

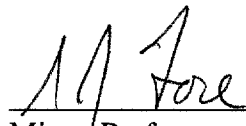
INDIA VAALE IN THE UNITED STATES

Parul Bhatia, M.S.

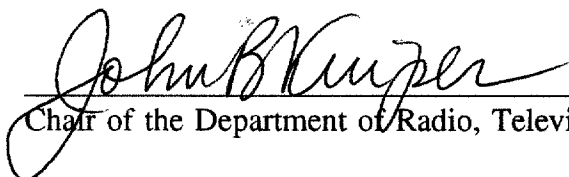
APPROVED:



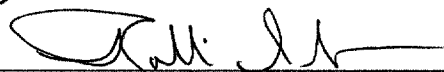
Major Professor



Minor Professor



Chair of the Department of Radio, Television and Film



Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

379
N81
No. 7191

INDIA VAALE IN THE UNITED STATES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

by

Parul Bhatia, M.A.

Denton, Texas

December, 1995

Bhatia, Parul, India Vaale in the United States. Master of Science (Radio, Television and Film), December, 1995, twenty-seven minute color documentary, interview of seven Indian students at the University of North Texas, 44 pp. written report, 1 chart, references, 46 titles.

This documentary reveals the thoughts and feelings of seven Indian students at the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas. It portrays that better material comforts in the U.S. condition the decision of Indian students in not returning to India even after the completion of their studies. It also shows their feelings of nostalgia for the social and cultural milieu of their home country, India. For this project 18 Indian students at the University of North Texas were interviewed and seven of them became part of the final documentary.

Copyright by

Parul Bhatia

1995

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Syed Mahmood Akhtar, without whom the piece would not have gone as smoothly as it did, and all the participants, Anshu, Ashok, Chandana, Matthew, Raj, Pradipta, and Madhu, who made this interactive piece possible, and my professor Mr. Ben Levin, who was a very supporting advisor for this documentary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PREPRODUCTION	19
PRODUCTION	23
POST-PRODUCTION	25
CONCLUSION	29
WORKS CITED	31
APPENDIX	32
WORKS CONSULTED	41

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this creative thesis project was to present and document the feelings of Indian students, through the means of a video documentary, at the University of North Texas. The constructed essence of the thesis was to show the reasons for their being in the United States and to also reveal their feelings about being away from their native country, India. The specific execution plan was to produce a color video documentary that revealed that although these students were much attracted to the material comforts available to them in the U.S., they also felt a strong social and cultural attachment to India.

Being an Indian, the filmmaker was instinctively interested in discussing and sharing with the other Indians in the U.S. their plans for the future. It was disturbing to find that most of these students had no plans of returning to India. This led to exploring the reasons behind such a mind frame. It was found that the major reason for their not returning was the availability of better material comforts in the U.S. This further led to the query as to whether or not these students find life satisfying in the U.S. These students expressed that despite so many comforts, that they deem so valuable, life was not particularly satisfying as they deeply longed for the social, cultural, and emotional aspects about life in India.

Informal discussions with these students revealed that although they are living in the U.S. for a better standard of living and economic comforts, they felt a strong emotional link with India that they could not sever. Their deeply felt bond with India resulted in the making of this documentary. It was felt important for the filmmaker that a documentary be made for an audience that would be interested in knowing and sharing the ambitions, experiences, and emotions of a few Indian students at the University of North Texas.

The targeted audience for this documentary was Indians living in the U.S., Indians living in India, and the American audience in the U.S. that is interested in and sensitive to the social, cultural, and emotional issues relating to people from other countries.

For Indians living in the U.S., this film hopes to challenge them to reexamine this conflict between material comforts and their social, cultural, and emotional roots in India. It hopes to evoke a mindset that the choice to live in the U.S. has a material motivation and that returning to India might ultimately be more fulfilling.

For Indians still in India, this project expects to generate the feeling that Indians in the U.S. are not necessarily finding life blissfully complete, as anticipated by people from the lesser developed countries.

For an American audience sensitive to the social, cultural, and emotional issues concerning people from different countries, this documentary delineates some very personal emotions and feelings of Indian students at the University of North Texas. It also hopes to convey that the many commodities and services that the American

citizens take for granted are only accessible to people elsewhere after a great deal of struggle. This piece also reveals some of the social, cultural, and economic differences between India and the U.S.

The initial goal of the video was to explore the propelling catalyst that influences these students to remain in the U.S. even after the completion of their studies. A large number of international students come to an affluent country like the U.S. in the hope of improving their standard of living. The tangential purpose was to explore their ideas and feelings about being away from home. Many students, despite a better standard of living, often feel lonely and sad being away from the familiar environment they have grown up in. The ultimate goal of the video was to portray the dilemma between their desire for an economically comfortable living in the U.S. and their feelings about being away from family, friends, society, and cultural milieu of India, their home country. Finally the wholistic purpose behind this video was to increase an emotional awareness within the Indian community, living in the U.S. and in India, and at the same time to present the feelings of the Indian students to an American audience interested in exploring the social and cultural experiences of people from other countries.

At this point it is also important to clarify that the participants in the documentary may not represent the feelings of every Indian in the U.S. This documentary was not designed to give a statistical analysis of the Indian community in the U.S., instead the focus was to bring out the conflict facing a few selected Indian students at the university of North Texas, Denton, Texas in the United States by

means of anecdotal interviews. Because of its visible character, the filmmaker felt that this video would work out more effectively in giving its audience a deeper and more intense look at the Indian students in the U.S. than any other form such as audio taped interviews or print interviews.

A production report accompanied the video. The written report focuses mainly on the background, preproduction, production, and post-production process, and served as a useful reference for future students who are interested in using video as a creative medium.

