The Influence of New Communication Technologies on the Acculturation of Bhutanese Refugees in an American Community

Cheryl A. D'mello

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THE INFLUENCE OF NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ON THE ACCULTURATION OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN AN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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I dedicate this work to my parents

the late Reginald Joseph Thomas D’Mello and Selina D’Mello
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THE INFLUENCE OF NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ON THE ACCULTURATION OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN AN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

CHERYL A. D’MELLO

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Bhutanese refugees, who are the newest group of refugees to arrive in the United States. It provides a detailed account of this community in the Cleveland-Akron area in Ohio. Research on this refugee population has only just begun, and they have been surveyed at an early time in the acculturation process. In 2007, their resettlement in the United States from camps in Nepal began, and by 2012, a total of 60,000 are expected to arrive in the United States.

The research questions examine to what extent new communication technologies and media (ethnic and host) help the Bhutanese refugees in their acculturation in the United States and to what extent this helps them keep in touch with their native culture. A questionnaire with 106 items was given to 116 Bhutanese refugees who began arriving in Ohio in 2008, after living for about 17 years in refugee camps in Nepal. The study primarily refers to Young Yun Kim’s theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation and examines the influence of various new and old communication technologies since their arrival in the United States.
The results indicate that the Bhutanese refugees are anxious to settle and make new American friends while remaining in close contact with other Bhutanese, whether across the street, the country, or around the world. As hypothesized, age was negatively associated with using technology to maintain ties with the home country and other Bhutanese. The use of American media was positively related to adjustment to the host culture. Also, the use of American media to learn about American culture was positively related to adjustment, as was frequent interpersonal communication with non-Bhutanese.

Results of this study can impact how future waves of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal and also other immigrants and refugees can use communication technologies to adjust and cope in a new environment. Any person interested in this refugee population will obtain information from this study about their background, habits, culture, media usage, and adjustment to life in the United States. Best practices for acculturation emerging from this research can enable those working with this population and other refugees to help expedite their acculturation to life in the United States and other countries.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Seventy five year old Dili Maya, dressed in a traditional sari, beams excitedly as she learns a brand new word of English. The English as a Second Language Class is in progress; it is crowded with adult Bhutanese refugees. There are pictures labeled in bold letters on the wall, and Ventures Workbooks piled high. The teacher is young, patient, and enthusiastic, as are the volunteers. “What will you do tomorrow?” the teacher asks. “I will come to class, I will go to office, I will...” the eager voices of the refugees rise slowly in a chorus, and drift out towards the apartments and the lake nearby...

This study reviews the experience of a group of Bhutanese refugees, the newest group of refugees to arrive in the United States. Forced to leave Bhutan, they lived in refugee camps in Nepal for about 17 years. Some of them have been resettled in the United States. Communication played a key role in keeping their culture alive when they lived in Bhutan and in the refugee camps in Nepal. Communication now plays a vital role in their adaptation to the new culture in the United States and in keeping in touch with their people and culture. This research study will primarily look at Young Yun Kim’s theory of acculturation and the role that communication plays. It will focus on the new communication technologies available today and their influence on this new group of refugees in the United States.
Communication technologies emerging in the last few decades such as the Internet, social media, search engines, and television via cable or satellite have enriched lives across the globe. Refugees and immigrants particularly can forge closer ties with their host culture through these new media, more so than earlier immigrants. They are also able to maintain contact with their native cultures, people, and events taking place in their home country and in their communities across the world more easily than ever before.

1.1. Background

Nestled in the heart of the eastern Himalayas, the Kingdom of Bhutan has often been called a paradise, “the Mountain Fortress of the Gods” or “the last Shangri-la,” (Schicklgruber & Pommaret, 1998). The last Buddhist kingdom of the Himalayas, Bhutan is an exotic tourist destination where Buddhist monasteries, bathed in swirls of mists, cling precariously to steep cliffs, where monks in bright saffron robes can be found in abundance, deep in meditation, and prayer flags flutter in the breeze. In “the land of serenity,” the Buddhist culture is extremely well preserved and “the whole landscape is sacred” (Ricard, 2007, p.10). Buddhism of the Drukpa Kagyupa School is the state religion of Bhutan, giving the country its name “Druk Yul” in Dzonghka (the official language) or “Land of the Thunder-Dragon” (Schicklgruber & Pommaret, 1998, p. 22).

A landlocked country with one of the world’s smallest and least developed economies, Bhutan lies between Tibet (China) to the north and the Indian states of Assam and West Bengal to the south, Arunachal Pradesh to the east, and Sikkim to the west. Bhutan has a total area of about 47,000 square kilometers, or 18,147 sq. miles, and a population of 672,425 (2005 census). Its unique insularity protected the cultural heritage of this small independent
nation no bigger than Switzerland and half the size of the State of Indiana. The term “Bhutan” is believed to be derived from the Indian term “Bhotanta’ which means ‘the end of Tibet,’ i.e., the end of the area culturally related to Tibet” (Schicklgruber & Pommaret, 1998, p.179). Since 1907, the Wangchuck hereditary monarchy wielded power until June 2008, when Bhutan became a constitutional monarchy. The current Head of State is King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (U.S. Department of State, 2010). For an accurate picture of the refugee situation, the maps of Bhutan, Nepal, and India are provided here.

The ethnic makeup of Bhutan consists of 65% Drukpa (which includes the Sharchops or people of the east, Ngalops who are of Tibetan origin, and indigenous tribal people), and 35% Lhotsampa or people of the south (of Nepali descent). The religious
demographics of Bhutan show the country is 75% Lamaistic Buddhist and 25% Indian and Nepalese influenced Hinduism (U.S. Department of State, Feb. 2, 2010).

In the early 19th century, people from neighboring Nepal began moving to Bhutan, retaining their language, religion, and culture. After the 1988 government census, many Nepalis were labeled as illegal immigrants, leading to protests by the Lhotsampas “alleging ethnic and political repression” (U.S. Department of State, Feb. 2, 2010).

The Cultural Orientation Refugee Backgrounder No. 4 reports that the Bhutanese authorities, seeing the increasing influx of Nepalis as a threat to their culture and Druk majority, introduced policies of ‘Bhutanization’ in the 1980s. The people of Nepali origin protested, leading to violence. The targeting of ethnic Nepalis led to their expulsion after being forced to sign “voluntary migration certificates.” Only those Nepalis who could produce evidence from records with the Ministry of Home Affairs that they had settled in Bhutan prior to 1958 were recognized as citizens. If not, they had to leave, fleeing to Nepal and the Indian state of West Bengal (Center for Applied Linguistics, October 2007).
For the past 17 years, about 107,000 refugees from Bhutan, who are descendants of the Lhotsampas, have been residing in seven United Nations-supervised camps in southeastern Nepal. Since Nepal is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it considers the refugees to be foreigners with no political rights; they are restricted from any economic activity outside the camps, unable to own any immovable property in Nepal, and are dependent on external aid. Some of the educated Bhutanese have founded several political organizations as they enjoy “de facto freedom of association” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2003, p. 13).
1.2. Gross National Happiness

Interestingly, Bhutan is the only country in the world that claims to put happiness at the heart of government policy. Its official website, www.bhutan.gov.bt, proudly proclaims that it is the only country to measure its well being by Gross National Happiness (GNH) instead of Gross National Product (GNP) or economic prosperity. The concept of GNH or Galyong Gha-Key Pelzom (Bhutanese translation) is a unique philosophy introduced by former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck based on Buddhist spiritual values that strive to achieve a balance between the spiritual and the material. GNH represents “Development with Values” according to the present King and is an official policy passed in the Parliament and adopted by analysts worldwide. However, for
many people it may appear ironic that the government has chosen to pursue GNH while physically evicting so many Bhutanese of Nepali origin.

Bhutan became one of the highest per capita generators of refugees in the world when, in the 1990s, nearly one sixth of the population was expelled after having their citizenship arbitrarily stripped (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

1.3. Media in Bhutan

It is significant that in 1999 Bhutan became the last nation in the world to introduce television. At the same time, it also opened up Internet services and cable television (Wangmo & Cokley, 2009, p. 154). Previously, owning and watching television was not allowed under Bhutanese law. Oral communication dominated earlier and the radio, introduced in the 1970s, was the main and oldest medium of information for rural citizens. People in the rural areas, such as the Bhutanese refugees who were primarily farmers, had access to the radio, since radios were cheap and portable. The first newspaper was introduced in the 1980s but had limited reach because of the physical barriers and low literacy rate of 54%. In 1986, Kuensel, a government newspaper introduced in the mid 1960s, began publishing in English, Dzonkha and Lhotshamkha. In 2001 it started a daily online news service. Bollywood, the Indian film industry, “has had a major impact on Bhutanese society” (p. 165). From a very young age, the Bhutanese who speak Dzonkha or Nepali have been watching Hindi language films from India and listening to music influenced by Bollywood.
1.4. State of Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

Hutt (2003) has recorded the history of Bhutan, the history of Nepali migration to Bhutan, and the history of the residents of Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal. Besides a historical construction of the migration and settlement of Nepalis into South Bhutan up to their expulsion, he draws on the real life stories of the refugees, recounting how the first people claiming to be Lhotshampa refugees from Bhutan entered Nepal towards the end of 1990 and the continuous flow that followed. He describes the establishment of camps and the political issues involved: “Though they could be described as de jure stateless people, their problem was their inability to establish their Bhutanese nationality rather than the lack of a country to call their own” (Hutt, 2003, p. 279).

Incidences of psychiatric disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and other disorders among the Bhutanese refugee community while in the camps, indicated that some of them had serious mental health issues and needed help. Along with human rights organizations, partner agencies, and political parties, a hut to hut survey between 1991 and 1994 in the refugee camps identified 2,331 refugees, mostly men, who had been physically tortured out of a total of 85,078 refugees (Ommeren, et al., 2001). The study also found that among the 418 tortured and 392 non-tortured Bhutanese refugees surveyed, there were lifetime disorders among five out of every six tortured refugees; among non-tortured refugees, more than half reported lifetime disorders. Quality mental health services were typically not available in the refugee camps. When studying the Bhutanese refugees, it is important to remember that some of them experienced harsh and brutal situations, from which a few may never permanently recover.
The issue of the Nepalis from Bhutan living in camps in Nepal for the last 17 years has drawn international attention and the involvement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Established in 1951, UNHCR is the branch of the United Nations charged with the international protection of refugees.

Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention held by world governments in Geneva states that a refugee is someone who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d.)

Over two thirds of the world’s refugees “are not in emergency situations, but instead trapped in protracted refugee situations (PRS)” (Loescher, et. al., 2008, p. 3), many of them in exile in camps for years. Their rights are restricted and political and security issues arise for the countries where they reside. The UNHCR seeks to find a durable solution for any refugee situation: voluntary repatriation to the home country, integration into the country of asylum, and only when those two solutions are not possible, then resettlement in a third country. Since talks with Bhutan regarding the repatriation of the refugees met with little success, the Bhutanese refugees are being resettled in seven countries: the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands,
Norway, Denmark and Canada, the United States accepting the largest number: 60,000 refugees.

1.5. The Resettlement Process

Resettlement of the Bhutanese refugees began in November, 2007 with support from the Government of Nepal, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the resettlement countries. By September, 2009, “about 20,000 refugees had left Nepal to begin new lives in third countries under one of UNHCR’s largest resettlement programmes” (UNHCR, 2009).

In the United States, the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration focuses on refugee issues when they arise. Refugees receive permission to enter the United States from the federal Department of Homeland Security. From October 1, 2007 to May 31, 2010, a total of 182,822 refugees entered the United States. Among these, the number of Bhutanese refugees was 27,447 (Refugee Processing Center, n.d.).

Out of 4,199 refugees who arrived in Ohio during this time, a total of 1,183 were Bhutanese refugees, starting in Federal Fiscal Year October 1 to September 30, 2008 (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Refugee State Coordinator’s Section). Some of these refugees have settled, and more will be settled, in the Cleveland-Akron area. By 2012, about 60,000 are expected to have arrived in the United States.

Coming from harsh conditions in camps, the resettlement process poses a huge cultural and social adjustment for the Bhutanese refugees. Before leaving Nepal for the
United States, refugees are given a Cultural Orientation (CO) by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) which covers topics such as pre-departure processing, the role of the resettlement agency in the United States, housing, health, employment, cultural adjustment, money management, transportation, rights and responsibilities, education and travel. “Through overseas CO, refugees gain an early understanding of what they will experience in the United States, and develop confidence that they can succeed” (Cultural Orientation Resource Center, n.d.).

Like other immigrants that leave their home cultures voluntarily for other lands, refugees face a new host culture and must learn to cope with the uncertainty of their environment; often this involves learning to communicate in a new language. At the same time, many wish to retain ties with their home culture, and new communication technologies allow for this possibility which was not available to earlier immigrant groups.

The group studied here is the Bhutanese refugees who have been resettled in the Cleveland-Akron area. According to The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, the Bhutanese refugee influx is “one of the largest refugee waves to reach Northeast Ohio in decades – and one of the most challenging” (Smith, 2008). He was referring to “the assimilation challenge” since they come from a Himalayan culture and many of them are illiterate. “Historically they were farmers, so they do not bring skills applicable to a manufacturing or a high-tech economy. Plus, there's a brutal recession on, so even finding entry level jobs is tough; their transition will be very difficult” (R. Smith, Personal Communication, August 9, 2010).
The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) manages the Ohio Refugee Services Section, which administers, coordinates, and supervises refugee programs in Ohio. Ohio Refugee Resettlement Agencies,\(^1\) which are non-profit, carry out the resettlement of refugees by finding them housing, enrolling them in English classes, helping them apply for county services, etc. Refugees are eligible to receive benefits for up to eight months after arrival. The benefits include food stamps, cash assistance and Medicaid. After the initial eight months, they are reassessed for eligibility based on family composition, and certain services for five years or longer (ODJFS, n.d.). After one year in the United States, refugees may apply for permanent residence and after five years U.S. citizenship. Resettled refugees are able to travel internationally, including to Bhutan, provided conditions there permit.

1.6. Significance of this Study

Today, the world is witnessing the migration of more people than ever before. Immigrants in search of work or opportunity and refugees fearful for their safety, are relocating temporarily or permanently. At the end of 2009 there were 43.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, the highest number since the mid-1990s. Of these, 15.2 million were refugees (UNHCR, 2010). Refugees are caught in a cross-cultural movement, often little prepared for the severity of life in camps that prove to be a temporary stop, sometimes for years, before they reach a permanent location. They have to cope with substantial and often painful change. Over the centuries, humans have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to cope with and overcome difficulties (Kim, 1988),
and their motivation to adapt usually depends on whether their residence is permanent or not.

What is different about this new wave of refugees as compared to earlier influxes of refugees is that the world is now in the throes of a communication explosion, where new forms of media are revolutionizing the way people are exploring and learning about the world while also keeping in contact with each other like never before.

Earlier immigrants gave up their countries, families, culture and traditions. Maintaining these connections was often hard, and they depended primarily on the postal system. Communication between families separated by thousands of miles quickly slowed to a trickle, consisting of an annual card or a few expensive phone calls. Besides travel becoming less expensive and much faster, phone calls have become inexpensive or free.

A host of media have developed that enables people across the globe to stay connected with a click of a mouse, even after immigration places oceans and continents between them. Software applications like Skype offer videophone services allowing one to talk, watch, and interact with people across the globe from their computer and share their lives as never before and public libraries have made it possible for people to access the Internet for free.
1.6.1. Impact of New Technologies

The width and depth of the Internet today is mind boggling. Search engines “flatten the world” and empower individuals “to do what they think best with the information they want,” according to Google CEO Eric Schmidt (Friedman, 2005, p.157). “Informing” also involves searching for friends, allies, and collaborators online, “empowering the formation of global communities.” According to Jerry Yang, Co-founder and Chief of Yahoo! Inc. the Internet provides “a forum, a platform, a set of tools for people to have private, semiprivate, or public gatherings regardless of geography or time” (Friedman, 2005, p.157). Today communities can flourish online, in an interactive environment. Groups can have “virtual homes” sharing, organizing and communicating information valuable to cultivating vibrant communities.

New social media have made it possible for people to “go global” and speak, see, and exchange information on the Internet. One can read the same newspaper their family reads in their home country. Events that take place “back home” 10,000 miles away are relayed, often instantaneously through satellite and cables to the living room television or computer screen. Instead of feeling alone and alienated in a new culture, the immigrant has only to go online to be connected with a hand-picked community via the new social networking media i.e., e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Yahoo Profiles, Xing, hi5, YouTube and E-net.

The growth of the current communication services can be illustrated by a study by Nielsen Co. reported in the Wall Street Journal (Vascellaro, 2009), where a comparison
was made between technology use in August 2008, and August 2009, in the United States and several European countries, Australia and Brazil. They found that within that time, the use of email jumped 21% from 229.2 million people to 276.9 million. The jump in the number of people using social-networking and other community sites was 31%, to 301.5 million. Truly, the world has become one global community because of the Internet (Melkote & Liu, 2000).

