DIASPORA PHILANTHROPY: IDENTITY AND OBLIGATION AMONG INDIAN ENGINEERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Shikha Batra

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APPROVED:

Gabe Ignatow, Major Professor
Cynthia Cready, Committee Member
Ami Moore, Committee Member
Dan Rodeheaver, Chair of the Department of Sociology
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School
Diaspora philanthropy to India has grown rapidly over the past several decades. However, little is known about the motivations of Indians living in the U.S. to donate philanthropically to India. Extant studies have either focused on quantitative analysis of diaspora philanthropy or qualitative research on the receiving of diaspora philanthropy in India. The motivations and strategies of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. have not been explored, particularly, the informal mechanisms and strategies of making philanthropic donations to India and the obligations that underlie the practice of diaspora philanthropy remain neglected in the existing studies on diaspora philanthropy. My research addressed this gap in the existing literature on diaspora philanthropy by conducting qualitative face-to-face in-depth interviews with a snowball sample of 25 Indian engineers in San Diego, California.

In my study, it was found that Indians preferred to channel funds for philanthropy in India through friends and family because of lack of trust in formal organizations and greater confidence in the activities of friends and family in India due to familiarity and better accountability. It was also found that Indians felt indebted to Indian society and the Indian nation-state for the free and subsidized education they had received in India, and therefore felt obligated to make philanthropic contributions to India in order to redeem the debt that they owe to India.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the topic of my study, diaspora philanthropy; identity and obligation among Indian engineers in the United States. My study raises questions that my research addresses and answers in the following chapters, discusses the significance and rationale for conducting this study, and provides a brief overview of the chapter-wise division and organization of this research. This chapter is divided into 5 sections. The first section, diaspora philanthropy, defines the concept of diaspora philanthropy with specific reference to its similarities with and differences from the concept of remittances in the sociological literature. The second section, rationale of study, discusses the basic rationale for conducting my research. The third section, significance of research, discusses the significance of my research for sociological literature, policy makers, and independent philanthropists and analysts. In the fourth section, research questions, I outline my research questions and the fifth section, organization of research, discusses the organization and presentation of my research in terms of 7 chapters.

Diaspora Philanthropy

This section discusses the controversy surrounding the definition of diaspora philanthropy as it relates to the concept of remittances in the existing literature on immigration studies. Sociologists may be classified into two categories based on their definitions of diaspora philanthropy. Those who argue that diaspora philanthropy should be defined in contrast to the
concept of remittances and those who argue that remittances should be included in the
definition of diaspora philanthropy.

Diaspora Philanthropy in Contrast to Remittances

Sociologists who define diaspora philanthropy in contrast to the concept of remittances
argue that diaspora philanthropy consists of transfer of money for the purpose of charity,
donation or welfare of people at large while remittances involve transfer of money for the
purpose of investment or the welfare of one’s own family. In other words, they argue that
diaspora philanthropy is associated with altruism, selflessness and lack of material expectations
from the transfer of funds while remittances are inherently associated with selfish interests and
involve an expectation of personal gain or profit from the transfer of funds. For example,
Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) define diaspora philanthropy as “the private donations
of diasporas to a wide range of causes in their countries of origin” (p. 2). Similarly, Sidel (2008)
defines diaspora philanthropy as “donations back to home countries for purposes of charitable,
social, economic, cultural, religious and other forms of development as distinct from family
relief, business investment, and other forms of remittances” (p. 4). These definitions emphasize
the differences and points of contrast between diaspora philanthropy and remittances as forms
of transnational giving by the immigrants back to their home country.

Diaspora Philanthropy Including Remittances

Sociologists who do not draw a sharp distinction between the concepts of diaspora
remittances and diaspora philanthropy use the two concepts synonymously. They argue that
both diaspora philanthropy and remittances involve transfer of money through personal connections and both include family transfers as well as investment transfers. For example, Orozco (2006) argues that an immigrant’s economic linkage with the home country includes family remittance transfers, funds spent on such services as telecommunication, consumer goods or travel, capital investment and charitable donations to philanthropic organizations which raise funds for the migrant’s home community (p. 25). Similarly Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2008) argue that the term remittances or philanthropy include money or gifts sent by migrants to relatives in countries of origin, personal investment transfers, collective transfers and charitable activities (p. 256).

Nielson (2004) argues that traditionally, remittances were not included under the rubric of philanthropy but this began to change as some remittances were being pooled and used more strategically to transform whole communities through building schools, paving roads and digging wells. Basa et al. (2006) argue that both diaspora philanthropy and remittances rest upon personal connections and shared interests with respect to social change, economic development, infrastructure, and political movements (p. 10). Dekkers and Rutten (2011) also argue that diaspora philanthropy involves transfer of resources from migrants to their home country and a large part of such resource transfers consist of household remittances, that is, transfer of money and goods from migrants to their family members for such purposes as family maintenance and consumption (p. 2).

Diaspora Philanthropy as Defined in my Research

Due to the difficulties associated with drawing a sharp distinction between the concepts
of diaspora philanthropy and remittances, the sociological literature is replete with studies where the two concepts have been used interchangeably. Accordingly, in this study, I examine diaspora philanthropy to include remittances. Hence, my definition of diaspora philanthropy includes transfer of resources, including funds and gifts from the diaspora to their family members in the home country for the purpose of consumption and individual investment and also collective transfer of resources for the purpose of building infrastructure, community, growth and development of one’s home country.

Rationale of Study

The basic rationale for undertaking my study is the need to explore and document the hidden obligations associated with diaspora philanthropy and the significant identities that motivate the Indian diaspora in the United States to make philanthropic contributions to India. Despite its past contribution and huge potential to affect the socio-economic development of India, this field has been relatively less researched (Geithner, Johnson and Chen, 2004; Johnson, 2007; Mehta and Johnston, 2011; Niumai, 2009). Particularly the informal channels and mechanisms of diaspora philanthropy have remained unrecognized and undocumented in academic studies and research (Geithner, Johnson and Chen, 2004; Shiveshwarkar, 2008; Sidel, 2008). These informal channels and mechanisms constitute an important and most prevalent source of diaspora philanthropy among Indians because of the strong social ties, bonds and networks that exist between non-resident Indians in the United States and their friends, families and relatives in India.
Brinkerhoff (2009) notes that a huge sum of philanthropic monetary donations from the Indian diaspora is transferred informally through *hawala* systems. The *hawala* system is an informal channel of transferring money from one part of the world to another without following the normal banking channels in order to evade taxes (Faith 2011). Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) also note that diasporas from poorly governed developing countries are more likely to donate through informal mechanisms and to individuals or organizations with whom they are personally familiar because of a general lack of trust in the nonprofit sector and greater confidence in the accountability of funds given to family and friends (p. 17). According to Shiveshwarkar (2008), Indian immigrants often choose to channel philanthropic contributions through family and close friends because of their trustworthiness and ability to identify local needs (p. 134). Bakshi and Baron (2011) also describe several reasons as to why the Indian diaspora prefer to give money to people they know rather than writing checks to organizations. These include a general lack of awareness about the various channels available to donate and a lack of trust in both intermediary organizations as well as grantee organizations, often due to lack of transparency (Bakshi and Baron, 2011, p. 2).

The unique contribution of my study constitutes an investigation and insight into the informal sources and mechanisms of diaspora philanthropy among Indian immigrants. This is done by conducting in-depth qualitative personal interviews with the Indian engineer immigrants in the United States that allows the participants to state express and reveal their own personal experiences. The qualitative nature of my research facilitates an understanding of the various informal channels adopted by the Indian diaspora in the U.S. to make philanthropic
contributions to India and also their explanation of the reasons for adopting such informal
sources and mechanisms of diaspora philanthropy.

Another rationale for undertaking this study is to explore the underlying obligations that
characterize the practice of diaspora philanthropy among the immigrant community. Although
the individual acts of philanthropy appear to be voluntary, they are motivated, guided and
regulated by a series of obligations deriving from guilt, shame, pride or indebtedness among
the diaspora community (Singh, 2006; Dekkers and Rutten, 2011; Geithner, Johnson and Chen,
2004; Brinkerhoff, 2008; Kumar, 2003) and return obligations deriving from the recipients’
relatively lower position in the power and status hierarchy (Newland, Terrazas and Munster,
2010; Shiveshwarkar, 2008; Johnson, 2007; Kapur et al., 2004). These obligations surrounding
the acts of diaspora philanthropy often remain hidden, unnoticed and undocumented. The
purpose of my research is to explore, probe and investigate these hidden obligations by
conducting face-to-face qualitative interviews with the Indian engineer diaspora community in
the United States.

Furthermore, an increasing awareness and recognition of the contribution of diaspora
philanthropy in terms of building universities, hospital, temple and other work in the countries
of origin since the late 1990s is drawing the attention and interest of scholars and researchers
worldwide towards the study of diaspora philanthropy. Over the years, this interest has grown
tremendously because of the growing contribution of diaspora philanthropy to global social
change and development. However, there is a relative scarcity of sociological research on
philanthropic giving by Indian professional groups such as doctors, engineers, business
organizations etc. in the United States. My study addresses this gap in sociological literature on
immigration studies by examining the practice of diaspora philanthropy among a specific group of professionals in the United States—the Indian engineers.

If the literature on various sources, channels and mechanisms of diaspora philanthropy among Indian engineers in the United States is less, the research on factors that motivate Indian immigrants in the United States to participate in diaspora philanthropy is far less (Sidel, 2008; Basa et al., 2006; Shiveshwarkar, 2008; Nielson, 2004), although there are few studies that have sought to address this issue. For example, Anand’s study (2003) demonstrates that the attitude of Indian Americans toward philanthropy is greatly influenced by their core Indian values, personal relationships, family and religion. Dadrawala (2011) also notes that philanthropy among Indians in the United States is influenced by such institutions as religion, caste, clan, family and community. Similarly, in a focus group discussion conducted by Viresh Rustogi, (in Taplin, 2002, p. 10) it was found that the majority of participants placed a high value on family relationships in the context of giving and preferred to give only to family and friends in need or to the organizations and causes that their parents and elders supported (Taplin, p. 10).

From a study conducted on Indian American entrepreneurs, Taplin (2002) concluded that the major factor that drives them to participate in diaspora philanthropy is social entrepreneurship, that is, “giving grants to innovative individuals and organizations to stimulate grassroots social change and investing in economic empowerment to create employment and a higher standard of living” (Taplin, 2002, p. 4).

Further, Kapur et al. (2004) argue that philanthropic motivations or altruism among Indian diaspora “may stem from the cognitive payoff gotten for recognition in the diaspora.
community as well as the source country; the idea of a strong, economically vibrant and socially just homeland as a source of self-esteem; or broader business interests wherein philanthropic actions create goodwill and entry points for business deals” (p. 192). Singh et al. (2010) argue that remittances are one of the important ways in which Indian migrants hope and continue to keep connection with their transnational family that includes not only those members of one’s family who have migrated but also those who have been left behind. They constitute a powerful symbol of care and a medium of expressing filial love.

Similarly, few studies have been conducted on the role of other factors that motivate the diaspora community to participate in philanthropy such as altruism (Tchouassi and Sikod, 2010; Brinkerhoff, 2009; Taplin, 2002) religious beliefs (Anand, 2003; Niumai, 2009; Nielson, 2004), affinity with the homeland (Chuyen, Small and Vuong, 2010; Dadrawala, 2011; Yuen, 2008) and/or incentives from the home country (Mehta and Johnston, 2011; Newland, Terrazas and Munster, 2010; Bakshi and Baron, 2011). However, there is a relative scarcity of research on the role of specific identities among the Indian diaspora and their hidden obligations in motivating them to make philanthropic contributions to India.

The basic rationale for exploring the role of specific identities among the Indian diaspora to examine their philanthropic behavior is the widespread conceptual ambiguity in the current usage and analysis of the concept of identities to explain the practice of diaspora philanthropy. Although several studies have analyzed how the Indian immigrants’ strong identification with their homeland motivates them to make philanthropic contributions to the suffering members of their community, there exists substantial confusion with respect to the concept of diaspora identities. It is not clear whether immigrants derive these identities from their individual
personalities such as appearance, intelligence, skill etc. or from their membership of a collective group such as their region, society, gender, culture, socio-economic status. Although the concept of collective identities is implied in several studies that describe how immigrants’ identities motivate them to engage in diaspora philanthropy, it has not been explicitly defined and remains conceptually ambiguous. My study not only clarifies this conceptual ambiguity in existing literature by defining the concept of immigrants’ identities as collective identities but also identifies the specific collective identities that motivate the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India.

Further, there exists a general consensus among the diaspora community as well as the scholars studying the practice of diaspora community that philanthropic contributions are given as gifts to the community members in one’s homeland. Several scholars have described and analyzed acts of diaspora philanthropy as gifts (Newland, Terrazas and Munster, 2010; Dobrzynski, 2007; Mehta and Johnston, 2011; Chuyen, Small and Vuong, 2010; Johnson, 2007; Bornstein, 2011; Lainer-Vos, 2012; Copeman, 2011). However, gifts are inherently associated with certain obligations—those who give the gift are obligated to give and those who receive it are obligated to not only receive but also reciprocate the gift (Mauss, 1954). My study explores and investigates these hidden obligations underlying the practice of diaspora philanthropy by conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews with the Indian engineer diaspora in the U.S. My study investigates what are the obligations experienced by the Indian diaspora and how do these obligations motivate them to contribute a portion of their earned income and wealth as philanthropic contributions to India. Since these obligations are hidden and implicit rather than being explicit, the qualitative research methodology was selected as an appropriate tool to
investigate and probe into the minds of the Indian diaspora and to get an insight into the specific obligations that the Indian diaspora perceive towards their home country and that motivates them to engage in diaspora philanthropy.

Significance of Research

Diaspora philanthropy constitutes an important field of investigation because it has the potential to contribute to the development of the home country and also to affect the relationships between the host country and the country of origin (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Mehta and Johnston, 2011; Chuyen, Small and Vuong, 2010; Dekkers and Rutten, 2010; Newland, Terrazas and Munster, 2010; Bakshi and Baron, 2010; Johnson, 2007; Orozco, 2006; Geithner, Johnson and Chen, 2004; Shiveshwarkar, 2008; Sidel, 2008; Hilber, 2008).

A large proportion of the transfers and donations made through diaspora philanthropy constitute social investments for the public good, such as building and financing of schools, community centers, or health clinics in the countries of origin. An important consequence of this practice is the expansion of networks and the transfer of knowledge between countries (Lowell, Findlay and Stewart, 2004) and massive socio-economic development of many developing nations (Chandrappagari, 2008). Hence, diaspora philanthropy by immigrants contains a huge potential to impact poverty and equity in their home countries and also to contribute to their nations’ economic and social development through a range of contributions, including financial investment, political advocacy, and philanthropic giving (Johnson, 2007).

This growing scope and importance of diaspora philanthropy in influencing development is also gaining popularity in the world of academia and is being recognized by scholars and
researchers worldwide. My research contributes to an understanding of diaspora philanthropy by investigating the informal mechanisms and sources of diaspora philanthropy among Indian immigrants in the United States and the hidden obligations underlying the practice of diaspora philanthropy and by clarifying the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the concept of identities in the existing literature on the role of immigrants’ identities in motivating diaspora to engage in diaspora philanthropy.

An understanding of the motivations, hidden obligations and informal sources and mechanisms of diaspora philanthropy among Indians in the United States may constitute an important guide and resource for the philanthropy supporters, volunteers, analysts and activists in the government sector, non-profit sector and social sciences who are involved in the study of trends and patterns of diaspora philanthropy. Hence, my research not only contributes to the existing body of sociological literature but may also assist policy makers, social scientists and social activists in learning about the hidden and informal factors associated with the practice of diaspora philanthropy.

Diaspora philanthropy eventually involves transfer of resources, income and wealth from one country to another. Therefore, it has the potential to influence the economic relations between the two countries involved in this transfer. By promoting an understanding of the sources and motivations of diaspora philanthropy, my research may assist policy makers in designing effective policies that will improve the economic relations between the two countries- India and the United States.
Research Questions

My research addresses the following research questions:

1. How can we best understand the role of immigrants’ identities in diaspora philanthropy?

2. How do practices of gift-giving and obligation influence diaspora philanthropy?

3. How do identities and practices of gift-giving and obligation interact in diaspora philanthropy?

Organization of Research

My research is divided into 7 chapters, introduction, theoretical orientation, method, literature review, method, analysis, discussion, and conclusion. The first chapter, Introduction, discusses the nature, scope and significance of my research. This chapter introduces the topic of my research, diaspora philanthropy; identity and obligation among Indian engineers in the United States, and examines the widespread confusion and current debate surrounding the issue of diaspora philanthropy particularly with reference to its similarity with and differences from the concept of remittances as discussed in the sociological literature on migrant communities. It discusses the current status of research on diaspora philanthropy within the broader sociological field of immigration, philanthropy and globalization and how does this research contribute to this field of academic research in sociology.

In this chapter, I discuss the rationale for conducting this research on the role of identity and obligation in motivating Indian engineers in the United States to practice diaspora philanthropy. This chapter also discusses the significance of this research for policy making on issues concerning capital transfer, economic exchange and international relations between
India and the United States. Finally, it introduces the research questions that my research addresses.

The second chapter, Theoretical Orientation, provides the theoretical foundation of my research. This chapter analyzes the concept of immigrants’ identities within the theoretical framework of the social identity perspective by Tajfel (1981). According to this perspective, social identity is defined as, “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of membership to a social group (or groups) together with the value and the emotional significance attached to it” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).

The concept of obligation is analyzed within the theoretical perspective of the gift theory by Marcel Mauss (1954). According to this theory, the gift relationship is typically characterized by 3 sets of related obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate. According to the first and the second obligations, the giver is under a constraint or obligation to give while the recipient is under an obligation to receive the gift. The refusal or the denial to either give a gift or to receive a gift amounts to rejecting the bond of friendship, closeness and community. According to the third obligation, the recipient of the gift is under an obligation to reciprocate this generous gesture by making a return gift to the original gift giver at a later time (Mauss, 1954).

The third chapter, Literature Review, discusses the various definitions and descriptions of the concepts of diaspora and diaspora philanthropy as they exist in the current sociological literature. It provides a discussion on how the sociologists who have analyzed the role of immigrants’ identities in influencing the decision of diaspora to make philanthropic contributions have approached the concept of immigrants’ identities. Additionally, this chapter
provides an account of the existing research by sociologists who have examined the concept of diaspora philanthropy as a gift and as an obligation and also their examination of the role of perceived obligations in influencing the decision of the diaspora to make philanthropic contributions. This chapter lays the foundation and background of my research and points out the gaps in existing sociological research on diaspora philanthropy that have been addressed in my study.

The fourth chapter, Method, provides an overview of my research methodology. In this chapter, I discuss the rationale for using qualitative research method to conduct my research. I discuss my research sample, my research questions, my research strategy of face-to-face in-depth interviews and the rationale for using this strategy to conduct my research. I also discuss my data sampling technique of snowball sampling and the rationale for using this technique of collecting my sample. This chapter includes a detailed description of how ethical and moral standards of research were maintained in my research and how the legal requirement of confidentiality of information, safety of respondents and informed consent were met before, during and after conducting my research. It also discusses the method and technique involved in my data analysis, the steps taken to ensure reliability of research and validity of responses in my research and also the limitations of my research.

The fifth chapter, Analysis, provides a descriptive profile of the participants in my study and a discussion on the various themes that emerged through the process of data analysis. This chapter discusses the results and findings of my data analysis with respect to my research questions pertaining to the ambiguity surrounding the concept of immigrants’ identities in the existing research on diaspora philanthropy, the role of hidden obligations in influencing the
The sixth chapter, Discussion, provides a summary of the theoretical and empirical implications of my research with respect to my research questions pertaining to the ambiguity surrounding the concept of immigrants’ identities in the existing research on diaspora philanthropy, the role of hidden obligations in influencing the decision of diaspora to make philanthropic contributions and the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy.

The seventh and the last chapter, Conclusion, provides an overall summary of the findings and results of my study as they relate to my research questions on the ambiguity surrounding the concept of immigrants’ identities in the existing research on diaspora philanthropy, the role of hidden obligations in influencing the decision of diaspora to make philanthropic contributions and the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. It describes how my research addresses and answers the research questions raised in the first chapter- Introduction and concludes my study by pointing out the future potential, scope and directions of research in my area of research.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

This chapter focusses on the theoretical foundation of my study. It provides a theoretical framework for the analysis of the concept of immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. This chapter is broadly divided into 4 sections. The first section, identity theories, discusses the various theories that have been used by social – psychologists to analyze the concept of immigrants’ identities in the context of diaspora philanthropy. The second section, the social identity perspective, analyzes the concept of immigrants’ identities from the social identity theoretical perspective by Tajfel (1981). The third section, theories of obligation, discusses the various theories that have been used by the economists to analyze the concept of obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. The fourth section, theory of gift, analyzes the concept of philanthropy as a gift and as an obligation from the theoretical perspective of the gift by Marcel Mauss (1954).

Identity Theories

The concept of identity within migrant communities has been approached differently by different social psychologists within the discipline of sociology. Based on their approaches, that is, their theoretical perspectives, these social psychologists may, broadly, be categorized into two groups, those who define identity in relation to a group, and those who define identity in relation to an individual. Those social psychologists who subscribe to the former approach emphasize those attributes, characteristics and behavior by which an individual is recognized as a member of collective group (Sahoo, 2006, p. 89) while those who subscribe to the latter
approach typically emphasize those attributes, characteristics and behavior by which an individual experiences self-hood and is recognized from a particular position (Sahoo, 2006, p. 89). The former category includes social psychologists such as Strada (2003) who define identity as “the perception of one’s self which comes from consciousness, a form of intelligence that enables skills such as foresight, recognition of the self as separate from others, and empathy toward others (p. 144). The latter category consists of social psychologists such as Premdas (2001) who define identity as “emerging from the collective consciousness of groups that share a common community and a common culture” (p. 4). This category also includes social psychologists such as Dlaminia and Anucha (2009) who define diaspora identity in terms of the new space occupied by the immigrants in the host country as well as their past experiences in the countries in which they have lived.