Background

The literature researched for this project was rather extensive in nature. To make it more comprehensible and less overwhelming the filmmaker divided the research into four categories. Broadly speaking first there was research to be done on the process of immigration, secondly on the economic, cultural, and social environment that exists in India, thirdly on the perception of U.S. as the land of opportunity by the Third or lesser developed countries, and lastly on the sociological role of documentaries and their different styles. For this purpose print material, electronic material, and direct audio and video interviews provided an extensive literature that proved very useful for this project.

A list of different topics were researched for the documentary to better understand the relevant material.

Print Material

- Articles, books, and theses about:

- Immigration from the developing countries to the highly developed ones
 - Economic conditions in India for an average middle class family
 - Cultural and social milieu in India
 - Indian family structure and Indian tradition
 - U.S. economy
 - U.S. as the land of opportunity and consumerism
 - Standard of living for an average student in the U.S.
 - Emotional crisis of people away from home
 - The sociological role of documentaries
 - Aspects and styles in documentary-making
- Personal material such as:
- Letters
 - Diaries
 - Photographs

Electronic Material

- Stock footage:
- Footage from personal videos
- E-Mail:
- Correspondence with the participants through E-Mail Direct Interviews
- Audio Interviews:
- A list of interview questions given to the people relevant to this thesis and their taped responses

- A list of interview questions given to the people relevant to this thesis and their taped responses

■ Video Interviews:

- Pre-Interviews to prepare the interviewees

The U.S., commonly perceived as the land of opportunities, attracts students from all over the world. It represents nothing less than the ultimate utopia especially for some of the people from the lesser developed countries. In his work Land of Opportunity, Donald Lambro reflects that this notion of "opportunity" indeed attracts millions to America. He comments that "America's economic miracle" is the "envy of the world," and "it is what continues to bring waves of immigrants to our shores and across our borders - over half a million a year (570,000 in 1985) from every corner of the globe, more than 5 million people in the last decade [in the seventies] alone - seeking opportunity and the promise of a better life" (75). In the context of immigrants, Lambro narrating his personal experience in the introduction, articulates that his own father "emigrated from Albania to America as a young boy during the early 1920's, sent here by his widowed mother in the hope that he would find a brighter future than the poor life that faced him in the post-World War I Eastern Europe. He had heard much of America and its promise of wealth and opportunity, and as young as he was, he wanted desperately to come here to make his way in the world" (xi). This hope of acquiring wealth and its accompanying material comforts acts as an enticing magnet for many immigrants who come to the United States from different corners of the world. "There has been world-wide migration since historic

times," (2) says R.B. Mandal in his work Frontiers in Migration Analysis and points out that "the term migration connotes a change of residence, journey to work, types of boundaries crossed, etc. . . . [and] indicates symptoms of social and economic change, and can be regarded as a human adjustment to economic, environmental and social problems" (1) Environmentalists and geographers have indicated numerous causes of migration. Mandal further points out that physical, economic, socio-cultural, and political causes act as the major inducers of migration. He offers causes that operate as some of the "push" factors, such as "decline in the national resources," and "loss of employment." Other causes that operate as the "pull" factors, Mandal points out, are "opportunities to earn a larger income," "to obtain desired specialized education or training," and "preferable environment and living condition" (16-17).

The conditions in the Third world countries create these many circumstances that in turn generate "push" factors for its inhabitants and result in pulling them towards lands with abundant resources and opportunities. Reimers in Still the Golden Door gives the figures of Indian migration in which he says that India's immigration increased substantially, "In the ten years after 1965, the figures topped 115,000. In 1976 immigration from India passed 17,000; in 1977 it went over 18,000 and in 1978 it went over 20,000. It topped 22,000 in 1980. India was becoming one of the largest source nations for American immigration. . . . they found conditions in the United States to be more attractive than at home" (114).

Another author, Sathi S. Dasgupta, of On the Trail of an Uncertain Dream: Indian Immigrant Experience in America writes that "the original intentions of the

immigrants to come to the U.S. could be divided into four categories: better economic opportunities, higher professional growth, job problems in India, and to get away from India and see the world" (41). In this work she gives examples from the different interviews she took of 25 Indian couples. One of her interviewees revealed that "he came to the U.S., just to earn money," and a few other interviewees expressed that "they were dissatisfied with the lifestyles they could afford in India, with the money they were earning. . . . they emigrated to the U.S. because they found that living was very hard in India. . . ." (42-43). Dasgupta reports that "[both] the interviewees share the perceptions that America is the land of opportunities and immigration to America would lead to an end to their monetary problems" (43).

Pursuit of financial security has indeed been one of the major reasons for migrating, as David M. Reimers also notes in his work Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes To America, "like so many Europeans, third world peoples came largely for economic reasons" (2). As also Joan M. Jensen's observes in Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America that between the early 19th and 20th century "large working populations on all continents moved from less economically developed countries (and areas of countries) to those more highly developed" (1). And as Mandal points out that "means of livelihood is the chief cause of migration," (11) and that "a person moves from his original place of residence due to some social and economic gains. The area of attraction for such migrants may be economically well off whereas the present living conditions may not be so congenial. Keeping this in mind the area of repulsion acts as push factor while the area of

attraction as pull factor of migration" (16). All this leads to the determination that economic causes have indeed played a critical role in the process of migration.

Quoting Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karinina* "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way," K. Seshadri, in Studies in the Problems of the Third World comments in the Introduction that "This is true of the nations too. All developed countries are alike happy but each of the Third World countries is unhappy each in its own way. . . . (1) Like each unhappy family each of these Third World countries has its own unique pattern of social and economic oppression" (4). And with reference to India he analyzes that Indian society "is a highly stratified society and this has caused a great deal of economic disparities and social disabilities" (9). In a developing country like India which has the "characteristics" of a "developed" as well as an "underdeveloped" country, "it is difficult to understand the social structure" of such countries (5).