Instant messaging and receiving text messages from home is common, not only when sitting at the computer, but 24/7 on the cellular phone. Refugees can connect with others from their home country in the United States and elsewhere and share resources and their experiences of adapting to American life here with one another by posting blogs, news articles, and even videos of these experiences. New communication technologies can expose the Bhutanese refugees to more of the new culture and at the same time help them stay in touch with the old cultures.

A review of what’s available about the Bhutanese refugees on the Internet using the Google search engine revealed 76,000,000 results (retrieved June 27, 2010) for “Bhutan.” Another search for “Bhutanese refugees” on YouTube revealed 261 videos (retrieved on June 27, 2010) including videos such as “Sentiments of Bhutanese refugee youth” and “Bhutanese Refugees (seniors) after completing summer class in Oakland, CA.” “Bhutanese refugees in U.S.A.” revealed 14,800 results. A search on Google for “Refugees from Bhutan” revealed 557,000 results; and “Bhutanese culture” generated 635,000 results. On the Yahoo! search engine, “Bhutanese refugees” produced 306,000 results. With the abundance of news sources and resources available, including newspaper articles, videos, movies, documentaries, colorful and exotic cultural displays
and blogs, this study shows how and to what extent the Bhutanese refugees keep in touch with their mother country and its culture. Also, how they keep in touch with other Bhutanese refugees worldwide, and the effect of these resources on their acculturation.

The refugee who arrives in the United States today continues to faces loneliness, isolation, and the challenge of dealing with a new people, while living in a different and sometimes strange culture. By no means is resettlement easy today; however, the Internet offers an abundance of resources not available earlier. The experience of today’s refugees is different from that of previous immigrants who had to grapple with a new world order after severing ties with their mother country. After a day’s work in the new culture, today’s refugee can sit down in front of a computer and be transported thousands of miles across the world to Nepal or Bhutan, a world they once knew – a world of familiar culture and people, or to friends who might help them construct an identity that is bicultural. Immigrants can even immerse themselves in the politics and culture of their native country. This facility helps them retain their sense of identity and alleviates the overwhelming feeling of being lost. However, submerging themselves in their native culture can also distance the immigrant from the reality of adjusting to the new culture, and may prove to be a hindrance to acculturation.

We will be studying the influence of new communication technologies on the acculturation of the Bhutanese refugees based on the paradigm of the theory of acculturation as proposed by Y.Y. Kim, Berry’s acculturation theory and Gudykunst’s AUM theory, and Katz’s uses and gratifications theory.
CHAPTER II
THEORIES, LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUALIZATION

2.1. Theory of Acculturation

Research in this field of cross-cultural adaptation in the United States began in the 1930s and continues today. This study focuses on the Bhutanese refugees’ resettlement in the United States, particularly in Cleveland-Akron, Ohio in relation to the theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation developed by Young Yun Kim (1988, 1990, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2008). Kim studied the field of cross-cultural adaptation for more than three decades and conducted studies among Korean immigrants; she also studied the initial adaptation patterns of Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Vietnamese refugees in the United States. Kim views cross-cultural adaptation as a dynamic communication process. She terms communication as “the central pillar of all human learning” (Kim, 1988, p. 45). According to Kim’s theory, the adaptation of all cultural strangers occurs through a communication process, as long as they continue to stay in contact with, and are functionally dependent on the host environment (Kim, 1990).
Kim uses the term cross-cultural adaptation as the process of change all individuals experience when they finish their socialization in one culture and then move to another strange culture for an extended time. Therefore the Bhutanese who moved to the United States at a young age and those who were born here will not undergo these experiences. All individuals in a changing and changed cultural environment share common adaptation experiences (Kim, 1988). In the face of these challenges, human beings have the ability to carry on life even in strange unfamiliar environments, pointing to human resilience.

Terms such as acculturation, assimilation, and adjustment are used frequently in the human sciences to refer to adaptation, which is the internal transformation of an individual challenged by a new cultural environment in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility within that environment. The acceptance of cultural elements of the host society by the individual is termed ‘assimilation’ and ‘amalgamation.’ One of the definitions of the term ‘acculturation’ is the process of acquiring some aspects of the host culture. Adjustment sometimes refers to the mental-emotional state of comfort, satisfaction, and positive attitude, while integration refers to the development of social relationships in the host environment. In Kim’s theory, adaptation broadly includes subjective, objective, assimilative, acculturative, and adjustive meanings.

Kim’s theory is grounded in General Systems concepts and principles, viewing individuals as “open systems.” Through communication an individual exchanges information with the environment, and “co-evolves with the changing environment” (Kim, 2008, p. 362). Anthropologists and sociologists approached the field of acculturation and assimilation mainly as a group phenomenon, rather than laying
emphasis on the individual. Kim developed a unifying perspective which integrates both group and individual level approaches. According to her, no immigrant or sojourner can completely escape adaptation as long as they remain in, continuously engage in communication with, and are functionally dependent on, the host society.

According to Kim the essence of acculturation lies in intercultural communication activity and new cultural learning. It is “the acquisition of new cultural practices in wide-ranging areas including the learning of a new language” (Kim 2008, p. 363). Based on a person’s predispositions, pre-existing needs and interests, he or she has the freedom or control over this process.

As new responses to situations are adopted, deculturation or unlearning of established cultural elements occurs. There is a “push” of the new culture and a “pull” of the old, leading to stress (Kim, 1998, p. 363). As people have direct and indirect contact with an unfamiliar environment, they try to establish a relationship which is termed adaptation, that is stable, functional and reciprocal.

The concept of “culture shock” was first defined by Oberg in 1960 as the “anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (Kim, 1988). The term has been extended further and the stages of adjustment that Oberg proposed still hold true: 1) a honeymoon stage, characterized by fascination, elation, and optimism; 2) a stage of hostility and emotionally stereotyped attitudes toward the host society and increased association with fellow sojourners; 3) a recovery stage characterized by increased language knowledge and ability to get around; and 4) a final stage, when adjustment is about as complete as possible, anxiety is largely gone, and new
customs are accepted and enjoyed (Kim, 1988, p. 24). In 1970 Alvin Toffler’s term “future shock” described the stress and disorientation people experience when dealing with extreme change (Kim, 1988, p. 3).

Individuals experience disequilibrium when they receive messages that disrupt their internal order and they face stress. Kim’s theory states that stress, adaptation, and growth, together, defined the internal dynamics of strangers’ cross-cultural experiences in a ‘draw-back’ and then ‘leap-forward’ pattern similar to the movement of a wheel climbing a hill. The stress-adaptation-growth dynamic is continuous and cyclic. This often daily experience for most immigrants leads to an increased adaptation and growth, and decreased stress levels. The majority of individuals in most circumstances achieve at least a minimum “functional fitness” in the host environment. A slow adaptive transformation takes place when they acquire elements of the new host culture through acculturation or learning, and lose some of the old cultural patterns through deculturation or unlearning.

Figure 4: The Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamic (Source: Kim, 2008, p. 364)
Communication is at the heart of cross-cultural adaptation. Social communication activities include interpersonal communication and mass communication. Both of these help develop host communication competence and maximize social participation. Also providing adaptation-facilitating functions for new immigrants initially are ethnic support systems, consisting of ethnic organizations and ethnic media. While these activities offer temporary relief and refuge, they may also discourage host communication competence and participation, and may slow down adaptation in the long run. Strangers who use ethnic communication strengthen their ethnicity and not their adaptation (Kim, 1998, p.126). The use and comprehension of the host’s dominant language is critical too. Kim says there are three pre-dispositional factors: cultural and racial background, personality attributes, and preparedness for change that characterize a strangers’ overall adaptive potential. Through the stress and demands experienced, individuals become internally better equipped and this brings about functional fitness; there is an increase in psychological health due to a decrease in intercultural stress and an intercultural identity is developed. With an increased flexibility and fluidity, this individual is able to accommodate and relate to both the host culture and their childhood culture.

A host environment that exerts pressure on strangers to conform, while also welcoming their participation, helps the adaptation process. Age also is related to openness to change, and plays a major role in cross cultural adaptation. Original communication patterns and cultural identities are more engrained in older strangers.

Kim’s studies with refugees and immigrant groups reinforced her view that it is language and communication that lie at the heart of all cultural strangers’ struggle to reorganize themselves in their new world. By studying the communication patterns and
use of media by the Bhutanese refugees, we will be able to ascertain how much they are adapting to the new culture.

Referencing research data, Kim concludes in her essay that stress, adaptation and growth lead ultimately to an “intercultural personhood” where neither the lender nor the borrower are left deprived (Kim, 2008, p. 366).

Berry (2005) also theorized about the acculturation process as one involving “mutual accommodation” between two cultures, which involve cultural and psychological changes. Both groups undergo psychological and socio-cultural adaptations. People achieve varying degrees of adaptation depending on the acculturation strategies employed which consist of their attitudes and behaviors. Berry uses the term “acculturative stress” instead of culture shock, as stress can vary from positive to negative stress. In Reece and Palmgreen’s publication, Berry (1991) stated that immigrants employ four strategies for acculturation, of which the first two produce the least acculturative stress: a) Integration (valuing one’s cultural identity as well as relations with others) b) assimilation (valuing relations with others while devaluing one’s cultural identity) c) separation (valuing one’s cultural identity while devaluing relations with others), and d) marginalization (devaluing one’s cultural identity as well as relations with others (2000).
2.2. AUM Theory of Intercultural Adjustment

Gudykunst’s (2005) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory or AUM Theory of intercultural adjustment could directly be applied to improving the effectiveness of our communication and strangers’ ability to adjust to new host cultures. By mindfully managing their anxiety and uncertainty in a new environment, strangers can consciously choose to think and behave differently and thus interact effectively with host nationals. By learning the language of the host culture, forming social networks and friendships, anxiety is decreased. Strangers are thus better able to predict with accuracy the behavior of host nationals. Gudykunst offers two applications for his AUM Theory: to help strangers adjust to host cultures, and for the use in planning intercultural adjustment training programs. Trainees are offered techniques for managing anxiety such as deep breathing, meditation, and breaking from the situation.

While surveying the Bhutanese refugee community, it will be interesting to study their process of acculturation, the means they have employed, and the adjustments they have made to the new culture they have faced in the United States.

2.3. Uses and Gratifications Theory

In this study, we also refer to the uses and gratifications communication theory, which tries to explain how individuals use media and other communication in their environment to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals (Katz, et al., 1974). It assumes the member of the audience is important and active, takes the initiative in choosing the type of media, and is able to recognize and name what their motive and
interest are in choosing particular media. Though a person’s exposure to media may begin casually, they have specific expectations of what media can offer. Each medium is unique, with certain features, contents, and settings, where it can be accessed. It is the audience member who makes the connection between gratification of needs and the choice of media at a particular time. The member may be influenced in their choice by social, psychological, and environmental factors. Diverse audiences and needs can be served by one particular medium and its contents (Katz, et al., 2001). In this study the uses and gratifications theory is applied to the viewing of television by the Bhutanese refugees to see whether television viewing is used for learning and adjusting to American culture or because it was a habit, and used for enjoyment.

2.4. The Refugee Experience

Refugees are like and unlike other immigrants who voluntarily move to other lands. Wilson refers to them as “broken spirits” “living in between different worlds of reality” (Wilson & Drozdek, 2004, p. 4). The process of becoming a refugee or asylum seeker is traumatizing. Refugees bring layers of trauma and personal losses with them to the country in which they seek resettlement. Wilson has described the journey of a refugee from homeland to an unknown world as “psychologically, it is the peril of the abyss” (p. 4). Volkan, as cited in Wilson and Drozdek (2004), points out the differences and common elements between refugees and voluntary immigrants. Both experience loss of country, friends, and previous identity. The degree of adjustment to the new life depends on the extent to which the immigrant mourns or resists the mourning process and accepts his or her loss. Refugees may experience guilt at being among the survivors and persecutory anxieties can get reignited by discriminatory attitudes of the host society. It is
against this background that we need to review previous literature on the acculturation experiences of refugees and immigrants.

### 2.5. Literature Review

A literature review of studies of other refugee and immigrant individuals and groups and what has helped or impeded their progress in resettlement and acculturation in different countries will help readers understand the process involved and the difficulties that are being, or may be experienced by the Bhutanese refugees. Various studies of successful work done with refugee resettlement and acculturation can also provide a guide to service providers, resettlement agencies, and people serving this population.

#### 2.5.1. Media Portrayal of Refugees

Leudar, et al. (2008) studied the representation of immigrants and refugees in the media in the United Kingdom and found that negative metaphors and language that dehumanize immigrants have frequently been used. As a result, the refugees suffer from socially shared prejudice, stigmatization, hostility, and exclusion from the community, often leading to the beginning of serious psychological problems (Leudar, et al., 2008). The study consisted of interviews of refugees/asylum seekers living in Manchester, United Kingdom and interviews with local people in their neighborhoods. It found that the hostility themes present in the media were often internalized by the refugees. The refugee status always carried negative connotations. The problems faced while living in
the United Kingdom were blamed for psychological problems that arose among these refugees.

After studying the coverage of Sudanese refugees by newspapers in the United States, Robins (2003) found that the ‘Lost Boys’ stories managed to get African news on to the front page and were great stories of human-interest stirring compassion. However, stories such as these are no more than “surface explanations of complex international situations” (p. 29). Instead of allowing those who have been silenced to speak personally about their experiences, they often tend to reinforce stereotypes, extend racism, and carry value judgments.

McKinnon, S. (2008) in her study conducted at the Arizona Lost Boys Center, discusses the positioning of refugees as “nonspeaking or objectified subjects,” “in a continual state of transition” (p. 398). The refugee resettlement program for the “Lost Boys of Sudan” is considered one of the most successful and has garnered public awareness. Refugees are viewed as “strangers and guests in this country” (p. 406). McKinnon strongly advocates that service providers need to speak to refugees about their needs before and after resettlement so that objectification is avoided and successful resettlement is achieved.

It is apparent here that the stories of refugees in the media are extremely important as they sway the public opinion and sometimes the personal treatment of refugees. Stories of the Bhutanese refugees in the different cities in the United States where they have been resettled have appeared in the media. It is still early to see what effect these have had on the treatment of the Bhutanese refugees by the public.
2.5.2. Effect of Media Stereotypes

In an autobiographical study, Keshishian (2000) has shown how media can facilitate and also impede the process of acculturation for an immigrant. She explains the trauma caused to Iranians who migrated to the United States around 1979 by “media characterizations and personal stereotyping” (p. 94). Media stereotypes can have a negative effect. “They affect the immigrant’s self concept, slow down her or his acculturation, breed mistrust, cause poor intercultural communication and facilitate discrimination, leading to an unhealthy society” (p. 103). Her hope is that the Internet can be used for international dialogue in this area. This goes to demonstrate that the portrayal of Bhutanese refugees in the media can affect their acculturation.

2.5.3. Media Portrayal of Bhutanese Refugees

The Bhutanese refugees have had some press coverage nationally and locally. One of the newspaper articles about the Bhutanese refugees in the Cleveland area refers to their “Old World farming skills,” and their success in a farming experiment in Madison, Ohio (Smith, 2009). Another article in a local Asian Indian newspaper in Cleveland (Sreenath, 2010), reported on the Bhutanese refugees vegetable farm project. It would seem that the general public, after reading these articles, will probably perceive the Bhutanese refugees primarily as farmers. This may not be wrong as a large percentage of them (94% as revealed in this study) were agriculturists in Bhutan, but it might affect the younger generation who are striving for other careers and goals.


2.5.4. Identity Issues faced by Refugees

Several studies have focused on the transformation of refugee identity from that of a demanding and dependent refugee to a deserving and active one. One study in the United Kingdom found that the negative images of refugees in the media created difficulty in establishing identities as worthwhile individuals, leading to very high levels of unemployment and underemployment (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). Living in ethnic enclaves can restrict communication of refugees with local residents. Refugee Community Organizations (RCOs), managed by the refugees themselves, were found to be very effective for empowering refugees to becoming capable and involved through education and training. About 40 Vietnamese clothing and other companies have been set up in Hackney, U.K. demonstrating the success of RCOs in empowering refugees.

2.5.5. Acculturation Issues faced by Refugees

Another study on women African refugees living in Fargo, North Dakota, looks at the little known aspect of the communicative problems refugees experience while adapting to American culture (Semlak, et al., 2008). Many refugees report experiencing conflicting issues such as having satisfying refugee experiences coming from better economic conditions, a feeling of safety and security, while also reporting prejudice, threats, increased domestic violence, etc. The pressures to adapt to a new culture are experienced differently by men and women though both often feel that as refugees, their cultures are marginalized.
The study of the acculturation process of female African refugees in Fargo, Dakota, was part of an action research project between the African Women’s Health Initiative, a group of female African refugees, and a group of communication doctoral students from North Dakota State University. Through focus groups, major challenges were identified such as mental/emotional well being, understanding American systems, cultural problems, family relationships and racism faced by the female African refugee population. This led to the development of a special government program to help female African refugees (DeWitt, et al., 2007).

