupied mainly by the Bengalis. It was observed that with the passage of time and over the generations these migrants intermingled with the host society so much so that the specific piece of land devoted to Durga Puja celebrations is also used for other
religious ceremonies and functions including Krishna Janamasthami, Diwali, Holi etc. with same fervor, zeal and devotion. The Bengali respondents in the same reference, admitted that festivals are not mere cultural potpourri rather these get-togethers generate occasions to be together for religious festivities and entertainment where feelings of mutual love, respect and brotherhood are shared.

Thus, residential segregation in the case of Bengali migrants in NCT of Delhi should be seen as a process that helped the migrants not to feel secluded in the initial phase of their migration and facilitated them to slowly and gradually become integrated with the host society and ultimately be a part and parcel of it.

**Political Integration**

An active involvement in the civil and political life of the host culture by the migrants, irrespective of whether they are the citizens or not, is considered significant for both the migrants and the community that receives them (Purdam et.al., 2002). An active participation not only helps the migrants to strengthen the bond with the non-migrants in developing social capital and cohesion but also helps them to achieve a sense of belongingness and practise commitments to the new society (Dahlstedt, 2005). Political participation also facilitates the migrants to voice their needs to the government; forming a means of communication other than through a ballot box.

The political dimension of integration is often denied as a valuable concept by some scholars but in spite of the rejection, the political participation of the migrants is still considered important while calculating the degree of integration achieved by them (Caponio, 2005). It is argued to be important because the political life of immigrants also represents an integral part of their personal lives. The role of the migrants in the political life of the host society is not only dependent on whether the host government allows them political participation or grants them the right to vote but also includes the right to express one’s own opinion and beliefs (Kofman, 2000). It also covers the association or the membership of any political party and therefore pulling out political integration would only mean leaving behind an important facet of migrants’ integration (Richard, 2004).
Table 5.4

Bengali Migrants in Delhi: Political Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Whether voted during the last national or local election (respondents in percentage)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor (Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>51.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td>38.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td>76.50</td>
<td>9.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 11.86, significant at p < 0.01
Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16

It has been observed that as an in-migrant gets adjusted to the city, he/she is reasonably expected to participate in the political life in the receiving urban society. However, the political participation of the Bengali migrants in the present study is found to be limited to casting their votes only. This is because of the fact that a large majority of the migrants are in the central government or in other government jobs and their service conditions would not permit them to participate more intensively and extensively in politics. The only aspect considered here, therefore, is whether or not the migrants have voted during the previous national or local elections. This factor was found to be significantly related with migrants’ integration to the city. Among those with high degree of integration very high percentage of Bengali migrants (76.5 per cent) voted during the last elections (Table 5.4). This percentage is comparatively low among those who are less integrated within the host society. The data indicates that as the migrants get adjusted to the urban society, their participation in the political life also increases and their attitude towards political involvement is not different from the attitude of members of the host society.

**Sense of Belongingness**

The best judge of one’s well-being is the person itself and therefore, human perception is always considered fundamental to the definition of well-being (Layard, 2005). Since majority of studies on integration are primarily focused on parameters such as education, income, language etc., the recent interest among geographers developed in the subjectivity of well-being of the migrants i.e. whether or not migration leads to life
satisfaction or a sense of belongingness. Kahneman and Riis, (2005) put forward certain key factors to measure life satisfaction i.e. quality of work, freedom of choice, political participation; degree of trust in own community, social relations as well as the contacts with the host society. Therefore, a number of studies, all over the world, have been put into words after weighing life satisfaction with various sectors of human life.

Bartram (2010) studies the level of life satisfaction among the natives and migrants in relation to the increase in income. Using the data from the world value survey, Bartram pointed out that an increase in income does not always lead to a greater life satisfaction. He, in fact, found this relation to be stronger among the immigrants residing in the USA than among its natives. In similar vein, three basic hypotheses were used to examine the question that why rural-urban migrants settled in China have an average life satisfaction score which is lower than that of the rural households. These hypotheses were: did migrant population have false expectations about their future in changed urban conditions, or did they have changed future aspirations, or whether their imagination of the future self-evolved in the new urban settings (Knight and Gunatilaka, 2007).