In India the disparity between the haves and the have-nots is becoming wider and wider. For an average Indian, despite having a standard job, maintaining a decent standard is indeed a burdensome task. Altaf Gauhar, editor of The Rich and the Poor highlights this gruesome fact by delineating the situation in the developing countries, where "inflation is rampant and the people's living standards are plummeting. Prices have kept rising over the last few years in developing countries, and in many of them high prices have led to even worse consequences than those in the developed countries" (143). In a country like India, with its growing "industrial powers" but at

the same time its "very low per capita income," the reality has become one of persistent economic oppression (97).

For students, in a milieu such as this, where employment is not the golden ladder to a decent standard of living, where population has crossed all boundaries, where bureaucracy reigns, an urge to escape is not an uncommon phenomena. As far as India's education system is concerned, it is highly competitive, yet the country's lack of facilities in certain areas and established programs in others inspire students from the best schools to come to the U.S. But while continuing their studies in the U.S. many are caught in the dilemma of whether to return to India or to stay in the U.S. Reimers indicates that by the year 1982 "over 300,000 foreign students alone were studying in American colleges and universities. Once here, many students stayed beyond the time allotted on their nonimmigrant temporary visas and took jobs and lived illegally" (112). The crux of the matter is that students who come to the U.S. for higher studies generally decide to settle or extend their stay in the U.S.

Dasgupta's analysis of the 25 couples she interviewed in her work further highlights this fact. "One recurring theme that runs through these interviews is that all the interviewees who said that they came to America to do higher studies had intentions to go back to India after the completion of their studies. But after the completion of their studies, they took jobs to gain experience. It was the fear of not getting the expected high position in India and also the professional satisfaction they were experiencing from their jobs in the American society that acted as the "pull" factors which were keeping them in American society" (44-45).

Indeed all these examples lead to the explorations of the reasons for extending their stay in the U.S., or in a lot of cases making it permanent. Richard E. Bilborrow, A.S Oberai, and Guy Standing in the work Migration Surveys in Low Income Countries: Guidelines for Survey and Questionnaire Design, survey these causes. They say that "At the individual level, economic models of migration suggest that people migrate if the cost of the move is less than the expected income gain," (133) and that "many people move in order to alter a lifestyle or change economic or social status" (43). For the people from lesser developed countries, settling in developed countries such as the U.S., appear to be an inviting answer to obtain a comfortable standard of living. The U.S., thus becomes the endowed country, and espouses the label of the land of abundant opportunities. It becomes a synonym for the land of fulfilled dreams for people coming from the less economically privileged societies. For instance, in the U.S., there are better comforts available even to an average student, such as an air-conditioned and a centrally heated apartment, a car, a telephone, computer, microwave, a T.V., a VCR to name a few. In comparison, to an average household in India such facilities are not only not accessible, but are also an almost empty possibility. These things are comforts here but luxuries back home. Dasgupta points out that "Most of the interviewees said that America seemed to them like a dream land or a fantasy land" (49). Once in this land of opportunity "professional jobs accorded them all the amenities associated with middle-class lifestyles. Now they can afford a house in a middle-class suburb, can afford cars, other amenities, and visits to India from time to time" (51). "The crucial factor

responsible for their immigration was that life in India seemed to offer much less than what they expected of it, either in terms of decent standard of living, job satisfaction" and they feel drawn by the "pull" factors towards America because of "their perceptions of the American society as a land of opportunities" (Dasgupta 48-49)

These material comforts outweigh the kind of marginal facilities accessible to an average person back in India. Hence, in my opinion, a better standard of living certainly influences the decision of these students. However once settled in the U.S. life does not grow to become the ultimate imagined and anticipated paradise of fulfilled dreams. Despite many material amenities there is a personal touch missing. Many students/immigrants face acute adjustment problems. The biggest one is the absence of immediate family, relatives, close friends, and neighbors one grew up with. Indians as a race are highly gregarious by nature. They focus a lot on community and a sense of camaraderie. Family and meaningful personal relationships to them are both integral and dearly precious.

Keeping this important fact in mind the filmmaker arranged to have informal talks with the Indian students at the UNT campus. At this point it was discovered that most of these students had no plans of returning permanently to India, at least not for the next 10 years or so. These students were clear about being in the U.S. and this led to the query that whether or not did these students feel any emotional bondage to their home country, India. The responses revealed a very strong sense of attachment to their family back in India and also disclosed their sense of loneliness in the U.S. The content of the questionnaire for this documentary gradually went from being less

personal to becoming more personal, from asking mild questions to intense ones. It was found that the experience of living away from the social and cultural milieu of their country generated a nostalgic pressure for most of them. Personal talks with these students during the production process for this thesis also displayed the predicament they experienced because of being away from their country. Their need and ambition to earn a good salary while at the same time continually feeling the absence of friends and families betrayed their emotions and doubts. The doubts portrayed in this documentary are very similar to the doubts expressed by the Indian people in Dasgupta's series of interviews, in her work On the Trail of an Uncertain Dream. She writes that "the ambivalence about the decision to settle permanently in the American society can be explained if we analyze the following statements:

As I was born in India, certain things came to me automatically. If I had to know a poet like Dey, I did not have to do much effort. But if I have to know Allen Ginsberg here, I have to make an effort. Then also I wouldn't feel the same. I wasn't born here, I did not go to school with friends who knew Allen Ginsberg. These are the difficult parts of being an immigrant. You cannot be a candidate for election here. I cannot ask for these things from this society being a half generation resident here (54).

She gives example of another interviewee who says, "You are different-- you are not born in this town. You don't know what Charlie Chaplin or whoever did here. You can feel this barrier. There are some basic differences-- you cannot deny it--it is very much there" (54).

In one sentence Dasgupta rounds up this feeling of nostalgia, explaining that "thus, the Indian immigrants, even when they become settlers, feel and see themselves as outsiders in the American Society." Giving another example she quotes an

interviewee who says, "In India, when I used to sit on the porch and watch people, I used to feel that though they are not my friends and I don't know them, they are my 'people'" (55).