The Social Identity Perspective

In order to examine the concept of immigrant identities, I have adopted the social identity perspective as proposed by Tajfel (1981) which approaches the concept of identity in relation to a group. According to this perspective, social identity is defined as, “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of membership to a social group (or groups) together with the value and the emotional significance attached to it” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Tajfel (1982, p. 2) argues that there are 3 components of the social identity which include the cognitive component (i.e., the sense of awareness of membership), the evaluative component (i.e., the sense that this awareness is related to some value connotations), and an emotional component (i.e., affective investment in the awareness and
evaluations). Hence, this theory defines an individual’s identity in terms of his/her social self, that is, in terms of one’s membership of a group. According to Lam et al. (2010) the social identity theory focusses on the collective self, that is, the self which is embedded in a collective or society as a whole. Following Tajfel’s concept of social identity deriving from his social identity theory, my research examines the Indian immigrants’ identities in terms of their social identities, that is, to what extent their concept of the self is derived from their membership of different social groups such as those based on region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement, society and culture.

Various social psychologists who have analyzed the Indian diaspora community from the social identity perspective include Bhattacharya, 2008; Raj, 2004; Oonk, 2007; Sahoo and Sangha, 2010; Safran, Sahoo & Lal, 2008; Sahoo, 2006; Bhatia, 2007.

Although there have been various theoretical perspectives used by social psychologists to address the concept of identity within the migrant communities, my decision to examine this concept within the framework of social Identity theory by Tajfel is based on the specific relevance and usefulness of this theoretical tool to understand and analyze the concept of diaspora in my study. The concept of diaspora is defined to include, “migrants who proactively maintain psychological, communicational, and sometimes material ties to their countries of origin” (Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 38). Members of the diaspora community specifically maintain their cultural and linguistic identities through ongoing links with home and family, and membership of collective home associations away from home in their host country (Segrott, 2001). Hence the concept and definition of diaspora approaches the migrant community from the perspective of their identities as derived from their membership of social groups in their
home country. For this reason, I identified social identity theory by Tajfel (1981) as an appropriate theoretical framework to analyze the concept of diaspora identity in my study.

The major advantage of using the social identity theory by Tajfel (1981) over other theoretical perspectives in the study of migrant communities is its emphasis on the positive attitude of the immigrants towards their in-groups (social groups in their home countries) without having any negative attitude towards the people and social groups in their host country (out-groups). This approach emphasizes that, “positive attitudes toward the in-groups may not be positively related to the negative attitudes toward the out-groups. That is, people who favor the in-groups over the out-groups do not have to derogate the out-groups” (Tasdemir, 2011, p. 125).

Another strength of social identity theory over other theoretical perspectives in the context of diaspora philanthropy is its potential to explain the relationship between immigrants’ identification with their social groups in their home country and their perceived insecurities about their identification with these groups. In other words, this theory emphasizes that immigrants’ identification with their social groups in their home country will be stronger when their perceived identification with these groups is insecure or threatened (Grant, 2007).

However, the major disadvantage of this theory is that it does not analyze the concept of social identity from the multidimensional perspective (Tasdemir, 2011, p. 127). This dimension is particularly important when studying the diaspora community in terms of their membership and identification with several social groups in their home country. This points to a future potential and direction of research in the social identity theory tradition in the context of diaspora philanthropy.
Theories of Obligation

There is a relative dearth of sociological literature on the theoretical analysis of the concept of obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. In order to better understand migrant communities and the impact of their transnational philanthropic initiatives, there is a need for more theoretical sociological research on diaspora philanthropy (Rudnick, 2006). While there is a shortage of such an analysis within the discipline of sociology, the development economics literature is replete with studies that have theoretically analyzed philanthropic contributions by the diaspora. Broadly, the main economic theories on philanthropic contributions by the diaspora may be divided into two categories, altruism, and self-interest. Those subscribing to the former approach explain the philanthropic behavior of the diaspora in terms of altruism whereby they feel obligated to help people in their home country.

The altruism hypothesis suggests that a migrant will willingly sacrifice his or her own well-being or interest for the sake of the welfare of the people in their home country due to the love and concern they may have for their welfare (Opong, 2012, p. 10). Altruistic remittances involve transfer of resources to the home country purely for the purpose of aid and without any expectation of reciprocity (Arun and Ulku, 2011, p. 896).

In contrast to the altruistic model, those who subscribe to the latter approach explain the philanthropic behavior of the diaspora in terms of their self-interest whereby they either feel obligated to return the expenditures incurred on them in their home country or to make advance payments for the favors they expect from the people in their home country in future. Lianos & Cavounidis (2010) argue that purely selfish motivations are involved when the migrants’ planning involves long term personal calculations that do not include welfare. These
include remittances based on the conditional behavior of the migrants towards their family and particularly parents or when the migrants’ intentions are to return home at some stage in their lives or there are investment motives in the place of origin. (p. 120). Self-interested diasporic contributions generally arise from the desire to obtain social or financial services (Arun and Ulku, 2011). Philanthropic contributions constitute informal contracts that are a return on investment, self-enforcing, mutually beneficial and do not have any scope for delinquency (Opong, 2012, p. 12). Migrants’ philanthropic contributions may be viewed as repayments of loans used to finance the migrant’s investments in human capital or the expenditures incurred in the course of migration (Rapoport & Docquier, 2005, p. 13).

Theory of Gift

In order to investigate the role of obligation in motivating Indian engineer diaspora in the United States to make philanthropic donations to people in their home country, my study examines the practice of diaspora philanthropy as a mechanism of gift giving. In order to study the practice of diaspora philanthropy as a gift transfer among the Indian engineer diaspora in the United States, I draw on the classical theoretical framework of the gift as proposed by Marcel Mauss in 1923 (translated in English in 1954). In his famous book, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1954), Mauss outlines the principal characteristics of a gift exchange which, according to him, involves an obligatory transfer of inalienable objects or services between related individuals.

According to Mauss (1954), the gift relationship is typically characterized by 3 sets of related obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to
reciprocate. According to the first and the second obligations, the giver is under a constraint or obligation to give while the recipient is under an obligation to receive the gift. The refusal or the denial to either give a gift or to receive a gift amounts to rejecting the bond of friendship, closeness and community. According to the third obligation, the recipient of the gift is under an obligation to reciprocate this generous gesture by making a return gift to the original gift giver at a later time. The recipient is under an obligation to repay the gift because all gifts are inalienable and possess some spiritual powers which tend to go back to the original giver. These powers are so strong that in cases of non-compliance, the defaulter is punished with sickness or death. In the words of Mauss (1954):

Suppose you have some particular object, taonga, and you give it to me; you give it to me without a price. We do not bargain over it. Now I give this thing to a third person who after a time decides to give me something in repayment for it (utu) and he makes me a present of something (taonga). Now this taonga I received from him is the spirit (hau) of the taonga I received from you and which I passed on to him. The taonga which I receive on account of the taonga that came from you, I must return to you. It would not be right on my part to keep these taonga whether they were desirable or not. I must give them to you since they are the hau of the taonga which you gave me. If I were to keep this second taonga for myself I might become ill or even die. Such is hau, the hau of personal property, the hau of the taonga, the hau of the forest. (Mauss, 1954, p. 11)

According to Mauss (1954), the principal outcome of this transfer and its underlying set of obligations is that it binds both the giver and the recipient in a chain and network of long term relationships.

The major advantage of using Mauss’s theory of the gift over other theoretical perspectives to examine the concept of obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy is its unique ability to draw a connection between altruism and self-interest by explaining the hidden self-interest behind altruism. In contrast to the theoretical models based on pure altruism or pure self-interest, Mauss’s theory of the gift (1954) recommends a middle path
between the two by proposing that gifts appear to be altruistic but are necessarily characterized by an underlying expectation to be reciprocated with a gift of similar value. Another important characteristic of the gift is the denial of the expected return on the part of the gift-giver (Mauss, 1954). This is specifically relevant for this research because the underlying expectation of return favors or reciprocity is often denied by the diaspora while making philanthropic contributions to the people in their country of origin.

Drawing on Mauss’s conceptual framework of the gift, my study examines philanthropic donations by the Indian engineer diaspora in the United States to people in their home country as gifts which involve 3 sets of obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate.

The Indian diaspora community in the United States is under an obligation to give or make philanthropic donations to their home country because of the feeling of guilt associated with leaving their people and their home country and the desire to repay the debt of care, emotions and subsidized education in their home country. Singh (2006) argues that family and village members who receive philanthropic donations from the Indian nationals settled abroad often emphasize that migrants have an outstanding debt to their mother country and homeland community which may stem from investments made to educate the migrant and may also be attributed to other forms of social and cultural capital that provided the migrant with the opportunity to go abroad. Dekkers and Rutten (2011) also argue that philanthropic donations by Indian migrants are not gifts but part repayment of a debt. Geithner, Johnson and Chen (2004) note that the diaspora communities have always experienced a strong obligation
to help communities in their home countries through the giving of time, goods, talents, skills and money (p. xvi).

Further, Kumar (2003) argues that Indian Americans realize the debt they owe to the country of their origin because of the value system with which they were raised in India and the high quality education they received in India at virtually no cost which eventually helped them achieve prosperity in the American society (p. 49). According to Brinkerhoff (2008), diaspora members may experience a strong sense of obligation to support their communities in the home country owing to their relative wealth and/or higher quality of life in the host society (p. 412). Further, Brinkerhoff (2009) notes that diaspora philanthropy may be motivated by a sense of obligation or guilt for their preference to live in the wealthy host country while they continue to identify themselves with the homeland and are concerned about the sufferings of the people in their home country (p. 4).

Following Mauss's argument that the recipient of a gift is under an obligation to receive gifts, I argue that people in the home country are under an obligation to accept philanthropic donations from the Indian diaspora. Owing primarily to their powerlessness and lower socioeconomic status compared to the diaspora community, people in the home country are often in a disadvantageous position and are therefore in a weak condition to bargain or negotiate the kind and amount of donations and also the areas where donations would be desired. Because of this power and status inequality, people in the home country, as recipients of donation, often feel obligated to accept whatever donation is provided.

This is evident from several studies and sources that describe the feelings of distress, discontent, powerlessness and pain among recipients of philanthropy in the home country. For
example, in the context of Vietnamese diaspora philanthropy, Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) note that recipient communities in Vietnam often complain that Vietnamese Americans are willing to give time, expertise, in-kind gifts but very few are willing to give financially. In addition, most Vietnamese Americans provide conditional support or provide donations for only those geographical areas or projects that are related to them or their families (p. 265). Faist (2008) describes that community members in the home community are often dissatisfied and frustrated because transnational migrants participate in the decision making process in their countries of origin but are unwilling to take any responsibility for the consequences of those decisions since these decisions do not affect them.

Further, in a study conducted on the philanthropic relations between Indian migrants and the local community in Gujarat, Dekkers and Rutten (2011) observed that the villagers admitted to occupying a position of dependence vis-à-vis the migrants because of accepting philanthropic donations from the immigrants. Some of the villagers also mentioned that they are unable to question or criticize the spending behavior of the migrants as new projects could be jeopardized for want of fresh donations (Dekkers and Rutten, 2011). Furthermore, Brinkerhoff (2009) argues that diasporans’ residency in relatively wealthier societies than the homeland places them at a vantage position from where they can support the policy agendas of their choice (p. 13).

Furthermore, as Mauss mentioned in his theory of gift exchange, the transfer of philanthropic donations by the Indian diaspora to the home country is also characterized by the third obligation- the obligation of reciprocity. In other words, I argue that people in the home country often feel obligated to reciprocate the philanthropic gesture initiated by the diaspora
community settled abroad and often do reciprocate by bestowing respect, status, prestige, allowing greater participation in home country’s politico-economic decisions and also by granting other privileges in the home country. For example, Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) argue that celebrities, sports stars, business owners, and magnates have used their fame and influence to promote causes and encourage greater philanthropy to their ancestral countries but have often gained more fame through such philanthropic donations (p. 11). Shiveshwarkar (2008) also argues that diaspora philanthropy is likely to be motivated by a desire for personal prestige and recognition in one’s own community.

According to Dekkers and Rutten (2011), “Migrants often tend to perceive philanthropic donations as a ‘gift’ to their home community which creates indebtedness on the part of the recipients. They expect gratitude and respect for the help they render to develop their ancestral village, and thereby emphasize the reciprocal nature of the gift” (p. 3). Johnson (2007) argues that among the major factors that encourage (philanthropic) engagement and giving are the extension of legal and political rights to diaspora members, supportive financial policies, and active government outreach to a diaspora population, and monetary incentives (p. 38). Kapur et al. (2004) also argue that, “altruism may stem from the cognitive payoff gotten for recognition in the diaspora community as well as the source country; the idea of a strong, economically vibrant and socially just homeland as a source of self-esteem; or broader business interests wherein philanthropic actions create goodwill and entry points for business deals” (p. 192).

Finally, as Mauss argued, these 3 moral obligations eventually tie the giver and the recipient in a network of long-term social ties and relationships, I argue that an important
outcome of the transfer of diaspora philanthropic donations is the maintenance and
development of transnational ties and linkages between migrants and people in the home
country who share common cultural identities. Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) argue that
philanthropic donations among Vietnamese diaspora in the United States have significantly
contributed to the maintenance of strong ties between the Vietnamese immigrants and their
kinship networks, language, and cultural identity in their home country. Brinkerhoff (2006) also
emphasizes the importance of community solidarity and social bonds in enhancing the ability of
diasporas to mobilize for philanthropic contributions to the homeland. According to Newland,
Terrazas and Munster (2010), the desire to retain meaningful personal and professional ties
with their ancestral countries often translates into contributions of time and more tangible
resources by the immigrants to the people in their home countries. According to Tchoussai and
Sikod (2010), remittances constitute an important source through which people in the diaspora
maintain ties with their countries of origin.

The major disadvantage of using Mauss’s theory of the gift to examine the concept of
obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy is that it does not consider the importance of
time gap or necessary delay involved in returning the favor through a counter gift which
differentiates a gift transaction from an exchange transaction. Mauss mistakenly reduces the
gift to an exchange by neglecting to consider and theorize an important characteristic of the gift
that is - a gift gives demands and takes time (Olson, 2002). This dimension is particularly
important in the context of diaspora philanthropy which necessarily involves a significant lapse
of time before the diaspora can make philanthropic contributions to pay off the favors and
investments they received in their home country. This points to a future potential and direction of research in the gift theory tradition in the context of diaspora philanthropy.

However, where Mauss outlined his theoretical perspective on the gift as occurring between a set of social relatives, my study examines diaspora philanthropy as transfer of gifts between people who share common social identities. I argue that the social identity of the immigrant emphasizes his/her shared identity and collective association with the people in their home country. These shared identities and membership in a common socio-cultural community motivates the Indian diaspora to participate in gift giving in the form of diaspora philanthropy in order to maintain, retain and reinforce their membership in this shared moral community. Hence, I draw a connection between Mauss’s concept of the gift (1954) and Tajfel’s concept of social identity (1981) in the context of diaspora philanthropy.
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the current sociological literature available on immigrants’ identities, gift and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. This chapter is broadly divided into five sections. The first section, diaspora and diaspora philanthropy, provides an account of the various definitions and descriptions of diaspora and diaspora philanthropy as discussed by various sociologists in their studies and research. The second section, diaspora philanthropy and immigrant identities, discusses the concept of immigrants’ identities and the role of immigrants’ identities in influencing the decision of diaspora to make philanthropic contributions. The third section, diaspora philanthropy as gifts, discusses the available sociological studies and research that have examined diaspora philanthropy as gifts. The fourth section, diaspora philanthropy and obligation, discusses 3 sets of obligations in the context of diaspora philanthropy and how the perception of diaspora philanthropy as an obligation towards their home country motivates the immigrants to make philanthropic contributions. The fifth section, immigrant identities, gift and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy: a summary, provides a summary of the available sociological research on immigrants’ identities, gift and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy and points to gaps in this literature.

Diaspora

The term “diaspora” refers to “transnational ethnic groups” (Vertovec and Cohen, 1999). According to Tchouassi and Sikod (2010), the term diaspora includes a category of
“displaced persons who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home. Thus, concepts of diaspora include a history of dispersal, memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, which can be ambivalent or utopian, ongoing support of the homeland and, a collective identity defined by the above relationships” (p. 4). Morawska (2011) defines the term diaspora to refer to “ethno-national groups whose members reside out of their home country (moved from there either forcibly or voluntarily) and who retain a sense of membership in their group of origin and a collective representation and concern for the wellbeing of their homeland which plays a significant role in their lives in both a symbolic and normative sense” (p. 1030).

The diaspora community includes a wide range of immigrants including those who are forced out of their homeland for religious, cultural, or political reasons, those who left their homeland to seek a better life for themselves and their descendants, those who became part of the diaspora because the border shifted either through imperial and colonial conquest or the break-up of nation-states, those who are temporary immigrants and also those who acquired the status of permanent residents and even citizens of the host country (Morawska, 2011).

In whichever way they are constituted, Morawska (2011) argues that they all possess one common feature- they have made the host land their place of residence (temporarily or permanently) and they believe themselves to be part of their homeland in which they consider to have a legitimate stake (Morawska, 2011, p. 984-985). Morawska further argues that this fellow-feeling of the diaspora with the community members in their host country is often reinforced by others' perception of them where they are believed to a part of the national community (Morawska, 2011, p. 984). However, this link of the diaspora to their homeland is
not based on any specific ethnic or religious affiliation, but rather on a relationship to a land, its political history, and its societal culture (Morawska, 2011, p. 989).

Shain and Barth (2003) argue that the diaspora attach great importance to their kinship identity because of their unique status – they are geographically outside the state, but identity-wise perceived (by themselves, the homeland, or others) as ‘inside the people’ (p. 451). Ite (2002) argues that the concept of diaspora assumes that the skilled professionals settled abroad are not likely to return to their home countries but will create links through which they can effectively be connected to their home country’s development without any physical temporary or permanent return. Bhatia (2007) argues that diasporas always attempt to maintain (real and/or imagined) connections and commitments to their homeland and recognize themselves and act as members of a collective homeland community (p. 23). However, Addis (2012) argues that –“whatever way diasporas imagine the homeland, they have often attempted to act as if they belong to ‘we the people’ of the homeland” (p. 963). They imagine themselves to be "outside the state but inside the people" (Addis, 2012, p. 963).

The diaspora population has grown significantly over the past few decades. According to the estimates provided by Brinkerhoff (2012), it has grown from 75 million in 1965 to 150 million in 2000 and to 185 million in 2005 which suggests the increasing and significant role that the diasporas are likely to play on the global stage (p. 411). The International Organization for Migration estimated that about 300,000 professionals from the African continent lived and worked in Europe and North America in 2002 (Ite, 2002, p. 77). Khanna (2008) argues that almost every ethnic or national diaspora in the world has some presence in America. The Africans comprised 2.8% of the U.S. population according to the United States census 2000
Asian Indians are among the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States. Their population totaled nearly 2 million in 2006 (Hickey, 2006, p. 117).

The Indian Diaspora

According to the 2000 US census, the Indian-American community is one of the fastest growing immigrant communities in the USA. From 1990 to 2000, there was a 106% increase in the growth rate of Indian-Americans, compared to the average 7% growth rate in the general population. This shift marks the largest growth in the Asian-American community (Bhatia, 2007, p. 24). The Indian diaspora is the third largest Asian American population after Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans (Bakshi and Baron, 2011, p. 1). The Indian diaspora comprises more than 20 million people dispersed over all continents (Safran, Sahoo and Lal, 2008). Although that figure is small compared to the more than a billion inhabitants in the homeland, it has reached a critical mass in various host countries (Safran, Sahoo and Lal, 2008, p. 1).

The Indian diaspora consists of all those Indians who live outside the Indian subcontinent and this wide term includes two categories of people—persons of Indian origin (PIO) and non-resident Indians (NRI). The NRIs are Indian citizens who hold Indian passports but are residing outside of India for an indefinite period, whether for employment, or for carrying on any businesses or vocation or for any other purpose while the term PIO is applied to a foreign citizen of Indian origin or descent (Niumai, 2009, p. 1). Oonk (2007) describes Indian diaspora as “a type of consciousness... A state of mind, and a sense of identity. This nature has various connotations. First, it refers to the experience of discrimination and exclusion, and at the same time, the positive identification with the highly-praised historical heritage of the
Indian civilization. Second, the awareness of multi-locality, the notion of belonging ‘here and there’ as well as sharing the same ‘roots’ and ‘routes’” (p. 18). Safran, Sahoo and Lal (2008) also define the Indian diaspora in terms of their continuing economic, cultural and familial connections with the homeland and the communities in their homeland, their struggle to adapt to the host land’s political, economic and social norms, their desire to maintain their homeland’s distinct culture and society and their continuous efforts directed towards reconciling the culture and social patterns of the host country and the homeland (p. 5).

Diaspora Philanthropy

The term “diaspora philanthropy” is a relatively new term that has several variations such as homeland philanthropy, migrant philanthropy, and transnational giving (Johnson 2007). However, the fundamental characteristics of this concept, according to Johnson(2007) include, “(1) charitable giving from individuals who reside outside their homeland, who (2) maintain a sense of identity with their home country, (3) give to causes or organizations in that country, and (4) give for public benefit” (p. 5). Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) define diaspora philanthropy as “the private donations of diasporas to a wide range of causes in their countries of origin” (p. 2).

A large proportion of these transfers and donations constitute social investments for the public good, such as building and financing of schools, community centers, or health clinics in the countries of origin. An important consequence of diaspora philanthropy is the expansion of networks and the transfer of knowledge between countries (Lowell, Findlay and Stewart, 2004). According to Hilber (2008), diaspora philanthropy often implies “collective remittances” or
“community remittances”, which are essentially group donations transferred by migrant
organizations such as hometown-associations (HTA) for development projects in their home
countries (p. 6). Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) define diaspora philanthropy as “a practice
that extends beyond individual family remittances and aims at humanitarian contributions
which address basic needs and promote longer-term development in the country of origin” (p.
back to Asian countries for purposes of charitable, social, economic, cultural, religious and
other forms of development as distinct from family relief, business investment, and other forms
of remittances (p. 3).

Dekkers and Rutten (2011) argue that diaspora philanthropy involves transfer of
resources by migrants to their home country and it includes remittances too because a large
part of such transfer consists of transferring money and goods to the family members for family
maintenance or consumption (p. 2). Nielson (2004) argues that, diaspora philanthropy is
generally motivated by feelings of cultural or religious identity with the community in the home
country and a desire to support and promote development in the home country of the
immigrants (p. 1). McCarthy (2002-2003) argues that diaspora philanthropy seeks to channel
the wealth of the diaspora towards the building of infrastructure and promoting development
in the poor developing nations (p. 1). However, Johnson (2007) defines diaspora philanthropy
as “the total giving of a diaspora -- back to the homeland, to communities of residence, or
elsewhere” (p. 8).