The areas of immigration and acculturation are being increasingly studied by social researchers and policy makers as many of today’s refugees and immigrants are not assimilating as quickly as before. An action research approach in a study to find the most urgent acculturation problems was conducted involving 12 women representatives as co-researchers from the African refugees and immigrants in the Fargo-Moorhead area (Okigbo, et al., 2009). This kind of dynamic research allows the voices and narratives of these people to be heard. First, their experiences from focus groups were used to get information to help in the community’s acculturation. Then training provided the women with helpful knowledge on integration into their communities. Challenges in areas such as mental health and depression, finance, education, loss of Africanness and living the American dream, racism and leadership issues were included in the training. It was found that eliminating difficulties in transportation, education, and language would make integration easier. Action research approaches that include critical theory, ethnodrama, photovoice and innovative creative methods which are in-depth and expansive are recommended for the study of immigration and acculturation.
Phillips (2009) pointed out that to successfully integrate into American communities, it is important that social service providers help refugees recover from grief and loss, and offer their time and support. Social workers and county providers play a significant role in adjustment and need to handle the resettlement of refugees with a deep understanding of their experiences, their adjustment pace and emotional needs. As one refugee expressed it, “Emotionally already it’s disaster inside…you are struggling to get yourself together” (p. 190). Offering culturally responsive services, English learning services, knowledge about social norms, etc. can actually save time and money.

2.5.6. Feeling of Marginality among Refugees

Smither and Rodrigues-Giegling (1979) studied Indochinese refugees from Laos and Vietnam who had been in the United States from one month to two years, measuring their marginality, anxiety and modernity. The term “marginality” in this context refers to the concept of E.V. Stonequist (1937) and R.E. Park (1950) as that of “being on the edge of two cultures rather than well-integrated into one.” These populations are similar to those of the Bhutanese, since they come from predominantly agricultural or preindustrial societies and have to adapt to a modern industrial society in the United States. The study focused on the feelings of distance from mainstream American society. Feelings of marginality and anxiety were higher and modernity was lower among the refugees than a random sample of Americans. Results suggested that Laotians feel less anxious than Americans because they feel more marginal. Among the refugees, concerns about marginality are not as acute as practical worries about job, home, and family. The feeling of marginality increased with age among Laotians, while it decreased with Americans.
Similarly, the Bhutanese refugees may have less acute feelings of marginality as their primary concerns are with finding steady employment, etc.

Another similar study looked at 460 Indochinese refugee heads of households in the United States (Nicassio, 1983). Due to disenfranchisement from their native country and a lack of control over their resettlement, refugees may have unique difficulties adjusting. It was found that those with poorer English skills and fewer American acquaintances felt more alienated than others. Those who used American media less, had lower socioeconomic status, and knew less English were also more alienated. Those refugees who were lacking in language and communication skills also felt more alienated and isolated even though they were members in various social groups. The importance of learning English cannot be over emphasized here for the Bhutanese refugees if they wish to feel adjusted and comfortable in the new culture.

2.5.7. Humiliation Faced by Refugees

Many refugees experience humiliation during the start of resettlement. They often start at “the bottom rung of the new social hierarchy” (Fangen, 2006, p.70). The experience of Somali refugees in Norway has been explored, who found that the prejudice of the majority population contributes to a feeling of humiliation due to media portrayals and treatment by officials, besides misunderstandings due to cultural and language differences, etc. She discusses several different humiliation-triggering situations and suggests clearer communication, more balanced media portrayals, bridge builders and self-help groups. Like the Somalis, the Bhutanese too have come from a poorer standard of living and don’t know about navigating government infrastructure. However,
in spite of the humiliation, the Somalis, and probably the Bhutanese refugees also, still feel safer here than in their home country. It is a challenge for refugees to come from austere living conditions in camps to the United States. However, with a little help, the virtues of hard work, self reliance and importance given to education that characterize most immigrants usually do pay off, leading to successful integration.

2.6. Influence of Ethnic and Host Media on Immigrants

The role of media and the influence it has on new immigrants in several different communities over the years is examined here. What makes the acculturation experience of today’s refugees and immigrants different from previous ones is the richness of the modern media and communication technologies available and their potential uses and influence.

2.6.1. Media Use among Korean Immigrants

It is assumed that the culture of the host society is conveyed through the host mass media. Kim (1978) surveyed the Korean population in the Chicago area in 1975 to study the acculturation process of immigrants through communication patterns. She found that their involvement in interpersonal communication with members of the host society resulted from the increased use of host mass media, and led to decreased consumption of ethnic mass media. A longer stay longer in the host society results in the immigrants finding increased satisfaction with life. We can therefore presume that the Bhutanese refugees will become more acculturated if they have more interpersonal
communication with host society members. We can presume that their use of host media will increase over the years, and use of ethnic media will decrease.

Moon and Park (2007) investigated how exposure to American mass media and Korean ethnic media in Los Angeles’s Koreatown (the largest Koreatown in the United States) is related to the acculturation process of South Korean immigrants. Living close together helps maintain cultural values, but isolates immigrants from American society and culture. They found that in Koreatown, the impact of American mass media was stronger than the Korean mass media which portrayed both Korean and American cultures. The authors conclude that as a result of the strong effects of the American media (television, radio, newspapers and magazines), Korean immigrants tend to be Americanized instead of being bicultural.

2.6.2. Media Use among Immigrants from Europe

Jeffres (2000) in a study of adults from largely European ethnic backgrounds pointed out that mass media and communication technology are certainly changing and enhancing cultural maintenance. There is a difference between today’s immigrants and those of the 19th century, who settled in ethnic neighborhoods with ethnic organizations, social institutions, and ethnic media. Even though social institutions faded away, ethnic media remain a potential influence in sustaining ethnic identity and became affordable and accessible with the new technologies. Over recent years, the mix of ethnic media is changing: the radio and newspapers compete with television and video. Ethnic media face competition from the Internet as newer immigrants read the online editions of newspapers from their mother country. Previous research showed that individuals gain
and maintain competence within two cultures (i.e., biculturalism) rather than losing their ethnic culture and adopting the host culture. Jeffres (2000) also points to the development of an international popular culture. He suggested that future research can study the use of the Internet (e.g. reading online editions of newspapers) by immigrants to maintain contact with the home country. This is what we will be surveying with the Bhutanese refugees.

2.6.3. Media Use among Haitian Immigrants

A study in Miami, Florida on the media use of first-year Haitian immigrants living in “Little Haiti” found there is a definitive effect of the media on the acculturation of immigrants (Walker, 1999). Both host and ethnic media influence and encourage adaptation when used along with interpersonal relationships. However, since most of these Haitian immigrants had few English-speaking skills initially, it was more difficult for them to make contact with Americans. At this initial stage, host media use plays a greater role than interpersonal relationships and was termed by Kim (p.187) to be “pressure free.” Walker found that contact with Americans, and more use of host media, led to an increased competence in host communication. Walker points out the importance of looking at both host and ethnic media use along with media content.

2.6.4. Media Use among Chinese Immigrants

While investigating the relationship between the use of the mass media and acculturation among Chinese immigrants in Silicon Valley, California, Hwang and He (1999) found that there was heavy use of Chinese language media for both information
and entertainment. Only some English-language media were used for entertainment and language-learning purposes. Chinese-language newspapers and television also provide information and advice about life in the United States. He points out that ethnic media help assimilation by providing information and also increase resistance to acculturation, “pushing the acculturation process in two opposite directions” (p. 19). Because of their need for survival, the Chinese immigrants were highly motivated to become acculturated on arrival, but this diminished after they settled down. Those who received more education in the United States had higher levels of acculturation. Interestingly, after they acquired a relatively stable job or business, and acquired enough English to manage, they seemed content and led a “bicultural life” (p. 18).

2.6.5. Media Use among International Students

Several studies looked at international students in the United States. A survey of Chinese students in a large research university in the Midwest showed the motive for media use is the need to acculturate and various media play different functions in fulfilling this need for adjustment to a new cultural environment. The Internet was a means for these students to stay connected with family and friends in China and find out what was going on there, whereas television watching provided the means to get information about American culture, adjust to American society, and to improve their English (Yang, Wu, Zhu & Southwell, 2004). Various media outlets play different roles in acculturation needs, and despite the advancement of new technologies, television continues to be a central force. The experience of these students is perhaps similar to that of other students at similar universities in the United States.
In another study, Kong (2005) reiterated the media’s great potential to influence acculturation patterns of students. He states that the multilingual content of the Internet makes it popular among foreign students in the United States, in this case, the Chinese doctoral students at Penn State University. Four kinds of media available are traditional host media, traditional ethnic media, Internet host media, and Internet ethnic media. He found that Chinese students spent more time on Chinese media than on English media on the Internet. Internet ethnic media use is, however, different from traditional ethnic media use. Chinese news ranked the highest in the most often surfed websites, followed by English news, information, e-mail and shopping. The higher the usage of English, the higher the acculturation level of students.

The importance of the role of the media in the new culture was emphasized in another study of Indian graduate students in a medium-sized city in the United States (Reece & Palmgreen, 2000). Eight motives for television viewing were isolated: acculturation, diversion, companionship, reflection on values, surveillance, learning, escape, and pass time. Students found valuable cultural information on news, situation comedies, sports, and movies on American television that helped them adapt to the new culture. Their motive for watching television was significantly related to their need for acculturation in the United States. This underscores the importance of the media in the new culture during the acculturation process and the effectiveness of television viewing.

2.6.6. Media use among Hispanic Immigrants

Stilling (1997) demonstrated that a correlation exists between English-language television viewing and the acculturation level of Hispanic immigrants. An acculturation
scale with 38 items was used by Stilling. His study found that television exposure can speed the rate of acculturation and create a likeness to the effect of acculturation after a long stay in the United States. As a result of high exposure to television, acculturation differences between people who have spent different amounts of time in the United States can disappear. This is the “electronic melting pot effect” (p. 96).

2.6.7. Media use among Immigrants from Hong Kong

Lee and Tse (1994) studying the changing media consumption among Hong Kong immigrants to Canada found that television habits of those who had been in Canada for at least seven years changed slowly. Exposure to media, length of residence, income, education, and trips back to Hong Kong, was significantly related to acculturation. Over time, the total media consumption time did not increase, but the need for more information did. Immigrants spent 41% of their time on ethnic media, which is high. Lee and Tse (1994) point out that humor and entertainment are “culturally loaded and difficult to appreciate cross culturally” (p. 68), which may be the reason why host media was perhaps being used for news and local events and ethnic media for entertainment. In the United States too, Bhutanese refugees who watch American shows on television may find it difficult to understand the “culturally loaded” content, and may resort to watching more ethnic media for entertainment.

2.6.8. Media use and Social Class

Jeffres (1983) studied the impact of education and income on ethnic identification and ethnic behavior. Attractive ethnic media might encourage ethnics from middle and
lower socioeconomic groups to spend money on these new technologies; however, the
costs of new mass communication networks might prevent some ethnics from using these
media. As Jeffres (1983) notes, “Thus the communication-social status link could
reappear to negatively affect those working to maintain ethnic cultures” (Jeffres, p. 241).

2.6.9. Media Use among Teens and Families

A study of immigrant teens in the United States (Louie, 2003) found that media
use patterns and choice of television programs, were found to be similar to that of U.S.
teens. One of the areas they are dissimilar is that immigrant teens watch television more
often than U.S. teens in the company of their parents and siblings. They may be
influenced by the values and behaviors of those people. Some immigrant youths choose
both English language and ethnic media that may be comforting to them. Immigrant
teens, especially boys, watch more English language media. Acculturation and
socialization of immigrant youth can occur through media, yet adults can have a
powerful influence on the effect of the media with their discussions on the content. We
can presume that the young Bhutanese are watching television programs similar to those
watched by American youth, with the difference being that the Bhutanese family
members are watching too. Internet access may be more of an individual activity among
the young.

Elias and Lemish (2008) studied the use of media by immigrant children and
adolescents from the former Soviet Union to Israel. They interviewed 30 families from
the Russian-speaking immigrant community about media usage and their choice between
Russian and Hebrew media programs. Television served a dual purpose in the family’s
resettlement, as a source of conflict between generations and as an “anchor”, holding the family together. The choice of “global media” such as Hollywood films, concerts, and international sporting events often resolved the conflict between ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ paths of integration, Russian and host media, and intergenerational tensions.

In an analysis of Portuguese immigrant families in Canada, Morrison and James (2009) explored the different acculturative strategies employed by members of the same family, and how family dynamics often leads to intergenerational tension. They recommend “community-based grass roots assistance” (p.163). They found the choice of food made by community members is of significance in acculturation. Often, the “culture of origin” is passed on to subsequent generations through food. In order to interact with the dominant culture, parents often take the help of their children’s fluency in the language. This will certainly occur among the Bhutanese refugees who will need the help of their children as interpreters to communicate to others in English, at least till they themselves gain fluency.

2.6.10. Ethnic Media use

Communication is the link between ethnics: ethnic groups depend on mass and interpersonal communication networks to coordinate their activities. Jeffres and Hur (1988) surveyed ethnic groups in Cleveland and found that they use ethnic media, personal communication and communication through phone and letters to maintain strong ethnic attachments. This has sometimes frustrated the assimilation of ethnic minorities. This may also frustrate the assimilation of some of the Bhutanese who will find
themselves comfortable talking to their own community members and not take the
trouble to learn English and assimilate.

In an essay, Vishwanath and Arora (2000) have pointed out that with the
increasing flow of immigrants into the United States the ethnic news media play an
important role. In 1999, 9.3% of the United States population was foreign born (p. 53).
These immigrants look for information on issues that affect and interest them. The ethnic
news media play a similar role to the community press in the United States. They are
credited with sustaining the ethnicity of immigrants, along with religious and cultural
organizations.

2.6.11. Role of Ethnic Communication Networks

Jeffres and Barnard (1982) have studied how communication affects ethnicity.
Parents pass on ethnic culture to their children through interpersonal communication. The
ethnic church, organizations, friendship networks and ethnic neighborhoods also
communicate this ethnic culture. Another link to their heritage is through the ethnic mass
media – print, radio, television, etc. Today the ethnic print media are available online,
which the younger ones in the group of Bhutanese refugees are accessing with their
computers. Ethnic communication networks thus play an important role, especially for
those who are tightly integrated. They cite a study of Canada’s ethnic minorities by Fathi
(1973) which showed that the advance of communication technology has helped ethnics
who are separated to maintain contact with each other. The ethnic minority groups in
Canada are less in danger of extinction because of the advance of communication
technology. Therefore, media links between ethnics are very important.
2. 6.12. Role of Communication Patterns in Acculturation

The communication patterns that develop among the immigrants themselves and between them and the host community constitute one of the important factors that play a role in the adjustment of the new immigrant in the new society (Drucker & Gumpert, 1998). Often, “the environment serves as a medium of communication” (p. 9). Referring to the acculturation of African immigrants in the United States, Bosah Ebo writes that acculturation is conceived of as a communication process as new communication practices are acquired and old ones rejected (as cited in Drucker and Gumpert, 1998). Interestingly, the concept of communication is used by Ebo to include all cultural artifacts, social activities, clothing, food, languages and music. He has described acculturation as the search for a blend of communication practices of the host and native cultures that is comfortable for the individual.

2.6.13. Media Use among Refugees

Asylum seekers, refugees, and their host minority communities in the United Kingdom have used media – both international satellite channels and local television – in identity construction and negotiating issues of “belonging” and “otherness” in British society (Moore & Clifford, 2007). The use of satellite channels helps women alleviate their isolation and maintain a sense of connection with their countries of origin. Several of the refugees who were more “settled” subscribed to international satellite stations. Satellite television was viewed as a “mixed blessing” and it was debatable whether it interfered with English learning. Women who did not speak English found that Arabic channels lifted some of their isolation and helped viewers feel closer to “home.” Several
of the refugees who had to flee from their country of origin want to stay informed about political developments and news. “In a cultural environment which can be difficult, hostile, and unsettling, satellite television serves as a reassuring cultural resource, reaffirming their cross-national identities” (Moore & Clifford, 2007, p.459).

### 2.6.14. Acculturation of Vietnamese Refugees

An interesting study by Celano and Tyler (1986) of 64 refugees from Vietnam who had been resettled in the United States from one to 24 months found that their behavioral acculturation was not linear or unidirectional. They used the Behavioral Acculturation Scale (BAS) (Szapocnik, 1978) and found that after six months of adopting American cultural patterns, there was a change and rejection, and Vietnamese culture was reaffirmed. Controlling the effect of employment status statistically revealed that behavioral acculturation was negatively related to length of stay in the United States. There was a direct effect of employment on acculturation, extending to increase in English language, recreation, diet and social behaviors. Socio economic class variables had a bearing on acculturation patterns. Those refugees with higher socioeconomic status (SES) in Vietnam were more Western and tended to become more acculturated in the United States.