Dasgupta's comment that "this feeling of being left out or not belonging to the crowd is also associated with a sense of loneliness and boredom," is very true of a lot of Indians. Yet another example that she gives, quoting an interviewee, further marks this sense of alienation on the part of an Indian immigrant in the U.S. who says,

From Monday to Friday, I don't feel bored because I am very busy. But on weekends, I feel that life is very monotonous- no variation. The only advantage of living in this country is economic freedom. Apart from that, I don't see any other advantage. I feel I can buy anything but I cannot buy happiness. I have job satisfaction here, but if I could do the same job in my own country environment, I would have felt much better because I would have felt that I am working among my own people with whom I can do heart-to-heart talk whenever I want to (55-56).

She quotes another female interviewee who says, "We stand out. We wear Saris. We look different I experience a sense of 'I don't belong here.' I don't feel involved here. Sometimes I feel homesick" (57).

Dasgupta analyses that "the feeling of 'not belonging here' is pervasive among the male and female interviewees" (57) and concludes that "the Indian immigrants came to the U.S. to pursue certain objectives they felt to be unattainable in the Indian society. These goals were better economic opportunities, better living conditions, professional growth or a more challenging life. Perceptions of the unattainability of these goals acted as 'push' factors propelling interviewees to seek immigration to the U.S.A. The 'pull' factors were the perceptions of the American society as a 'dreamland' where these objectives could be fulfilled. . . ." (59). And once here,

although the hopes of acquiring a better standard of living do get fulfilled, the lack of the Indian essence in this affluent country causes many immigrants a deep sense of isolation. And this was particularly revealed through the interviews presented in India Vaale in the United States.

Methodology

As discussed previously, the primary goal of the video was to explore the feelings of Indian students at the University of North Texas. Their feelings were explored in the context of the material comforts they experience here and the emotional shelter they experienced back home. Different genres take different styles and methods of approach. When it comes to making documentaries the process of exploratory interviewing acquires different dimensions. Eric Barnouw's analogy of a documentarian as a prophet, explorer, reporter, painter, advocate, bugler, prosecutor, chronicler, promoter, observer, catalyst and guerrilla offers an insightful overview of the diverse roles that a documentarian plays in the process of making a documentary. In his opinion these roles are "never mutually exclusive" and a documentarian is "almost always a combination of these. . . ." (297). The documentary genre worked more efficiently for this project than perhaps audio taped interviews or print interviews could have, as this genre was able to depict the interviewees' more visually and expressively. The filmmaker found herself functioning as a reporter, chronicler, explorer, observer, catalyst during different situations in the production phase. Sometimes one role operated stronger than the other, and sometimes different roles

worked in combination and relation to the other, depending on the question asked and the person being interviewed.

The purpose was to accomplish an interactive relationship with the participants so that they felt at ease expressing feelings about being away from their families and friends in India. The foundation of such a candid conversational contact was felt to be very critical for the piece, which aimed at creating an emotional awareness in the Indian audience in the U.S. and in India. This also became one of the operating criterions for the final selection of the participants. Those interviewees who felt comfortable not only with the filmmaker but also with the subject and could express their feelings without a sense of unease, were finally interviewed. Only those Indian students were approached for the piece who had come to the U.S. essentially for higher studies rather the Indian students who had already settled here with their parents. Audio interviews were taken first. After that further choice was exercised on the basis of clarity, expression, and level of commitment of the interviewees. For this project the filmmaker at many points operated as a catalyst by participating verbally in the documentary and thereby "enabling people to talk about things they had previously been unable to discuss" (254). In many ways she acted as a stimulator by asking the interviewees' questions about their past life in India. Once this comfortable rapport was established the process of exploration became a lot more personal and intense. It resulted in bringing about anecdotal interviews that further unveiled emotions normally unaddressed and unexpressed. In some cases the filmmaker functioned as a listener as some of the participants were eager to express their emotions and fears and wanted to

share them. The purpose behind addressing such feelings was to evoke personal and deeply felt responses from the interviewees about things they were close to.

Consequently, the filmmaker's creative strategy was closely related to the spirit of documentary filmmaking and through this medium the exploration of the feelings and ideas of people, who had not been very vocal about the subject otherwise or were eager to express it sometime, became possible. The employment of video as a genre resulted in successfully capturing the feelings and emotions of these people. It proved to be an effective means of sharing as well as learning the experience of the Indian students in the U.S., at the University of North Texas, as it established a link between their present in the U.S., and their past in India.

Budget Background

The total budget of this project was \$988. The largest production cost came from purchasing S-VHS videotapes. The filmmaker had accumulated twenty-five hours of master footage from shooting. Another ten tapes were used for editing purposes. For the purpose of taking preproduction interviews of the participants 20 audio-tapes were bought. Five audio tapes were used to analyze the music of three musicians for the purpose of this project. Refreshments and snacks were provided to all the 18 interviewees and the four member crew, including the filmmaker. From June 7th to July 21st, 12 interviews were shot. From September 7th to October 7th the remaining 6 interviews were shot. During the rest of the month of October the cover footage of the temples, grocery store, and restaurant were shot. In this span of 13 weeks, 22 days went for shooting interviews and four days were spent on shooting

the temple, grocery, and restaurant footage. The total number of production days were 26. For 22 days five people and for four days four people were provided refreshments and snacks. Transportation expenses came from going to the interviewees apartments, for preproduction interviews, to the Dallas Hare Krsna Temple and the Irving Hindu temple, for shooting AB roll footage, and to an Indian restaurant located in Dallas, for additional AB roll footage. Art paper, paints and brushes were bought to be used for the art work created for this project. Three camera rolls were bought for the purpose of using the photographs as inserts. A box of computer discs were also bought that were used for the purpose of Chyron Graphics in during the editing process. In the end thank-you cards were given to all the interviewees. See Budget Chart in Appendix.