There are several sociological studies and accounts of diaspora philanthropy among
various immigrant ethnic groups settled in the United States, Australia, England and France. For
example, Johnson (2007) notes that Chinese Americans have provided enormous resources to build and equip schools in their hometowns through contributions paid to family members. She argues that the investment of Chinese-American community accounts for 70% of foreign direct investment in China. Young and Shih (2003) state that private diaspora philanthropy from Chinese living abroad (especially in the United States) has been a critical resource for the expansion and development of Universities in China which is evident from the fact that Tsinghua University has received about 70% of $50.8 million from Chinese donors living abroad.

Describing the extent of philanthropy among the Vietnamese diaspora, Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) argue that the three countries with the largest Vietnamese diaspora populations are the United States with 1.2 million, France with 250,000, and Australia with 200,000. Canada follows closely with around 151,000 Vietnamese, mostly from the 1975-1985 wave, who have settled in the urban centers of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. The Vietnamese diaspora sends an estimated $6.8 billion in remittances to Vietnam annually. A small portion of Vietnamese remittances extend beyond family contributions and can be considered philanthropic gifts (p. 255).

In the context of Mexico, Nielson (2004) argues that Mexico received 42 million remittances totaling more than $13 billion, or 2% of GDP in the year 2003. Much of this was channeled through one of the 600 hometown associations that thrive in cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles, where there are large Mexican populations. In fact, Mexican federal and state governments (and some local governments), recognizing the importance of these flows, have agreed to match funds that go towards infrastructure projects. In 2003, the state of Michoacán
received almost $1.7 billion in remittances, representing close to 17% of its gross state product and equivalent to $425 per capita.

Indian Diaspora Philanthropy

Diaspora remittances to India from the United States are one of the highest in the world and have played a significant role in India’s development over the past few years. In 2000-2001, the overall contributions to India from the diaspora were $955 million in which the United States alone gave over $315 million. It is estimated that between 1975-2000 $97 billion was received from the diaspora. (Anand, 2003, p. 5). These contributions were estimated to be $49.3 billion in 2009 alone and are expected to increase in the coming years (Bakshi and Baron, 2011).

Bornstein (2011) argues that diaspora philanthropy from US-based Indian communities has been increasing at such a rapid and alarming rate that it may even substitute the Indian state in the coming years (p. 3). Bakshi and Baron (2011) argue that Indian diaspora philanthropy takes many forms including those based on centuries-old religious and ethnic traditions and also those based on new technologies. Leclerc and Meyer (2007) describe how the Indian diaspora has played a key role in the IT revolution and the rising information economy in India through the transfer of knowledge and donations from successful diaspora members to higher education institutions in India.

There are several studies providing detailed accounts and description of the type of diaspora giving back to India. For example, Sidel (2002) enumerates eight important informal and more formal channels for philanthropic giving by NRIs in the United States back to India. These include giving through personal and family, non-organizational ties directly in India,
through Indian-American umbrella occupational, ethnic, professional, religious or other groups, a particularly important set of channels, directly through Indian organizations based in India (such as CRY/India), through U.S.-based international NGOs with operations in India, either on a generalized or donor-advised basis (such as CARE), through U.S.-based public charity affiliates of Indian organizations (such as CRY/U.S), through high technology and other companies, through Indian-American umbrella philanthropic groups (such as AIF), through American philanthropic entities on a donor-advised or ‘venture’ basis.

Leclerc and Meyer (2007) argue that there are about 35,000 IIT alumni in the US who donated about $36 million to open management schools, research laboratories and technology centers in India as of January 2003. The IIT foundation from Kharagpur itself received about $200 million from its network. The money also helped establish endowed professorship which is a common practice in US academic life and which helped to foster the knowledge transfer. The IIT, Delhi acquired 17 professorships between 1996 and 2000. Some other diaspora members opened new private institutions like the International School of Business (ISB) in Hyderabad, created by Rajat Gupta who became the managing director of McKinsey from 1994 to 2003. ISB is associated with three leading international business schools (Kellogg School of Management, The Wharton School and London Business School), and many Indian professors abroad spend their sabbatical year teaching there. These management skills acquired through the diaspora provide significant strength for the Indian IT industry to compete on the global scale (Leclerc and Meyer, 2007, p. 164).

Further, Saxenian (2005) argues that U.S. educated and trained Indian engineers are increasingly transferring up-to-date technology and market information to India. Also, because
of their experience and professional networks, they can quickly identify promising new opportunities, raise capital, build management teams and establish partnerships with other specialist producers. Saxenian (2005) also argues that learning in the Indian software industry has occurred primarily through long distance relationships with successful Indian and multinational software professionals and firms in the U.S and other developed nations, in spite of the fact that Bangalore is home to India’s leading University and government research centers, including the elite Indian Institute of Science, the Center for the Development of Advanced Computing and a range of telecommunications and defense-oriented research facilities.

Immigrant Identities

The concept of identity within migrant communities has been approached differently by different social psychologists. Based on their approaches, these social psychologists may, broadly, be categorized into two groups- those who define identity in relation to a group and those who define identity in relation to an individual. The social psychologists who subscribe to the former approach emphasize those characteristics, attributes and behavior by which an individual is recognized as a member of a collective group (Sahoo, 2006, p. 89) while those who subscribe to the latter approach typically emphasize those characteristics, attributes and behavior by which an individual experiences self-hood and is recognized by the world from a particular position (Sahoo, 2006, p. 89).

The former category includes social psychologists such as Strada (2003) who defines identity as “the perception of one’s self which comes from consciousness, a form of intelligence
that enables skills such as foresight, recognition of the self as separate from others, and empathy toward others” (p. 144). The latter category consists of social psychologists such as Premdas (2001) who define identity as “emerging from the collective consciousness of groups that share a common community and a common culture” (P. 4). This category also includes social psychologists such as Dlaminia and Anucha (2009) who define diaspora identity as a dynamic process that is constantly being created and recreated by the immigrants in their new space together with their past experiences in the countries in which they have lived (Dlaminia and Anucha, 2009, p. 229). Similarly Lorenzana defines identity as a dynamic process that is constantly transforming itself through space and time. It is essentially, plural and contextual and may even be contradictory since individuals or groups claim multiple affiliations (across ethnicity, class, gender, etc.) at the same time (Lorenzana, 2008, p. 61-62).

The Role of Immigrant Identities in Diaspora Philanthropy

Several sociologists have examined how the dominant socio-cultural identities of Indian engineer immigrants in the United States influence their practices of diaspora philanthropy, that is, how different socio-cultural identities that make up an immigrant’s self influence their engagement and participation in diaspora philanthropy. The socio-cultural identities of immigrants may motivate immigrants to participate in diaspora philanthropy because they represent shared identities with the members in their home country and may therefore engender greater trust, understanding and belief in the cause of donation (Nielson, 2004; Johnson, 2007; Yuen, 2008). In other words, the socio-cultural identities of immigrants are
reflective of their bonds of togetherness and a moral community and therefore motivate the
diaspora community to make philanthropic donations to their community members.

Arthur (2010) states that African immigrants in the United States maintain highly diverse
and constantly evolving transnational cultural identities that allows them to participate equally
in fostering ties to both the United States and Africa. According to him, “maintaining the
transnational immigrant identity serves as the conduit and the agency for effecting macro-
structural changes in Africa….The economic and cultural resources African immigrants harness
in the United States are funneled home to set up various business enterprises to produce food,
to operate transportation systems, to build flats and condominiums, hospitals and schools or to
is the primary motive behind diaspora philanthropy amongst Irish diaspora because one has to
feel or have affinity with one’s country in order to maintain a relationship with that country or
to make philanthropic contributions to that country (p. 1). Henry and Mohan (2003) argue that
diasporic identities create a sense of community with the people in their home country which
engenders a sense of virtue to support those in the members in these communities.

Yuen (2008) argues that Asian American immigrants maintain their distinctive religious,
cultural and demographic identities. The identity of each cultural group has played a vital role in
forming many religious, mutual aid and social organizations which allows them to stay
connected with their own community and to provide resources and assistance to each other
and to individual members and groups in their home countries. According to Yuen (2008), their
distinctive cultural identities are important to understand their participation in diaspora
philanthropy because donors need to have strong feelings of identification with the community
or the organization they make donations to. In other words, they should be convinced about
the cause, trustworthiness and credibility of the recipient organizations or communities (p. 1).
Yuen (2008) further argues that the donors vary in terms of the specific ways in which they
identify with the causes of the community they donate to and hence their specific reasons for
making philanthropic donations. While some donors contribute with a desire to improve the
lives of their families and friends in their homeland, others wish to contribute to the financial
success of their birthplace through their contributions.

Orozco (2006) examined the role of immigrant identities in the context of diaspora
philanthropy by looking at the experience of Central American hometown associations
including Guatemalan, El Salvadoran, Honduran and Nicaraguan associations in the United
States. In his survey of Latino groups from twelve Latin American and Caribbean countries, he
found that on an average eight percent of people who send remittances belong to a Hometown
association (HTA). HTAs are “entities formed by immigrants who seek to support their places of
origin, maintain relationships with local communities, and retain a sense of community as they
adjust to life in the United States” (p. 5-6). Hence, these associations represent a subset of
minority-based migrant philanthropic organizations whose activities range from charitable aid
to investment. Orozco (2006) argues that Central Americans participate in these associations as
a way to validate their identity, attachment and relationships with their hometown.

Further, illustrating the factors conducive to diaspora mobilization and contribution
among Afghan Americans, Brinkerhoff (2008) mentions that identity concerns strongly
informed philanthropic tendencies among the youth and first generation Afghan Americans.
Geithner, Johnson and Chen (2004) argue that the diaspora prefer to make philanthropic contributions to specific geographic locations and communities which reflect their sense of identity, familial relationships and social affinities. Typically, “first-generation Indian Americans prefer to give to their regional, linguistic or religious compatriots rather than ‘to India’ ” (Geithner, Johnson and Chen, 2004, p. xvi). Johnson (2007) argues that charitable giving from individuals who reside outside their homeland is fundamentally motivated by a sense of identity with their home country. Nielson (2004) also argues that diaspora philanthropy is largely motivated by feelings of cultural or religious identity, a sense of community, and often an acute appreciation of conditions within the home country. Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) argue that an important motivating factor behind diaspora philanthropy is ‘identity maintaining mechanism’, that is, members of the diaspora give to their country because it allows them to maintain some form of connection to their place of origin and the re-establishment of identities that have been dispersed through migration (p. 258).

Berger (2006) argues that cultural identity influences certain factors that serve to either facilitate or impede philanthropic activity. For instance, being identified as a member of one religious group may increase the number of personal invitations to volunteer, increase one’s knowledge about where and how to volunteer, and thereby facilitate the volunteering decision. Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) argue that philanthropists often donate to causes that have some kind of personal resonance for instance, they may relate to some of their past challenges or personal experiences in their life trajectories, or underprivileged individuals who hail from similar backgrounds (p. 9). Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) also argue that the extent of
participation in philanthropic activities by the diaspora community depends on their level of identification with their homeland or country of origin.

Diaspora Philanthropy as Gifts

Several sociologists have described and analyzed acts of diaspora philanthropy as gifts. Sidel (2008) argues that the early research on diaspora philanthropic giving in Asia consisted of a discussion of gifts and their givers, primarily to India and China and later the Philippines. Referring to diaspora philanthropy, Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) argue that “whether donors give individually or as a group has profound implications for the impact of their gifts” (p. 9). Dekkers and Rutten (2011) refer to the philanthropic relations between Indian migrants and the local community in Gujarat as a “gift-giving process” (p. 1). Mehta and Johnston (2011) refer to the philanthropic contributions of the diaspora as “mega-gifts” (p. 3). Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) argue that “a small portion of Vietnamese remittances extend beyond family contributions and can be considered philanthropic gifts” (p. 255).

Johnson (2007) argues that “the size of such gifts can range from small monetary contributions to fairly significant investments... many gifts both large and small are made directly to local organizations or institutions within home countries and are difficult to track or measure” (p. 7). Bornstein (2011) argues that “Recipients of gifts by global philanthropic networks are not individuals but non-profit organizations that work directly with those in need” (p. 3). Lainer-Vos (2012) refers to the flow of philanthropy from the Irish-American and Jewish-American diasporas to their respective homelands as “a hybrid of a gift and an investment” (p. 74).
Further, referring to diaspora philanthropy McCarthy (2002-2003), argues that, “a small but growing number of community foundations in the US have begun to raise funds from immigrant groups in their areas, matching their gifts with nonprofit organizations in the donors’ home countries” (p. 1). She further argues “While more traditional gifts might pave a street or repair a building in the donors’ home town, community foundations have the capacity to multiply these gifts in perpetuity” (McCarthy, 2002-2003, p. 1). Foley and Babou (2010) describe the hospital constructed by the transnational diaspora in the holy city of Touba in central Senegal as “a gift” presented by the Kalife general to the state (p. 82).

Analyzing the factors that motivate the members of the central African diaspora to make philanthropic contributions in their region of origin, Tchouassi and Sikod (2010) refer to these philanthropic contributions as ‘charitable gifts’ (p. 10). Similarly, referring to the sources or channels of diaspora philanthropy, Shiveshwarkin (2008) argues that “Many individuals choose to use family and close friends as conduits for charitable gifts and social investments, believing that they are the most trustworthy of intermediaries and those best able to identify local needs” (p. 134). Referring to the practice of diaspora philanthropy amongst female diaspora philanthropy in Italy, Basa (2006) states that “Providing food and material aid are some of the most common forms of gift-giving activities by women” (p. 20). Other sociologists who have described diaspora philanthropy as gifts in their studies and research include Dobrzynski, 2007; Copeman, 2011; Thomas, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2008; Young and Shih, 2003; Singh, Cabraal and Robertson, 2010; Nielson, 2004.
Diaspora Philanthropy as an Obligation

Several sociologists have examined the obligations that underlie the practice of diaspora philanthropy among the immigrant community. The diaspora may be under an obligation to give or make philanthropic donations to their home country because of the feeling of guilt associated with leaving their people and their home country and the desire to repay the debt of care, emotions and subsidized education in their home country. Although the individual acts of philanthropy appear to be voluntary, they are motivated, guided and regulated by a series of obligations deriving from guilt, shame, pride or indebtedness among the diaspora community (Singh, 2006; Dekkers and Rutten, 2011; Geithner, Johnson and Chen, 2004; Brinkerhoff, 2008; Kumar, 2003) and return obligations deriving from the recipients’ relatively lower position in the power and status hierarchy (Newland, Terrazas and Munster, 2010; Shiveshwarkar, 2008; Johnson; 2007; Kapur et. al, 2004). These obligations surrounding the acts of diaspora philanthropy often remain hidden, unnoticed and undocumented and may be discussed under 3 sub headings-. The obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate.

The Obligation to Give

Singh (2006) argues that family and village members who receive philanthropic donations from the Indian nationals settled abroad often emphasize that migrants have an outstanding debt to their mother country and homeland community which may stem from investments made to educate the migrant and may also be attributed to other forms of social and cultural capital that provided the migrant with the opportunity to go abroad. Dekkers and
Rutten (2011) also argue that philanthropic donations by Indian migrants are not gifts but part repayment of a debt. Geithner, Johnson and Chen (2004) note that diaspora communities have always experienced a strong obligation to help communities in their home country through the giving of time, goods, talents, skills and money (p. xvi). According to Brinkerhoff (2008), diaspora members often experience a strong sense of obligation to support their home country owing to their relative wealth and/or higher quality of life in the host society (p. 412).

Further, Brinkerhoff (2009) notes that diaspora philanthropy may be motivated by a sense of obligation owing to the guilt of living in a prosperous nation while their community members continue to live in a suffering homeland (p. 4). Kumar (2003) argues that the Indian Americans realize the debt they owe to the country of their origin for the value system with which they were raised in India and also for the high quality education they received in India at virtually no cost - which eventually helped them achieve prosperity in the American society, (p. 49). Thomas (1999) describes philanthropic contributions by Vietnamese diaspora in the U.S. to their home country as “a form of compensation” (p. 156). He argues that these contributions, “ameliorate the sense that the escapees were the lucky ones, assuages the guilt felt that family remaining in the home country are suffering from a political regime that diaspora cannot tolerate… alleviate suffering and guilt at escaping as well as the guilt of staying away. There is also an admiration felt for those who were left behind and many overseas Vietnamese feel indebted to their nation, which provided them with their lives, identities and connection to place” (Thomas, 1999, p. 156).

Similarly in the context of the Greek diaspora in Britain, Evergeti (2006) argues that the members of the diaspora community are expected to perform family duties and obligations and
do as much as possible for the family left behind not just for the guilt of leaving their community but also to maintain one’s status as an active member of the family left behind (p. 359). Further, in his study of the Afro-Caribbean community in the UK, Stephenson (2002) observed that the migrants’ travelled to the ancestral homeland because they felt ‘obliged’ or ‘compelled’ to do so (Stephenson, 2002, p. 396) (Ali and Holden, 2006, p. 223). Khan (1977) also noted that Pakistani immigrants are not accepted as a member of the kinship group or village where they originate if obligations are not fulfilled. (Ali and Holden, 2006, p. 223).

Page (2012) argues that the diaspora in the west are often associated with increasing levels of selfishness and a loss of understanding of the real needs of those in the home communities. Hence, the diaspora often feels obligated to assuage this guilt by providing aid to the communities in the home country. (p. 6). Describing the relationship between obligation and diaspora philanthropy amongst Ghanians in the United Kingdom, Mohan (2006) argues that Ghanian immigrants have a strong moral and social obligation to send money in order to support housing, infrastructure and the welfare of the kin in Ghana. This may be considered a sort of repayment for the cost of their education and transportation borne by their home country.

The Obligation to Receive

People in the home country are under an obligation to accept philanthropic donations from the Indian diaspora. Owing primarily to their powerlessness and lower socio-economic status compared to the diaspora community, people in the home country are often in a disadvantageous position and are therefore in a weak condition to bargain or negotiate the
kind and amount of donations and also the areas where donations would be desired. Because of this power and status inequality, people in the home country, as recipients of donation, often feel obligated to accept whatever donation is provided. This is evident from several studies and sources that describe the feelings of distress, discontent, powerlessness and pain among recipients of philanthropy in the home country. For example, in the context of Vietnamese diaspora philanthropy, Chuyen, Small and Vuong (2010) note that recipient Vietnamese communities often complain that Vietnamese Americans are willing to give time, expertise, in-kind gifts but very few are willing to give financially. In addition, most Vietnamese Americans prefer to provide donations for those geographical areas or projects that are related to them or their families (p. 265).

Further, Brinkerhoff (2009) argues that “diasporans’ residency in relatively wealthier societies than the homeland places them at an advantageous position from where they can support the policy agendas of their choice” (p. 13). Faist (2008) describes that community members in the home community are often dissatisfied and frustrated because transnational migrants participate in the decision making process in their countries of origin but are unwilling to take any responsibility for the consequences of those decisions since these decisions do not affect them.

Furthermore, in a study conducted on the philanthropic relations between Indian migrants and the local community in Gujarat, Dekkers and Rutten (2011) observed that the villagers admitted to occupying a position of dependence vis-à-vis the migrants because of accepting philanthropic donations from the immigrants. Some of the villagers also mentioned that they are unable to question or criticize the spending behavior of the migrants as new
projects could be jeopardized for want of fresh donations (Dekkers and Rutten, 2011). Carling (2005) argues that the relationship between diaspora and the people in their home town is intrinsically asymmetrical because of the differences in their perception of transnational moralities, difference in their access to information in the host country of the diaspora and also because of the differences in the resources possessed by the diaspora and their counterparts in their home country.

The Obligation to Reciprocate

People in the home country often feel obligated to reciprocate the philanthropic gesture initiated by the diaspora community settled abroad and often do reciprocate by bestowing respect, status, prestige, allowing greater participation in home country’s politico-economic decisions and also by granting other privileges in the home country. For example, Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) argue that celebrities, sports stars, business owners, and magnates have often used their fame and influence to promote causes and encourage greater philanthropy to their ancestral countries but in the process, they have often gained more fame through philanthropy (p. 11). Shiveshwarkar (2008) also argues that diaspora philanthropy is likely to be motivated by a desire for personal prestige and recognition in one’s own community. According to Dekkers and Rutten (2011), “migrants often tend to perceive philanthropic donations as a ‘gift’ to their home community which creates indebtedness on the part of the recipients. They expect gratitude and respect for the help they render to develop their ancestral village, and thereby emphasize the reciprocal nature of the gift” (p. 3).
Among the major factors that encourage philanthropic giving by the diaspora are the extension of legal and political rights to diaspora members, supportive financial policies, and active government outreach to a diaspora population, and monetary incentives (Johnson, 2007, p. 38). Kapur et al. (2004) also argue that, “altruism may stem from the cognitive payoff gotten for recognition in the diaspora community as well as the source country; the idea of a strong, economically vibrant and socially just homeland as a source of self-esteem; or broader business interests wherein philanthropic actions create goodwill and entry points for business deals” (p. 192). Page (2012) argues that the developing countries could benefit significantly if the diasporas invested money in worthy projects in their home countries. Hence, the role of government and other policy-makers in this scenario is to help educate the diaspora about the potential consequences of their choices or to steer them in particular directions using financial inducements and incentives, or by establishing the regulatory framework for financial services to do the same (Page, 2012, p. 5).

Further, Henry and Mohan (2003) argue that the diaspora support people and communities at home in order to ensure that there will be some personal or group gains in the future (p. 615). Lentz (1994, p. 151) describes this characterization of diaspora behavior towards home as ‘mere strategy for self-advancement’. (Henry and Mohan, 2003, p. 615). Again, Arhinful (2001) describes the contributions sent by diaspora to their home country as a form of social security to ensure that they are cared for in old age if at all they decided to go back to their home country at some stage in their lives. (Henry and Mohan, 2003, p. 615). Foley and Babou (2010) examined a development project- the construction of a medical hospital, initiated by the transnational diaspora in the holy city of Touba in central Senegal and examined
the processes through which the emigrants develop meaningful social connections and capitalize on the opportunities triggered off by these transnational social networks (p. 78). For e.g. the diaspora enjoy the privilege of becoming members of the hospital by purchasing membership cards in amounts which are determined by their geographic location and are based on an estimation of the relative affluence of the Mouride community in question. An interesting thing to note here is that membership cards in African countries cost considerably less than cards sold in Europe and North America. (Foley and Babou, 2010, p. 80).