Using the 2002 National Household Survey in line with the classical literature on the psychology of migration and acculturation, Graham and Markowitz (2011) have studied this disparity driven by the migrants’ condition and their aspirations influenced by these reference groups. Similarly, Baltatescu (2007) examines the satisfaction level of Eastern European immigrants in relation to the social and political environment by using European social survey data from 2002-03 to 2004-05. These calculations were based on different frames of reference i.e. while evaluating their overall satisfaction in the host society. Immigrants totally rely on their experiences in the destination country, while evaluating the societal conditions; the immigrants compared their experiences to their home countries. The report further concluded the immigrants’ lower satisfaction with life as a whole but their higher satisfaction with the societal conditions than the native population.

Moreover, some research papers have particularly focused on the role of social contacts in analyzing the aspects of the integration process. Neto and Neto (2011) studied the immigrant adolescents of Portugal and found out that psycho-social factors such as contact with the peers, the feeling of control etc. are more important to study than the demographic factors. Whereas, Vaquera and Aranda (2011) pointed out that a sense of
belongingness is always built either by trans-nationalism (maintaining contacts with communities of origin, returning on a regular basis for visits etc.) or by the involvement maintained at a moderate level. However, some researchers have studied life satisfaction in respect to the immigrants’ ethnic and national identities. One such early study was done by Boski (1989) in which he discovered that immigrants’ life satisfaction is positively related to their identities established in Canada and America. While Phinney et al. (2001) argued that it is, in fact, a positive correlation among immigrants that exists i.e. their strong association with the country of origin as well as their strong local identification with the host society, which is the key to a successful integration and life satisfaction of the immigrants.

Bartram (2011) highlighted the importance of the variables of identity; like age, income, employment, religiosity etc which, according to him, display larger effects. The standard deviation increase in the pride of national identity also increases the satisfaction among the life of the migrants, while the standard deviation increase in unemployment reduces the life satisfaction considerably. However, it is argued that these effects should not be interpreted as casual.

Since, there is a limited research on life satisfaction among migrant groups, the existing research concentrates on understanding the increase in the level of happiness among the migrants in relation to their expectations of improved economic and social living standards, post the change in pace (Bartram, 2013). In general, a lower level of life satisfaction is observed among the migrants once they have moved as compared to the majority group (Baltatescu, 2007; Safi, 2010; Kirmanoglu and Baslevent, 2014). The reasons, however, are both migrant specific and contextual host society effects. Recent studies have highlighted that life satisfaction also differs between the first and the second generation migrants (Safi, 2010; Kirmanoglu and Baslevent, 2014) and also between those who are less or more integrated.

Bjornskov (2005) suggested that countries are found more homogenous with life satisfaction when acknowledged in terms of regional variation in happiness. This subsequently shows that life satisfaction can be understood as a part of a larger cultural process of interpretation giving meaning to life and is also simultaneously dependent upon the cultural mechanisms that are already present in the society. For instance,
Angelini et al. (2014) point out that the gap in life satisfaction between the Germans and the immigrants is due to the different levels of cultural assimilation and identification between them i.e. those immigrants who feel more connected to the Germans and the host society, automatically feel more satisfied than those who do not feel connected. However, this particularly centered to those belonging to the second generation of migrants or those residing in Germany for a longer period of time.

A similar argument was forwarded by Gokdemir & Dumludag (2012) stating that life satisfaction also varies with the difference in the origins of the migrant groups. They said that the subjective well-being of the Turkish and Moroccan migrants depends upon their level of identification with the people of Netherlands. An overview of these examples, across countries are suggestive that what emerges to be more essential to measure or calculate the life satisfaction among the migrant groups is the level of individualism and collective orientation in the host society (Hofstede, 2001).

Thus, on similar lines of explanation; one could expect that cultural assimilation of the immigrants arriving from collectivistic countries to the individualistic societies is ought to have an adverse influence on their levels of life satisfaction. Besides all the above factors, studies are inclusive regarding the duration of immigrants’ stay and its effects on their life satisfaction. Erlinghagen (2011) & Bartram (2013) have found a positive correlation between migrants living abroad with life satisfaction while Safi (2010) suggested that the second generation is even less satisfied when compared with the first generation. However, symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups, like facing problems in learning the language of the host society, also have an important effect on the happiness/satisfaction level. Integration and deeper links with the host society, over and above cultural differences are definitely essential for a positive life satisfaction (Simpsons, 2012). Personal well-being is considered to be an individual’s responsibility in many individualistic societies of the world and therefore, this subjectivity is seen as a positive bias towards any conclusion (Diener et al., 1985; Inglehart, 1997).