PREPRODUCTION

The preproduction period of this project lasted from January 26th to May 30th, 1994, a week before shooting started. This period proved to be sufficient for the nature of research assessed for this highly interactive project. A course in documentary preproduction, taken prior to starting this project, made the preproduction process for this project more focused, accessible, meaningful, and substantial. It oriented the filmmaker to pursue certain criteria considered important for the phase of preproduction. January 24th to March 30th was spent in print material research, which consisted of reading articles, books, and theses on topics such as immigrants, the reasons that promote immigration, the mental make-up of students in pursuit of higher education, the difficulties they face in an alien country, the material comforts of living in the U.S., and other related topics. Being an Indian student in the U.S., the filmmaker chose a topic that she felt close to and deeply inclined to explore.

However one of the problems encountered by the filmmaker during the preproduction process was that of interviewee selection. The filmmaker contacted the Indian Student Association at UNT and got a list of phone numbers of the Indian students enrolled at UNT. Following that these students were first contacted on the phone which led to taking their preliminary informal interviews. The filmmaker verbally interviewed 35 UNT students in total without any video or audio recordings. 30 of these students expressed that they had no plans to return to India for at least another 10 years or so. The filmmaker frequently took notes of these tete-a-tetes. Upon reviewing these conversations the filmmaker prepared a questionnaire that was

designed to seek responses to some of the issues that these informal dialogues had evoked. Though all these students agreed to be a part of this production, some of them delayed and made it a complex process. Six students declined as they were not ready to give any taped interviews. Finally 24 of them agreed to give their interviews. To each of them the filmmaker gave a questionnaire for the purpose of analyzing preproduction audio interviews. After 10 days these tapes were collected, with the exception of five students who returned the tapes after another 8-10 days. One of the problems that the filmmaker faced was that some of the subjects were not as prompt as they had promised, being not only full-time students but also working as teaching assistant's or lab monitors in the school. However upon receiving the audio taped responses from these interviewees the filmmaker assessed the responses carefully. This was the preliminary personal test held by the filmmaker to select the interviewees for the documentary.

Their audio-taped responses further shaped the nature of this project and focused the issue that even though these students had no immediate plan to return to India, primarily because of better financial conditions in the U.S., they nevertheless felt deeply attached to their homeland. These audio interviews further led to additional print research, and personal material research such as letters, diaries, photographs, and watching stock footage from personal videos belonging to various Indian faculty members, and other video research such as watching Indian films dealing with the issues of immigrants and their state of mind, and issues related to

economic crisis and overseas distance between family members particularly found in Indian films and songs from the Bombay film industry.

Then for further interaction the filmmaker established E-mail correspondence with Indians who were to become a part of the interview process, to establish a personal rapport with them. Because of the nature of the documentary, which was essentially personal and interactive, it was important that the interviewees felt comfortable disclosing their feelings to the filmmaker. These research materials further shaped the nature of another (revised) questionnaire. The E-mail correspondence and the audio interviews further helped the filmmaker to implement the process of preproduction editing. This led to the selection of 18 out of 24 students to become a part of the actual production. The intention of the filmmaker was to select those subjects who were interested in sharing their feelings, were clear in speech, as well as comfortable with the camera. Some of the students were highly communicative, some moderately so, while a few lacked in clarity of speech or had difficulty articulating their thoughts. Those who were obviously not suitable were politely thanked for being helpful for their contribution to the filmmaker's project.

Having sought the cooperation of the 18 students, the filmmaker visited the places where the cover shoots were likely to take place. Among them were an Indian restaurant, an Indian grocery store, and a Hare Krsna Temple in Dallas, and a Hindu Temple in Irving. Because of the extensive nature of the project and the bulk of the production equipment a crew had to be accrued. Fortunately a team of four was

recruited that generously agreed to commit themselves to the interview-production to be shot during the summer.

PRODUCTION

The production stage of the video documentary took place mostly at the campus of UNT, or at the students apartments. The majority of work done in the production phase involved videotaping 18 students and asking them questions prepared earlier in the preproduction stage. All the interviews were conducted between June 7th and July 21st. Each week two interviews were accomplished. Six interviewees were not available during this span.

The remaining six participants were interviewed in the fall semester between September 7th to October 7th. The production schedule was at the mercy of the students availability. During the interviews a particular set of questions were followed. However the questions were not treated as a set of rules, and they were now and then molded, rephrased, extended, or in some cases sketchily referred to, depending on the person being interviewed. In this project the equipment used was the S-VHS three chip Panasonic video camera, a gitsu tripod, and hand held and lavalier microphones. Both omni and pro lights were used as additional sources during the production phase. During the production process crew selection became another critical choice. The equipment used was bulky and the idea of appointing a camera operator came about not only because of the equipment's weightiness but also because the filmmaker wanted to have direct, eye-to-eye contact with the subjects while interviewing them. This being a personal documentary, such contact proved to be a wise choice as it put the subjects at ease and reduced the pressure of talking directly into the camera. A sound operator, a craftsman, and a grip were

almost a necessity in the scorching heat of June during which the interviews were shot. Related to this came the problem of a suitable crew selection, as not only skill was required but also time which is not easy to obtain in a situation where services are not being paid for. It was only fair to at least feed the crew.

The style of this documentary was interactive in nature, one in which the filmmaker asked questions and taped the responses of the students. Another obstacle encountered was that despite pre-arranging the time and place for the interviews, some of the interviewees either showed up really late or in some cases did not show up at all on the assigned day of the interview. This once again was a schedule related problem and patience and control over her displeasure helped the filmmaker in successfully completing the shooting of this documentary. The filmmaker had to continually tell herself that she was not the only student around. However sometimes the emotion of exasperation could not be avoided when a noisy helicopter would fly over the university campus, especially when the interview would be going super smoothly, or had to be interrupted because of some major and minor technical problem. The rest of the footage of the temple, grocery store, and an Indian restaurant was shot in a span of four days in the month of October. The family photographs were shot in the month of November. However some of the photographs needed by the filmmaker were not available because they had to be sent from India. The filmmaker remained in constant touch with the subjects to ensure that they received the material from India. Eventually all the required photographs were shot under the guidance of the Department of Radio, Television and Film engineer, Wayne Hassell.