Again, Kitchin and Boyle (2009) argue that diaspora philanthropy should not be a one-way street which means that there must be some benefits accruing to the diaspora for making philanthropic contributions. That is why, for instance, the Irish Technology Leadership Group, comprising Irish people in senior positions in the high-tech world of Silicon Valley, are seeking to invest in Irish companies because they see this initiative as a good and profitable enterprise for their Irish members (Kitchin and Boyle, 2009, p. 1).

Immigrant Identities, Gift and Obligation in the Context of Diaspora Philanthropy: A Summary

The existing sociological studies have examined the role of immigrants’ identities in motivating the diaspora to make philanthropic contributions. These studies examine how members of the diaspora identify themselves with the communities in their home countries as one shared moral community and how these shared identities engender greater trust and confidence in the need, worthiness and authenticity of the individuals and organizations receiving philanthropic contributions in the home country. The diaspora transnationals are more likely to know about the existence and needs of the individuals and organizations in their
own community and are therefore more likely to make philanthropic contributions to them. However, diaspora members vary widely in terms of the ways in which they identify with their communities in their home country. For example, some donors identify closely with their religious community, others identify themselves more with their kin. Some identify with their birthplace while others identify with the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, one common characteristic about the diaspora is that they attempt to reinforce, reassure and reestablish their identities as members in their shared communities through diaspora philanthropy.

The sociological literature on diaspora philanthropy as gifts and as an obligation examines the various forms and ways in which the diaspora perceives and regard their philanthropic contributions as gifts to their country. These studies examine the diaspora’s perception, attitude and belief about the philanthropic contributions as an obligation towards their home country and how that perception influences their decision to participate in diaspora philanthropy. The 3 fundamental obligations that underlie the practice of diaspora philanthropy and motivate the diaspora to make philanthropic contributions include- the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate.

Members of the diaspora suffer from guilt and shame for having received the education, social support and cultural values from their home country and enjoying the wealth and higher standard of living in a rich country while the people in their home country continue to live in poverty, corruption and misery. They attempt to make for this selfish attitude through diaspora philanthropy. The recipients of the philanthropy in the home country are often under an obligation to receive whatever philanthropy is offered to them because of their weak bargaining position, lower socio-economic status compare to the diaspora and the resulting
powerlessness. The community members in the home country complain that the amount, locations and specific projects supported by the diaspora through philanthropy are selected on the basis of their potential benefits to the diaspora and their family members rather than their need or worthiness. Hence, the diaspora possesses the ability and the power to determine the amount and the projects to be supported by their philanthropy which constitutes another motivating factor in their practice of diaspora philanthropy.

Further, the government in the home country feels obligated to reciprocate and return the favor of investments and transfer of funds through diaspora philanthropy. Hence, they offer monetary benefits through supportive financial policies and greater participation in the political and legal decisions of the nation and treat the diaspora with greater respect and prestige. This provides another significant incentive to the diaspora to participate in diaspora philanthropy.

Hence, plenty of sociological studies have described the role of immigrants’ identities in motivating diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to their home country. However, there is conceptual ambiguity with respect to the concept of identities in the existing literature. Similarly, there is an abundance of sociological literature examining diaspora philanthropy as a gift. However, there is a lack of sociological research on the underlying hidden obligations that are associated with the practice of gift-giving in the context of diaspora philanthropy. Also, there is a dearth of sociological literature on the various ways in which identities and practices of gift-giving and obligation interact in diaspora philanthropy, that is, how transnational immigrant identities create a sense of obligation among the diaspora to make philanthropic contributions as gifts to their home country. Besides, the informal sources and mechanisms of making philanthropic contributions by the Indian diaspora to India are relatively less known in
the existing literature on diaspora philanthropy. Hence, the above discussion points to the gaps in the available sociological literature on immigrant identities, gift and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. It raises the following research questions:

1. How can we best understand the role of immigrants’ identities in diaspora philanthropy?

2. How do practices of gift-giving and obligation influence diaspora philanthropy?

3. How do identities and practices of gift-giving and obligation interact in diaspora philanthropy?
CHAPTER 4

METHOD

This chapter provides a description of the research methodology used to conduct my research including the rationale of its use in my study, my sampling strategy, the technique of data collection and data analysis, procedures adopted to maintain confidentiality of information and informants, steps taken to ensure validity and reliability of research, the limitations of my research due my research methodology and also my reflections as a researcher. This chapter is divided into 11 sections. The first section, research methodology, discusses the nature, significance and rationale of using qualitative research methodology to conduct my study. The second section, data collection, describes my population of interest, sample size and field of study. The third section, research strategy, describes my research strategy of face-to-face in-depth interviews. The fourth section, data sampling, describes my sampling technique of snowball sampling. The fifth section, data confidentiality, describes the procedures taken to maintain confidentiality of my data and respondents. The sixth section, data analysis, describes my technique of data analysis. The seventh section, interview questions, outlines the specific interview questions used to obtain data for my study. The eighth section, reliability, describes the steps taken to ensure reliability of my data while the ninth section, validity, describes the steps taken to ensure validity of my data. The tenth section, limitations, describes the limitations of my research due to the qualitative nature of my research methodology. Finally, the eleventh section, my reflections as a researcher provides a discussion on my experience as an insider researcher.
Research Methodology

My study was conducted using qualitative research methodology. Smith et al. (2011) define qualitative research as a generic term that refers to “groups of methods and ways of collecting and analyzing data that are distinctly different from quantitative methods because they lack quantification and statistical analysis” (p. 4). They, further, argue that qualitative methods are most appropriate for exploring those issues about which very little is known, or complex issues or when new insights or information are desired from existing phenomena, when the requirement is to construct themes to explain a phenomena or when in-depth knowledge or understanding is required of any phenomena (smith et al., 2011, p. 41). Arnold and Lane (2011) also argue that qualitative research is highly appropriate for the exploration of topics or issues about which little or nothing is known (p. 292).

Several sociologists have identified the shortage of literature in the field of diaspora philanthropy. Bornstein (2011) argues that there exists substantive research and literature on philanthropy and the non-profit sector but very little is known about diaspora philanthropy (p. 4). Mehta and Johnston (2011) state that although there are a few example studies on diaspora philanthropy, very little is known about the scope and extent of diaspora engagement in philanthropy. Further Johnson (2007) stresses that diaspora philanthropy remains one of the least understood components of the philanthropic domain and specifically organized diaspora philanthropy. Although there have been some studies conducted on the individual experience of specific institutions or countries but the broader potential or common challenges of this field have been largely ignored. Consequently, the growing number of organizations and institutions seeking to encourage and strengthen diaspora philanthropy lack the knowledge base to do so.
effectively. Therefore, new research, discussion, and creative thinking is required if diaspora philanthropy is to realize its full potential (p. 4).

With specific reference to Indian diaspora, Niumai (2009) states that data on Indian diasporic philanthropy are very limited, although there have been few studies that have provided a glimpse of the role played by the Indian diaspora through NGOs in promoting welfare, social development and emergency assistance in India (p. 2). Geithner, Johnson and Chen (2004) argue that there exists very little information on the amount, purpose and geographic distribution of diaspora philanthropy to China and India. Nielson (2004) states that despite few initiatives that have been taken so far, the overall research on diaspora philanthropy is scarce.

If the literature on diaspora philanthropy is less, the research on factors that motivate diaspora to engage in philanthropy is far less. Sidel (2008) argues that within the available literature on diaspora philanthropy that addresses the mechanisms of giving, there is far less on the motivations of diaspora giving (p.6). Shiveshwarkar (2008) also argues that there is no comprehensive or organized study on the diaspora’s motivations and factors associated with their giving (p. 133). Again, Nielson (2004) states that very little work has been done on what motivates diaspora communities to make philanthropic contributions. Similarly, Tsunoda (2010) argues that the current research on specific donor motivations in the context of diaspora philanthropy is limited.

The qualitative research method was selected as an appropriate method to understand the role of identity and obligation in motivating Indian engineers to participate in diaspora philanthropy because an investigation of the individual motives behind social action can only be
conducted through a research design that allows the researcher to probe into the minds of the participants and facilitate an understanding of how the participants themselves understand their situation or phenomena. Sin (2010) argues that qualitative research provides a deeper and more meaningful understanding of complex social phenomena by exploring the social world as experienced by people themselves (p. 306). Swift and Tishler (2010) argue that qualitative research investigates “how and why people behave in certain ways” (p. 560). The qualitative method enabled me to explore and understand the meanings of certain concepts such as ‘quality of life’ from the perspective of the Indian immigrants in the United States. The following part of my interview conversation with one of the respondents illustrates this:

Researcher: How does your personal and family life in the United States compare to your lived experiences in India?

Respondent: Social life is of course better in India. But I think the quality of life is obviously better in the U.S.

Researcher: What do you mean by the quality of life?

Respondent: Quality of life means the facilities or the infrastructure that the U.S. provides you. For example the roads, the traffic problem, the power problem. Those kind of things.

Further, the use of qualitative method in my research not only facilitated a better understanding of the participants’ concepts but also provided me an opportunity to use my researcher mind, understanding and interpretation to summarize and clarify the information provided by the respondents. According to Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012), qualitative research is a unique methodological tool in that it relies heavily on the interpretive qualities and skills of the researcher in order to explore the responses, expressions and behavior of the respondents. (p.
This is illustrated from the following segment of the interview with a respondent in my research:

**Researcher:** Did you participate in the transnational political movements organized by the Indians settled abroad against corruption in India?

**Respondent:** No, I did not. I did not agree with that movement. They are trying to eradicate corruption from top down which I think is not a very effective way.

**Researcher:** So you don’t support the movement because you don’t think that the movement will be effective?

**Respondent:** Yes. I say ok. Go ahead do it and let’s see if it works. If it works then maybe I can be a convert. But I am very skeptical of that movement and I don’t believe it’s going to work.

The qualitative research methodology provided me with a unique opportunity to explore the cultural context and meanings associated with the understanding of certain concepts. For example, during one of my interviews, the respondent explained the concept of ‘duty’ in terms of the Indian cultural system of beliefs and values. The qualitative techniques are culture sensitive and aim at understanding the participant in a communication form that can incorporate cultural clues (Weil, Eberly and Flick, 2008). This is illustrated from the following segment of my interview conversation with a respondent:

**Researcher:** Do you think it is the duty of the Indian nationals settled abroad to contribute to India’s development by sending funds to India?

**Respondent:** There is no “should” here and there is no duty here….it is something probably beyond duty. What they call as “dharma”… it’s not about a penal code or something like that. English cannot comprehend the concept of dharma. Perhaps the closest I could use in English is-values… So that’s why it’s called “dharma.” Nobody on earth or outside can say you need to do this. You need to do that or whatever. And it depends and it varies from time to time. Place to place… person to person… circumstances to circumstances.
Besides, the use of qualitative method allowed me to probe deeper into the responses by developing a rapport and empathy with the participants. Weil, Eberly and Flick (2008) argue that qualitative techniques are less rigid than quantitative methods and allow the researcher to be more sensitive and empathetic to the responses of the participants (p. 4). This is illustrated from the following part of my interview with a respondent:

**Researcher:** Did you face any problems or challenges in giving or receiving funds to India?

**Respondent:** Just giving little amounts like 100 dollars or so per year is not a problem but one time we did want to donate a big amount. About 10,000 dollars and we contacted the charity couple of times and they never really got back to us.

**Researcher:** How did that happen? Can you explain?

**Respondent:** I think it was just lack of follow up on their part. Maybe sometimes lack of proper organization and you know some person might have taken the message but did not pass it on to the right person and then we lost the motivation to actually give that money away.

Further, the qualitative research methodology allowed me to capture the activities, behavior and understanding of my respondents in terms of their own words and sentences and as they naturally occurred. “If someone expresses him/herself in a narrative, that story is "his" (or "hers"); it may have been recounted hundreds of times before and it may have been triggered off by a photograph or a television series, but the ways and the manner in which that narrative is recorded are unique and authentic for that person. Such passion, lethargy or indifference cannot be recorded in any quantitative study” (Weil, Eberly and Flick, 2008, p. 5).

The qualitative research is typically characterized by the use of methods that focus on interpretation, depth and meaning of data which is collected in the natural setting (Smith et al.,
In the following conversation, the respondent described the natural scenario of a work environment in the 2 countries- the U.S. as well India:

Researcher: How do your professional working conditions in the United States compare to those in India?

Respondent: I have to go back to the times when I was in India. If I compare to the times when I was in India in 91- the class structure was maintained within a company. Management did not let people to associate directly with them. All managers would go together for lunch and other employees would go together. They also socialized accordingly. All employees who belonged to one level had one group and managers had a different group. But in U.S. there’s nothing like that. I can go and have coffee with the senior level executive in the company and if I see an executive in my cafeteria, I just go and talk to him or he will talk to me.

The qualitative research methodology allowed me to collect such rare information as the sources of knowledge and trust in the context of diaspora philanthropy by means of an engaging and meaningful mutual conversation. The qualitative researcher must engage participants in a deep and meaningful way (Hurt and McLaughlin, 2012). The following segment of my interview conversation with a respondent illustrates this:

Researcher: Why do you use/prefer to use such a way/method of sending funds to India?

Respondent: Actually I found out from Facebook about this organization. A good friend of mine worked there. He was actively involved with this organization. I never knew they existed. I would have never donated probably in my life because I have never actively gone out to donate money or actively searched for organizations. So I think social networking made a huge difference in the sense that without Facebook... I don’t think I would have found out about this organization.

Data Collection: Selection of Participants

The population of interest for this study comprises Indian engineers in the United
States. From this population, a sample of about 25 Indian engineers was recruited in San Diego. This city was selected for conducting my research because of a large number of Indian engineers employed by some of its major corporations. This is because California has attracted the maximum number of these immigrants since 1990s when there was an upsurge in the migration of Indian engineers to the United States due to the boom in information technology. However, within California, the choice of the city of San Diego was based on constraints of time, cost, travel, and available resources.

Research Strategy

In order to address my research questions, qualitative data was collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews with the participants. Interviews are essentially negotiated conversations that construct a reality that did not exist previously (Hale et al., 2007). Draper and Swift (2011) define an interview as “a kind of conversation; a conversation with a Purpose” (p. 4). The intimate and open interaction of an interview can usefully explore why people act in certain ways (Whitley and Crawford, 2005, p. 111). Face-to-face in-depth interviews allow the interviewers to get a deeper insight into complex and personal matters (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). Face-to-face encounters are good for establishing rapport and also for capturing the body language of participants (Draper and Swift, 2011, p. 4).

The interviews conducted with the participants were semi-structured. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has a clear list of questions to be asked during an interview but the order, structure, phrasing and placement of questions are flexible and the interviewer is also free to probe responses (Draper and Swift, 2011, p. 4). The semi-structured
The interview question guide used in my interviews had a sequence and pattern of questions beginning with respondent's demographic information such as name, gender, age, marital status, nationality, number of children, religion, annual individual income, highest education level achieved, region of birth and region of upbringing followed by introductory questions such as length of stay in the United States, length of stay in San Diego, California and the frequency of trips to India.

These introductory questions were followed by questions pertaining to diaspora philanthropy such as those related to the amount, time, frequency, place, purpose, specific motivations and sources involved in giving. These questions were, then, followed by questions pertaining specifically to my research on immigrants’ identities and diaspora philanthropy. These include questions on their legal Status in the United States, participation in Indian social, cultural and/or religious events in San Diego, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, level of discrimination, professional, personal and social life in the United States.

The respondents were then asked specific questions related to obligation and diaspora philanthropy which includes their opinions about such a practice being an obligation towards India and awareness about government benefits for the investment contributed through diaspora philanthropy. The final section of my interview guide consisted of questions pertaining to immigrants’ identities and obligation in influencing their decision to engage in diaspora philanthropy. The interview was closed by getting their opinions about settling down in India and also their comments for my research.
Each interview began by establishing rapport and trust with the participants before exploring their practices and opinions about diaspora philanthropy. The interview guide consisted of both open ended and close ended questions. The close ended questions provided direction while the open ended questions enabled me to probe deeper into the minds and responses of the participants, thus allowing for flexibility in research.

The interviews took place during weekends or after office hours at the respondent’s office, his/her place of residence or at a restaurant or any other public place per the convenience of the participant. The duration of each interview was half an hour to forty-five minutes.

I conducted three pilot interviews prior to the actual interviews. The information obtained through these pilot interviews was reviewed to ensure that the language and questions incorporated in my interview guide are clear and that they successfully communicate the information intended to be conveyed through the research questions. However, the data obtained through these pilot interviews were not used in the analyses.

Data Sampling

I collected a small snowball non-probability sample of approximately 25 Indian engineers in San Diego, California. “A sampling procedure may be defined as snowball sampling when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants. This process is, by necessity, repetitive: informants refer the researcher to other informants, who are contacted by the researcher and then refer her or him to yet other informants, and so on” (Noy, 2008, p. 330). I adopted the non-probability strategy of snowball
Sampling to conduct my study because the nature of my research is exploratory. Snowball sampling is used in research situations where the sample to be collected for the study is very rare or limited or hard to access or the study is primarily exploratory which means that the researcher is curious about a particular topic, wants to get better insight into it and test the feasibility of doing a more extensive study, as well as develop the methodology for subsequent studies (Pope, 2012, p. 1).

Another reason for selecting non-probability snowball sampling over probability sampling techniques is that it is simpler, quicker and cheaper. Given the constraints of time and money, this strategy enabled me to examine, explore and investigate the issue of diaspora philanthropy in a quick and inexpensive way.

I began my research process by identifying few Indian engineers in San Diego who displayed their interest to take part in my research. I, then, asked my initial set of respondents to assist in the identification of more Indian engineers to participate in my study. Having obtained the names and contact information of my research participants, I contacted each of them through phone or email and invited them to participate in my study. Upon their approval, I scheduled a convenient time and place for a face-to-face interview either at their office, their residence, my residence or a convenient restaurant or public place.

Before conducting the interview, I briefed all my participants about my study, its nature and significance. I informed them that their participation is purely voluntary, that they may refuse or stop participating at any time with no consequences, that confidentiality of their identities and responses will be maintained and that they can contact me by telephone or email
if they have any questions or concerns. Having obtained their consent, each respondent was asked to read and sign an informed consent Form.

Data Confidentiality: Informed Consent

At the time of the interview, each participant was asked to read and sign an informed consent Form. Each consent form included a brief, but full explanation of the study and a statement on confidentiality and anonymity. The consent form explained in full that their participation is voluntary and that at any time they may withdraw and cease to participate without any compromise. For the sake of confidentiality and anonymity, each consent form was maintained in a locked file cabinet in my home.

Approval

Before conducting this study, I obtained approval from the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis basically involves the process of dismantling, segmenting and reassembling data according to the research questions and the research aim in order to form meaningful findings and draw inferences (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 75). Each interview was audio recorded. Thereafter, I manually transcribed each recorded interview verbatim in Microsoft Word software including an account of my respondents’ usage of cultural specific words such as “you know,” “I mean,” “kind of” so that the meaning and context of the information provided
does not get lost in translation. The transcripts also contained such information as their pauses, repetitions, words and phrases mentioned in native language such as “puja,” “Diwali,” “Dussehra,” “dharma.” “The major advantage of researchers transcribing their own interviews is the opportunity to develop familiarity with the data, and familiarity is essential for effective analysis” (Fade and Swift, 2010, p. 107). This information was stored on a password-protected computer in my home.

The data obtained was analyzed using the “framework” approach proposed by Ritchie and Spencer (2002). The “framework approach” is designed to provide some coherence and structure to the cumbersome qualitative data set while retaining a hold of the original accounts and observations from which it is derived. (p. 176). Following this approach, I conducted the analysis of my data in 5 key stages - familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002, p. 178). In the familiarization stage, I gained familiarity with the range and diversity of the data collected by a careful reading and rereading of my transcripts in order to get a feel for the information on immigrants’ identities, obligation and diaspora philanthropy as a whole. This stage involves making notes about the issues and themes that emerge as being important to the respondents themselves (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002, p. 178).

In the second stage of identifying a thematic framework, I identified the key issues, concepts and themes in the research notes made in the familiarity stage according to which the data was later examined. This stage sets up a thematic framework within which the material can be sifted and sorted (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002, p. 179-180).
In the third stage of indexing, I systematically applied the thematic framework or Index to the textual data recorded in my transcripts. In this stage, the entire data are read and annotated according to the thematic framework and indexing references are recorded on the margins of each transcript (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002, p. 182). This stage is also referred to as the coding stage. Coding refers to “the marking the text in order to tag particular chunks or segments of that text. Code words are thus attached to discrete stretches of data” (Coffey et al, 1996). “A code (sometimes referred to as an Index or a Node) is simply a label that the researcher attaches to piece of data” (Fade and Swift, 2010, p. 107). Fade and Swift (2010) argue that codes are essentially developed for everything within the transcript that is of interest and meaning to the researcher (Fade and Swift, 2010, p.108).

In the charting stage, I arranged my data in a matrix where I placed all the relevant pieces of my data under an appropriate theme. “The researcher builds up a picture of the data as a whole, by considering the range of attitudes and experience for each issue or theme. Data are ‘lifted’ from their original context and rearranged according to the appropriate thematic reference” (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002, p. 182).

In the final stage of mapping and interpretation, I put together the key characteristics of the data in order to analyze and interpret the data set as a whole in terms of its relevance and significance for my research questions on the concept of immigrants’ identities and their role in influencing the decision of Indian diaspora in making philanthropic contributions to India, the role of hidden obligations in influencing the decision of Indian immigrants to engage in diaspora philanthropy and the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in diaspora philanthropy. The interpretation of data in this stage was guided by my research questions and
by the themes and associations which gradually emerged from the data themselves (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002, p. 186). Hence the data was carefully analyzed to identify emerging and recurring themes relevant to my research.

Interview Questions

Participants’ responses obtained to the following interview questions were analyzed to investigate the concept of immigrants’ identities and their role in influencing the decision of immigrants to make philanthropic contributions:

1. Where in India did you give the funds?

2. What was the fund money used for? (for example health, education, community building, cultural activities, socializing and networking, assisting disabled, elderly, sick persons/invalids, children, cultural exchange, knowledge transfer, economic development projects, religious activities, political change/advocacy, disaster relief or any other). Please explain.