Nonetheless, many studies based on socio-economic indicators have also shown that immigrants are behaving more similar to natives over time (Heath et al., 2008). Findings of the present study for the Bengali migrants in the NCT of Delhi show that more than 80
per cent of the Bengalis who have a good integration score in the NCT are living a highly satisfied life (Table 5.5). Although, the initial phase of settling in Delhi involved certain stress and adjustment among the Bengali migrants but over the long run once they interacted with the host society and got settled they felt happy and satisfied with the host society. Once they have settled and interacted with the host society, they feel no less satisfied with the host society.

### Table 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Satisfaction Level (respondents in percentage)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor (Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td>Not Satisfied: 52.7</td>
<td>Satisfied: 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td>Not Satisfied: 36.8</td>
<td>Satisfied: 19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td>Not Satisfied: 10.5</td>
<td>Satisfied: 81.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 37.21, significant at p < 0.01
Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16

In this context, the following are the words of C.R. Pakarashi, a 92 year old Bengali resident about his experiences of staying at Chittaranjan Park:

"Any new thing demands adjustments. We knew that and we were ready. Yes, we did feel a little alien to be in a new place initially. Even though, the ambience was familiar but there, of course, were mixed feelings in a new setting. But, I would not fail to say that we were also welcomed in a way that we gradually became part of it. If you ask me, I never regret coming here. So, may be not in a literal sense but Delhi is home now (he laughs). You can feel the whole heartedness by the grandeur celebration at which Durga Pujo is now celebrated here. That is pure satisfaction for us."

During informal interactions, another respondent, Rabindra Mukherjee (67 years old) mentioned:

“We have a living we desired. We expected nothing more—nothing less. Nothing has been discriminated for us; at workplace or social gathering. We are part of the mainstream and we enjoy every bit of it. We have as many non-Bengali friends as from our own community, so I don’t see anything disturbing as far as our lives in this city is concerned.”"
Level of Integration among Generations

The phenomenon of integration of migrants with their new host surroundings is widely studied across countries and societies all over the world. A well-established literature which was first created in the United States in reference to the integration of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century migrants from Europe, explains the migrants’ integration process as something that develops over time and across generations. Waters (2014) points out that researchers of that time had clearly noticed the initial difficulties that migrants faced. Over the time and across generations however, their lives merged with that of the natives to provide a successful economic vitality and vibrantly changing culture. However, others highlighted the root techniques that helped the migrants in acquiring citizenship and therein the adoption of the host society’s language, culture and customs which together provided them with the opportunity to become a central part of the host society (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie, 1925; Gordon, 1964).

Subsequently, a report submitted by the Pew Research Centre (2013) highlighted the difference in the level of integration that was achieved by the first and the second generations of migrants. It suggested that the second generation of migrants in America is definitely doing better than the first generation of migrants in all aspects of daily living such as in terms of education, ownership of home, median income and the quality of life they are living. The Pew survey further illustrated that a higher level of satisfaction among the second generation can be calculated through various factors like percentage of them speaking fluent English; having more friends and arranging marriage outside their ancestral group and most importantly considering themselves as ‘typically Americans’. Moreover, Praag and Dageous (2003) have provided a similar observation in respect to the socio-cultural level of integration achieved through generations and concluded that by the second generation the prominent socio-cultural trends of the host society automatically make the way of life for these immigrants. They suggested that the reason behind such a change is their longer contact with the host society which provides better command on the language and enough time to form modern opinions in comparison to the first generation (Praag and Dageous, 2003). Whereas, Zorlu & Traag (2005) used “level of education” as a tool to assess the level of integration among the first and the second generations. They pointed towards the lower education of the first generation in comparison to the higher degree of education attained by the second generation, which is significantly similar to that of the native population. This, they suggested, indicates
towards a smoother level of integration among the second generation. Martikainen & Haikkola (2010) highlighted the reason behind this difference and argued that it is mainly because the second generation and the following generations are so comparable to the population of the host society in general that integration becomes successful. Not only do they share common resources with the native population but also similar educational grounds, which, in long term, creates a prosperous integration policy for any society.

Nonetheless, the extent of integration amongst the second generation of migrants varies distinctively because they do not always totally follow their community’s traditions and customs but also follow the traditions of the new society as well. Also, there are degrees of ways in which the following generation reacts to these changes like some welcome the new culture, others like to preserve their parents’ cultural traditions while constantly participating in the new society. There are also those who keep to their community and those who become alienated from both- the cultures of their parents’ as well as of the host society. The first generation of immigrants differs from the native born along dimensions of language, citizenship, civic involvement, religiosity trust, discrimination, occupation and income whereas these dissimilarities are no longer same for the second generation immigrants. In fact, except religiosity, factors like occupation, citizenship, income have shown spectacular growth between these generations.