POST-PRODUCTION

A total of twenty-five hours of footage was accumulated in the production phase. Now the process of logging and transcribing the footage began. The logging in fact had been an ongoing process. It started in September and was completed by the end of November. Logging proved to be a very demanding process. Each and every statement was critical to note because this project was designed to be a dialogue oriented documentary. Editing is indeed a critical backbone of any creative genre. During the post-production phase the logs were read, analyzed, and understood very sensitively and minutely and based on that the documentary was broken into nine parts. Both the oral and visual element of the interviews were critically studied. The technical aspects, such as lighting and sound, came under a major surveillance in the post-production period. Even when the subject content was relevant it was open to elimination if the technical element did not meet the standards. Another aspect that needed attention besides oral content and technical standards was the emotive style of the interview in question. It was significant to keep track of the mood and the tone of the interview in question. All these elements were recorded in the log sheets. The filmmaker regularly screened all the footage with her major professor and advisor, Ben Levin, once or twice a week. His critique was the most valuable source of guidance received by the filmmaker. For the purpose of clarity the filmmaker typed and saved all the logged footage on a computer. Even though this took extra time it proved to be worthwhile as during the editing process these clear notes facilitated clarity. Another basic concern was that of assembling cutaways, which were primarily the

photographs of the family and friends of the interviewees. Some of them were easily available, while others had to be mailed from India. Some graphics had to be created as they were not obtainable in the USA, such as those of the Indian flag used in the opening shot of the documentary, and an Indian Goddess inserted towards the latter part of the documentary. For the purpose of utilizing some video footage of India the filmmaker E-mailed the advertisement "Video footage of India needed for a student Thesis". Some videotapes were obtained but did not fulfill the criteria of the type of footage required either because of technical or contextual requirements.

The first rough cut was turned in to the professor by the end of November. The running time of the first draft was 120 minutes. This rough cut was the barest skeleton of the documentary. Throughout fall 1994 and spring 1995 a weekly joint screening by the professor and the filmmaker and a comfortable and straightforward relationship between them was a definite plus for the making of this documentary. These regular weekly meetings became an advisory critique for the filmmaker and guided her throughout the editing process. Choosing the right kind of music was another critical post-production decision. During mid- fall of 1994 the filmmaker had advertised for music at UNT's music department and had been able to meet musicians specializing mostly in Western classical or jazz, or in playing guitar or the drums. Three musicians were contacted and their music was recorded. Finally a guitarist, Darin Layne prepared the composition A Distant Cry which was chosen as music to be used in the prologue and over the credits at the end of the documentary.

One criterion for choosing him was that his music was able to blend comfortably with the kind of Indian music the filmmaker had in mind. The filmmaker had her sister, Charul Bhatia, who has had five years of training in Indian classical music and lives in India, in mind for the piece. The filmmaker's visit to India during the 1994 Christmas holidays was utilized to introduce the subject of the project to her sister. The mood and the content of the film were explained to this singer. Charul agreed to sing for this documentary. She sang Raagas Purvaiya and Desi for the piece, that were used over the credits at the end of the documentary. This proved highly valuable as all endeavors to obtain Indian classical music in the U.S. had already proved for the filmmaker to be an almost impossible process. Jan 25th to March 5th were spent in working towards editing the second rough cut. On March 6th this final rough cut of the project was submitted to the major professor. Its running time was 32 minutes. The opening of the piece was not scheduled to be shot with the rest of the production process. This was a deliberate decision on the filmmaker's part as she felt that shooting the opening during the latter part of the project would offer her a more concrete idea as to what to shoot, although a tentative idea of the opening had been planned during the production phase. The opening shots were planned to be brief in length and introductory in nature. They were shot between March 19th to 24th of 1995. They comprised of a shot of a hand painted Indian flag, a shot of an American flag, of American students at UNT, of Indian students at UNT, and a shot of the UNT administration clock tower building. The time (March 24th to April 24th 1995) was spent in the editing room towards completion of the final cut.

Finally seven of them appeared in the Master cut. Throughout the preproduction, production, and the post-production process the major concern was that of selection. Some of them were not included in the final cut either because of the lower light quality or sound quality of the interview, for instance one interviewee was very interesting but often mumbled, or because of the lack of camera presence and lack of interesting content. Finally a critical eye had to be exercised keeping all these aspects in mind even though it was not particularly easy to not include a few more participants in the documentary. During the editing process special effects were chosen rather carefully. Fade-ins and fade-outs were designed to take the documentary from one topic to another. Chyrons were used in between the fade-ins and fade-outs to introduce the subject-matter of the section that was to ensue. Western music was used in the opening shots of the documentary to mark the setting of the piece, i.e. the U.S. Indian music was used over the credits at the end of the documentary to reflect the Indian emotions witnessed during this twenty-seven minute piece. This medley of the Western and Indian musical compositions in the opening and the close of the piece were designed intentionally to evoke an acoustic sense of the East and the West under one sky.

CONCLUSION

Finally the making of this documentary was a productive learning experience for the filmmaker. This project brought to the forefront the important message that a very prominent part of these people is still deeply connected to India, and still longs to be with family and friends back home. This delineation hopes to evoke the process of reexamination for the Indian students living in the U.S. to either continue living in the U.S. for an economically richer and materially more comfortable life or to return to India for an emotionally, socially and culturally more fulfilling life. It also emphasizes for Indians living in India that material comforts are not everything in life and through the interviews in this documentary it can be shared that relationships with family and society one grew up in can not be deemed any less important or less valuable.

The preproduction phase of this documentary also established that research plays a significant role in the process of documentary making. The foundation of a well researched background made the process of interviewing more meaningful and focused. The questionnaire built for this piece was pivotal as it took the interviewee or went along with the interviewee from one topic to another. The style of the questionnaire helped break the documentary into nine definitive categories.