3. What are your main reasons for supporting development projects/activities in India?

4. What is your legal status in the United States? (For example, do you have temporary visa, are permanent resident, naturalized citizen or U.S. born)

5. How often do you and/or your family participate in the Indian social gatherings, festivals or cultural events held in the United States? Please explain.

6. How often do you and/or your family participate in religious events and activities held in your city? Please explain.

7. How often do you and/or your family participate in the groups, movements and activities concerning Indian politics in the United States (for example, transnational political movements organized by the Indians settled abroad against corruption in India)? Please explain.

8. Do you think your skills, knowledge, education and services are more highly valued/appreciated in the United States compared to India? Please explain.
9. Have you ever faced discrimination based on nationality or race in the United States? Please explain.

10. How do your professional working conditions in the United States compare to those in India? Please explain.

11. How does your personal and family life in the United States compare to your lived experiences in India?

Participants’ responses obtained to the following interview questions were analyzed to investigate the hidden obligations associated with diaspora philanthropy:

1. Do you think it is the duty of the Indian nationals settled abroad to contribute to India’s development by sending funds to India? Please explain.

2. Are you aware of any Indian government programs/policies that support and promote investments towards public social services in India by the Indian nationals settled abroad (for example any tax deductions/ exemptions on investment, easy access to loans etc.)? Please explain.

3. Are you aware of any specific privileges/ benefits available to the Indian nationals who send funds to India (for example, discounts, memberships in prestigious clubs, participation in Indian politics, legal aid, health care, tourism, etc.)? Please explain.

Participants’ responses obtained to the following interview questions were analyzed to investigate the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy:

1. Do you prefer to send funds to a specific group or community of people (for example your religious community or people in your city/region, people of specific gender, age group, caste/sub caste, organized groups against corruption, etc.) or any community in India that needs assistance? Please explain.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research is synonymous with consistency which means that the research findings can be replicated by another researcher (Lewis, 2009, p. 3). Reliability refers to “the idea that the results of the analysis would be the same if carried out by different
observers or by the same observers on different occasions. (Pilnick and Swift, 2010, p. 210). In order to ensure reliability in my research, I made precise and detailed field notes during the interviews and also supplemented the data obtained in the interviews with my own observations in the form of reflective notes after each interview session. Hence, if some other researcher gets to collect or analyze this data with respect to my research questions, the outcome would be very similar to my results.

Validity

Validity refers to the issue of accuracy, that is, whether the researcher’s account truly reflects what actually happened. (Pilnick and Swift, 2010, p. 210). According to Miyata and Kai (2009), validity is the strength of research conclusions, inferences, or propositions, that is, the extent to which the research truly measures what it intended to measure (p. 67). In order to ensure validity in my research, I consciously repeated and confirmed responses with the participants themselves, supplemented and counter checked information provided by them with the existing literature and allowed the respondents to open up and talk freely in a comfortable atmosphere. I constantly ensured them that their views will be kept confidential and will not be shared with other respondents and also encouraged them to share their views without any hesitation by probing deeper into their responses through such questions as – ‘can you elaborate on that statement?’

Limitations

As with other studies and pieces of research, this study also has certain limitations. One
major limitation of this study is that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all Indians in the United States. This is because of the bias and prejudice inherent in my sampling strategy of snowball Sampling. Since my sample was recruited through referrals and contacts, it was selective and does not represent the motives, intentions and mechanisms of all Indians in the United States. For example, the practice of diaspora philanthropy among Indians may be influenced by the corporate culture or socio-cultural environment in any other state such as the availability of networks and organizations that facilitate the transfer of funds to India.

Also, my sample does not represent Indian engineers from all regions, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds in India. This is because San Diego is a small city and does not have enough population of Indian engineers to be representative of entire India. Additionally, there is an over representation of engineers from the southern region of India in my sample. Eighteen out of twenty-five respondents in my study were from the southern region of India. Besides, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to Indians as a whole because it is restricted to individuals from only one profession, that is, engineers. For example, it does not represent the amount, intensity, frequency, mechanisms and sources of diaspora philanthropy among individuals in other professions such as doctors, businessmen, accountants, etc.

My Reflections as a Researcher

In this section, I provide a discussion of my reflections and experience as a researcher in the field. In every research, the researcher occupies a specific position, status and role with respect to the participants in one’s research. In qualitative research, the position or status of a researcher as an insider or outsider in relation to those participating in the research is a crucial
aspect of the investigation because it not only influences the possibility of access to the population under study but also the nature and quality of data collected by the researcher. As an insider, the researcher shares either the characteristics such as language, religion, identities, roles, or experiences with the participants under study and as an outsider, the researcher does not share membership in the common characteristics, roles or experiences of the study group.

My position as a researcher with respect to the participants in my study was that of an insider. Similar to all the respondents in my study, I was born and raised in India and share the language, culture and the identity of an Indian with my respondents and by virtue of this identity, I also share similar experiences with my subjects.

There have been arguments both in support as well as against the status of researcher as an insider and similarly for the researcher as an outsider. However, there are advantages and disadvantages associated with both these positions.

The insider status allows researcher to enhance the depth and breadth of understanding a population because shared identities or experiences promotes trust and the participants are likely to be more open with the researcher. For example, Egharvba (2001), a black (of African descent) postgraduate student interviewed a sample of 19 South Asian female student teachers in England who were studying for a degree (BA/BSc) with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Since she was part of the same institution as the students and had not approached the institution to gain access to the students, she occupied the position of an insider into the group. As a result, her respondents did not restrict themselves to share about their educational experiences. In fact, they openly criticized the institution and individual tutors when discussing the factors which had hindered their academic success.
Similar to Egharvba’s experience (2001), the participants in my study openly and freely expressed their opinions, experiences and concerns about the socio-political and economic issues in India. Specifically, while expressing their concern about the deteriorating political condition of India due to the rising corruption, my respondents did not hesitate in openly criticizing the politicians and their frustration and dissatisfaction with the transnational political movement against corruption in India. For example, one respondent describes his opinions about this movement in the following words:

I don’t see that whatever support we give from the United States here will have any impact on the government because the government of India does not listen to the people of India where they have the voting rights. Why will they listen to the people who are outside of the country or have no voting rights in the democracy?

The feminist literature emphasizes that the gender of the researcher is an important factor in determining the quality of data obtained, specifically when the study deals with gender issues. When Easton (2005) as a female researcher interviewed 11 male members of a University fraternity about the subjects’ bodies, their ideas of masculinity, and conceptions of their identities, she typically occupied the position of an outsider from the gender perspective and she points out that her respondents consistently used gender to place her and shape their responses to her questions. Some of the participants clearly stated that they would not have responded or behaved in the same way if the researcher was a male.

A major claim made by the feminist researchers has been that the women can get women to talk about private and upsetting aspects of their lives with ease. In my study, I observed that due to my position as a female researcher, the women respondents felt very comfortable in discussing the status of women in India and how they would like to improve the
status of women in India through diaspora philanthropy. As one respondent in my study explained:

You know that when we empower women by giving them education. You make them aware of the choices that are available to them and when women become moms, they can give it to the next generation. They can take care of themselves and they give it to their kids.

However, Platzer and James (1997) argue that this ease of access is potentially abusive and exploitative because disclosing emotionally disturbing events and memories might result in research participants being unnecessarily traumatized or guilty for not taking certain steps or decisions in life.

The nature of my study was not sensitive. Nevertheless, due to my insider status, I observed, that the participants in my study felt guilty about not being able to contribute huge amounts of money for philanthropic purpose in India. For example, when a respondent was asked if he ever sent funds in the form of cash or gifts to India, he replied: “It has never been an organized effort but we just did whatever we could.”

Hence, Thapar-Bjorkert and Henry(2002) argue that the benefits of gaining access to respondents through connections is high in a research where the researcher occupies the position of an insider but the major drawback of such a research is the possibility of obtaining limited and tailored responses or non-disclosure of sensitive information. By virtue of similarities with the researcher, the participants may make assumptions of similar understandings and therefore fail to explain their individual experience fully.

In a study of Australian long-term female foster care givers by Blythe and Jackson (2013) where the researcher was also a long-term foster care givers and hence an insider, it was observed that the assumed understanding between the insider and participants encouraged
participants to omit information from their responses which was evident from the frequent use of such sentences a 'You should know that,' or ‘You know what I mean.

I also had a similar experience like Blythe and Jackson (2013) in certain instances during my research when the respondents in my study assumed my understanding of certain issues. For example, when a respondent was asked about her opinion about the transnational political movement against corruption in India, she stated:

I don’t support the movement but I support this person in south India. He is now a politician... Jai Prakash Narayan. You know him. Right? I support his ideas and values.

Against the insider status of the researcher, it is also argued that it may compromise the objectivity, and authenticity of the research. Fay (1996) argues that the outsider status of the researcher facilitates an understanding of the group in several ways. As an outsider the researcher possesses the adequate distance required to not only understand the experiences of their participants but also to be able to see through the complexity of their experiences. Besides as an insider, the researcher is in a better position to appreciate the experiences of the participants from a wider perspective.

For example, Platzer and James (1997) conducted qualitative interviews with lesbians and gay men about their experiences of nursing care from an insider’s perspective. Their insider status reduced many of the problems associated with conducting sensitive research such as access, gaining trust and rapport with subjects, ethical concerns, and stigma contagion. However, they faced more challenges due to their insider status such as being immune to the experiences described by the respondents since they were also part of their own lived experiences. At times, they admitted that their shared experiences was resulting in incredulity
on the part of those being researched when the subjects felt that the researchers were asking questions which have an obvious answer.

There were several instances during my research when the respondents expressed their astonishment for the kind of questions being asked. Their puzzled expressions and short responses revealed their amazement about the research questions to which they assumed that responses were obvious. For example, when a respondent was asked about her main reasons for engaging in diaspora philanthropy in India, she replied: “Just like that. I don’t think there is any particular reason.”

Another constraint on the research conducted by the insider researcher is the fear of the respondents that the unique and personal nature of the data provided by them would be easily identified in research reports by themselves and others. This concern was also shared by several respondents in my study. Almost every respondent expressed their anxiety and fear about the usage of the responses which was tape recorded. One of the respondent expressed his concern in the following words:

>Everything is good except that I do not know where this information will land. I know that it is towards your research which is good but it becomes a public record after that and I do not know how you will ensure that it will not reach wrong hands. Like some right wing groups can access the information and use it against people of Indian nationality.

The major drawback of being an insider researcher is the possibility of fabricating data and modification of responses by the participants to provide a particular image about an issue or themselves or to maintain a positive impression on the researcher who is one of them. Hence, it is sometimes argued that an outsider researcher is in a better position to obtain objective responses from the participants under study.
For example, Thapar-Bjorkert and Henry (2002) interviewed surviving ‘ordinary’ middle-class women activists in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India who were involved in the anti-colonial struggle during the years 1930–1945. Their position as western researchers or outsiders in their study group was an advantage to their research because the subjects were prepared to talk openly at length about their experiences and opinions and were more willing to disclose information to them (foreigners) than they would to an insider. For example, their respondents did not hesitate to tell them that they participated in the nationalist movement for fun and frolic rather than for any patriotic sentiments. Perhaps they would not have revealed this information to a journalist who would have published it in the local newspaper and perhaps brought them under political scrutiny. The fact that they were ‘outsiders’ and did not know their life histories in the way in which family, friends and neighbors might helped the respondents to feel comfortable revealing details of their lives, assured that we were not likely to compromise their place in their daily lives and community. Hence, their position in dominant cultures helped them to gain access to otherwise non-accessible respondents.

Sutcliffe, Linfield and Geldart, conducted research on the analysis of a problem-based learning (PBL) approach introduced into professional studies modules, for trainee student teachers within an English university. As insider researchers, they knew their subjects and also their writing styles well enough to identify them. As a result, the data collected was flawed because the interviews revealed a generally positive view of PBL and the new professional studies modules and the researchers knew that this was at odds with the commonplace view at that time. The participants were unable to express their genuine opinions about the PBL
approach and its impact on their own practice and student learning. Some lecturers even admitted that they had edited or distorted their reflections.

Similarly, while carrying out research as an insider among nurse lecturers, Moore (2012) observed that the responses of her participants who were also her colleagues were influenced and shaped by certain fears such as not being a good teacher, saying or doing the wrong things, or things not going well.

In my study, I also observed the tendency among my respondents to present themselves in a positive light. All the respondents in my study responded that they have engaged in diaspora philanthropy and their inability to contribute huge amounts due to lack of time also their desire to increase their level of participation in future. Through such responses, my respondents shared their guilt for not being able to do much for the Indian community and at the same time painted a positive picture of themselves by expressing their desire to contribute more in future.

While I was careful in my research about the accuracy, validity and reliability of the data collected, I must admit that my status as an insider prevented me from obtaining an insight into certain key factors likely to influence the process of diaspora philanthropy among Indians. One such factor is the caste identity of my respondents.

As mentioned earlier in my research, caste is an important identity among Indians. Nevertheless, I omitted this issue from my research because it is a sensitive topic of discussion among Indians. Indians prefer to maintain anonymity about their caste status and identities outside of India because of the fear of being categorized and marginalized by other Indians in their work place and in their social relations. Since I recruited my subjects through snowball
sampling or known acquaintances where each respondent knew most others in my study group, I refrained from including questions that were likely to adversely affect my rapport with the respondents and also their social relations with each other who were also each other’s colleagues and friends. In such a scenario, an outsider who is not an Indian and who is not likely to identify the caste identity of a respondent will be in a better position to collect data about the caste identities of Indians and how it influences their practices of diaspora philanthropy because it will not raise anxieties among the respondents about getting their economic and social life affected due to their caste identities.

To conclude, I agree with Dwyer and Buckle (2009) who argue that the core issue is not insider or outsider status of the researcher but his or her ability to be open, authentic, honest, and committed to accurately understanding the experiences of the participants in one’s research.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

This chapter provides the findings and results of my data analysis. It discusses the various themes that emerged through the rigorous process of coding adopted to analyze my data. These themes were identified in terms of their relevance and importance to my research questions and have been substantiated by the representative quotes from the participants. This chapter is divided into 4 sections. The first section, description of the participants, provides a description of the participants in my study. The second section, immigrant identities and diaspora philanthropy, provides a discussion on the themes generated with respect to the concept of immigrants’ identities and their role in diaspora philanthropy. The third section, obligation and diaspora philanthropy, discusses the results of my study with respect to the role of hidden obligations in diaspora philanthropy. The fourth and final section of this chapter, interaction between immigrant identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy, discusses my findings on how immigrants’ identities interact with obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy.

Description of the Participants

A total of 25 individuals participated in this qualitative study. This sample included 10 females and 15 males. The majority of my respondents (18 people) were in the age-group 36 – 45. While 4 individuals belonged to the age group-26- 35, 2 individuals were 66 years old and only one respondent was 23 years old in my sample.
All the individuals in my sample except one were married. However, it is interesting to note that all my married respondents declared their marital status as single because all of them were staying separate from their spouses and did not want their spouses to be contacted for participation in the study. By describing their marital status as single, they meant living single away from their spouses in a separate state or city. Since, I recruited my sample of respondents through snowball sampling, that is, through referrals, they felt obligated to honor the word of their friend or colleague who recommended their name and hence, felt obligated to participate in my study. However, they tried to protect their spouses from running into this obligation where they would have had to spare 30-45 minutes for an interview from their busy schedule and life caught between home, kids and work. Although, I knew that they were married and were misrepresenting their marital status for a reason, I did not dwell deep into this question and clarify their marital status because I knew from those who recommended them that they do not want their spouses to be contacted for the interview.

Fourteen participants were of Indian nationality and 11 were naturalized citizens of the United States. About 11 respondents had 2 children, 8 had only one child, only 2 respondents had 3 children and 4 respondents did not have any child. All of my respondents except two were practicing Hindus. These 2 individuals stated that they did not practice any religion.

As far as annual individual income is concerned, 19 participants stated their incomes to be $100,000. Three participants mentioned their annual individual incomes as ranging between $75,000 - $100,000 and 3 participants declined to share any information about their income. With respect to the highest education level achieved, 19 respondents had a master’s degree, 4 had bachelor’s degree and 2 participants had a Ph. D. in engineering. The majority of
my respondents (13 of them) had their degrees in computer science, 6 of them had their engineering degrees in electrical engineering, and only 4 of them had their degrees in electronics, only one of them had a degree in mechanical engineering. Although, 6 of my respondents did not have a degree in computer science, all of them except one were working as software professionals in the corporate sector. The one individual who was not employed as software professional had a degree in civil engineering and was working as a structural engineer.

An overwhelming majority of my participants belonged to the southern region of India. Only 4 participants identified themselves as belonging to the northern region of India. All the participants except one had lived in the United States for more than 5 years. This respondent was the youngest individual in my sample who described his stay in the U.S. to be around 2 years. While 4 of my respondents mentioned the duration of their stay between 5-10 years, 8 of them stated it to be between 11-15 years, 10 of them stated between 16-20 years and 2 of my respondents had been staying in the United States for more than 40 years.

As far as the length of their stay in San Diego, California is concerned, only 2 respondents described the length of their stay in San Diego to be between 0-5 years, 8 of them stated it between 6-10 years, 4 of them stated it between 11-15 years, 9 respondents mentioned between 16-20 years and 2 of my respondents mentioned more than 20 years. When the participants were asked about the frequency of their travel to India, 16 of the participants in my sample described that they visited their families, friends and relatives in India once in 2 years, 6 of my respondents mentioned that they like to visit India every year and only 3 respondents in my sample stated that they visited India between 2-4 years.
Immigrant Identities and Diaspora Philanthropy: Caste

An important social identity among Indians is their caste identity which is derived by virtue of being born in a particular family. The Hindu caste system in India places each individual in a strictly stratified hierarchy of social castes where each caste occupies a higher or lower position relative to each other in the social hierarchy. Hence, the essential characteristics of the caste identity among Hindus in India is that it is ascribed, irreplaceable and unchangeable during the course of one’s lifetime, strictly hierarchical, that is, it assigns either a higher or lower social status based on one’s membership of a particular caste and determines one’s status in the Indian society.

In the past, the caste system entirely regulated the socio-economic and political lives of Hindus in India. Although, it is not as significant in regulating the socio-economic and political lives of Hindus now as it was in the past, it continues to influence the social interaction, political career and participation and the life chances of Hindus in the economic world.

Even though the caste identity constitutes a critical social identity among Hindus, I did not question my respondents about their caste identity or collect data about their caste because the caste identity is not only an important social identity, it is also a very sensitive issue and topic to be discussed among Hindus. Fox News (2010) reports that the Hindu caste system which essentially divides people in a strict social hierarchy based on their family's traditional livelihood and ethnicity constitutes a deeply sensitive subject and must therefore be handled carefully.

The qualitative research technique and methodology of my study was not designed to address this sensitive topic. The duration of each face-to-face interview in my study was only
half an hour and it was not sufficient to build a rapport with the respondent which is often a requirement before addressing a sensitive question in any research design dealing with sensitive topic or population.

Dickson-Swift, James and Liamputtong (2008) and Oakley (1981) state that conducting qualitative research on sensitive issues such as caste and race can be very stressful for both the researcher and the interviewee. Hence, the researcher must design a research study that focusses on building rapport and a relationship with the potential participant through more than one interview. Hsiung (2010) also states that it is extremely difficult to conduct research on sensitive issues such as caste. Hence, the researcher must exercise a great deal of skill and sensitivity in dealing with such issues. It is very important that the researcher first develops rapport and trust with the respondent and takes all possible measures so as not to offend the respondent. The researcher must carefully phrase each question so that the respondents are not uncomfortable in responding to them (Hsiung, 2010). Hence, it requires a special design of study tailored to handle the sensitivity of the issue of caste.

Due to the constraints of time and resources and the fear of losing data by raising a sensitive issue without adequate efforts and time in building rapport with them, I did not address the issue of caste in my study. This was experienced by Metcalf and Rolfe (2010) who conducted a qualitative study on caste discrimination and harassment at work place on the basis of caste in Great Britain. They mentioned that the quality of their data was severely affected because the respondents were not willing to provide accurate information about their caste in the qualitative interviews conducted by them. They admitted that membership of a low caste and the resulting discrimination are very sensitive issues and may be seen as shameful.
Therefore, individuals are usually unwilling to discuss these issues particularly with a stranger (p. 12).

Although, my study was not adequately designed to deal with the sensitive issue of caste among the respondents in my study, I admit that it is an important social identity among Hindus that strongly influences their politico-economic and social life. By virtue of being important, it is highly likely to influence the practice of diaspora philanthropy among Indian immigrants in the United States. Hence, it constitutes an important area of research in future that can be explored by researchers examining the role of social identity in influencing the practice of diaspora philanthropy among Indian immigrants.

Region

Amongst several socio-cultural identities that constitute an individual’s self, the regional identity of the Indian diaspora was found to be the major factor influencing their decision to participate in philanthropic activities in India. Geithner, Johnson and Chen (2004) argue that diaspora prefer to make philanthropic contributions to specific geographic locations or regions based on their sense of identity, familial relationships and social affinities (p. xvi). The regional identity of the Indian diaspora typically involves their sense of identification with the region that is the city, they grew up in. When the respondents were asked, “Where in India did you give the funds?”, 22 out of 25 respondents mentioned donating to their region, that is the city, they grew up in and when they were asked, “What are your main reasons for supporting such development projects/activities?”, the majority of them cited reasons such as greater trust and confidence due to the familiarity of the individuals and organizations in one’s region and also
better accountability of the funds due to the fact that parents, family members and close
friends can monitor the activities of the individuals and the organizations receiving funds.

As one of the respondents mentioned:

If I am giving to one person in my hometown... I can talk to him and see why he needs it...Before giving the money, I can verify with my friends if that person really needs the money or his family status, his background, why does he need money and how is he going to use it? Also, at the end of the day. Maybe after some time, I know that whether that guy gets the job or finishes the engineering degree or whatever the cause I am sending it for... if he completes it, then I know that the money I sent is 100% utilized in proper way.

Another respondent who explicitly agreed to having a regional bias in making philanthropic contributions states: “My support has been regional I would say because people I know happen to be in those regions.”