### 2.6.15. Influence of Computer-mediated Communication

While there is a lot of literature about the effect of television and other media on acculturation, not many studies exist on the social impact of computer-mediated communication on acculturation. Melkote and Liu (2000) have pointed out that computer
networks could be an important factor in the acculturation of immigrants who use it. The Chinese Ethnic Internet (CEI) which consists of several electronic magazines, electronic bulletin boards, email and the World Wide Web was developed as a virtual Chinese community, designed to help Chinese students and scholars link up and unite. According to the research, CEI helped the respondents maintain Chinese values while enabling them to learn useful American behaviors. While living in other countries, cultural minority groups and immigrants have access to their native culture’s news, ideas, values, etc. and are able to preserve an ethnic identity and values while being offered knowledge of the new culture. Time and space become irrelevant in computer-mediated communication. Television, on the other hand, is “a one-way, top-down medium providing audiences with ‘mainstream’ fare” (Melkote & Liu, 2000, p.502).

2.6.16. E-net Identities

Ting-Toomey & Chung (2005) have pointed out that today’s techno-savvy population has changed what constitutes personal identity and are reinventing their contemporary identities. Through the Internet, relationships are built across the barriers of “time, space, geography, and cultural-ethnic boundaries” (p. 314). They have coined the term “e-net identity” as one that is “global, shaped by technology, pop culture and mass consumption.” A sense of communal belonging is built through chat rooms, online journals, message boards and fan-based websites. Individuals searching for a sense of belonging to a group sometimes find it in cyberspace.

Satellite television and cable television also contribute to this. New media have often been thought to be “corrosive” of traditional cultures, but Thompson (2002) has
pointed out how modern media can help preserve culture in diasporic communities of Asians from the Indian subcontinent living in the United States and United Kingdom and also create “hybrid cultures” (p. 410). However, not all immigrant communities are considered to be “diasporic communities.” Bhatia and Ram (2004) have defined diasporas as those that “distinctly attempt to maintain connections and commitments to their homeland and recognize themselves and act as a collective community” (p. 226).

2.6.17. Formation of Diasporic Identities

According to Thompson, through the use of media technologies new hybrid cultures are being negotiated and a Hindu consciousness is being reinvented among Asian Indian diasporic communities. Indian culture is presented abroad through the common practice of the family watching Indian videos together. His earlier research has pointed out the use of the Internet for maintaining a virtual community among Asian Indian mothers and daughters in the United Kingdom. The soc.culture.indian usenet, group has informational postings on religion, and discussions of immigrant identity. Thompson describes this as an “ever-emerging text” (p. 411). He points to the lack of restrictions on the Internet and the fluid nature of the system. More than any other form of mediated communication, new and fresh voices appear easily, giving a sense of empowerment. One negative aspect of the Internet is the “vituperative and extreme nature” of documented postings. The Internet has helped in “transnational ethnic networking” (p. 415). Thompson suggests that for social assimilation to occur, acculturation is not necessary. Let us recall here what Kim said: acculturation/adaptation is the internal transformation of an individual challenged by a new cultural environment in the direction
of increasing fitness and compatibility in that environment. Thompson’s research leads us to imagine that just like the people who originally emigrated from India, the Bhutanese refugees’ utilization of the new media is helping them negotiate new hybrid cultures, and construct diasporic identities, networking with other Bhutanese refugee groups.

As diasporic audiences relocate and reposition themselves, there are linkages between communication networks, and media representations. Video stores in the United States are stocking ethnic movie fare. In an essay, Shome and Hegde (2002) state that “There is a rich ethnic culture that is woven around video watching. The migrant sensibility mines these screened images for nationalistic affiliation and personal meaning. The South Asian diaspora in the United States are strongly connected through Bollywood (Indian) films to lives left behind” (p. 183). Indian movies are also viewed at theatres over the weekend. This has contributed to what they have termed a “resistant insularity” among members of this group. Thus, we may surmise that those Bhutanese refugees who watch videos from India, Nepal and Bhutan, may be more insular than those who do not.

2.6.18. Refugee Support Groups on the Internet

In a study of 45 refugee support groups on the Internet in the United Kingdom, many of them non-governmental organizations, Siapera (2003) points to the strong influence of the Internet as a platform to conduct politics. The political goal of these groups is to try and persuade and mobilize the public to favor, defend and support refugees/asylum seekers through content and requests for online donations of money. Even though the author acknowledges that only a small number of refugees may access the websites, it has resulted in wide diffusion of information and the formation of a
community. “The Internet…is issued to amplify the voice of refugee support groups, increase their communicative efficiency, enable them to create a common world, thereby contributing to the empowerment of one of the most marginalized groups in society” (Siapera, 2003, p.13).

2.6.19. Support from Social Networks for Refugees

New refugees are usually resettled in groups, so that they can support and help each other. In a study of a Vietnamese community of refugees in Louisville, Kentucky, Dsilva and Whyte (1998) discuss how people from collectivistic cultures such as from Asia, place importance on extended families, loyalty to groups, staying together, and avoiding conflict. Immigrants benefit from a social network as newcomers are taught to travel and cope in a strange land. The Bhutanese communities in the Cleveland area too have formed tight social networks in the apartments where they reside. According to Kim (1988), ethnic communication activities are “invaluable initially as they struggle to cope with the experiences of dealing with uncertainty and uprootedness” (p. 127). However, she cautions that in the long run, this will reinforce the ethnicity of strangers, and not their adaptation.

2.7. Asian Indians and the Bhutanese Refugees

The Bhutanese refugee community in the Cleveland-Akron area have formed ties with one community that is ethnically closest to them in terms of culture and religion: the Asian Indian community. SEWA International, USA, a non-profit volunteer organization of Asian Indians, has taken up a nationwide project to help and empower the Bhutanese
refugees in several cities, including Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. The word SEWA is not an acronym but means “Service above Self.” Members of SEWA have helped provide the Bhutanese with access to their original or related cultural experiences as many of the Bhutanese are Hindus, and this serves as a bond with many of the Asian Indians. SEWA volunteers have been helping some of the refugees with mobility, providing some essential materials, and assisting them in transitioning to a new environment while preserving their culture through mentoring, friendship, and rides to their preferred places of worship. This study also looks at the relationship between these two ethnic groups. Only time will tell if the Asian Indians, who have ethnic similarities with this group, can prove to be bridge builders and help in their assimilation into the new culture.

2.8. Communication Influences in Acculturation of the Bhutanese Refugees

An analysis of the literature reviewed here identifies several communication processes that influence the adaptation and acculturation of the Bhutanese refugees as shown in Figure 5.
Acculturation Process for Bhutanese Refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Acculturation/Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to ethnic culture in U.S. and home country through new technologies</td>
<td>Maintenance of ties with Nepal/Bhutan; feeling connected to home country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure free use of host media initially to learn about host culture</td>
<td>Feeling of comfort while adjusting to host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication with other Bhutanese refugees</td>
<td>Maintaining ethnic diasporic identity and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication with Asian Indians</td>
<td>Developing ties with host nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication with host nationals</td>
<td>Communication with host nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of media for maintaining Bhutanese ethnic identity</td>
<td>Comfort in communicating with host nationals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Survey of the communication influences in acculturation

2.9. Rationale and Hypotheses

There are various means by which the Bhutanese refugees will undergo the process of acculturation/adaptation in the United States. A list of potential influences on acculturation and adaptation are illustrated in Figure 5. During the initial stages, they will feel awkward communicating with the host nationals and will use “less personal, less direct mass communication as alternative, virtually pressure-free sources of learning about the host environment” (Kim, 1988, p. 116). Their access to ethnic culture in their home country and through other Bhutanese refugees will help maintain ties with their...
home country and also maintain their ethnic identity and culture. Their interpersonal communication with Asian Indians and other Americans will help make them comfortable while communicating with Americans. Their use of ethnic media will help maintain their ethnic identity. Kim’s concept of cross-cultural adaptation will continue to occur as long as individuals, in this case the Bhutanese refugees, “continuously engage in communication with the host environment and are in some way functionally dependent on it” (Kim, 1988, p. 163).

From our literature review we can make predictions about the conceptualization of the acculturation process of the Bhutanese refugees in the United States. Initially they will use more pressure free media such as the television and the radio. Those who use both host and ethnic media and also have interpersonal relationships with locals (in this case perhaps even the Asian Indian community) will grow in host communication competence faster than those who do not.

One of the variables that will influence the extent and speed of acculturation of the refugees that will occur is age. “The younger they are, the more likely they are to be receptive to host cultural influences,” (Kim, 1988, p. 36). They are also more likely to use the computer or learn how to use the computer and access the Internet than the elderly, who might be more reluctant to learn new skills. The younger ones will be able to keep in touch with online ethnic media, news about the home country, and also connect with other Bhutanese refugees settled in other parts of the country. They will also be able to access more information about the new culture than those who do not use the computer. They will, therefore, undergo acculturation at a faster rate than those who do not use the computer, and also keep in touch with their culture.
Thus, the following research questions and hypotheses are offered:

RQ1. To what extent do the new communication technologies and media (ethnic and host) help the Bhutanese refugees in the process of acculturation in the United States?

RQ2. To what extent do the Internet and new communication technologies help the Bhutanese stay in touch with their native culture?

H1: Age will be negatively associated with using technology to maintain ties with the home country and other Bhutanese.

H2a: Use of American media will be positively related to adjustment to the host culture.

H2b: Use of American media to learn about American culture will be positively related to adjustment.

This leads us to our third hypothesis which is based on the conceptualization that the more frequently the Bhutanese refugees have interpersonal communication with Americans, the more they will adjust to the American culture. Those who have jobs and are in contact with Americans, will adjust faster. Their relatives, especially the elderly, who are sitting at home without jobs, will adjust more slowly. Several of the Bhutanese are attending English as a Second Language (ESL) classes but the only Americans they are interacting with are the teachers and the volunteers. Some are attending church
organized social groups and people in some neighborhoods are reaching out to them. All this interaction will help them adjust to the new culture and country.

Therefore:

H3: The more frequent the interpersonal communication with non-Bhutanese, the greater the adjustment to the host culture.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

3.1. Procedure

In order to examine the research questions and the hypotheses proposed, Bhutanese refugees were surveyed in the Cleveland-Akron area. This group of immigrants has not been previously studied for their media use and adaptation so this research possibly serves as a case study of early Bhutanese refugee adaptation. A questionnaire with 106 items took approximately 35-60 minutes to complete, depending on the level of literacy of the respondents. The questionnaire assessed the length of the stay in the United States of the Bhutanese refugees, languages known, their ethnic identity, demographics, current and past employment, their cultural and religious practices, their sense of community, and their adjustment to life in the United States. Sections of the questionnaire centered on their access to modern communication
technology, their use of media and media technology, such as radio, television, the computer, DVDs/VHS, movies, videos, telephones, cell phones, their use of the Internet and social media to see how they keep in touch with their community, their home country, and also how they are using the media to learn about the host culture.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. All participants were assured of the confidentiality of their answers and the results and were told that it would be used to help future groups of Bhutanese refugees. The two versions of the entire questionnaire along with the consent letter is presented in the Appendix. Those who participated reflected a sample across that was representative of the Bhutanese population in the Cleveland-Akron area.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained on January 5, 2010. The questionnaire was translated by Hari Pyakurel, a bilingual Bhutanese refugee who had been identified by Prof. Sree Sreenath, Ph.D., President of SEWA International, USA. Many of the questionnaires were completed with the help of Hari, his brother Raghu, family members, friends, and Prof. Sreenath’s contacts in the Bhutanese community.

A large number of the refugees were illiterate; several were fairly new to the United States and had little or no access to a computer. The survey was administered personally by the project coordinator over a few months, from January to April, 2010, to Bhutanese families in Cleveland, Cleveland Heights and South Euclid. Translators assisted in administering the questionnaire. The International Institute of Akron and the International Services Center invited the project coordinator to address the English as a Second Language classes being held for the Bhutanese. With the help of volunteers and
translators, the questionnaire was completed in classrooms with 10-20 students and helpful teachers.

The interviews included several open-ended questions about how the refugees were adjusting to their new life in the United States which provided context to the quantitative data to be used in answering the research questions and the testing hypotheses.

The project coordinator was often seated with a family of four or five members in their home, and with the help of a translator, read the consent form and the survey and helped fill the answers. The project coordinator was treated very hospitably, and at some homes, was given a mala (light handmade necklace with beads), coffee, chai, (tea) fruit, sukha roti, (dry flat wheat bread) rice, sabzi (vegetables), lentils and delicious sel roti, a deep fried circular Nepali snack made of flour.

It was found that most of the refugees were using the resources available to help acculturation in the new culture, while not giving up the old. They were visiting the library, attending English as a Second Language (ESL) classes run frequently by the resettlement agencies, going to social get-togethers organized by local churches, attending health fairs and informational meetings organized for them, including how to go to college, etc. A few had learned driving and were helping to drop and pick up family members from work. Some had enrolled in the local Community College for ESL classes and were planning for future course studies. They expressed their frustrations at the difficulties they faced finding employment and a few had even begun moving across the country to other Bhutanese communities to find employment opportunities. Individual
feedback and comments provided insight into the cross-cultural adaptation process of this community and the challenges they are facing.

3.2. Operationalization of Concepts

Communication patterns were measured with these items:

3.2.1. Media Access and Usage: Past and Present

One of the first, important and economical ways that newcomers get acculturated into a new culture is through the media. For immigrants with low levels of literacy, the radio can be particularly important. Most of the respondents had radios back in the camps in Nepal and had been actively listening to local and international news. They were asked if they owned a radio here in the United States and if they did, whether they listened to it. They were asked to mention the number of hours and the radio channels/programs they listened to.

Respondents were asked if they owned a television set here in the United States and if they watched television. The respondents were asked which channels they usually watched and how much time was spent watching television on weekdays and on weekends. The responses were summed up for a figure representing the number of hours spent watching television during a week. They were also asked if they subscribed to cable/satellite television and if so, which one.

Respondents were asked if they read newspapers, and if so, which ones -- American, Nepali, Bhutanese or local Indian newspapers. They also were asked if they read newspapers online. Respondents were also asked if they had visited local libraries, which offer a wealth of media such as books, newspapers, magazines, audio tapes, DVDs
and VHS tapes, and free use of the computer and the Internet. They were also asked how often they read Nepali, Bhutanese, or Indian books.

Respondents’ exposure to movies was also recorded, whether they had watched movies in Nepal, in the United States and if so, what movies were they, and if they had any favorites. They were asked where they watched American movies, in theatres, on television through DVD’s/VHS, on the computer, or anywhere else.

To learn whether the tradition of watching Nepali, Bhutanese or Indian movies continued after coming to the United States, respondents were asked if they watched Nepali, Bhutanese or Indian movies and if they had any favorites. Respondents also were asked where they obtained films -- from friends, DVD rental stores, cable television channels, the Internet, viewing in theatres or from other sources such as the library.

Some of the families had DVD and VHS collections they had brought from Nepal or built up here after arrival. Respondents were asked how many movies they had watched in the past month. They were also asked how they were watching these movies - on television, through DVDs/VHS tapes, cable television, on the computer, or anywhere else and if the family was sitting and watching these movies with them.

Computer use was also explored, whether they knew how to use a computer and whether they had learned to use a computer in the United States, in Nepal, Bhutan or any other place.

3.2.2. Patterns of Interpersonal Communication

Several measures tapped whether the Bhutanese were keeping in touch with other people from the camps in Nepal who are in the Cleveland area and other parts of the United States, and whether they kept in touch through telephone, e-mail, the Internet, or
such social media as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. They also were asked to describe any other ways they kept in touch.

Ethnic groups often maintain their solidarity and culture through communication networks. In the Cleveland-Akron area, the Bhutanese immigrants tend to cluster, with three-four Bhutanese families in some locations, and 40 or more families living in close proximity in other locations. Respondents were asked about the number of families residing near them, and whether they felt they formed a close knit community. Respondents were also asked if they communicate with other immigrants living in their neighborhood and how often this happened -- everyday, on weekends, once a month, or once in a few months.

It was presumed that the Bhutanese refugees would feel more comfortable talking to the local Asian Indian community because they are from the same sub-continent (the countries of Nepal and India are neighbors) and share common traits as well as cultural traditions and, in some cases, religion. Since several of the refugees have had an opportunity to interact with members of SEWA International, they were asked how frequently they had contact with this group. They were also asked if this group had helped them to settle down in the new country, and if so, in what ways this had been accomplished.