During the production phase for this piece several aspects became training points for future projects. Additional footage, depicting a typical day in the U.S. for an Indian student would have further added to the piece. Footage of festivals in India, such as Diwali, Durga Pooja, Onam, and Christmas, would have rendered this

documentary a very depictive character. Depiction of living circumstances in India is another aspect that the filmmaker would have liked to shoot for this documentary. These features would definitely make the piece more visual as well representative in nature.

In the post-production phase the importance of logging and transcribing footage was another significant training process for the filmmaker. The pacing of the piece had to be worked on with time and the idea of breaking the piece into nine parts proved to be a good pacing decision.

In the end the filmmaker felt that the aspired purpose of delineating the attachment of the Indian students to material comforts and to the social and cultural milieu of India gets successfully established through the means of this documentary.

WORKS CITED

- Barnouw, Erik. Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Bilsborrow, Richard E., A.S. Oberai, and Guy Standing. Migration Surveys in Low-Income Countries: Guidelines for Survey and Questionnaire Design. London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984.
- Dasgupta, Sathi S. On the Trail of an Uncertain Dream: Indian Immigrant Experience in America. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989.
- Gauhar, Altaf, ed. The Rich and the Poor: Development, Negotiations and Cooperation - An Assessment. London: Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, 1983.
- Jensen, Joan M. Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Lambro, Donald. Land of Opportunity: The Entrepreneurial Spirit in America. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1986.
- Mandal, R.B., ed. Frontiers in Migration Analysis. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1981.
- Reimers, David M. Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America. Ed. David M. Reimers. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Seshadri, K., and Ehsanul Haq, eds. Studies in the Problems of the Third World. New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1985.

APPENDIX

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a project description for a video documentary. The project is originated and constructed by Parul Bhatia, a master's degree candidate in the Radio-TV-Film program at the University of North Texas. The entire project is under the supervision of the Department of radio-TV-Film at the University of North Texas. The purpose of this presentation is to seek the complete support of the participants for the video documentary.

Goal

This project is designed to interview students from India going to the University of North Texas. It will be a candid tête-à-tête between the filmmaker and these students. The purpose is to explore the reasons behind these students not returning to India upon completion of their studies and finally their emotional make-up being away from their country. This video project intends to depict that how Indian students are caught in this dilemma between monetary comforts and emotional needs.

Production Activities

In this video 6 to 8 students will be chosen as the subjects of exploration. There will be candid interviews ranging between 60 to 90 minutes. In addition footage of any cultural events will be taken, and family photographs of these students will also be used in the documentary.

Treatment

The video will open with shots of the University's clock tower, students at UNT, and an American flag. Following that will be the interviews of the Indian Students. The documentary will be divided into 8 or 9 sections.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
PARUL BHATIA
1011 W. CHESTNUT APT # 1
DENTON, TX 76201
(817) 243 1117

QUESTIONNAIRE

- ▶ What's your name, and what field of education are you pursuing at the University of North Texas (Major, Classification)?
- ▶ Which part of India do you come from, and when did you come to the United States?
- ▶ What were the major reasons for coming to the U.S.?
- ▶ What are your immediate plans after graduating?
- ▶ What is your means of income here at the University of North Texas?
- ▶ Would you like to go back to India after finishing your degree in the United States?
- ▶ What is the major reason for your not returning back to India?
- ▶ What facilities of United States has made your standard of living better than India, give us examples from you every day life?
- ▶ Describe a typical day in United States, how do you spend your day?
- ▶ Do you miss being away from India?
- ▶ What was it like to grow up in India?
- ▶ Describe a typical day in India?
- ▶ What do you miss about India, is something lacking here despite so many comforts?
- ▶ Which are your favorite festivals and why?
- ▶ Do you have any fears of being so far away from home?
- ▶ Do you want to say anything else?

Budget Chart for India Vaale

Raw Material Bought	Number of Materials	Individual Cost	Cumulative Cost
S-VHS Tapes	35	\$11.75	\$420
Audio Tapes	20	\$1	\$20
Camera Rolls	3	\$6	\$18
Developing Rolls	3	\$8	\$24
Computer Disks	Box	\$7	\$7
Paint Papers	4	\$3	\$12
Paint Colors	Box	\$24	\$24
Paint Brushes	3	\$5	\$15
Cards	18	\$1	\$20

Total Cost = **\$560**

Budget Chart for Refreshments and Snacks

Days	People	Cost	Total
22	5	\$3	\$330
4	4	\$3	\$48

Total cost = **\$378.00**

Transportation Expenses

Places	Cost
Apartments of Interviewees, Denton	\$15
Hare krsna Temple, Dallas	\$10
Hindu Temple, Irving	\$10
Indian Restaurant, Carrollton	\$15

Total cost = **\$50**

Hence the Cumulative Cost for the film was = **\$988**

LOCATION RELEASE

Production Location:

I/ We authorize Parul Bhatia to shoot in these premises, and to use and authorize others to use the shot footage. Parul Bhatia shall own all right, title and interest in and to the video, including the recordings, to be used or disposed of without limitation as Parul Bhatia in its sole discretion determine.

Person in charge:

Address:

Telephone:

Date:

APPEARANCE RELEASE

Person Appearing:

Person Title: India-Vaale in the United States

Production Date:

Production Location: Denton, Texas

I authorize Parul Bhatia to record and edit into the video and related materials my name, likeness, image, interview and performance. Parul Bhatia may use and authorize others to use all or parts of the video. Parul Bhatia shall own all right, title and interest in and to the video, including the recordings, to be used or disposed of without limitation as Parul Bhatia in her discretion determine.

Signature:

Address:

Date:

MUSIC PERFORMANCE RELEASE

MUSICIAN:

PERFORMANCE DATE:

I authorize Parul Bhatia to record and edit into the video, India Vaale in the United States, and related materials my performance of the Raagas Purvaiya and Desi. Parul Bhatia may use and authorize others to use all or parts of the video. Parul Bhatia shall own all right, title and interest in and to the video, including the recordings, to be used and disposed of without limitation as Parul Bhatia shall in her discretion determine.