Class

Another dominant socio- cultural identity that makes up an individual’s self amongst the Indian diaspora is class and the class identity of the Indian diaspora was found to be a significant factor influencing their decision to make philanthropic contributions in India, particularly amongst those who experienced poverty in India. Six out of twenty five respondents identified their past with the condition of the poor in India and hence explained their financial contributions to support to them. Newland, Terrazas and Munster (2010) argue that philanthropists often give to causes that have personal resonance, such as those related to some of the challenges they have faced, experiences that have shaped their life trajectories, or underprivileged individuals from a similar background (p. 9).
One of the respondents cited his own experience of poverty in India as one of the main reasons for supporting the poor in India.

Researcher: What are your main reasons for supporting these projects/activities in India?

Respondent: Maybe because I am from a poor family. You can call it empathy. Because I am from a poor family...I probably understand little more about hunger and psychological issues that entail poverty.

Another respondent stated:

My family background is very poor. All my family members are below middle class. So, whenever I go to India, I inquire about... who is doing what. If I see that any individual in my family needs any financial help, I tell them that I will support them.

Gender

Another significant identity that makes up an individual’s self is one’s gender and this identity was found to be a strong factor among the Indian women engineer diaspora in influencing their decision to participate in diaspora philanthropy. Six out of ten female respondents supported the cause of women’s education in India. Support for the education of the girl child in India was explained in terms of the poor condition of women in India as well as her potential to improve the condition of the entire family. Bornstein (2011) noted that sociologists working on diaspora philanthropy are increasingly recognizing women as worthy recipients of philanthropic aid because “they constitute high-yielding investments, and subsequently donors are increasingly targeting aid to women and girls” (p. 3).

Asked why she supports the education of the girl child in India, one female respondent stated:

If a guy is educated it’s just him who is educated but if a woman is educated, then the whole family gets benefitted from it. I have seen it and I really believe in that.
One more female respondent who contributed towards the education of women in India states:

When a woman becomes independent she helps raise the family and she can educate the children better and so that’s the reason why I like to support women

Participation in Transnational Political Movement against Corruption in India

One of the contemporary processes that have played a significant role in constituting the identities of the Indian diaspora in the United States is their level of participation in the transnational political movement against corruption in India. The Indian engineer diaspora was found to be strongly associated and involved in the transnational political movement against corruption. About 7 out of 25 respondents actively participated in this movement. The strong concern and involvement of the Indian diaspora in the current socio-political climate of India reflects their collective sense of identification with the Indian nation. Shain and Barth (2003) argue that the diaspora are interest groups that seek to influence the domestic political process of their homeland in order to advance their identity-based interests.

One of the respondents who participated in the transnational political movement described his involvement in the movement in the following words:

I supported the movement by giving my signatures and raising slogans in support of this movement. They also took some photos and videos and asked questions about each individual’s views on how to weed out the corruption. This feedback along with the evidence was then sent to Anna Hazare in India to show him that we all support his movement against corruption in India.
Another respondent described himself as the silent supporter of the movement. Although he was a strong supporter of the movement, he regretted for not being able to participate actively in the movement.

I am a silent supporter because I used to follow all the news about what was happening about the movement in India. Also, I expressed my support for this movement on the website called voice.org. So, I am just one of the million people who did respond positively to that movement but I don’t consider it as an active participation. So that’s why I said that I am a silent supporter of that movement.

Social Identity

One of the most important identities that makes up an individual’s self among the Indian diaspora is their social identity derived from their collective membership and identification with the social life in India. A large majority of the participants in my study (15 out of 25 participants) identified themselves as being part of the Indian social group and expressed their discontentment over the lack of an active Indian social life in the United States both at the workplace and at home. This includes interaction with extended kin networks and informal nature of relationships with family and friends. In a focus group discussion conducted by Viresh Rustogi, (in Taplin, 2002, p. 10) it was found that the majority of participants placed a high value on family relationships and preferred to give only to family and friends in need and organizations or to the causes that their parents and elders supported (Taplin, 2002, p. 10).

One of the respondents expressed her appreciation for the wide network of relatives and friends available in India.

In India we have more gatherings... basically you have more connections because you are born in India and your parents, your cousins and most of your family is back home.
Describing the difference between the social life in India and the United States, one respondent mentions:

India is better because you have a support system. Here we are... kind of ...alone. We do build our own relationships here and friends become family. We all depend on each other but it’s not the same as in India. In India, we have the benefit of being close to our family. That’s something we really miss in the United States.

Cultural Identity

The cultural identity of the Indian diaspora is another dominant identity that makes up an individual’s self. Diaspora philanthropy is largely motivated by feelings of cultural or religious identity (Nielson, 2004). According to Yuen (2008), the distinctive cultural identities of the Asian American diaspora are important to understand their participation in diaspora philanthropy. A significant portion of my sample (19 out of 25 participants) identified themselves with the Indian culture, practiced Indian culture through participation in Indian cultural events, festivals and traditions, expressed their desire and efforts taken to inculcate Indian cultural values in their children. This strong affiliation and identification of the Indian diaspora with the Indian culture which constitutes an important part of their self was found to be a significant factor influencing diaspora philanthropy amongst Indian immigrants in the United States.

One respondent expressed pride over the fact that both his kids were fluent in Indian language. He states that:

Both my kids speak fluent Hindi. They can read and write Hindi. They are well versed with the Indian scriptures. More than I do. I just wanted them to have roots. I know that they will know American culture any way no matter what you do. They are part of this society but I wanted them to know Indian values and I taught them when they were small.
Another respondent expressed his appreciation and pride over the Indian culture in the following words:

I think our culture is very rich. Things that we see in our culture. They have evolved over 6,000 years and 6,000 plus years and I think that there is a lot of justification in whichever way you look at things. Whether it is science or just aesthetic. There is lot of value in it. So just to preserve that value. I would like my kids to learn and learn not only an Indian form of art but also imbibe some value in themselves.

The above analysis points out the importance of social groups based on region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, society and culture in India in constituting the self amongst the Indian diaspora in the U.S. The Indian immigrants’ sense of identity confirms the social identity perspective by Tajfel (1981). “Social identity is defined as that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of membership to a social group (or groups) together with the value and the emotional significance attached to it” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).

The Indian engineer immigrants in the U.S. closely identify themselves with the region where they were grew up in India. This was explicitly mentioned by the respondents who described their confidence in the activities of the people in their region because of these shared identities. Although, they are leading prosperous lives in the U.S., the Indian diaspora still maintain and retain ties with their childhood spent in poverty in India and keep this connection alive by identifying themselves with the poor in India and funding their needs. The Indian immigrant women in the U.S. expressed their concern about the poor status of women in India and strongly supported the cause of women’s education because of their own personal experience. The extent to which the Indian diaspora identify themselves with the political groups in India is reflected in their strong concern about the deteriorating political climate of
India and the strong support provided through their participation in the transnational political movement against corruption in India.

The above analysis shows that the Indian diaspora maintains a strong sense of identification with the society in India. This is evident from their expression of discomfort and frustration with the formal nature of social life and relationships in the U.S., unlike those in India. Finally, the Indian diaspora expressed their identification with the culture in India through their emotional attachment and pride in inculcating Indian cultural values in their children.

It is interesting to note that the Indian diaspora maintained their pride and attachment with the Indian cultural values together with their pride and appreciation for the American cultural values. This is evident from their responses describing their efforts involved in teaching both Indian and American languages, food habits and forms of art to their children. Hence, their identities with the social groups in India were not drawn in contrast to their identities with the social groups in the U.S. These two identities existed in conjunction instead of opposition. The above analysis of my research data also shows that the Indian diaspora were quite insecure about their identification and membership in the social groups in India, specifically the social life and culture in India which they left behind due to migration.

The significant depth and rich quality of information obtained on the nature of factors that motivate the Indian diaspora in the U.S. to participate in diaspora philanthropy was accessible through the use of qualitative method to conduct my study. “Qualitative research investigates how and why people behave in certain ways” (Swift and Tishler, 2010, p. 560). The qualitative method and face –to – face interview method allowed me to gather detailed information about the level of comfort and confidence experienced by the Indian diaspora in
giving to the people in one’s own region, about their empathy and emotional attachment with
the women and the underprivileged in India, about their concern and ways of involvement with
the Indian politics and the political climate in India, about their understanding and perspective
of the Indian society and culture in India.

Obligation and Diaspora Philanthropy

A huge majority of the participants in my study recognized diaspora philanthropy as a
gift (15 participants) and a significant majority of them described it as their duty and an
obligation towards India (13 participants). Although the immigrants varied in terms of the
factors they identified as contributing to this obligation, they all agreed that they owe a debt to
their home country.

Diaspora Philanthropy as a Gift

“Migrants often tend to perceive philanthropic donations as a ‘gift’ to their home
community which creates indebtedness on the part of the recipients” (Dekkers & Rutten, 2011,
p. 3). The early research on diaspora philanthropic giving in Asia consisted of a discussion of
gifts and their givers, primarily to India and China and later the Philippines (Sidel, 2008).
Nineteen out of twenty five respondents in my study refereed to the practice of diaspora
philanthropy as gifts. For example, the following respondent describes his philanthropic
collection towards eye surgeries for the poor in India in the following words:

These are the people who live below the poverty line in India and who cannot afford
this eye surgery and that’s the best gift one can give. I think that to enable a person to see the
world is the most precious gift one can give. Even this organization calls it a gift of vision. That’s
the best I can do.

Diaspora Philanthropy as a Moral Responsibility

There is a strong moral obligation on the part of the migrants settled abroad to connect
with and support their ‘homes’ in their country of origin (Mohan, 2006, p. 867). One of the
major factors that came up in my study as contributing to the practice of diaspora philanthropy
was the moral obligation that the prosperous diaspora in the U.S. owe to their less privileged
countrymen in India who do not have access to the same wealth, prosperity and privileges that
they have managed to obtain in the United States. Twelve out of twenty five respondents
referred to diaspora philanthropy as their moral responsibility towards the society and people
in India. This is evident from the following conversation with a respondent:

Researcher:  Do you think it is the duty of the Indian nationals settled abroad to contribute to India’s development by sending funds to India?

Respondent:  Yeah... Because lot of people in India live below the poverty line so it’s our duty to help them. We have the means. We don’t have to do a lot but at least we can do a little bit in our capacity.

Another respondent phrased this moral obligation in terms of a social responsibility that the diaspora has towards the people in their home country. He, further, states that the diaspora should not only feel obligated to send funds but also to actually visit India and spend some time with the people in their country where they can explain the value of critical and innovative knowledge that they have learnt in the United States.

Researcher:  Do you think it is the duty of the Indian nationals settled abroad to contribute to India’s development by sending funds to India?
Respondent: Yes I think there is an inherent social responsibility. I would look at it more as a moral responsibility. It is not just in sending funds but it is also going there and actually spending time. So for example go to a school and teach something. When I say schools... Not the big private schools that are well funded but more like those that don’t have facilities that we would take for granted here in the U.S. So I think it is important to not just sending funds but actually being there on the ground.

Diaspora Philanthropy as a Return for Education

Another reason described by some of the participants for realizing their sense of obligation to make philanthropic contributions in India is the debt they believe to have taken from India in terms of free and subsidized education. Since the major cause of their prosperity in the United States is the education that they received in India, they believe that they have a responsibility to share this prosperity with the country that bore the cost of their education in the first place. Eighteen out of twenty five respondents supported the cause of education in India and described it as an obligatory payback for the subsidized education that they received in India. Henry and Mohan (2003) describe how the Ghanian diaspora are obligated to provide for the health and education of their people in Ghana primarily because they got their own education by consuming the resources of their family in Ghana. This observation finds support in my study through the following segment of my conversation with a respondent:

Researcher: Do you think it is the duty of the Indian nationals settled abroad to contribute to India’s development by sending funds to India?

Respondent: Yes it is because even though I came here. My foundation was laid in India. I got my basic education in India- until bachelors. It was all free education. So it’s my responsibility and my fundamental duty to do something for that country. For example, pay some amount of money for some of the social causes.
Diaspora Philanthropy due to Emotional Attachment

Some of the respondents related and compared their feelings and sentiments towards India with those held towards their parents. They reflecting on the Indian cultural value system where children accumulate a debt in their childhood for receiving love and care in the childhood and are obligated to pay it back when they are young by taking care of their old parents. Hence, these respondents explained the obligation and the debt that they owe to India in terms of the same emotional attachment that they shared with their parents. Ten out of twenty five respondents described their obligation to practice diaspora philanthropy in terms of their emotional attachment towards family, friends and people in India. Diaspora philanthropy constitutes a powerful symbol of care and a medium of expressing filial love (Singh et al., 2010). Orozco (2006) argues that diaspora philanthropy is a way of validating their identity, attachment and relationships with their hometown. This is evident from the following passage:

I support development projects or activities in India because of my emotional attachment to India since I was born and brought up there. Same thing as you know what you have towards your parents and you want to take care of them at certain point. So since the country took care of when you were young. You know you want to return the favor.

Diaspora Philanthropy as an Obligation to Promote Indian Culture and Traditions

Explaining the factors that motivate the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to the Temples in India, Anand (2003) argues that the Indian diaspora seek to do justice to their roots and hence make these contributions to the Temples that preserve Hindu religion and culture for future generations. I found significant support for Anand’s observation
in my study. Five out of twenty five respondents described their philanthropic contributions as an obligation to support and promote Indian culture and tradition.

Displaying pride in the lineage, culture, values and tradition learned in India, One respondent specifically mentioned her beliefs about the obligation that the Indian diaspora owe towards promoting cultural values in India. Her argument rested in her belief that the Indian diaspora accumulated a wealth of traditional and cultural knowledge in India from the Indian society and this wealth constitutes a favor because it was not paid for in terms of the taxes to the government. Hence, the Indian diaspora are obligated to return this favor back to the Indian society by contributing funds for the promotion of cultural values which are dying out for lack of funds in India. This is evident from the following narrative provided by a respondent:

I don’t feel obligated to India for receiving such services as music or dance or even school education because I paid for these services. It isn’t that I lived off the government and even I did, I paid taxes. But I do feel obligated for my culture and lineage because that is something that does not get covered by taxes. The institutions that promote our culture such as the Temple are run by the society and they require charitable contributions. So if we don’t promote and preserve our history and your lineage, then there’s a risk of those things just dying out because society no longer values those kinds of skills.

Diaspora Philanthropy as an Obligation to Boost Economy and Development

Some of the participants described diaspora philanthropy as an indirect foreign investment that provides a boost to the Indian economy and also contributes to its growth and development. Since, the diaspora received a favor from the Indian government in terms of subsidized education, these participants believed that the diaspora now carry an inherent responsibility to return this favor to the Indian government by making investments and
contributing to its growth and development. Seven out of twenty five respondents explained their practice of diaspora philanthropy as an obligation on their part to support the Indian economy. The diaspora wish to contribute to the financial success of their birthplace through their philanthropic contributions (Yuen, 2008). Taplin (2002) argues that the major factor that drives the Indian American diaspora to participate in philanthropy is social entrepreneurship, that is, “giving grants to innovative individuals and organizations to stimulate grassroots social change and investing in economic empowerment to create employment and a higher standard of living” (Taplin, 2002, p. 4). This is evident from the following statement made by a respondent in my study:

I think every Indian living abroad must send some funds to India because whatever funds that we send to India. That indirectly helps our economy. So that’s an indirect foreign investment. It’s our duty because we got all our education back in India. So in some way or the other the government helped us. So we should help back or contribute to India’s development. Like promoting education or rural development or providing drinking water facility in the villages.

Diaspora Philanthropy as an Obligation towards Society

Philanthropic contributions “yield a satisfaction to the migrant out of a concern for the social welfare of his family, community or Country” (Tchouassi and Sikod, 2010, p. 2). In other words, they argue that these contributions are sent out of responsibility towards the family, community or country. (Tchouassi and Sikod, 2010). Six out of twenty five respondents expressed their obligation to support Indian society through diaspora philanthropy. One of the respondents in my study stated that the Indian diaspora owe a debt not to the government but to the society because it is the society that contributed resources towards raising them. Hence, the Indian diaspora need to reciprocate that obligation and they can do it not only by
contributing funds but also by being an exemplar of good citizens or by organizing Indians in the
United States for the welfare of India. This is evident from the following passage:

As a part of society, you have always taken something when you have grown up. So, I
have a debt to the society that grew me up. Since I grew up in India, I owe a debt to the
Indian society that contributed a lot towards my education, my upbringing. I think every
Indian who has grown up in India is obligated to give something back to India but money
is not the only way. It could be by organizing Indians in the United States for a better
India. One could also foster understanding between India and other countries by being
model citizens... By being good examples of Indians.

The above analysis shows how the Indian engineer immigrants in the U.S. described
their philanthropic contributions to the people in India simultaneously as gifts and as an
(1954), Mauss outlines the principal characteristics of a gift exchange which, according to him,
involves an obligatory transfer of inalienable objects or services between related individuals.
The Indian diaspora believed that they owe a debt and an obligation to the people, society and
government of India for providing them with free and subsidized education and for inculcating
rich cultural values in them which were not paid for through taxation. The Indian immigrants
also expressed their moral obligation to provide financial assistance to support growth and
developmental activities in India owing to the fact that they were leading prosperous lives in
the U.S. while their friends and family were living in poverty in India.

The in-depth account and explanation of the ways in which the Indian diaspora
perceived philanthropic contributions to India as an obligation was provided by the qualitative
method. The face-to-face interview method allowed me to get an insight into the reasons why
diaspora philanthropy was perceived as an obligation by the Indian immigrants. Participants’
expression and description of their emotional attachment and moral duties towards India was
successfully captured through the qualitative interview method. The unique advantage of using this qualitative research tool to conduct my study was its ability to get an insight into the participants’ hidden obligations associated with diaspora philanthropy. It allowed me to get an understanding of the participants’ obligations in their own words—their perception of obligation as not being restricted to financial assistance only but also spending quality time and sharing advanced technological and critical learning skills with the people in India, or by organizing Indians abroad and being good examples of Indians in foreign countries, the comparison of motherland with parents, the need to pay back for receiving a strong educational foundation for free of cost and for receiving the unmatched treasure of cultural traditions.

Diaspora Philanthropy: Regional Identity and Obligation

Through their concept of “translocal village,” Wise and Velayutham (2008) describe how Tamil immigrants and people in their home village are held together by fear of ostracism, shame, guilt and moral obligations towards their village. Along similar lines, 4 out of 25 respondents in my study expressed their obligation to make philanthropic contributions to the region where they grew up in India. One of the respondents mentioned donating out of guilt for not being able to do something for one’s hometown especially when a group of his friends initiated philanthropic activities in the same town:

All these people from different places are coming and staying for like 6 months and it’s all in my hometown and I am not doing anything. The least I can do is to donate.

In similar vein, another respondent who was asked why she prefers to make donations in her region responded:
Because I know them through my family and friends... These are the people who live in the same village and the same community where I grew up... They visit my parents and I have seen them since I grew up. So I feel more close to them. They are the people in my community. I have to give them because I know what they are going to use it for.

Class Identity and Obligation

Five out of twenty five respondents emphasized their experiences of poverty and misery in India and their sense of identification with the poor and underprivileged in India as a factor that creates a sense of obligation amongst them to help the poor in India. Brinkerhoff (2008) observed that philanthropic contributions by the Egyptian diaspora to the poor in Egypt were motivated by identity expression and by feelings of guilt and obligation that are reinforced by faith. According to him, “through sponsoring children and receiving updates on their welfare, young donors receive regular contact with Egypt, experience indirectly the struggles of poverty and discrimination, and potentially feel a sense of pride and a deepening of their faith for the support they provide” (Brinkerhoff, 2008, p. 426). In my study, one of the respondents stated: I have seen enough poverty in India and so I felt a need to contribute towards it. Another respondent stated:

Being an underprivileged myself in a nation which is not at par with countries like the United States, United Kingdom and other developed countries, I feel there is a lot to be done in countries like India which needs help. Contributing small pieces of help will definitely add. It’s a big effort and a big amount for these underprivileged communities in India.

Participation in Transnational Political Movement and Obligation

The Indian diaspora has significant mistrust in the formal bureaucratic administrative systems because of corrupt practices at different levels (Chandrappagari, 2008). Seven out of twenty five participants in my study described the need for the Indian diaspora to participate in
the transnational political movement against corruption in India and how their participation in
these movements was motivated by their sense of obligation towards India. One of the
respondents who was asked if he participated in the transnational political movement
responded:

I did participate once when there was a long walk organized by the Indians in San Diego
to protest against the corruption in India. I believe that every small little drop of water
makes an ocean so whatever awareness that we bring in will definitely bring to the
attention of the politicians and if we can change one single politician with our
motivation or movement, that would at least help a part of the current political
situation. So we all must make that effort...That would be a Great achievement.

Another respondent mentioned giving support through Twitter and Facebook and
spreading awareness about this movement amongst people who were not familiar with the
level of corruption in India. He states:

I didn’t officially go anywhere but I was in total support like I was tweeting and doing
Facebook updates. So lot of my participation was informal. It was basically getting the
people around me who were not from the Indian descent- to know and understand
about the corruption in India and also participating in informal discussions with my
Facebook friends about what should be done to eradicate corruption from India.

Cultural Identity and Obligation

Describing the factors that motivate the Punjabi Indian diaspora to participate in
philanthropy, Thandi (1999) mentions their sense of identity as a Punjabi Sikh (Indian ethnic
group) which specifically involves fulfillment of Sikh cultural values emphasizing the importance
of sharing of fruits of labor, selfless service and welfare of all mankind and participation in
philanthropy as civic duty, loyalty to village kith and kin, gratitude and payback. Participation in
diaspora philanthropy as an obligation deriving from one’s cultural identity also came as an
important motivating factor behind diaspora philanthropy in the interviews conducted with 5
out of 25 respondents. One of the respondents who were asked about the major reasons why he supported developmental projects/activities in India explicitly stated:

I would say cultural affinity. That’s the only reason. That is why I feel I have to give some money to my colleges. I have to give money to my local schools. So when I give money. It is in some way connected to me. My college is connected to me. The local communities there are connected to me. So if I give to India it is mainly because of cultural affinity...because I was born and raised there.