Respondents were asked if they got a chance to interact with local Americans (other than Indians) at work, in the neighborhood, at social gatherings, or elsewhere, and also whether they were interacting with agency workers. They were asked how many Americans they had spoken to in the past week: five or less, or more than five.
Respondents were asked how comfortable they felt talking to Americans (other than Asian Indians): very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, very uncomfortable, somewhat uncomfortable. Respondents were also asked if they had one American friend, a few, or none.

They were asked if they had visited any American homes, and if they would like to have friends who are American: yes, no, maybe. They were also asked if they felt the need to mix with Americans: yes, no, maybe and why. Two more open ended questions also tested their desire to be more acculturated – the reason why they would like to have American friends and what did they think would help them to mix with Americans better.

Five uses and gratifications items were used to see if respondents watched television to accommodate to American culture. Respondents were asked if they disagreed a lot, disagreed a little, were uncertain, agreed a little or agreed a lot with the following statements:

1) I watch television to learn about American culture.
2) I watch television to improve my English.
3) I watch television because it makes me feel less lonely.
4) I watch television because it helps me adjust to American society.
5) I watch television to learn about politics, local events and issues.

In addition, three general uses and gratifications items for television viewing were asked:

1) I watch television because it is a past time.
2) I watch television because I enjoy it.
3) I watch television because it is a habit.
Responses to the first five uses and gratifications items were standardized and summed up for a scale on television use for acculturation.

3.2.3. Feeling of Comfort in Host Culture

Respondents were asked if they were getting used to life in the United States -- yes, uncertain, no. An open ended question towards the end asked what they thought would make them feel more comfortable living in the United States.

One of the important factors that can help a person feel comfortable in a new culture is knowledge of the language of the host culture. Early on in the questionnaire, the respondents were asked if they knew English, and if they did know it, where had they learned it, in Bhutan, Nepal, in the United States or elsewhere. Many of them were attending the English as a Second Language classes run by the resettlement and other agencies.

Respondents were asked if they were aware of, or had participated in any American celebrations such as the 4th of July. Participation would demonstrate that the immigrants were being exposed to the local culture and its influence.

3.2.4. Identification with their Native Culture

Identification with their native culture was measured by asking the respondents, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with five statements using the following scale: 1) disagree a lot 2) disagree a little 3) uncertain 4) agree a little 5) agree a lot.

1) I am extremely proud to be a Nepali/Bhutanese
2) I’d rather associate with my people than others
3) My culture strongly affects my daily life
4) I want my children to consider themselves American or Nepali/Bhutanese

5) I speak to my children about our heritage.

Several items measured cultural practices and ethnic identification. Refugees and immigrants can decide to enact traditional ethnic cultural practices by using the ethnic language, practicing cultural traditions, attending ethnic festivals, and cooking ethnic food. Respondents were asked if they speak their native language at home: yes, no, sometimes, and how well their children speak it: not at all, poorly, fairly, moderately well, extremely well. They were also asked about the importance of their native language to them: completely unimportant, not very important, somewhat important or very important. Those who place a strong importance on their language would also have a pride in being Bhutanese.

They were asked if they followed any religion and, if so, how often they visited the temple/church/mosque or other place of worship, which religious or national festivals they celebrate, and if their children participate in these as well. Respondents were asked how frequently they cook native food at home: everyday, once a week, once a month, or almost never.

To explore the ties that the respondents had with their own community, respondents were asked to identify the number of their close friends who were of the same ethnic group (Bhutanese refugees) -- almost all, about two thirds, about half, about a third, very few, none. They were asked whether their spouses were of the same culture. This would display the extent of their observance of their culture.
If they had a choice, would they rather associate with their own people than with others? This question demonstrated their readiness to get acculturated and become friends with those of a different culture.

Most of these families were living in close proximity of other Bhutanese families, some of whom were complete strangers. Information was obtained about whether they felt they formed a special closely knit community: yes, no, maybe. Exploring how much community activity was taking place in these neighborhoods also revealed whether ties with community members were being strengthened or weakened.

3.2.5. Use of Media to Maintain Ties to Native Country

Several immigrant communities maintain close ties to their native countries through subscribing to cable television or satellite television that offers programs in their native languages. Did the Bhutanese refugees subscribe to cable television or satellite television and if yes, which one? Respondents were asked for the number of hours spent on the Internet at home or at work the previous week. They were also asked if they used e-mail, and the number of e-mails sent the previous week.

While they were sitting at home, getting acclimatized and waiting for employment through the resettlement agency, perhaps they were watching movies for lack of other things to do. Perhaps watching the same movies repeatedly helped them feel more connected to their native country.

Another important issue was where and how did these families obtain information about Nepal and Bhutan now that they were on the other side of the globe. Were they keeping in touch with events in their native countries through television (American television would not have a lot of news about Nepal or Bhutan), satellite or
cable television, was it through the Internet, through newspapers, the radio, or other sources. A later question asked which newspapers they were reading.

3.2.6. Use of Communication Technologies to Maintain Ties with Bhutanese Refugees

One of the important concepts about how the Bhutanese refugees keep in touch with their culture is their knowledge and use of different media and how they utilize these to keep in touch with those from the camps in Nepal. It was important to find out if the people who had come from the camps were isolated from other Bhutanese or were in touch with other similar communities in the United States. Were they keeping in touch through telephone, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, or any other ways? Respondents were asked for the number of hours spent on the Internet at home or at work the previous week; if they used e-mail, and the number of e-mails sent the previous week.

Since there are many Bhutanese refugee communities across the United States, the respondents were asked if they had looked for these communities online. They were asked if they keep in touch with those in the camps, what media and means they use to keep in touch, and how often they keep in touch.

Many of these questions would help to find out important background information about this community which included their lifestyles, media and communication practices, education, religion, languages known, literacy levels, employment, and desire to interact with Americans. This could help determine how the media and new communication technology were helping in the adjustment to the new culture and also keeping them in touch with their people and culture overseas.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Each refugee group is different and unique. The results of the questionnaire revealed contrasts between the lives of the Bhutanese refugees while they were in the camps in Nepal, and now in the United States. There are major changes in their lifestyle, usage of media, outlook on life, and they expressed a pride in their ethnicity while wanting to learn more about American culture. All these factors: employment, learning English, the need to mix with Americans, wanting to have American friends, watching more American movies, point towards their increased desire for adjustment to the new culture. Some qualitative details provide a context for the quantitative data.
4.1. Narratives

During some of the interviews, respondents revealed stories about their past, and their lives in Bhutan. These stories serve to highlight their experiences and the changes in lifestyle they have experienced, from being primarily farmers, to becoming homeless refugees, living in camps with the bare necessities for 17 years before coming to the United States. One of the refugees vividly recounted the history of his family, which had lived in Bhutan for at least five or six generations. “The King of Bhutan had made a treaty long, long ago with the ruler of Nepal; he took a group of about 60 families from Nepal for farming,” he said. A farmer, he had owned over five acres of cardamom gardens, paddy, maize and betel nut fields, a thousand trees, 12 cows and oxen. Then one night he was beaten up, forced to sign a paper, and told to leave the country with his family. Later, they heard that their houses had been burned. They moved to Nepal, and were placed in a camp where there were 10,000 other displaced people from Bhutan.

Another young woman remembers that she was about six years old when her family was told to leave Bhutan as soon as possible. “We had a three story concrete house and a farm; I remember playing with the baby goats. That night we just let the cattle go free and left with a little food.” When they reached the refugee camps in Nepal, they had houses made of bamboo and plastic sheets; they were given pots to cook and food through UNHCR. In one camp there were flooding, in another, a fire broke out and within four hours 200 out of 1475 houses were burnt down. Luckily for her, her parents had managed to send her outside the camp to the city to attend college for a while.
4.2. Sample Description

The demographics give us some background information about the population we are surveying. This sample of 116 Bhutanese refugees surveyed were all from the refugee camps in Nepal; 59.5% had been living from anywhere between one month to less than a year in the United States, while 40.5% said they had lived in the United States from one to two years. They ranged from 18 to over 75 years of age. Among the 111 who responded to the question about their age, 13.8% were between the ages of 18-21, 28.4% were 25-34, 7% were 21-24, 16.4% were 35-44, 16.4% were 45-54, 2% were 65 or older, and 1% were 75 or older. All of them had been born in Bhutan and had lived there for a year or more. The mean number of years spent in Bhutan was 20.4. They had been living in refugee camps in Nepal for 16-19 years, with 74.1% of them living there for 18 years. The mean number of years spent in Nepal was 17.8. According to Kim’s theory, the younger ones would adapt faster in the new culture so we would expect the younger Bhutanese refugees to adjust faster to life in the United States.

Of the group, 51.7% were male and 45.7% were female, some 68.1% were married, and 26.7% were single. Of those married, 64.7% had from one to six children ranging in age from 0-10, 10-20, and 21 and older; 32.8% had no children. The mean for the number of family members was 5.7 and the mean number of household members was 5.18.
4.2.1. Occupations: Past and Present

The biggest challenge for the refugees so far has been finding job opportunities. The majority, 65.5% are unemployed and 25% were employed. Those employed are working in companies, restaurants, bakeries, as warehouse workers, in jobs found mostly by the resettlement agencies. Since most of them have been here for less than a year, many are still looking for employment, and in the meanwhile, are receiving government assistance for a few months. When asked how difficult was it to get a job in the United States, 67.2% answered that it was very difficult, 22.4% that it was difficult, 2.6% that it was fairly easy. Most of them were looking for entry level jobs, “anything, I don’t care,” “packing,” “housekeeping”, “teaching.” Only five said they wanted professional jobs.

When replying to what work they had done in Bhutan, 42.2% said they had been in farming, 14.7% had been students, and 14.7% had been very young. In Bhutan’s workforce, 94% is employed in agriculture (U.S. Department of State, 2005). According to an UNHCR 2000 Global Report, refugees in Nepal were considered to be foreigners and not allowed to engage in economic activities or own property. They depended on external aid. In the camps in Nepal, most of them had done some farming or agriculture, or had been occupied in housework, construction work, tailoring and sewing, teaching in schools and in the shop keeping businesses. Looking at the high numbers that were employed in agriculture in this community, it is not surprising that the public would tend to stereotype them as farmers after reading the newspaper coverage.
4.2.2. **Education: Past and Present**

Out of the 107 who responded to this question, some 33.6% had no education, 7.8% had received elementary education, 12.1% had received some high school education, 20.7% were high school graduates, 6.9% had some college, 5.2% were college graduates, and .9% had some advanced college degree (M.A., Ph.D, JD, MBA). Some 7% declined to answer or did not know. They had primarily been farmers in Bhutan. Limited education was available in the camps. Some of them had managed, with difficulty, to find resources to send their children to college outside the camps, and sometimes in India too. At present, 3.4% reported that they were students, some of whom are attending the Community College, while a large number are attending English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and could also be counted as students.

4.2.3. **Language Fluency: Past and Present**

Other background information that helps paint an accurate picture of this group examines the languages spoken. Only those who had attended school in Bhutan learned the Bhutanese language, Dzonkha. It is spoken by 21.6%, while 15.5% can read it and 15.5% can write it. Some 2.6% said that they had fluency in Dzonkha, whereas 6% said they spoke it not so well, 8.6% said fairly, 7.8% said poorly.
Table 1: Fluency in Bhutanese (Dzonkha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very well</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not so well</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>missing data</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Nepali language is spoken by 100% of them, 84.5% can read Nepali, and 78.4% can write Nepali. Some 83.6% said they knew Nepali very well, 9.5% said not so well, 4.3% said fairly, and 1.7% said poorly. This illustrates that even though they had been inhabitants of Bhutan for many years, they had maintained their Nepali identity, ethnicity, culture, and customs. When asked what was their native language, 93.1% said it was Nepali, 1.7% said it was Bhutanese (Dzonkha), and 4.3% said other languages; 4.3% said they speak Kirati (indigenous ethnic language), and .9% Limbu (spoken by a tribe).

Table 2: Fluency in Nepali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very well</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not so well</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poorly</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>missing data</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The English language is spoken by 59.5%; exactly 50% said they can read English and 47.4% said they can write English. Those speaking English include the ones presently attending English as a Second Language classes provided by the agencies, local churches and non profits. When asked about their fluency in English, 22.4% said they spoke it very well, 13% not so well, 15.5% fairly, and 13% poorly. Those who were fluent in English would be able to communicate with Americans and get jobs faster than those who did not speak or understand English. Understanding television programs, movies, and songs in English would help these Bhutanese to be more comfortable and adjust to the new culture faster than those with limited English proficiency. In a country which has been plagued by recession for the last couple of years, it has not been easy for the resettlement agencies to find jobs for the refugees, and their limited English proficiency makes it harder.

Table 3: Fluency in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very well</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not so well</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>poorly</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some 11.2% said they had learned English in Bhutan, 33.6% in Nepal, 30.2% in the United States, and .9%, elsewhere. Those who have some knowledge of English will
be able to secure jobs faster and adjust quicker than those who have no knowledge of English. Because of the proximity of Nepal, Bhutan, and India, many of the refugees also had some knowledge of the Indian language Hindi. About 28.4% of the refugees speak Hindi, 14.7% said they could read it and 13% said they could write it. As will be seen later, many of them are watching Hindi Bollywood movies which were popular in Bhutan and Nepal.

4.3. Media Access and Usage: Past and Present

Based on their discussion with community members, 19% of them felt that their community members were well informed about current local, national, and international events and news, 60% felt that most are well informed, but few are not, 22.4% felt few were well informed, but most poorly, and 1.7% said almost all adults were poorly informed.

While in Nepal, 88% of them had received the local and international news from the radio. About 45.7% had read newspapers in Nepal, and 41.4% had used the television to obtain news in Nepal. The computer was used by 19% to access news from the Internet in Nepal.

Once the refugees had learned that they were going to be resettled in the United States, many of them tried to access sources to find out about the country. Most of them received information from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), agencies such as LWF (Lutheran World Federation), Caritas Nepal, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), while others received it from books, radio, the Internet, movies, and friends. Only 13% out of 102 had logged on to American websites
to find out information about the United States prior to their coming here. For some, the only source of information was the orientation which was given to them before they left for the United States.

After coming to the United States, 76.7% out of 102 respondents are still receiving information about Bhutan and Nepal. Only 8.6% receive information about Bhutan and Nepal from television (Many of those with television sets are only using them for playing DVDs and watching movies). Out of 105 who replied, 59.5% are using the Internet, 11.2% are using newspapers for information about Bhutan and Nepal, and 7.8% are using the radio for information. Other sources of information about Bhutan and Nepal are through children, and from relatives and friends in and outside Nepal.

When asked if the family owned a radio in the camps in Nepal, out of 108, 86.2% said “yes”. They listed the radio stations that were most popular, e.g. Radio Nepal, BBC, Kantipur FM, Kanchanjunga FM, Pathibara FM, etc. Only 29.3% said they owned a radio in the United States, and 24.1% were listening to the radio. Some 17.2% spent one to three hours a day listening to the radio, and 3.4% spent more than three hours a day. Those who listened to the radio here in the United States said they listened to “FM”, 90.2 FM, News, Kiss FM 96.5, etc.

While 33.6% owned a television when they were in the camps in Nepal, 76% now own a television in the United States, and 77.6% reported watching television. Only 4.3% said they had cable/satellite service here. (Many of the refugees had been given television by the resettlement agencies here in the United States, but as of June 12, 2009, they were required to buy digital-to-analog converter boxes as full-power television
stations nationwide began broadcasting exclusively in a digital format. Since many did not purchase these boxes, they are using the television sets only to watch DVDs and VHS movies, and cannot access American programs). Out of 89 people who responded, 22.4% watch television on weekdays. Some 13.8% watch television less than one hour on weekdays and 39.7% watch television one to three hours on weekdays. Out of 92 people who responded, 11.2% watch television less than one hour on weekends, 47.4% watch television one to three hours on weekends, and 7.8% watch television 3-6 hours on weekends. Among those who are watching television, the most popular channels are ABC Channel 5, Fox 8, and Channel 25 -- WVIZ.

Some 70% agree a lot that they watch television to learn about American culture, 72.4% to improve their English, 56% because it helps them adjust to American society, and 42.2% because they can learn about politics, local events, and issues. About 50% said they agreed a lot with the statement that they were watching television because they enjoyed it, 25% because it was a habit, 36.2% because they felt less lonely, and 36.2% because it was a past time. These results are clear indications that the Bhutanese refugees are actively looking for ways to adjust to American society.

While in the camps in Nepal, some 45.7% had said they read newspapers to obtain local and international news. Now that they were in the United States, out of 108, 12.1% were reading online Nepali/Bhutanese newspapers, 10.3% were reading American newspapers, 7.8% online American newspapers, 6% said Nepali or Bhutanese newspapers (probably online, since there are none available locally), and 2.6% local Asian Indian newspapers available quite often in the local Indian grocery stores which they visit to purchase their cooking ingredients. Since the newspapers that are available
now are in English, readership has decreased. However, since some have computers in their homes, the adults are able to access the Internet through their children.