Interestingly, when the level of integration, among the Bengali migrants in the present study, was calculated in the context of the two generations i.e. first generation and second generation, interesting results were found. A stronger bond of integration of the second generation with the host society when compared to the first generation (Table 5.6) was observed in the present study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.6</th>
<th>Bengali Migrants in Delhi: Level of Integration among Generations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Integration</td>
<td>Generations (respondents in percentage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor (Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td>23.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td>31.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td>44.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 8.6, significant at p < 0.05  
Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16
This strong integration of the second generation of Bengali migrants, however, can be patterned upon a multiple number of factors such as language, dress, food patterns etc. as discussed in Chapter IV. The younger generations, this chapter revealed, have not only started speaking a mix of Hindi and Bengali and English and Bengali known as ‘The Cocktail Bengali’ in their daily lives, but have also developed their food habits in consonance with that of the host society. They, no longer, have to stick to a palate from a traditional Bengali kitchen, serving fish and rice and are instead adopting a mixed diet based on experiment and variety. The second generation is, thus, living a life of choice which is mainly based on its concepts of retaining the traditional values as well as adopting the culture of the host society by practicing transformation.

Moreover, integration among generations of different cultures can clearly be seen during the festival of Durga Puja when an active participation by youngsters is not limited to Bengali clans; even Non-Bengali members of host society are equally contributing to these celebrations. This combined positive and fruitful interaction is attributed to day to day formal and informal interactions among Bengalis and Non-Bengalis. Such a scenario is a true portrayal of the two-way-process of integration in which the Bengali migrants and the host society are both communicating with each other leading a peaceful co-existence.

**Level of over-all Integration**

Since, integration is considered as a twofold process, it is not only completely dependent on the migrants in respect of how successfully they adjust to the host society but is equally significant for the host society to show how to welcome the migrants and their actions and activities in the host society. Therefore, it can be said that an equal effort from both sides i.e. the migrants as well as the host society leads to a positive and a balanced form of integration. When the level of integration is broadly analyzed among the Bengali migrants residing in the NCT of Delhi, results have highlighted that nearly 50 per cent of the Bengali migrants are highly integrated in the host society (Table 5.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor (Integration score &lt; 4)</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>21.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (Integration score 4-8)</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>29.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (Integration score &gt; 8)</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>49.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2015-16
Like assimilation, integration does not involve a complete surrender of one’s own culture or identity and, in fact, includes an adoption of new culture while retaining one’s own. The level of integration attained among the Bengalis in Delhi can also be seen in the same light. The survey clearly shows that in terms of over-all interaction, while on the one hand, Bengalis are retaining their own culture and on the other they are also willingly adopting and experiencing the cultures of the host society as well.

**Conclusion**

From the above discussion, it can, thus, be concluded that Bengalis in the NCT of Delhi have undergone tremendous transformation over the course of their migration process and are now deeply integrated with their host culture. The process of integration of the Bengalis, was studied vis-a-vis the attributes of language, inter marriages, residential segregation, political integration and sense of belongingness. Level of integration among generations was also quantitatively analysed. Both, during the intensive field survey and while analyzing the vast sets of data statistically, it was revealed that the Bengali community of the NCT of Delhi has showed a near universal acceptance of the culture of its host society. It can be concluded that the Bengalis, in Delhi, use Hindi in most of their conversations; secondly, they have welcomed cross community marriages; thirdly, by participating in political activities they are using their political rights extensively (like right to vote); fourthly, it has also been witnessed that the second generation of Bengalis shares a much stronger bond with the host society than the first generation and lastly, amongst all these changes, as the data reveals, they are living a highly satisfied life. Interestingly, this study also stands opposite to the negative illustration of the concept of residential segregation, whereby, living in a separate neighborhood of any group of migrants is considered as a sign of marginalization and disintegrated social cohesion. In the case of Bengali migrants in the NCT of Delhi, residential segregation has had no negative connotations in the process of their integration rather it has resulted in the smooth amalgamation of a new culture into the already existing space of the host society.

The above discussion clearly highlights that the Bengalis in Delhi have undergone substantial changes in terms of the spoken language, customs followed, intermarriages, food habits and dressing patterns. Their consistency in following their ancestral beliefs, post witnessing all these changes, is nevertheless worth noticing. What is equally important to note is that these traditions have been sustained through generations by the Bengali migrants that highlights a complete investment in one’s own culture and community.