**Gender Identity and Obligation**

Investigating the factors that motivate Italian migrant women to involve themselves in diaspora philanthropy in Italy, Basa et al. (2006) found that the Italian women made philanthropic contributions towards women’s empowerment and various projects related to the health, education and economic development of women in Italy and their decision was motivated by their desire to fight patriarchy and challenge gender disparities in rights in Italy. A huge chunk (6 respondents) of my female participants described their preference and obligation to support the education of women in India. The major reason identified by them is their own personal experience of empowerment through education and also their knowledge about the poor status of women in India. These participants strongly believed that any contribution made towards educating the poor women in India would go a long way in helping the Indian society as a whole because women are the backbone of the society and they are the ones responsible for building the foundation of the future generation. Having experienced this personally, they specifically felt obligated to contribute to this generous cause in India. This is evident from the following response of a female respondent who described her preference for supporting the education of women in the following words:
I prefer supporting women’s education because I think that when you empower women by giving them education, you make them aware of what is available. You make them aware of the choices they have and when women become moms, they can give it to the next generation. They can take care of themselves and they give it to their kids. So it’s kind of a chain that continues in a big way. It also has got to do with the fact that I got good education and I still see that there is a difference between men and women in terms of what they have access to. Not necessarily just in India. Even here in the U.S.

Another respondent described her sense of obligation towards supporting the education of poor girls in India as follows:

I always advocate helping poor girls more than poor boys because I think that the basis of society is women. So if we make them strong-the society will survive because educated women can keep the home together. Also, I find that women particularly poor girls in India are at a disadvantage. The Indian society does not give them due respect or the power to grow.

Social Identity and Obligation

With respect to the Pakistani diaspora, Ali and Holden (2006) state that their sense of obligation towards their relatives in Pakistan secures their family networks and upholds their membership into kinship groups in Pakistan. A large number of the respondents in my study (10 out of 25 respondents) referenced their identification with the people and the society in India and their sense of obligation to help the Indian society. For example one such respondent stated:

I think it is sort of a social responsibility that we all have when our country and people in our country go through difficult times. Especially because of natural disasters. We all must do our small bit. Because those are the times when our people need help. It is a specially trying time because anybody can be impacted by the disaster. So it is our duty to help our people in need.

Another respondent referred to his social identification with the people and society in India while describing his obligation to support the eye health of the poor people in India:
I grew up in India and I have seen many people who didn’t have eyesight for very small reasons which can be fixed by just few dollars that we can send from here. So I feel that I can and I must give for that cause in India.

Educational Identity and Obligation

The professional Indian and Chinese diaspora have long evidenced a strong obligation to transfer the public subsidy that they received for their education in their respective home countries by supporting the cause of education in Indian and China respectively (Geithner, Johnson and Chen, 2004). A huge number of respondents in my study (20 out of 25 respondents) described their strong motivation and a sense of obligation to promote the cause of education in India. While some of them explicitly mentioned their own education as the cause of their prosperity, I must say that the educational identity was an important factor motivating that sense of obligation because my sample was selectively composed of educated people who at least had a bachelor’s degree in engineering. This emphasis on supporting and promoting the cause of education in India as a matter of duty and obligation was particularly evident in the following narrative of a respondent:

I am really passionate about education because I think that education is the backbone of society. When I look back at my childhood, I see a lot of my friends who were not that well to do and were not able to get education and are leading a life of misery now. Right now I am going to join a Ph.D..... So I do appreciate the value of education and what it can provide to the individual and the society. So I strongly feel that more people should get that. You can call it as my duty because I want to see everyone getting educated.

The above analysis shows that the Indian diaspora identified their obligations towards India owing to their shared identities and memberships of social groups based on region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, culture and society in India. These obligations emerged from the guilt associated with leaving their
country and people behind in misery, concern for humanity, women and poor in India, passion and appreciation for the value of education to improve economic and social standards of people in India. Hence, I drew a connection between Mauss’s concept of the gift (1954) and Tajfel’s concept of social identity (1981) in the context of diaspora philanthropy by examining diaspora philanthropy as transfer of gifts between people who share common social identities.

The qualitative method of face-to-face interviewing allowed me to obtain an insight into how the Indian diaspora themselves drew connection between identity and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy, how did they experience guilt and how could that be assuaged, how did they relate to the issue of corruption in India and where did they perceive themselves in dealing with this nationwide evil, what role did they identify for themselves in dealing with the issue of poor status of women in India and how did they perceive obligations owing to their identification with the Indian society and culture.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the theoretical and empirical implications of the findings of my research. It provides a summary of the findings of my study and also discusses the significance of these findings with respect to my research questions. This section is divided into 3 sections.

The first section, immigrants’ identities and diaspora philanthropy, provides a summary of my results on the concept of immigrants’ identities and their role in motivating Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India. The second section, obligation and diaspora philanthropy, discusses my findings on the role of hidden obligations in motivating Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India. The third section, immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy, provides a discussion of my findings on how the immigrants’ identities interact with obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy.

Immigrant Identities and Diaspora Philanthropy

Previous research on immigrants’ identities and diaspora philanthropy has emphasized how the philanthropic contributions of the Indian diaspora are motivated by their sense of identity with their home country. Such a practice allows them to reestablish and reinforce connections with the Indians in their home country who share identities with the Indian diaspora. However, there exists substantial conceptual ambiguity with respect to the concept of immigrants’ identities in these studies. In my research, I used the social identity perspective proposed by Tajfel (1981) to understand the concept of immigrant identities and to clarify this conceptual confusion in the existing literature and to better understand how the dominant
socio-cultural identities of the Indian diaspora motivate them to participate in diaspora philanthropy. In my study, I found that it is the collective identities of the Indian diaspora deriving from their region, gender, class, Indian society, Indian culture and their level of participation in the transnational political movement against corruption in India that motivates them to participate in diaspora philanthropy.

The Indian diaspora was motivated to make philanthropic contributions to the individuals and organizations located in one’s region or city they grew up in because they were perceived to be more credible and trustworthy. Such factors as greater familiarity with the recipient individuals and organizations, long term association and proximity of distance with one’s parents, family and close friends which enables close monitoring of their activities provided greater confidence to the diaspora that the funds will not be misused.

The class identity of the Indian diaspora was another significant factor motivating those who have seen and experienced poverty in India to make philanthropic contributions because they identified themselves with the condition of the poor in India and felt a moral responsibility to share their prosperity with their less privileged community members in India.

The gender identity was particularly a strong factor amongst the female Indian diaspora in influencing their decision to support the education of the girl child in India. Having seen and in some cases experienced the poor status of women in India and also how education contributed to the improvement of their status, the female Indian engineers strongly supported the education of women in India.

One of the dominant identities that makes up an individual’s self amongst the Indian diaspora is the one deriving from their participation in the contemporary transnational political
movement against corruption in India. This identity was also found to be a strong factor influencing the decision of the Indian diaspora to participate in diaspora philanthropy. The Indian engineers expressed their desire, intention and potential to improve the current socio-political condition of the country by providing their moral, social and financial support to this movement.

The social identity of the Indian diaspora which involves their deep sense of identification with the social life and groups in India constitutes another strong indicator of Indian diaspora philanthropy. The Indian engineer immigrants in the U.S. expressed their dissatisfaction with the secretive, artificial and formal nature of social relationships both in their professional and personal social life, lack of social support, limited friends and relatives, limited socialization and lack of shared understanding between friends and colleagues. Their desire to stay connected with the Indian social life and retain their memberships in Indian social groups prompted them to participate in diaspora philanthropy.

Finally, the cultural identity of the Indian diaspora which involves their identification and affiliation with the Indian culture was found to be influencing the decision of the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions in India. The Indian diaspora took pride in inculcating Indian cultural values among their kids by teaching them Indian language, Indian art forms, Indian scriptures and history, showing them Indian movies and cooking Indian food. By participating in diaspora philanthropy, the Indian diaspora attempted to maintain and reaffirm their cultural identity with the Indian nation. In other words, by contributing to such causes as health, education, disaster relief and community building for the people of India, the Indian
diaspora attempted to reassure and reconfirm their shared identities with the Indian culture which may have been threatened due to their migration.

On the basis of my analysis of the data collected for this research, I found that the Indian migrant communities in the U.S. emphasized their positive attitude towards social groups in India without having any negative attitude towards the people and social groups in the United States. Tasdemir (2011) argues that, “positive attitudes toward the in-groups may not be positively related to the negative attitudes toward the out-groups. That is, people who favor the in-groups over the out-groups do not have to derogate the out-groups” (p. 125). This is evident from the following statement made by a respondent in my study:

I want my kids to be comfortable eating what I grew up eating and when they go back to India, we don’t have problems finding food for them. Also, I want them to enjoy different types of food. Besides the American food and other food that they eat here, I want them to be comfortable eating Indian food.

Another respondent stated:

Both my kids speak fluent Hindi. They can read and write Hindi. I know that they will know American culture any way. They are part of this society but I wanted them to know Indian values also.

Describing the reason why she wants her kids to learn her local Indian language, one of the respondents stated:

They already know English. They are learning it in School and from friends...its good for them to know a second language and since we already speak another language at home, they have an advantage and so that's how they are learning an Indian language... they don’t have to put any extra effort in it. They are just learning 2 languages simultaneously.

Another respondent stated:

My daughter learns an Indian classical dance.... She learns ‘bharatnatyam’-an Indian dance form... She takes classes once a week. She is interested in western dance also...She is doing ballet too.
Similarly one respondent stated:

The kids here are brought up in a multicultural environment which I think is good. It’s not that if you have Indian culture, you completely exclude American culture. For example, if you want to learn a dance, nothing prevents a kid who is going here to the western ballet as well as an Indian ‘bharatnatyam’ (Indian classical dance form). She can learn both. They are not mutually exclusive. And again it depends on what the kid is interested in.

My data analysis, further, revealed that the Indian immigrants were significantly insecure about their identities deriving from their membership in the social groups in India.

Grant (2007) emphasizes that immigrants’ identification with their social groups in their home country will be stronger when their perceived identification with these groups is insecure or threatened. This is evident from the following part of a conversation with a respondent:

I send my daughter for a ‘Gita’ (religious lessons) class that goes on near my area for an hour a week. She is not in India and she won’t have that exposure that we had...so, I am afraid, she might not lose her own culture... At least she can be aware and get some of it through these classes.

Another respondent stated:

Whenever there is an Indian festival, we go there. Either we have a gathering or we go to the temple where we meet lot of other Indians. There are 2 reasons for that. One is that. It is a culture I am born into and the culture I have grown with and I would like to continue that. The second one is that I see it as an opportunity to expose my children who are born here and who don’t see the festivals in India. If I do not take them to the temple and celebrate those festivals, they would not be aware of my culture... my ancestors’ culture.

One of the respondents who not only practiced Indian cultural beliefs and values but was also actively involved in teaching Indian cultural values and beliefs to the second generation of Indian immigrants in the U.S. explained her actions in the following words:

I feel that it’s the history of India... It’s our lineage and something that the modern society does not give importance to anymore. With the modernization of society now, the people are not focusing much on cultural aspects anymore. But we draw a lot of strength from these things so I feel that it’s important to continue the legacy. And
nowadays if children of modern era do not get this cultural education... then that legacy would just die out. So I think it’s a very valuable contribution to make.

In the following words, one of the respondents explained why he wants his kids to learn his local Indian language and eat Indian food:

I want them to speak and master my Indian language because if they want to go to India, then it’s an easy transition for them. And there are many relatives in India who are more comfortable speaking in the native language. So I want my kids to converse well with them. Also, I want them to be comfortable with Indian food because when they grow up and happen to go to India, I don’t want them to lose out on it. They should be comfortable eating Indian food in any Indian family that we might visit. And it’s more likely that they will visit Indian families than others. So it is more of a practical reason that I want them to pick these up.

Obligation and Diaspora Philanthropy

Previous research on obligation and diaspora philanthropy has emphasized how the philanthropic contributions by the Indian diaspora are motivated by their sense of obligation and responsibility towards their home country. However, these studies do not identify the specific obligations that are associated with the practice of diaspora philanthropy which is because they are often hidden or not explicitly recognized. Through my qualitative research methodology, I discovered these hidden obligations and found out that these obligations are implied in their conceptualization of diaspora philanthropy as – gifts. The concept of gift is characterized by an inherent sense of indebtedness and obligation (Mauss, 1954).

The Indian diaspora experience a sense of guilt and shame for leaving the country which provided them all the resources - financial, social and emotional which they needed to become successful professionals in the United States. Perceiving these resources that they consumed in India as a debt on themselves, the Indian diaspora experience a sense of obligation to pay back and return the favor by making philanthropic contributions in India. In order to investigate the
hidden obligations that are associated with the practice of diaspora philanthropy, I examined the concept of diaspora philanthropy from the theoretical perspective of the gift by Marcel Mauss (1954) which involves 3 sets of obligations- the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate.

Within Mauss’s theoretical framework (1954), my research found evidence for the first set of obligation associated with the concept of the gift- the obligation to give. The Indian diaspora expressed their pride, indebtedness, concern, duty and responsibility for the well-being of their people in India. Comparing their own prosperous condition in the United States with those of the people in India who are still living in an impoverished state in India, the Indian diaspora believed that they have a moral responsibility to share the fruits of their wealth with the unfortunate and underprivileged citizens in India. They add that this moral responsibility is not restricted to the sharing of wealth alone. The diaspora also have a moral responsibility to spend quality time with the people in India and share their advanced knowledge with them so that they are well equipped to improve their own socio-economic condition in India.

The Indian diaspora also expressed their deep sense of indebtedness towards their home country which laid the foundation of their lives by providing them with free and subsidized education. They experienced a sense of guilt for not sharing the returns on their education with the country that provided them a strong educational base. Therefore, they considered it to be their fundamental responsibility to share the fruits of their education with their home country by providing for the social causes in India through diaspora philanthropy.

The Indian diaspora identified the love and care that they received from the people in India with the emotional care that they received from their parents during their childhood and
just as it is the responsibility of the children to take care of their parents when they get old, the Indian diaspora expressed it as their duty to take care of their country through diaspora philanthropy when they become adults and prosperous residents of the United States.

Another significant way in which the Indian diaspora recognized their obligation towards India was through emphasizing their duty to promote Indian culture and traditions. This duty and obligation on the part of the Indian diaspora is explained by the fact that Indians received an invaluable wealth of cultural traditions and lineage from India which were not paid for by the taxes because they were not provided by the government. This treasure of cultural heritage and knowledge was provided to the Indian diaspora as free of cost and it therefore constitutes a debt which they need to pay back through contributing funds towards promoting cultural values and traditions and traditions in India for future generations.

Besides, the Indian diaspora accepted that they owe a debt to the Indian government for all the subsidies that they received from the government when they were in India. Also, that they should display efforts towards paying it back by contributing philanthropic funds towards promoting education, rural development etc. which eventually constitute indirect foreign investments that promote growth and development in the country.

Finally, the Indian diaspora expressed their obligation towards the Indian society because of the resources that were primarily contributed by the family, friends, relatives and people in India. They emphasized the need on their part to fulfill this obligation by providing a good name to the country of India as exemplary and model Indian citizens in the U.S. or by networking with other Indian citizens in the United States to promote the welfare of India.
In addition to the obligations that the Indian diaspora perceived towards people in India, I found evidence and support for the expectation of reciprocity on the part of the Indian diaspora and the obligation to reciprocate on the part of the recipients of philanthropy in India. Johnson (2007) argues that the key factors that encourage philanthropic giving by the diaspora to their home country include the increased prospects of legal and political rights, favorable financial policies, monetary incentives and government support to the diaspora population in their home country (p. 38). This is evident from the following statement made by a respondent:

I haven’t come across an NRI who is unselfish regarding organizing these kinds of movements. At least among the ones I know- who have been actively participating in Indian political movement. I now, for sure, that they are all doing it just for benefits. It’s like associating with powerful people to get power. For example, if I know a minister and I invite him over to my house when he visits the U.S., he is obligated to reciprocate this favor. So next time when I go to India, I have some privileges like if I want to start my own company or a business in India, he is most likely to help me with the legal stuff.

While there is an expectation of reciprocity on the part of the Indian diaspora making philanthropic contributions, it is interesting to note that this expectation remains hidden and is, rather, denied in public. An important characteristic of the gift is the denial of the expected return on the part of the gift- giver (Mauss, 1954). This is evident from the following conversation with a respondent in my study:

Researcher: Why do you use/prefer to use such a way/method of sending funds to India?

Respondent: I believe that the trust in the organization comes through the trust in the person. Because I trust my cousin, my friend and I know that he won't screw me over. So it's more of an investment in him rather than the organization. But, I am not expecting him to return it in any way. I just feel like giving in some sense...it is more of a feeling.
Immigrant Identities and Obligation in the Context of Diaspora Philanthropy

Previous research on the relationship between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy is scarce. My study examined the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy by drawing a connection between Tajfel’s social identity theory (1981) and Mauss’s theory of the gift (1954). In other words, a perspective of social reality was provided by using existing theoretical lens in a different way, that is, by drawing a connection between two different theoretical perspectives to understand the social reality of diaspora philanthropy. To elaborate, this study examined diaspora philanthropy as a mechanism of gift transfer (with its underlying obligations) that occurs between people who share common social identities. For this purpose, the mechanism of gift transfer was explored within the framework of the gift ideology proposed by Mauss (1954) and the concept of immigrant identities was explored from the social identity perspective proposed by Tajfel (1981).

My research found that the social identities of the immigrants deriving from their region, class, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, culture, gender, society and education in India emphasize their shared identities and collective association with the people in these social groups. These shared identities and collective association, then, create a sense of obligation amongst the Indian diaspora to participate in gift giving in the form of diaspora philanthropy which they believe is required in order to maintain, retain and reinforce their membership in this shared moral community.

The Indian diaspora expressed an obligation to make philanthropic contributions to people in their home town or village because it constitutes their community and they
emphasized the need to maintain the closeness of their relationship with the community members through transfer of funds which they know will be used responsibly.

Those members of the Indian diaspora who identified themselves with the poor and the underprivileged in India expressed their obligation to contribute philanthropic funds towards improving the condition of the poor in India because of empathy and an understanding that a small help on their part will make a big contribution in their lives.

Similarly the Indian diaspora participated in the transnational political movement against corruption in India because of their strong belief that it is the responsibility of every Indian to make an effort and raise a voice against corruption in India. This may be done through active participation in the political movement or through creating awareness amongst people about the deteriorating political condition in India.

Further, the Indian diaspora admitted their cultural identity and affinity with India as a factor that contributes to their sense of obligation to make philanthropic contributions to India. Diaspora philanthropy keeps them connected with the Indian culture.

As women, the female Indian diaspora felt obligated to contribute philanthropic funds towards the education of women in India because of their knowledge about the poor status of women in India, their own experience of empowerment through education and their strong belief that educated women take better care of their families. Hence they believed that this contribution will go a long way in uplifting the Indian society as a whole.

Besides, the identification of the Indian diaspora with the Indian society creates an obligation on their part to make philanthropic contributions to the members of the Indian society, specifically to pay for the health care of poor and when they are in trouble such as
during times of natural disasters. This obligation is derived from the fact that diaspora philanthropy reestablishes and reassures the membership of the Indian diaspora in the Indian society.

Finally, the Indian diaspora expressed their moral obligation to support the cause of education in India through diaspora philanthropy. Having experienced the fruits of education themselves through prosperity and better quality of life, the Indian diaspora felt obligated to spread awareness about the benefits of education amongst the huge chunk of masses in India who do not have access to this door to prosperity.

During the analysis of my research data, I found that the Indian diaspora felt obligated to make philanthropic contributions to the people in India not only because of their identification and association with the culture, society and people in India but also because of the guilt associated with the fact that they were residing in a wealthy country while their poor counterparts continued to live in misery and poverty. According to Brinkerhoff (2008) “diaspora members may experience not only an allegiance to the ancestral homeland but also, or instead, a nagging sense of obligation owing to their relative wealth and/or higher quality of life in the adopted society” (p. 412). I found support for this observation in the following conversation with a respondent in my study:

Researcher: What are your main reasons for supporting the cause of children’s education in India?

Respondent: I think there are not a lot of good opportunities for lot of kids specially the kids in India. Lot of these kids don’t get as much as I have gotten. So I think it’s time for me to give back.

Interestingly, although the Indian diaspora in the U.S. expressed their obligation to make philanthropic contributions to India, they were aware of their superior status as donors
residing in the U.S. and hence quite explicitly expressed their expectations from the people who were at the receiving end of their philanthropy. Brinkerhoff (2009) argues that “diasporans’ frequent residency in relatively wealthier societies than the homeland, inclusive of income earning opportunities, gives them a proportional advantage in supporting their policy agendas of choice” (p. 13). The superior status, better say and expectations of the diaspora as donors from the recipients in their home country are somewhat reflected in the following remark made by a respondent in my study:

I have seen in my relatives that when I try to help them by giving money, they don’t want me to ask them any questions. They just want to take money and then do whatever they want. So they expect help from me and at the same time don’t want me to know anything. But if they are taking money from me. I expect them to tell me about each and every penny they are spending. After all it’s my money that they are spending.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the findings of my research and describes how my research successfully and systematically addressed the research questions raised in the introductory chapter. It also provides recommendations and directions for future sociological research in the field of diaspora philanthropy. This chapter is divided into 3 sections. The first section, diaspora philanthropy: identity and obligation among Indian engineers in the United States, provides an overall summary of the results with respect to my research questions. The second section, the research process: a summary' provides a chapter wise description of the conclusions drawn with respect to each of the 7 components of my research, introduction, theoretical orientation, literature review, method, analysis, discussion and conclusion. The third section, recommendations for future research, discusses the future potential and scope for sociological research on the various factors that motivate Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India.

Previous research in sociology demonstrates the complexity of distinguishing between remittances and philanthropy, which are neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive (Plasterer, 2011). In support of this observation, my research also found that the concept of diaspora philanthropy amongst Indian engineers in the United States includes both private and collective donations of money and gifts to friends and relatives in need and also for the social, economic, political, cultural and religious development in India. In other words, I observed that the Indian
diaspora does not draw sharp distinctions between private donations to relatives and collective donations for development, that is, between traditional and ideal definitions of diaspora remittances and diaspora philanthropy. Since the lines of distinction between these 2 concepts are blurred and almost invisible, the Indian diaspora uses these two concepts interchangeably and synonymously. The major reason behind the blurring of boundaries is the use of informal channels and networks to transfer funds which makes it difficult to track the exact uses for which the transfers were made - for private use by relatives or for social cause in general.