Many of the refugees have visited the local public library where they have been able to borrow DVDs of Indian films, and other material. They can also access the Internet for free in the library. When asked, 45.7% said they had been to the library. Some 59.5% said they read Nepali, Bhutanese or Hindi books. Two individuals said they read the Bible and another two said they read English books.

Some 91.4% said that they had watched movies in Nepal. The most popular were Nepali movies, which 94% of them said they had watched in Nepal, and Indian movies, which 69% of them had watched in Nepal. Only 8.6% said they had watched Bhutanese movies, while 17.2% had watched American movies, 1.7% had seen Chinese movies, and .9% English, namely Shakespeare.


Out of 111 respondents, 65.5% now watch movies. In the past six months, out of 103, 34.5% had seen 1-10 American movies, 10.3% had seen 10-20 American movies, 5.2% had seen 20-30 American movies, 3.4% had seen 30-40 movies, and 2.6% had seen more than 40 American movies.

Out of 107, 10.3% had viewed American movies in the theatre, while 55.2% had viewed them on television; this would include viewing them on DVDs and VHS. Some
25% had viewed them on the computer. A few others had viewed them at the library, at an ESL class, or at a friend’s or relative’s house. A few respondents named their favorite American movies such as Titanic, Spiderman, 2012, Avatar, and Harry Potter. Though they were seeing more American movies than ever before, the percentage of ethnic movies they were watching was also significantly high.

Some 92.2% watch Nepali or Hindi movies in the United States; 33.6% of those surveyed owned 1-10 movies, 12.1% said they owned 10-20 movies, and 7.8% said they owned over 100 Hindi movies and some Nepali movies. Of 103 respondents, 76% said their families watched movies with them, and 8.6% said this happened sometimes. More of them are watching movies now than before. A very high percentage is watching ethnic movies, perhaps because they have easy access to them, enjoy them, and find comfort in watching them. However, watching more Hindi movies than English ones will hinder their acculturation in the United States and as pointed out in the literature review, can build insularity among members.

Of the 110 who responded, 44.8% obtained these movies in the United States from friends, 26% got them from rental stores, 51% saw these movies on the Internet, 2.6% saw them in theatres, and 2.6% saw them on cable channels. Some 38.8% borrowed Hindi movies from the public libraries.

The Cuyahoga County Public Library is one of the libraries that serve this population. Interestingly, it has 795 Hindi DVD movies (Personal communication, May 4, 2010). The Cleveland Public Library does not stock Nepali or Bhutanese movies but has a collection of 1145 Hindi DVDs as of May 21, 2010 (Personal communication, May 22, 2010). Out of 89 who responded, 38% had seen 1-10 Nepali, Hindi or Bhutanese
movies in the previous month, 13% had seen 10-20 movies, 10.3% had seen 20-30
movies, 2.6% had seen 30-50, 4.3% had seen 50-90 movies, and 3.4% had seen more
than 90 Nepali, Hindi or Bhutanese movies. These movies had been watched mainly on
DVD or VHS at home, and some on the computer. Some 76% of them said their families
sat and watched too. Favorite Nepali movies included *Jungle Manche, Saino, Hami*
*Teen Bhai* and the Hindi Bollywood movie *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*.

Some 11.2% had watched American movies in the theatre in Nepal whereas
14.7% had watched them on television, and 7.8% had watched them on the computer.
Some 7% had watched the Hollywood movie, *Titanic*.

4.4. Patterns of Interpersonal Communication

Even though they have a strong ethnic identity, they are anxious to mix with
Americans. However, only 26.7% had a chance to interact with Americans at work, only
13% had some interaction with neighbors, and only 8.6% reported interacting with
Americans at social gatherings. Only 40.5% were interacting with agency workers who
were primarily American. In the past week, 51.7% had spoken to five or less Americans,
37.1% had spoken to more than five, and 4.3% had not spoken to any Americans. Some
32% still felt very uncomfortable talking to Americans, 14.7% felt somewhat
uncomfortable, 12.1% felt very comfortable, and 38% felt somewhat comfortable. Some
87.1% would like to have American friends; 80.2% felt the need to mix with Americans
because “I am living in America,” “I can learn more English and get help,” “I cannot mix
religiously, but to live together I mix socially,” “to know about American culture.” Most
of them agreed that knowing English would help them mix better with Americans. As
they are still relatively new in the country, it is natural that they might experience some awkwardness when interacting with Americans. As the literature review reveals, the more American movies and television programs they watch, the more comfortable they will feel when talking to Americans.

The involvement of members of the Asian Indian community, mainly through SEWA International, has helped many of the Bhutanese to adjust. Out of 104 who responded, 39.7% said that the Asian Indians helped them settle here, while 12.1% said they had somewhat been helped. The Asian Indians had donated microwaves, rice cookers, clothes, shoes, taken them to the Hindu temple, organized a college orientation, tips on American culture, hygiene, helped them learn English, provided medical checkups of their eyes, got them involved in the farming project in Madison, Ohio, etc.

Many of the families are surrounded by one to forty Bhutanese families residing in close proximity in the same apartment complex. Out of 111 who responded, 74.1% felt they were a close knit community, while 9.5% said they did not feel that; 12.1% said “maybe” they felt they were close knit.

Communication within the community appeared to be frequent. Out of 110 respondents, 63% said they communicate everyday, 27.6% said they communicate on weekends, 2.6% said once a month, 1.7% said once in a few months. Among the ways they communicate are: “phone calls and visits,” “meeting them,” “visit just to kill time since no work,” “I feel lonely I just go to them and share my feelings,” “having some food together,” “visiting and sharing ideas that will work,” “when new family arrives, we meet them,” “we meet in Institute class,” “some of us meet on Saturday for prayer
meeting, we eat together, meditate,” “fellowship, prayers to Jesus.” Neighbors casually stopped by, “aata - jaata hai,” (come and go) sometimes getting together to share a meal or do “pooja” (prayers) together. Informal community activities among the families occurred sometimes.

4.5. Use of Communication Technologies to Maintain Ties with Bhutanese Refugees

In an increasingly global world, communication links help to keep cultures and ethnic identities alive. When asked if they were in touch with other Bhutanese refugees who had come to the United States from the camps in Nepal, 92.2% of the Bhutanese said yes. Telephone was cited as the most popular means of communication with relatives and friends, and 88.8% had a home phone, while 32% owned a cell phone.

Only 4.3% said they had owned a computer in Nepal, but 39.7% reported having had access to a computer, mostly through the cyber café’s or Internet café’s that exist in the urban centers in Nepal near the refugee camps. Some 31% said they knew how to use a computer in Nepal, and 15.5% said somewhat. Out of a total of 104 who responded, 38% said they had an email account.

After coming to the United States, 36.2% knew how to use a computer (the numbers have gone up slightly), 14.7% somewhat knew. About 34.5% had access to the Internet at home, and 46.6% used email. Some 28.4% had sent 1-10 emails the previous week, 8.6% had sent 10-20 emails, 5.2% had sent 20-30 emails, and 1.7% had sent more than 30 emails; 26% spent 1-5 hours on the Internet the previous week, and 11.2% had spent 5-10 hours. Some of the adults were accessing the Internet at home through their children, and sending emails, chatting online, etc. About 64.7% had looked for Bhutanese
or Nepali communities online. These answers were highly relevant to ascertain the extent to which new media technologies were being utilized by this group.

Some 88.8% kept in touch with relatives and friends in the United States through telephone, 43.1% through email, 15% through Facebook, Twitter, etc. Some 49.1% were calling relatives and friends in the United States about once or twice a week, while 23.3% were calling them once a day or more, 18.1% once a month, and 5.2% every few months. Many, about 65% of them, have looked for various Bhutanese or Nepali communities online. Several of the older Bhutanese also use the Internet through their children to send messages over the Internet and chat with relatives and friends. Most of the Bhutanese, 92.2%, still have relatives and friends in the camps in Nepal, many of whom are awaiting resettlement, and 91.4% recorded that they keep in touch with them, 66.4% through telephone, 40.5% through email, 44.8% through the Internet, 15.5% through Facebook, Twitter, etc. and 13% through mail. Since there are many with low literacy levels, they seem to prefer the telephone to keep in touch. Some 64.7% keep in touch 1-2 times a month or more, 13% 1-6 times a week, and 10.3% keep in touch 2-3 times a year. Since they keep in close touch with their relatives and friends from the camps in Nepal, it is natural that their ethnic identity will be strong while their adjustment to American culture will be slower.

4.6. Identification with their Native Culture

The Bhutanese are proud of their heritage and traditions. Some 88.8% agreed a lot with the statement that they are extremely proud to be Nepali/Bhutanese and 33.6% agreed that their culture affects their daily life. The majority of them, 93.1% said they
spoke their native language, which would be Nepali (93.1%) at home, .9% said sometimes. Some 52.6% of their children spoke the language extremely well, 77% said fairly, 8.6% said moderately well, 1.7% said poorly; 30.2% had no children. Many immigrants to the United States stop using their native languages and speak English. Some 90.5% of the Bhutanese refugees said their native language is very important to them. If they place a high value on their culture, they are less likely to stop using their native language.

The majority of them, 67.2%, had spouses of the same culture, 4.3% of them were of different backgrounds, and 25% were not married. Among 112 respondents, 72.4% were Hindu, 11.2% were Kirat, 7.8% were Christian, 3.4% were Buddhist, .9% said Christian and Hindu, .9% said Hindu and Buddhist. Many of them celebrated festivals such as Dassera, Diwali, Teej, and Tihar (major Hindu religious festivals), others said Christmas, Easter, while one said Udhauli Ubhauli (Kirat). Most of the children, 67.2%, participate in these festivals, showing the significance of these festivals to them.

Some 88.8% of them agreed that they were “proud to be Nepali/Bhutanese,” 32% disagreed with the statement that they wanted their kids to consider themselves American (both Bhutanese and American, they said) and some 66.4% were speaking to their kids about their heritage. Out of 107 who answered the question about which was their mother country, 84.5% said Bhutan, 77% said Nepal, and .9% other country. Two were confused, and one said America.

Some 33.6% strongly agree that their culture affects their daily life, 17.2% agree a little, 24.1% are uncertain, 2.6% disagree a little and 1.7% disagree a lot.
4.7. Feeling of Comfort in Host Culture

When asked if they were getting used to life in the United States, over half (57.8%) said somewhat, and 38.8% said yes. It is apparent that they are getting comfortable here, but because of the differences between their life in the camps and in the United States, adjustment will take a while. Most of them were still maintaining their earlier lifestyle and habits as was evidenced by the fact that some 88.8% said they were cooking their native food everyday.

Towards the end of the survey, several open ended questions gave the Bhutanese refugees a chance to comment on their life in the United States. Most of them shared the same experiences after coming to the United States, their anxiousness about finding jobs, hopes for education, and improvement of their lives. Some 82.8% said that the biggest challenge they had faced after coming to the United States was finding a job, learning English 16.4%, while just 10.3% said it was the weather. Obviously, when they are worried about their survival, factors like the extreme winters become insignificant.

They reported “big” changes in their lives after their arrival in the United States. One said, “full life changed,” “living standard is better,” “here we have electricity, there we had kerosene lamps.” “In the camps, two families shared a toilet, there was one faucet for water with 400 people standing in line, there were no proper doctors,” “I came from living in a bamboo and thatched hut in Nepal with wood burning stoves and a cow dung floor to living in a furnished rental apartment with running water, electricity and gas stoves,” another said. “Life is good here, no dust particles, no pollution, there is hot and cold water, no need for boiling water.” Here there was “systematic and organized way of life,” “Law enforcement is strong here.” One person was “excited about living in a nice
house, fresh fruit, computer, furniture, television, movies.” “Here peaceful, political
danger in Nepal is a lot.” However, there was concern about a couple of incidents of
attempted robbery that had occurred in one of the apartment buildings in the city where
neighbors had to rush to the aid of one of the refugees returning from work. Some of the
refugees, fearful about their safety, had visited the police, and had even formed a
committee within the community to watch over the safety and welfare of their members.

Many said they were “Happy to be here,” but regretted not knowing English.
“Ameri ca is good.” There were comments such as: “Do not forget your motherland,
Bhutan.”

4.8. Resettlement and Hope for the Future

Respondents were asked if they thought that coming to the United States was
beneficial to them and their family. Out of 108 who answered, 88.8% think that it is
beneficial, .9% think it is not, 3.4% said “maybe.” “As refugee, not allowed to work in
Nepal; hope to get job here,” “good home, good climate,” “We have to say beneficial, as
no other choices,” “U.S. is a developed country and I will be a citizen after five years.” “I
have my own apartment, cars, got educational aids [financial aid] for college.” “I am free
to own my cultural and spiritual aspects; this makes me comfortable living in America.”

The interviewees were also asked what they thought would make them more
comfortable living in the United States. “Having a job and knowing English” was the
most common answer.

Immigrants, including refugees, always have dreams for the future of a better life,
and finally, perhaps “the American dream.” When asked what they hoped to achieve in
ten years, many of them said, “education,” “job,” “get citizenship and speak the language,” “have a house, kids future”, “return IOM loan for plane ticket” (this loan, given by the International Organization for Migration, is due 44 months after arrival in the United States), “make bright future to be a citizen of U.S.,” “make my children future bright,” “become financially free business owner.”

4.9. Analysis for Research Questions

The results were derived after running a series of correlation analyses.

The first Research Question

The first research question asked to what extent the refugees use media to adjust to the host culture. One section in the questionnaire specifically focused on use of television, following the “uses and gratifications” tradition. Respondents were asked how important watching television was for each of eight purposes, four explicitly to adjust to the host culture, and four traditional media uses. Television was selected for this special treatment given the fact that so many of the refugees have low levels of literacy and television is accessible.

Four uses and gratifications items were used to see if respondents watched television to accommodate to American culture. The response scale was as follows: 1) disagree a lot, 2) disagree a little, 3) uncertain, 4) agree a little, 5) agree a lot
I watch television primarily because

   a) I want to learn about American culture
   b) To improve my English
   c) Because it helps me adjust to American society
   d) Because I can learn about politics, local events and issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television Uses for acculturation</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn American culture</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve my English</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helps me to adjust to society</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can learn about politics</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to these four items were summed up for a scale on use of television for acculturation (alpha = .56).

The correlation between this scale and the measure of acculturation was (r=.16, p<.10), which approaches statistical significance. The means are in Table 4. The higher the mean, the more important the use of television for this purpose.

In addition, respondents were asked whether they agreed with four other uses and gratification items for general television viewing, using the same response scale: 1) disagree a lot 2) disagree a little 3) uncertain 4) agree a little 5) agree a lot.
I watch television primarily because:

e) I enjoy it
f) It is a habit
g) It makes me feel less lonely
h) It is a past time.

They were also asked to what extent they agree with the statements in the following table:

**Table 5: General Uses and Gratifications for Television Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because I enjoy it</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is a habit</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is a past time</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I feel less lonely</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the tables show, the three highest uses of television are for adjusting to the host American culture. One can also argue that the next two highest, use of television because you enjoy it and can learn about politics, also fit in with adjustment to American society, the latter to understand the political situation of their host culture, and the other to relax and enjoy the entertainment that takes you away from the feeling of estrangement in a new culture. The four uses and gratifications for general television viewing were summed up for a scale to compare with the four-item scale measuring use of television for acculturation. The means for the two scales were: uses for acculturation, 17.99; general uses, 13.67. A t-test comparing the two was statistically significant (t=5.6,
p<.001), with greater use of television for acculturation than for general viewing gratifications.

Means and standard deviations for all metric variables may be found in Appendix A.

The second Research Question

The second research question asked to what extent refugees use new communication technologies and media to maintain ties to their native culture. Respondents were asked if they kept in touch with other Bhutanese refugees through the telephone, e-mail, the Internet, Facebook, or Twitter. Results are in Table 6.

**Table 6: Use of Communication Technologies**

| Keep in touch with native community | 92.2% |
| Keep in touch through telephone     | 88.8% |
| Keep in touch through e-mail        | 43.1% |
| Keep in touch through Facebook or Twitter | 14.7% |
| Looked for native communities online | 64.7% |

Some 92.2%, a high percentage, keep in touch with others in their native community, 88.8% through the telephone, 43.1% through e-mail, 14.7% through Facebook or Twitter. The interviews revealed that many of the Bhutanese were using the Internet through their children. They were sending emails and using web cameras to have video chats with their relatives and friends across the United States and the world. Many of them, 64.7% were also looking for other Bhutanese-Nepali immigrant communities
online. Thus, the refugees in substantial numbers use the new communication technologies to maintain ties to their native culture. As mentioned earlier, the Internet offers plenty of resources, contact groups, and stories to keep them in touch with others from the Bhutanese refugee communities in the city, the country, and the world.

4.10. Analysis for Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis H1

According to Hypothesis H1, age will be negatively associated with using communication technology to maintain ties with the home country and other Bhutanese.