Signature:

Address:

Date:

MUSIC PERFORMANCE RELEASE

MUSICIAN:

PERFORMANCE DATE:

I authorize Parul Bhatia to record and edit into the video, India Vaale in the United States, and related materials my performance of the song The Distant Cry. Parul Bhatia may use and authorize others to use all or parts of the video. Parul Bhatia shall own all right, title and interest in and to the video, including the recordings, to be used and disposed of without limitation as Parul Bhatia shall in her discretion determine.

Signature:

Address:

Date:

WORKS CONSULTED

Books

- Barnouw, Erik. Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Bilsborrow, Richard E., A.S. Oberai, and Guy Standing. Migration Surveys in Low-Income Countries: Guidelines for Survey and Questionnaire Design. London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984
- Bochner, Stephen. The Mediating Person: Bridges between Cultures. Mass.: Schenkman Pub. Co., 1981.
- Carnoy, Martin. Education and Social Transition in the Third World. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Dasgupta, Sathi S. On the Trail of an Uncertain Dream: Indian Immigrant Experience in America. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989.
- Gauhar, Altaf, ed. The Rich and the Poor: Development, Negotiations and Cooperation - An Assessment. London: Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, 1983.
- Gibson, Margaret A. Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Hugill, Peter J. and D. Bruce Dickson. The Transfer and Transformation of Ideas and Material Culture. College Station: Texas A and M University Press, 1988.
- Jensen, Joan M. Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Kessner, Thomas, and Betty Boyd Caroli. Today's Immigrants, Their Stories: A New Look at the Newest Americans. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Lambro, Donald. Land of Opportunity: The Entrepreneurial Spirit in America. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1986.
- Mandal, R.B., ed. Frontiers in Migration Analysis. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1981.
- Mascro, Juan. The Bhagavad Gita. New York: Penguin, 1962.

- Merrill, Dennis. Bread and the Ballet: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Mountjoy, Alan B., ed. The Third World: Problems and Perspectives. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.
- Reimers, David M. Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Seshadri, K., and Ehsanul Haq, eds. Studies in the Problems of the Third World. New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1985.
- Sinha, R., Peter Pearson, Gopal Kadekodi, and Mary Gregory. Income Distribution, Growth and Basic Needs in India. London: Croom Helm, 1979.
- Smith, Anthony. The Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the World. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Periodicals

- Albanese, Catherine. Rev. of Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry, by Raymond Brady Williams. Journal of Religion 70 (1990): 499-500.
- Borjas, G. "Economic Theory and International Migration." International Migration Review 23 (1989): 457-485.
- Cox, J.L. "The Overseas Student: Expatriate, Sojourner or Settler." Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica 78 (1988): 179-184.
- Daniels, Roger. "United States Policy towards Asian Immigrants: Contemporary Developments in Historical Perspective." International Journal XLVIII (1993): 310-
- Dignan, Don. Rev. of Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America, by Joan M. Jensen. Pacific Historical Review 58 (1989): 393-395.
- Dirks, Gerald E. "International Migration in the Nineties: Causes and Consequences." International Journal XLVIII (1993): 191-214.
- Fornaro, Robert J. Rev. of Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry, by Raymond Brady Williams. Contemporary Sociology 18 (1989): 688.

- Freeman, Richard B. "Immigration from Poor to Wealthy Countries: Experience of the U.S." European Economic Review 37 (1993): 443-451.
- Helweg, A.W. "Why Leave India for America?: A Case Study Approach to Understanding Migrant Behavior." International Migration 25 (1987): 165-178.
- Johnston, Hugh. Rev. of Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants from North America, by Joan M. Jensen. Canadian Historical Review 70 (1989): 141-142.
- Kale, Rajendra. "A Visible Form of Charity- QED: Lifeline Express." British Medical Journal 308 (1994): 1108-09.
- Kapur, Geeta. "When was Modernism in Indian/ 3rd World an Art?." South Atlantic Quarterly 92 (1993): 473-51
- Kravitz, Lee. "My Passage to India." Scholastic Update [Teacher's Edition] 121.13 (1989): 4-5.
- Larson, Heidi. "South Asia Accommodation without Assimilation." Rev. of Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School, by Margaret Gibson. Journal of Asian Studies 49 (1990): 675-76.
- Limage, L.J. "Economic Recession and Migrant/ Minority Youth in Western Europe and the United States." International Migration 25 (1987): 399-413.
- Li Chiu, Martha. "The Influence of Anticipatory Fear on Foreign Student Adjustment: An Exploratory Study." International Journal of Intercultural Relations 19 (1995): 1-44.
- McDonald, Hamish. "Bouncing Back." Far Eastern Economic Review 156.30 (1993): 55
- "Prices and Trends: Economic Indicators, Selected Asian Countries." Far Eastern Economic Review 156.17 (1993): 56-57
- Rose, Peter I. Rev. of Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America, by Joan M. Jensen. International Migration Review 23 (1989): 735-36.
- Rubinoff, Arthur G. "India at the Crossroads." Journal of Asian and African Studies 28 (1993): 198-216.
- Salt, J. "Contemporary Trends in International Migration Study." International Migration 25 (1987): 241-51.
- Segal, Uma A. "Cross -cultural values, social work students and personality." International Social Work 36 (1993): 61-73.

- Singer, M.S. "Starting a Career: An Intercultural Choice among Overseas Asian Students." International Journal of Intercultural Relations 17 (1993): 73-88.
- Stark, Oded, and Edward J. Taylor. "Relative Deprivation and International Migration." Demography 26 (1989): 1-14.
- Straubhaar, Thomas. "Migration Pressure." International Migration 31 (1993): 5-41.
- Weiner, Myron. "Security, Stability, and International Migration." International Security 17.3 (1992): 91-126.