The practice of diaspora philanthropy among Indian engineers in the United States has been relatively less researched by sociologists and social anthropologists. My research sought to address this gap in sociological research by investigating the factors that motivate Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India. In this endeavor, my research specifically examined the role of identity and obligation in influencing the decision of Indian immigrants to practice diaspora philanthropy. Although sociological research is available on the role of immigrants’ identities in motivating the diaspora to make philanthropic contributions, there is substantial conceptual ambiguity surrounding the concept of identities in these studies. In my research, I sought to clarify this conceptual ambiguity and confusion by analyzing the concept of immigrants’ identities within the social identity perspective by Tajfel (1981) which defines the concept of identity as a collective identity. Tajfel’s perspective (1981) conceptualizes identities in relation to one’s membership of social group(s).

My research found that a significant part of the self and identity among the Indian diaspora were derived from their identification, association and membership of social groups based on region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement against
corruption in India, society and culture in India. This was reflected in the specific concern displayed by the Indian immigrants about the needs of the people in their region owing to their personal involvement and long term association with that region. The female engineers expressed an understanding of the status of women in India through their own experiences and some of the immigrants who rose from lower socio-economic status displayed greater empathy and concern for the underprivileged in India. Further, the Indian diaspora displayed consistent interest and concern about the deteriorating political climate of India, about the dying cultural heritage in India, the socio-cultural and political climate of India and also about the lack of warmth, reliability and informality of social relationships in the United States which are typical of social bonds in India.

Their shared and collective identities with the people in India engendered greater trust and confidence among the Indian diaspora about their activities, needs and appropriate utilization of funds and hence motivated the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to serve their needs. The familiarity, awareness and knowledge about the place and the people due to the proximity of distance and frequency of contact between the recipients of philanthropy in India and the relatives of the diaspora in India contributed to a better understanding of their needs and hence convinced the Indian diaspora that their funds will be used responsibly.

The transfer of funds by the Indian diaspora as philanthropic contributions towards family, friends, neighbors and people in India, further, reinforced and reinstated their shared and collective identification with the social groups in India. Through diaspora philanthropy, they
reestablished their identity and stake in the socio-cultural, economic and political groups in India.

My research examined the concept of philanthropy as a gift and identified hidden obligations associated with diaspora philanthropy among Indian immigrants in the United States. The concept of philanthropy was analyzed within the framework of “the gift theory” by Marcel Mauss (1954) which defines the concept of gift as involving 3 sets of obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate.

My study found that the Indian diaspora community in the United States experiences a sense of obligation to make philanthropic donations to their home country because of the guilt associated with leaving behind their family, friends and relatives in their home country and the moral urge to pay off the debt of economic, educational, social and emotional costs involved in their upbringing in India.

The Indian diaspora is quite aware of its superior economic and social standing compared to their counterparts in India who are at the receiving end of the philanthropic donations. Hence, they explicitly disclosed their expectations with respect to the specific ways in which they expected their funds to be used and demanded fulfillment of those expectations. As givers, they expected to be kept updated and informed about every minute development on the status of the philanthropy recipients and shared their dissatisfaction and frustration when the recipients failed to keep up to this expectation. This reflects the implicit and implied obligation on the part of the people accepting philanthropic donations in India to accept the terms and conditions of the philanthropy transfer as framed by the diaspora.
Interestingly, my research discovered that the practice of diaspora philanthropy among the Indian engineers in the United States is characterized by an awareness or expectation of obligatory return or reciprocity for the philanthropic contributions. The obligation to reciprocate was reflected in the financial and economic incentives provided by the Government of India to the diaspora for making philanthropic contributions that eventually and significantly contribute towards the building of the Indian economy. The diaspora’s awareness of this underlying obligation of reciprocity was reflected in their opinions and views with respect to the participation of the Indian diaspora in the transnational political movement against corruption in India. The Indian immigrants stated that the major factor behind the diaspora’s involvement and participation in this movement is political favors expected in return for the mobilization of the Indian diaspora and the strengthening of their political stature in India.

Although Mauss (1954) outlined the principal characteristics of a gift exchange as involving an obligatory transfer of inalienable objects or services between related individuals, my research examined diaspora philanthropy as transfer of gifts between people who share common social identities. Hence, I drew a connection between Mauss’s concept of the gift (1954) and Tajfel’s concept of social identity (1981) in the context of diaspora philanthropy. My research found that the identity of the Indian diaspora deriving from their identification with their region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, culture, society and education in India created a sense of obligation among the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India.

The emotional attachment and guilt among the Indian diaspora about not doing enough for the people in their region contributed to their experience and feelings of obligation towards
the people in their region. The female diaspora expressed their obligations towards the education of women in India owing to their own advancement of status in the United States through education. Similarly, the Indian diaspora who identified their own childhood with the suffering poor in India expressed their obligation to contribute to their improvement through diaspora philanthropy. Besides, their opinion about participation in the transnational political movement against corruption in India was expressed as an obligation to improve the political climate of India that is severely infected with corruption. Further, expressing their opinion about the declining warmth in social relationships in India and dying cultural values, they cited it as their duty to contribute funds to restore social and cultural values in India. Finally, as beneficiaries of education themselves, they expressed their strong sense of obligation to share the knowledge and fruits of education with the people in India by contributing funds to promote the cause of their education.

My research found that the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy was mediated through guilt, emotional attachment and moral responsibility on the part of the Indian diaspora. In other words, the Indian diaspora’s identification with the socio-cultural, economic and political groups in India contributes to their emotional attachment with the people in India and explains their feelings of guilt associated with leaving them behind to suffer in misery and also their feelings of moral responsibility to take care of the people in India. These feelings of guilt, emotional attachment and moral responsibility experienced by the Indian diaspora towards the people in India create an obligation among them to fulfill their duties towards the people, society and government in India and pay off their debt through diaspora philanthropy.
A large majority of philanthropic donations among the Indian diaspora are made through informal channels and networks such as through family and friends. The qualitative nature of my research methodology involving face-to-face in-depth interviews allowed me to get valuable insights into these informal mechanisms of fund transfer in diaspora philanthropy. The major reason why the Indian diaspora practiced diaspora philanthropy through informal channels and networks of family and friends is rampant corruption in the country, fear of misuse of funds and lack of trust and faith in the activities of organizations and unknown individuals seeking donations in India.

The Research Process: A Summary

Introduction, my first chapter, introduced the topic of my study by defining the concept of diaspora philanthropy in terms of its similarities and differences from the widely popular concept of remittances in sociological literature. Although diaspora philanthropy (collective donations for social welfare) is defined in contrast to the concept of remittances (private donations to family and friends), the frequency and flexibility with which the two concepts can acquire each other’s characteristics has resulted in the synonymous usage of these two concepts by sociologists conducting research on immigrant issues.

This chapter discussed the significant contribution of my research towards the advancement of sociological literature on diaspora philanthropy, towards assisting policy makers, social scientists and social activists in directing their resources and efforts to promote diaspora philanthropy and also towards improving relationships between India and the United States. Although philanthropic contributions by the Indian diaspora to India are growing rapidly
both in terms of magnitude and importance to the Indian economy, this field has been relatively less researched. Hence, the basic rationale for conducting this research was to fill this gap in sociological research by investigating the social factors that motivate Indian diaspora to practice diaspora philanthropy.

Theoretical orientation, my second chapter, described the theoretical framework of my study by analyzing the concept of immigrants’ identities from the social identity perspective by Tajfel (1981) and the concept of philanthropy as a gift and as an obligation from the theoretical perspective of the gift by Marcel Mauss (1954). Discussing the advantages and disadvantages associated with the use of these two theoretical perspectives, this chapter described the rationale behind using their frameworks to analyze the concept of identity and obligation in my study. The social identity perspective by Tajfel (1981) approaches the concept of identity in relation to a group. In other words, it defines the concept of identity as a collective identity and was therefore found to be most appropriate to understand the concept of diaspora whose members proactively maintain their identities through links with collective groups in their home country. Similarly, the gift perspective by Mauss (1954) was found to be most appropriate to analyze the concept of philanthropy because it examined the underlying hidden obligations associated with the practice of diaspora philanthropy. It captured the dimension of altruism as well as reciprocity in the understanding of philanthropy by exploring the hidden self-interest behind declared selflessness.

In my research, I drew a connection between Mauss’ concept of the gift (1954) and Tajfel’s concept of social identity (1981). While Mauss described the practice of gift giving as occurring between a set of social relatives, I examined diaspora philanthropy as transfer of gifts
between people who share common social identities. I argued that the social identity of the immigrant emphasizes his/ her shared identity and collective association with the people in their home country and these shared identities create an obligation amongst the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India which further reestablish and strengthen their bonds with the communities in India.

Literature Review, my third chapter, provided an overview of the background research and available sociological literature on the motivating factors behind Indian diaspora philanthropy. It discussed the various definitions and descriptions of the concepts of diaspora and diaspora philanthropy in sociological research. The term diaspora is defined to include “ethno-national groups whose members reside out of their home country (moved from there either forcibly or voluntarily) and who retain a sense of membership in their group of origin and a collective representation and concern for the wellbeing of their homeland which plays a significant role in their lives in both a symbolic and normative sense” (Morawska, 2011, p. 1030). The term diaspora philanthropy is defined as “the private donations of diasporas to a wide range of causes in their countries of origin” (Newland, Terrazas and Munster, 2010, p.2).

This chapter provided a discussion of the existing sociological studies that have examined the role of immigrants’ identities and obligation in motivating immigrants to diaspora to make philanthropic contributions. However, there is substantial conceptual ambiguity surrounding the concept of identities in the context of diaspora philanthropy and severe dearth of sociological research on the specific hidden obligations associated with the practice of diaspora philanthropy. Hence, this chapter provided the background of my research by pointing
out the gaps in existing sociological literature on diaspora philanthropy that were addressed in my research.

Method, the fourth chapter, described in detail my methodology for conducting this research, the rationale behind its use and my technique of data collection and analysis. I adopted the qualitative research methodology because of its appropriateness and unique advantages in conducting my study. Its unique investigative and probing technique allowed me to get an insight into underlying obligations and motivations behind the practice of diaspora philanthropy amongst the Indian immigrants. It also allowed me to obtain relevant and significant information in its cultural context by enabling me to develop a rapport and empathy with my respondents. Through my snowball sampling technique, I collected a sample of 25 Indian engineers from San Diego, California and conducted face-to-face in depth, semi-structured interviews with them in order to explore the informal mechanisms through which they conduct their practice of diaspora philanthropy. Each interview was audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed through “the process of dismantling, segmenting and reassembling data according to the research questions and the research aim in order to form meaningful findings and draw inferences” (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 75).

Analysis, the fifth chapter, provided the findings and results of my data analysis with respect to my research questions on the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the concept of identities in the context of diaspora philanthropy, on the role of hidden obligations in motivating the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions and on the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. On the basis of my data analysis, I found that the self and identity among the Indian diaspora was
significantly derived from their membership of social groups based on region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, society and culture in India.

Besides, the Indian diaspora believed that they owe a debt and an obligation to the people, society, Government of India for providing them with free and subsidized education and for inculcating rich cultural values in them which were not paid for through taxation. The Indian immigrants also expressed their moral obligation to provide financial assistance to support growth and developmental activities in India owing to the fact that they were leading prosperous lives in the U.S. while their friends and family were living in poverty in India.

Further, my data analysis revealed that the Indian diaspora identified their obligations towards India owing to their shared identities and memberships of social groups based on region, class, gender, participation in transnational political movement against corruption in India, culture and society in India. These obligations emerged from the guilt associated with leaving their country and people behind in misery, concern for humanity, women and poor in India, passion and appreciation for the value of education to improve economic and social standards of people in India.

Discussion, my sixth chapter, described the theoretical and empirical implications of the findings of my research in terms of their significance for my research questions on the concept of immigrants' identities and their role in motivating the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions, on the role of hidden obligations in motivating the Indian immigrants to make philanthropic contributions to India and on the interaction between immigrants' identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy.
The Indian diaspora were motivated to make philanthropic contributions to the individuals and organizations located in one’s region or city they grew up in because they were perceived to be more credible and trustworthy. Those who have seen and experienced poverty in India identified themselves with the condition of the poor in India and felt a moral responsibility to share their prosperity with their less privileged community members in India. Having seen and in some cases experienced the poor status of women in India and also how education contributed to the improvement of their status, the female Indian engineers strongly supported the education of women in India. The Indian engineers expressed their desire, intention and potential to improve the current socio-political condition of the country by participating in the transnational political movement against corruption in India. The Indian engineer immigrants in the U.S. expressed their dissatisfaction with the secretive, artificial and formal nature of social relationships in the U.S. and took pride in inculcating Indian cultural values among their kids by teaching them Indian language, Indian art forms, Indian scriptures and history, showing them Indian movies and cooking Indian food.

Comparing their own prosperous condition in the United States with those of the people in India who are still living in an impoverished state in India, the Indian diaspora believed that they have a moral responsibility to share the fruits of their wealth with the unfortunate and underprivileged citizens in India. The Indian diaspora also expressed their deep sense of indebtedness towards their home country which laid the foundation of their lives by providing them with free and subsidized education. The Indian diaspora expressed their sense of duty to take care of their country through diaspora philanthropy just as they would take care of their parents when they get old and also to promote Indian culture and traditions because they
received this treasure for free of cost in India. Besides, the Indian diaspora accepted that they owe a debt to the Indian government for all the subsidies that they received from the government when they were in India and hence believed that they should contribute funds towards the development of the Indian economy through diaspora philanthropy. Finally, they emphasized the need on their part to fulfill an obligation towards the Indian society by becoming exemplary and model Indian citizens in the U.S.

The Indian diaspora expressed an obligation to make philanthropic contributions to people in their home town or village because it constitutes their community. Those members of the Indian diaspora who identified themselves with the poor and the underprivileged in India expressed their obligation to contribute philanthropic funds towards improving the condition of the poor in India. Similarly the Indian diaspora participated in the transnational political movement against corruption in India because of their strong belief that it is the responsibility of every Indian to make an effort and raise a voice against corruption in India.

Further, the Indian diaspora admitted their cultural identity and affinity with India as a factor that contributes to their sense of obligation to make philanthropic contributions to India. As women, the female Indian diaspora felt obligated to contribute philanthropic funds towards the education of women in India because of their knowledge about the poor status of women in India and their strong belief that educated women take better care of their families. Besides, the identification of the Indian diaspora with the Indian society creates an obligation on their part to make philanthropic contributions to the members of the Indian society, specifically to pay for the health care of poor and when they are in trouble such as during times of natural disasters. Having experienced the fruits of education themselves through prosperity and better
quality of life, the Indian diaspora felt obligated to spread awareness about the benefits of education amongst the huge chunk of masses in India who do not have access to this door to prosperity.

Conclusion, my last chapter, concludes my study by summarizing the findings of my research and describing how my research successfully and systematically addressed the research questions raised in the introductory chapter. It also provides recommendations and directions for future sociological research in the field of diaspora philanthropy.

Recommendations for Future research

Through qualitative face-to-face interviews, my research sought to clarify the conceptual confusion surrounding the concept of identities in the context of diaspora philanthropy and explore the role of identity and obligation in motivating the Indian engineer diaspora in the U.S. to practice diaspora philanthropy. It was an exploratory study in which I adopted the snowball sampling technique to recruit my sample of respondents. Hence, the data collected for this study was selective because it was recruited through referrals and contacts.

Since my data was not representative of the population of Indian engineers in San Diego or California or the United States, its findings cannot be generalized to the entire population of the Indian engineers or Indian diaspora in San Diego, California or the United States. However, my data analysis and research led to the discovery of significant themes and insights with respect to the concept of role of immigrants’ identities and their role in motivating the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India, the role of obligation in motivating the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India and the interaction between
immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. These exploratory insights can be examined in the light of a wider, national and more representative data in the United States so that its results can be generalized to a wider population of the Indian diaspora.

Further, my research was focused on the underlying motivations behind diaspora philanthropy amongst the Indian engineers. However, similar studies can be done to examine the motivating factors behind philanthropic donations amongst other categories of Indian diaspora such as the doctors, businessmen, accountants etc.

Furthermore, in my research, I found that obligation plays an important role in motivating the Indian diaspora to practice diaspora philanthropy. However, my study examined the role of obligation from the perspective of the diaspora and therefore analyzed only one dimension of the obligation- the obligation to give, that is, the obligation, on the part of the Indian diaspora, to make philanthropic contributions to India. The other two dimensions of obligation, namely, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to reciprocate, can be examined more systematically from the perspective of the people and communities receiving philanthropic donations in India. These studies on diaspora philanthropy will complement my study.

Finally, through the qualitative analysis of a small sample of 25 Indian Engineers, my research has provided foundational insights into the immigrants’ identities that are significant in constituting the self amongst the Indian diaspora in the U.S. It has provided an insight into the various obligations that are perceived by the Indian diaspora towards India and also the interaction between immigrants’ identities and obligation in the context of diaspora philanthropy. These foundational insights can be expanded, developed and built on through
quantitative studies of large data sets. These studies will not only be more generalizable but will also be able to measure the extent of prevalence and the significance of the themes discovered through the present qualitative analysis.

To conclude, my research found that the collective identities of the immigrants and their hidden obligations play an important role in motivating the Indian diaspora to make philanthropic contributions to India. Besides, these collective immigrants’ identities also create an obligation amongst the Indian immigrants to make philanthropic contributions to the people and communities in India. These contributions, in turn, strengthen and reestablish their identities and stake in the socio-cultural, economic and political communities in India.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE
Background Information

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Marital status:

Nationality:

Number of Children:

Religion:

Annual individual income:

(a) ___ Up to $25,000  (b) ___ $25,001 - $50,000  (c) ___ $50,001 – $75,000

(d) ___ $75,001 – $100,000  (e) ____ Above $100,000

Highest education level achieved:

Current occupation:

Which part/region of India were you born?

Which part/region of India were you raised in?

Introductory questions

How long have you been in the United States?

How long have you been in San Diego, California?

How often do you visit your family, friends, and relatives in India?

Philanthropy

Have you sent funds in the form of cash or gifts to India?

If not, are there any particular reasons why not?
If yes, can you please tell me about your recent fund giving?

a. What amount do you usually send as funds to India?

b. When was the last time you sent funds to India?

c. How often do you give such funds?

d. Where in India did you give the funds?

e. What was the fund money used for? (for example health, education, community building, cultural activities, Socializing and networking, assisting disabled, elderly, sick persons/invalids, children, Cultural exchange, Knowledge transfer, economic development projects, religious activities, political change/advocacy, disaster relief or any other). Please explain.

Motivations

What are your main reasons for supporting development projects/activities in India?

What are the key problems/challenges that affect the giving and/or receiving of funds in India?

Sources/channels/agencies

How do you send funds to India?

Why do you use/prefer to use such a way/method of sending funds to India?

Identity

What is your legal status in the United States? (For example, do you have temporary visa, are permanent resident, naturalized citizen or U.S. born)?

How often do you and/or your family participate in the Indian social gatherings, festivals or cultural events held in the United States? Please explain.

How often do you and/or your family participate in religious events and activities held in your city? Please explain.

How often do you and/or your family participate in the groups, movements and activities concerning Indian politics in the United States (for example, transnational
political movements organized by the Indians settled abroad against corruption in India)? Please explain.

Do you think your skills, knowledge, education and services are more highly valued/appreciated in the United States compared to India? Please explain.

Have you ever faced discrimination based on nationality or race in the United States? Please explain.

How do your professional working conditions in the United States compare to those in India? Please explain.

How does your personal and family life in the United States compare to your lived experiences in India?

_Obligation_

Do you think it is the duty of the Indian nationals settled abroad to contribute to India’s development by sending funds to India? Please explain.

Are you aware of any Indian government programs/policies that support and promote investments towards public social services in India by the Indian nationals settled abroad (For example any tax deductions/ exemptions on investment, easy access to loans etc.)? Please explain.

Are you aware of any specific privileges/ benefits available to the Indian nationals who send funds to India (for example, discounts, memberships in prestigious clubs, participation in Indian politics, legal aid, health care, tourism, etc.)? Please explain.

_Identity and Obligation_

Do you prefer to send funds to a specific group or community of people (for example your religious community or people in your city/region, people of specific gender, age group, caste/sub caste, organized groups against corruption, etc.) or any community in India that needs assistance? Please explain.

_Closing Issues_

Do you want to go back to India at some stage in your life? Please explain

Do you have any additional comments for this research?
Your feedback is greatly appreciated

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Diaspora philanthropy: Identity and Obligation among Indian Engineers in the United States.

Student Investigator: Shikha Batra, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Sociology.

Supervising Investigator: Gabe Ignatow, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Sociology.

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study which involves an investigation of the factors that influence the decision of the immigrant Indian engineers in the United States to donate funds for wider public cause/welfare in India.

Study Procedures: During the interview, you will be asked general questions about the factors that motivate or influence the decision of the immigrant Indian engineers in the United States to donate funds for public cause/welfare in India. The interview will be audio recorded. A hand held digital recorder will be used. The researcher may also take notes. If you prefer no audio recording, only notes will be taken. This interview will take about 30 minutes of your time.

Foreseeable Risks: No foreseeable risks are involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to you, but we hope to learn more about the motivating patterns, trends and tendencies in
diaspora philanthropy among Indians in the United States. This study may significantly assist policy makers, social scientists and social activists in promoting diaspora philanthropy among Indians by directing their efforts and resources in the areas where they are most fruitful.

Compensation for Participants: None

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: To protect your confidentiality and anonymity, I will keep all the recordings and notes in a locked file cabinet at my home. I will save the transcription of the recorded interviews to my personal computer where they will be password protected. Only the researcher (me) and my advisor will listen to the audio recordings and read the transcripts. Further, all the recordings, written interview, and information saved on my computer will be shredded or destroyed after three years following the completion of the study. I assure you that the confidentiality of your individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Shikha Batra through email or through telephone or Gabe Ignatow through email or through telephone.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants’ Rights:

Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:
• Shikha Batra has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.

• You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.

• You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.

• You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

• You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

__________________________________________
Printed Name of Participant

__________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Participant                                     Date

For the Student Investigator or Designee:
I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the subject signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the participant understood the explanation.

__________________________________________
Signature of Student Investigator                    Date


Kumar, G. R. (2003). *Indian diaspora and giving patterns of Indian Americans in U.S.A*. New Delhi, India: Impulsive Creations:


Premdas, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Identity, ethnicity and culture in the Caribbean*. St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago: School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies.