Analysis showed that age was negatively correlated with keeping in touch with other Bhutanese through email ($r=-.35$, $p<.001$). Thus, H1 was supported. The younger Bhutanese refugees use the communication technology more to keep in touch with other Bhutanese than do the older members of the community.

Hypothesis H2

According to Hypothesis H2a, use of American media will be positively related to adjustment to the host culture.

Note: The acculturation variable was measured by asking respondents, “Are you getting used to life in the United States?” Answers were – no (0), somewhat (1), yes (2).

Results show that time spent on the Internet was positively correlated with adjusting to the host culture ($r=.19$, $p<.03$), but there was no relationship with listening to
the radio (r=.01 p=.78), watching more American movies (r=-.01, p=.94) or more time watching television (r=-.08, p=.58). Therefore, H2a is partially supported.

Respondents were also asked if they read any newspapers, and, if so which ones. Answers were grouped into American newspapers, Asian ethnic newspapers (Indian or Bhutanese or Nepali), and those who read no newspapers. The following table shows the breakdown of adjustment to host culture by reading different newspapers. Out of 109 respondents, 54.3% read no newspapers, 18.1% read Nepali or Bhutanese newspapers (online and other), 2.6% read local Indian newspapers, 18.1% read American newspapers (online and other). As Table 7 shows, a breakdown of adjustment by readership was statistically significant (F=3.9, p<.03). Those who read American newspapers had a higher score and felt more adjusted to the host culture; those who had read the least newspapers were less adjusted.

Table 7: Breakdown of Adjustment to Host Culture by Newspaper readership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper readership</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read no newspapers (N=62)</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Asian ethnic newspapers (N=25)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read American newspapers (N=21)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N=108)</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F=3.87, p&lt;.024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis H2b

According to Hypothesis H2b, use of American media to learn about American culture will be positively related to adjustment. First we looked at the relationships between television uses and gratifications and adjustments (see Table 8). H2b was partially supported. Only watching television to improve one’s English was positively correlated with feeling adjusted with American culture. Watching television as a past time was negatively related to feeling adjusted with American culture.

Table 8: Correlations between Television Uses and Gratifications and Adjustment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television Uses</th>
<th>Adjustment to American culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn American culture</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve my English</td>
<td>.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it helps me to adjust to society</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I feel less lonely</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I can learn about politics</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I enjoy it</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it’s a habit</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is a past time</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= p<.05

The uses and gratifications for television use were measured by asking respondents to use the following scale to indicate how much they agreed with these uses: 1) disagree a lot 2) disagree a little 3) uncertain 4) agree a little 5) agree a lot.
As the results show, those who watch television to improve their English feel more adjusted to American life, while those who use television as a past time feel less adjusted. This latter use suggests that some immigrants are using television to escape from their situation. Those with no televisions were excluded from the data analysis.

Using television to improve one’s English was significantly related to adjusting to American life ($r=.20, p<.05$). People who watched television as a past time had a significant negative relationship with watching television to learn about American cultures ($r=.22, p<.05$).

Hypothesis H3

According to Hypothesis H3, the more frequent the interpersonal communication with non-Bhutanese, the greater the adjustment to the host culture.

Respondents were asked whether they had a chance to interact with local Americans at work, in their neighborhood, at social gatherings, at social agencies. An index was created summing across the four settings. In addition, respondents were asked how many Americans they had spoken to in the past week. Results showed that adjustment to the host culture (“getting used to life in the United States”) was positively correlated to the number of Americans spoken to ($r=.19, p<.03$) and the correlation with the interaction index ($r=.14, p<.08$) approached statistical significance. If the number of respondents had been larger ($N=116$), it is likely that the interaction index would have been significant. Therefore, there is some support of H3.
Thus it can be said that the more they interacted with Americans, the faster was their adjustment to the host culture. Those who were working and had jobs would probably be interacting more with Americans and be more likely to adjust more quickly than the elderly, the unemployed, and others who were at home.

4.11. Summary

The answers to the research questions illustrate that the Bhutanese refugees are using media to adjust to the host culture. They are also using new communication technologies such as email, Facebook, etc. for keeping in touch with their native people and culture. These numbers will only increase as the years pass and more refugees get educated and learn to use the computer. They will be able to access resources better and also interact more with Bhutanese elsewhere. Younger Bhutanese will be using technology to maintain ties with the home country more than the older Bhutanese. Those who are watching American media will be adjusting more to the culture than those who are not. Those who are reading American newspapers are adjusting better to the host culture. Those who are watching television to improve their English are more adjusted than those who are using television as a past time. And lastly, the more the Bhutanese are interacting with Americans, the faster they are adjusting to the new culture.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

5.1. General Discussion of Study

This study gives a detailed account of the Bhutanese refugee community in the Cleveland-Akron area. Research with this group of refugees in the United States has just begun. Similar communities exist at several cities across the United States. This study provides information about their background, resettlement process, social, cultural, media and communication practices, beliefs and habits, their interactions with local residents, the changes and challenges they have encountered, their hopes and dreams.

The successful resettlement experiences of other refugees and also the influence and role that new communication technologies have played in acculturation are highlighted here. Like other immigrants, the Bhutanese refugees are eager to learn about the new culture, but are often inhibited by their lack of fluency in English and anxiety about finding employment. Y.Y. Kim’s theory of acculturation is relevant as we make sense of the stress and turmoil they are experiencing and the “leap forward” that will come as a natural process of adjustment.
Any research on the processes of adaptation and acculturation is important for scholars, and immigrants and refugees who are trying hard to adjust in new and unfamiliar worlds. By learning best practices for acculturation from this group of refugees, those working with this population can assist in their transition to life in the United States and other countries and help alleviate the stress that immigrant groups face.

5.2. Communication Findings

This study makes a contribution to the field of communication because it is one of the early studies of the Bhutanese refugees. The literature review discusses the resettlement of different groups of refugees and immigrants in the United States and elsewhere who have faced similar challenges as the Bhutanese, and the effect of media and communication technologies on them. Each refugee group that enters the United States comes with its own culture and history. The study catches the Bhutanese refugees at an early stage in the resettlement when ethnic media use is at its highest. As Kim has said, this will decline and use of host media will increase. It would be ideal to do a study after a few more years have passed to see the differences. The research questions found that the degree of adjustment to the new culture depended on what the motives for using media, in this case, watching television were. If the motives were to learn about American culture, improve English, help to adjust to society, and learn about politics, then the likelihood of adjustment to the new culture was more than if television watching was a past time, a habit, for enjoyment, or because a person felt lonely. Reading American newspapers also seems to contribute to greater adjustment.

The second research question sought to find out to what extent the refugees were
using the new communication technologies to keep in touch with the native people and culture. It was found that most of them (92.2%) were keeping a strong connection alive with their native people and culture across the street, the city, the country, and the world. Our study revealed that the Bhutanese refugees were using media to accommodate to American culture and also to maintain ties to their native culture.

As hypothesized, age was negatively correlated with keeping in touch with other Bhutanese through the Internet. Younger Bhutanese are using the new communication technology more than the older Bhutanese to keep in touch with other Bhutanese refugees in the camps in Nepal and in the United States. The younger Bhutanese are the ones who will acculturate faster than the older refugees. Future research need to find out if this will happen when they are simultaneously maintaining strong ties with their native culture and people through technology,

Results also suggest that time spent on the Internet could help one adjust to the host culture, but there was no relationship with listening to the radio, watching more American movies, or time spent watching television. Those who were using the media more are likely to acculturate faster than those who were not. Though 54% were not reading any newspapers, those who did accessed them from the home and host country on the Internet.

As hypothesized, those who were using American media to learn about American culture were adjusting to the new culture more than those who did not. Those who were using television as a past time were less adjusted than those who watched television to improve their English.
Results also showed that adjustment to the host culture was positively correlated to the number of Americans spoken to. Those interacting with local Americans were more likely to adjust to the host culture than those who had no contact with Americans.

5.3. Limitations of this Study

This is not a random sample as no population frame exists. Thus, though we attempted to obtain a diverse cross section of this refugee group, we are limited in our generalizability. Also, some of the refugees are illiterate, making the interview process difficult. This was more likely to happen in the classrooms where a large number of refugees were attending an ESL class and the project coordinator needed the help of translators. However, most of the interviews were conducted in homes, where questions were read out slowly and care taken to make sure that they were clearly understood.

5.4. Suggestions for Future Research

One of the important factors that this study uncovers is the tremendous potential of new communication technologies and especially the Internet to help new immigrants keep in touch with their culture and also to learn about the new culture. The web camera for example, can be used to learn English. Many new resources could be utilized for their acculturation and this area requires further exploration.

Since this population is relatively new in the country and still in the early stages of adjustment, it is difficult to make future predictions with accuracy. Their experience at an early phase of acculturation has been captured here. Future studies can look at whether their ethnic pride is being strengthened or weakened with ties to other Bhutanese refugees.
It would be ideal to do a follow up survey after a few years to see the extent of the influence of new communication technologies on the Bhutanese, and how their trajectory is different from that of other ethnic groups.

5.5. Conclusion

We cannot say what the future holds for the Bhutanese refugees in America, what will be their triumphs and failures, what will be their road to growth, opportunity, acculturation, and perhaps, success. It is hard to say whether or not this study will make a difference to their experiences. If the refugees knew the benefits of watching television for acculturation, would they increase their viewing time or be afraid of imbibing the values of a different culture?

In response to the question: “What do refugees need?” the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Fact Sheet on Refugee Resettlement (ODJFS, n.d.) states that “refugees need help assimilating into American culture as soon as possible.” If people reading this study realize the benefits of interacting with refugees and immigrants, will it encourage them to cross the street and reach out a welcoming hand to the Bhutanese to help them adjust faster to the new culture? If the media see the influence they have in creating stereotypes and repercussions of this, will they be more careful in their portrayal of refugees?

Fr. Ken Gavin, S.J., National Director of Jesuit Refugee Services, USA echoes the hopes we all have for the refugees:

While the transition from the simple and austere living conditions of the camps to
life in modern America may be a challenging one, we feel that the virtues of self
reliance, hard work and dedication to education that characterize this community will,
with a little help, ultimately lead to their successful and welcome integration (The
Refugee Voice – USA, 2008).

This study gives an account of the Bhutanese refugees at an early time in their
acculturation process. Given the fact that they have come from harsh conditions, we hope
the scars of the past are slowly erased. Research on other refugee communities certainly
points towards successful adaptation and achievements. We can only wish them well –
this group with their own individuality, personality and culture. Vignettes of individuals
such as Dili Maya, the 75 year old woman, excitedly yet laboriously spelling English
words in the ESL class for two years; the young man Raghu, knowing that somehow,
someday, he would work his way back into school and satisfying employment; the elderly
farmer Nar, eager to till the land and reap a harvest from his labors; the young lady
Manju, toiling in a laundry, and helping to empower the women in her neighborhood will
live forever in my mind. Like every immigrant and refugee, they will have their own
individual stories to tell and pathways to tread in a new country.

As the Bhutanese refugees take their place in the extraordinary and sometimes
bewildering mosaic of the United States, I quote the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Be not the slave of your own past. Plunge into the sublime seas, dive deep and swim far,
so you shall come back with self-respect, with new power, with an advanced experience
that shall explain and overlook the old.
Endnotes

1 Resettlement agencies are non profit agencies that receive funding and enter into agreements with the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) to provide initial reception and placement services to newly arrived refugees in the United States. Many of the Bhutanese refugees in the Cleveland-Akron area are working with the resettlement agencies such as Cleveland Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services, International Services Center, International Institute of Akron, and US Together, Inc.

2 SEWA International, USA is a 501© (3) non profit volunteer based group of Asian Indians. The Asian Indian community has helped provide the Bhutanese with access to their original or related cultural experiences as many of the Bhutanese are Hindus, and this serves as a bond with the Asian Indian community, which is primarily Hindu. One of their projects is helping to empower the Bhutanese refugees. Prof. Sree Sreenath, PhD President of SEWA International USA is the Director, Complex Systems Biology Center, Professor, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. In partnership with Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, SEWA is working in 30 cities in the United States on the Bhutanese Refugee Empowerment Project (BRE). Its volunteers are mostly first and second generation Asian Indians. In the Cleveland-Akron area, they have reached out to many families to fulfill immediate and long terms need, e.g. helping with transportation to the Hindu temple, donations, health fairs, initiating a farming project, providing information about education opportunities and living in the United States. For more details go to www.sewausa.org

3 Prior to beginning data collection, the project coordinator attended events to meet the Bhutanese refugees. These included an information talk by Prof. Sreenath, a college orientation fair at Cleveland State University; she visited homes, assisted in a quilting project organized by Manju Rastogi, a volunteer in Akron, attended a health fair, a Thanksgiving Dinner organized by FICA (the Federation of Indian Community Associations in Cleveland) and a Christmas Party organized by Cleveland Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services.
REFERENCES


Jeffres, L. & Hur, K. K. (1979). Ethnic communication in Cleveland: An exploratory study of ethnics and mass communication in Cleveland, Ohio, Cleveland State
University, Communication Research Center in conjunction with the Ethnic Heritage Studies Center.


Communication Association; 2005 Annual Meeting.


APPENDIX
Table 9: Mean and Standard Deviations of Control and Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in United States</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years spent in Bhutan</td>
<td>20.41</td>
<td>15.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years spent in Nepal</td>
<td>17.83</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency in English</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of media in U.S.: TV, radio, Internet, emails, movies, newspapers</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV to learn American culture</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV to improve my English</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV to help adjust to society</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV to learn about politics</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV because I enjoy it</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV because it is a habit</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV because it is a past time</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV because I feel less lonely</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures of interpersonal communication with Bhutanese</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch with others from Nepal in U.S.</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through telephone</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through email</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch with relatives/friends in Nepal</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through mail</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through email</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through Internet</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through Facebook, Twitter, etc.</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In touch through telephone</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures of interpersonal communication with Americans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with Americans at work</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with Americans in neighborhood</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with Americans at social gatherings</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Americans spoken to last week</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable talking to Americans</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures of ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud to be Bhutanese</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is your native language to you</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV Acculturation</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note:

Age was measured with the following categories: 1) 18-21,  2) 21-24,  3) 25-34,  4) 35-44  5) 45-54  6) 55-64  7) 65-74  8) 75 and older.

Time spent in U.S.: 1) less than a year, 2) one to two years, 3) three or more years  9) missing data.

Fluency in language: 1) very well 2) not so well 3) fairly 4) poorly 5) not at all 9) missing data

Watch television to learn American culture: 0) no television 1) disagree a lot 2) disagree a little 3) uncertain 4) agree a little 5) agree a lot 9) missing data

In touch with others from Nepal: 1) yes 2) no 9) missing data

Frequency of communication: 0) don’t keep in touch 1) once a year 2) 2-3 times a year 4) 1-2 times a month or more 4) 1-6 times a week 5) no relatives  9) missing data

Keep in touch through mail: 1) yes 2) no

How comfortable do you feel talking to Americans: 1) very comfortable 2) somewhat comfortable 3) very uncomfortable 4) somewhat uncomfortable

Interact with Americans at work: 0) no 1) yes 9) missing data

Proud to be Bhutanese: 1) disagree a lot 2) disagree a little 3) uncertain 4) agree a little 5) agree a lot  9) missing data

Importance of native language: 0) completely unimportant 1) not very important 2) somewhat important 3) very important 4) not known

Whether acculturating: 1) no 2) somewhat 3) yes 9) missing data
Consent Form

Dear Participant

I am a student at Cleveland State University pursuing a Master’s in Communication Theory and Methodology. This research is part of my thesis for my exit option for completion of the Master’s program. I would like to thank you for helping me with this research conducted by myself, Cheryl D’Mello (E-mail: cheryldmello@hotmail.com) with the help of my advisor Prof. Leo Jeffres (216-687-5088), E-mail: ljeffres@csuohio.edu in the School of Communication at Cleveland State University.

In this study we are interested in the experience of refugees and new immigrants to the United States, such as you, who are in the process of settling down and adapting to life here. We are studying your use of modern technology for staying in touch with your native culture and country and also for getting familiar with the United States.

This survey, which takes about 30 minutes, has been translated into Nepali for the benefit of those who do not speak English. I will be taking the help of translators for carrying out the survey.

This research project has been endorsed by SEWA International, consisting of members of the Asian Indian community in the Cleveland area who are involved in volunteer work with this community. We do hope this survey will help other Bhutanese refugees and any future immigrants to the United States.

The information we obtain from the survey will be kept strictly confidential. We will never use the information you provide in a manner that threatens or compromises your confidentiality. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. Whether you participate in the study or not will not impact your receiving services from the government or other organizations.

The risks involved in this research are no greater than those experienced with daily living. Please understand that your participation is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason or terminate the interview and survey at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board of Cleveland State University at 216-687-3630.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and we will keep the other one. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

Please indicate your agreement to participate by signing below.

I am 18 years or older and have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate.

Signature______________________________________
Name________________________________________ (please print)
Date________________________________________
अनुसरण प्रति
(अद्यतन साधनो)

माहेंद्रीको वर्तमान निपातद्वारा मा संस्थाको
पुनर्अपवादा र कर्मलिखित रिलाई लिएँ स्वयंको
लागि अनुसरण गरिएको हुँ। निर्देश धारा संकेत-लिखि
एरू। तो अनुसरण गर्नु लागि प्रत्येक अलिको बिर्दा को
मान्नुहुन्छ। यो लाभकारी भएको दिनहरुमा जीविको स्तर
अनुसरण गर्नेलो भएको दिनहरु मा जीवित र अनुसरण गर्नेलो
अनुसरण गर्नेलो तथा स्तरहरूका बजामा प्रत्येक लोको
झम्मिरु (२९८-३८६-४०२८) धनुष्यार र वर्षा सनस
थूँ को समाप्त गर्नेला नार्तक पुनुँसुँहु।

शारणार्थीहरू र आपलाईको लागि साधन राज्य
अमेरिकामा लागि बस्नेला र तय हो जीवित सुरु गर्नु
धनुष्यार र बहादू जस्ता विधानसभाको अनुकूलनको
तर्क अनुसरण गर्नु र तर्को जस्तो र आफ्नो लेखको।
लागि भएमा अनुसरण गर्नु र आफ्नो देशको
राज्यमा रहेको कस्तो अभिलेख दिल्ली दिल्ली
प्राप्त गर्नु र जल्दी अनुसरण गर्नु लागि सनस
स्थानीय पारित्तुँ पुनुँसुँहु अन्तहरु वुझाङक
प्रकारहरूँ अनुसरण गर्नेला पर्णैल।

आफर्छो बौँल राजार्थीको सघिलेली लागि
हैपाली आफ्रिका अनुसार जीवित हुँ।

उन अनुसरण गर्नुको सेला आताप्रमाणको वर्गान्त
अनुमान दिनहरुमा हुँ। जे संस्थागी सङ्केत लिएको रहेको
स्थलमा आतीम सञ्चारका साधितको स्थलमा
स्तरहरूको स्तरहरूको काम गरिएको। आफ्रिका र उन
अनुसरण गर्नु नाम अनुसार अपलाई र आफ्रिका
आपलाईहरूलाई साधन राष्ट्र अमेरिकामा फैले
साथै पुनुँसुँहु।
यौ गिरिजाबाल उपलब्ध अटका व्यक्तिगत आवेदन रोपण
कीमत रखते हैं। हम आवेदकलिए तपाईलाई (अस्त्र पाएंगे अनि)
पत्र देने खैल र में अनुसंधानीय साधन प्रदान गाएँगे।
तपाईले यो अनुसंधानकारी आग लिंग ना गाविए,
तपाईले स्किल र संस्थाबाहिनी नैनेकोता अनुसार
पार्दिन्छ।

मा अनुसार आपका आवेदन असल र पाइसौ दिन
आयेको अनुसार मद्दत रहेको हो।

हमी स्वाभाविक हादसे कारण युक्त पत्रको उल्ल
अवसरका भार्य समय भएको हुनुहर र अवसरका दिन
लागि भएको हुनुहर।

तपाईलाई मा अनुसार आपका कुनै प्रश्न अन्तर
अवसरलाई जुनौले (२६५६-३६३०) को
क्रिया सम्पूर्ण र राजकाली गरी रामकृष्ण रामकृष्ण
प्राचीन नस्त्रा पर्शिवारलाई प्रभुस्वर चालनादृव्य हुन।

धर्मा कुनै प्रतिलोक भने। द्वारका और, स्थान
तपाईले रास्तामा र आफ्नो हाली रास्तामा।
लागि र रास्ताकारालाई अवसर मात्र भन्नुहोस्।

स्पष्टता (जल पैरावर ताकोस) सहभागीको स्पष्टा टूलकार
पारि होला।

मा २८ वर्ष तार्क भन भन मा अच्छी भविष्यशास्त्र दृष्ट मा
अनुमान नस्त्रा पैर पर्दै बुँदै र स्थानको हुन
सीधौ।

हुलियको

गा: _______________ (हुलिया पूरा नाम केलो होला)

लारिक _______________
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How long have you lived in the U.S.A?
   
   _1) Less than a year (number of months)_
   _2) One - Two years_
   _3) Three years or more_

2. Where were you born?
   
   _1) U.S.A. _
   _2) Bhutan _
   _3) Nepal _
   _4) Other country (name)_

3. How many years did you live in Bhutan?
   
   _

4. How many years did you live in the camps in Nepal?
   
   _

5. Check the languages that you speak, read & write
   
   _

6. How well do you speak these languages?
   
   _

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4) Any other languages

7. Which is your native language/mother tongue? 1) Bhutanese 2) Nepali 3) Other (name it)

8. Do you speak your native language at home? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Sometimes

9. How well do your children speak your native language?

10. How important is your native language to you?

11. If you know English, where did you learn it?

12. Based on your discussions with your community members, how informed would you say they are about current events and news (local, national, international)?

(Section on possible feedback or a rating system would be included here.)
13. How did you get your local/international news when you were in Nepal?

1) Newspapers
2) Radio
3) T.V.
4) Internet
5) Other (name it)

14. What sources of information did you use to learn more about the U.S.A. while you were in Nepal? e.g. books, internet, movies, etc.

15. Did you and your family watch movies in Nepal? 1) Yes 2) No

1) Watched American movies in Nepal? 2) Bhutanese

16. If yes, what movies were they? 1) American 2) Nepali 3) Bhutanese 4) Indian

1) Your favorite ones were

17. If you watched American movies, where did you watch them in Nepal?

1) At the theatre? 2) On T.V. (DVDs, VHS)?
3) On the computer?  
   __a) Yes __b) No

18. Where did you watch Nepali/Bhutanese/Indian movies in Nepal?
   लन्पाइले नेपाली/भूटानी/भारतीय फिल्म देखनुका दिशापत्र हो?  
   1) At the theatre?  
      __a) Yes __b) No
      फिल्मघरमा परिवारको?  

2) On T.V. (DVDs, VHS)?  
   __a) Yes __b) No
   टी.वी. (डी.वी.डी. / वी.एच.सी.)  

3) On the computer?  
   __a) Yes __b) No
   कम्प्युटरमा?  

19. Did your family own a T.V. set in Nepal?  
   आपकी परिवारको नेपालमा टी.वी. खोजवो छ?  

20. Does your family own a T.V. set here in the U.S.A.?  
   आपकी परिवारको अमेरिकामा टी.वी. खोजवो छ?  

21. Do you watch T.V.?  
   टी.वी. देख्नुहोस्?  

22. About how much time do you spend watching T.V. on an average weekday?  
   क्यों धेरै पैसा टी.वी. देख्नु हुन्छ?  

23. Do you subscribe to any cable TV service/satellite television that offers programs in other languages?  
   मार्ग स्वीकार्य स्थलको खोज र आँकार प्रसारण प्रदान गर्दै छ?  

24. If you do watch T.V. here in the U.S.A., how much do you agree with these statements?  
   यहाँ टी.वी. देख्नुहोस् र र आफ्नो अभिज्ञानको सुझावहरूलाई सम्बन्धमा?
I watch T.V. primarily because

Agree Agree Disagree Disagree Uncertain
a lot a little a lot a little

a. I want to learn about American culture
   अमेरिकी नस्ल राष्ट्रीय सांस्कृतिक
   संस्कुलता का अध्ययन करना चाहता हूँ

b. To improve my English
   अपनी इंग्लिश को बढ़ाने के लिए

c. Because I enjoy it
   मेरे पसंद के लिए

d. Because it is a habit
   मेरे प्रचलित अन्य कामों में हो जाता है

e. Because it makes me feel less lonely
   मुझे कमजोर समय का महसूस करना होता है

f. Because it helps me adjust to
   अमेरिकी समाज

h. Because I can learn about politics,
   कान्स्ट्रूक्शन, राजनीति आदि

25. Do you watch any movies here in the U.S.? 1) Yes 2) No
    अमेरिकी में फिल्म देखने की आवश्यकता क्या है?

26. How many American movies have you watched in the last three to six months?
    अंतिम तीन से छह महीनों में जितनी अमेरिकी फिल्में देखी?

27. Where did you watch them?
    फिल्में कहां देखी?

   1) At the theatre? 1a) Yes 1b) No
       फिल्म टियर में?

   2) On T.V. (DVDs, VHS)? 2a) Yes 2b) No
       टीवी पर (डीवीडी, वीडियो हेडर)?
3) On the computer?   ____a) Yes   ____b) No

4) Where else have you watched American movies?   ____________________________

5) Any favorite movies? (name them)   __________________________________________

28. Do you watch Nepali/Bhutanese/Indian movies?   ____1) Yes   ____2) No. Any favorites?

29. Check from where you get your Nepali/Bhutanese/Indian films

   __1) Friends   __2) DVD rental stores   __3) Cable TV channels
   __4) Online channels (internet)   __5) Watch them at theaters
   __6) Other source (state which)

30. About how many Nepali/Bhutanese/Indian movies do you own on DVD, VHS, etc

31. In the past month, how many Nepali/Bhutanese/Indian movies have you watched?

   __1) At home (on DVD, VHS, Cable TV)   __2) On the computer

   __3) Where else?   ____________________________

Which are your favorites?

32. Does your family – husband/wife, children, watch these movies also?

   __1) Yes   ____2) No   ____3) Sometimes

   __4) ______   __5) ______   __6) ______

33. Did your family own a radio in Nepal?   ____1) Yes   __2) No. If yes, which radio stations did you listen to?

   _______________
34. Does your family own a radio here in the U.S.A? 1) Yes 2) No

35. If yes, do you listen to the radio? 1) Yes 2) No. If yes, on an average day, how many hours do you
spend listening to the radio?

36. Which radio channel/programs do you listen to most often?

37. Where do you get most of your information now about Bhutan/Nepal? 1) T.V. 2) Internet 3) Newspapers 4) Radio 5) Other sources 6) Not known.

38. Did your family own a computer in Nepal? 1) Yes 2) No

39. Did you or your family members have access to a computer in Nepal? 1) Yes 2) No

40. Did you know how to use a computer in Nepal? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Somewhat

41. If you did know how to use the computer, did you have an e-mail account in Nepal? 1) Yes 2) No

42. If you did use the computer in Nepal, did you log on to American websites to learn about the U.S.A?

43. Do you know how to use a computer now? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Somewhat

44. Where did you learn to use a computer? 1) U.S.A. 2) Nepal 3) Bhutan 4) Other place

45. Do you access the internet at home or at work?
46. Do you use e-mail?  ____1) Yes  ____2) No

47. Approximately, how many e-mails did you send last week?

48. How many hours did you spend on the internet last week?

49. Are you in touch with other people in the U.S. (including those in the Cleveland area) who have come from

50. Check how you keep in touch with them:  ____1) Telephone  ____2) E-mail

51. Have you looked for other Bhutanese-Nepali immigrant communities online?  ____1) Yes  ____2) No

52. Do you have relatives/friends in the camps in Nepal?  ____1) Yes  ____2) No. Do you keep in touch with them?  ____1) Yes  ____2) No

53. Check how you keep in touch with them:  ____1) Mail  ____2) E-mail  ____3) Internet  ____4) Facebook

54. How often do you keep in touch?

55. Do you own a cell phone?  ____1) Yes  ____2) No
56. A home phone? 1) Yes 2) No

57. Do you telephone your relatives/friends in the U.S.? 1) once a day 2) once a week 3) once a month 4) every few months

58. Which newspapers do you read here in the U.S.A? 1) None 2) Nepali/ Bhutanese newspapers
3) Local Indian newspapers 4) American newspapers 5) Online American newspapers
6) Online Nepali/ Bhutanese newspapers 7) Other - What are they

59. Have you been to the local library? 1) Yes 2) No

60. Do you read Nepali/Bhutanese/Indian books? 1) Yes 2) No. How often a) One a week b) More than one a week

61. How often do you talk to members of the local Asian Indian community? 1) Sometimes 2) Very often 3) Never

62. The Asian Indian community members have helped me settle into the new country 1) Yes 2) No 3) Somewhat. Describe the ways, if any, in which they have helped

63. Do you get a chance to interact with local Americans (other than Indians)? 1) At work 2) In the neighborhood 3) Social gatherings 4) Agency workers 5) Other places

64. How many Americans (other than Indians) have you spoken to in the past week? 1) 5 or less 2) more than five?
65. How comfortable do you feel talking to Americans (other than Indians)? 1) Very comfortable 2) Somewhat comfortable 3) Very Uncomfortable

66. How many American (other than Indian) friends do you have? 1) One 2) A few 3) None

67. Have you visited any American (other than Indian) homes? 1) Yes 2) No

68. Would you like to have friends who are American (other than Indians)? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

69. Do you feel you need to mix with Americans (other than Indians)? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Maybe

Reason

70. What do you think might help you to mix with Americans (other than Indians) better?

71. Is your husband/wife of the same culture as you? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not married

72. Which do you consider to be your mother country: 1) Bhutan 2) Nepal 3) Other (name it)

73. Which religion (if any) do you follow?

74. Do you visit the temple/church/mosque/other place of worship?

75. What religious/national festivals do you celebrate?

76. Do your children participate in these festivals? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Sometimes
77. Have you participated in the 4th of July festivities in the U.S.A or any other American festivals/celebrations? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not aware of it

78. How often do you cook your native food?
1) almost never 2) once a month 3) once a week 4) everyday

79. How much do you agree with these statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- a. The American media (news) have shown our community very positively
- b. I am extremely proud to be a Nepali/Bhutanese
- c. I’d rather associate with my people than others
- d. The orientation & information I received prior to coming prepared me for life here
- e. My culture strongly affects my daily life
- f. I want my children to consider themselves American instead of Nepali/Bhutanese
- g. I speak to my children about our heritage

80. How many Nepali/Bhutanese families are living close to you?
1) One 2) Two or three 3) The total number, if you know it
81. Do you feel you all form a special closely knit community? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Maybe

82. Do you communicate with each other? 1) Every day 2) on weekends 3) once a month 4) once in a few months. Describe how

83. About what percentage of your close friends would you say are Nepali/Bhutanese refugees/immigrants?

   1) almost all 2) about two-thirds 3) about half 4) about a third 5) very few 6) none

84. How much activity in the community occurs in informal situations (e.g. socials)?

85. Are you 1) single 2) married 3) widowed 4) divorced/separated 5) Not known

86. Do you have any children? 1) Yes 2) No. If yes, number of children

87. Age of children

   1) 0-10 years 2) 10-20 years 3) 21 years and older 4) Not known

88. Check your gender: 1) male 2) female

89. How many members are there in your immediate family? (yourself, spouse, children)

90. How many members are there in your household (include relatives staying with you)

91. Present Occupation 1) Employed 2) Unemployed 3) Student/Job Training 4) Position if

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92. Into which of the following annual income categories would your household fall?

1) $5,000 or less  2) $5,001-$7,500  3) $7,501 - $10,000  4) $10,000-$15,000
5) $15,001-$20,000  6) $20,001-$25,000  7) $25,000 - $50,000  8) More than $50,000

93. What work did you do in Nepal?

94. What work did you do in Bhutan when and if you lived there?

95. Which are the agencies which worked with you when you came into the U.S.? Are they still helpful?

96. What is the highest educational level you have obtained?

1) elementary (8 years or less)  2) some high school  3) high school graduate
4) some college  5) college graduate (4 year bachelor’s degree)  6) advanced college degree (masters, doctorate, law, MBA)
7) (Declines to answer/ not known)

97. How difficult was it to get a job in the U.S.A?

1) fairly easy  2) difficult  3) very difficult

98. What kind of job would you like to have?

99. What is your age?

1) 18-21  2) 21-24  3) 25-34  4) 35-44
5) 45-54  6) 55-64  7) 65-74  8) 75 and older

100. Are you getting used to life in the USA?

1) Yes  2) No  3) Somewhat
101. What is the biggest challenge you face? e.g. weather, job opportunities, cultural differences

सबसे महत्वपूर्ण चुनौती क्या है? वादा, उड़ान, शॉपिंग, राजकीय प्रतिद्वंद्वी?

102. Do you think coming to the U.S. is beneficial to you and your family?

क्या आपके व आपके गण से यह प्रेरणापूर्वक है?

103. How would you say your life has changed since your arrival in the United States?

आपके जीवन का किस समय पता करते है?

104. What would make you feel more comfortable living in America?

आप अमेरिका में जीवन में कैसे और आरामदायक होते?

105. What do you hope to achieve in 10 years?

आगामी 10 वर्षों में क्या आपका उद्देश्य?

106. Any other comments you would like to make

कैसे आपकी उड़ान की और राजकीय स्थिति?

Thank you for your cooperation

आपके प्रति सहारा का धन्यवाद!