

11 THE STATUS OF THE SIKH WOMEN IN NAIROBI 12

THIS THESIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED FOR
THE DEGREE OF M.A. 1988
AND A COPY MAY BE PLACED IN THE
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

By

IANITA GURWITZ

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
LIBRARY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Masters of Arts in the University of Nairobi.

July 1988

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY



0100877 0

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

.....

HANITA GURWITZ

This Thesis has been Submitted for Examination

with our approval as University Supervisors


.....
DR. P. WALJI

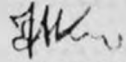

.....
DR. J. AKONGÁ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Abstract	
Acknowledgement	
 <u>CHAPTER 1</u>	
1.1 Introduction and Problem Statement	1
1.2 Rationale for the Study	
 <u>CHAPTER 2</u>	
Literature Review	16
Theoretical Framework	45
Hypotheses	61
 <u>CHAPTER 3</u>	
Methodology	66
A. Site	66
B. Sample Size	65
C. Sampling Strategy	70
D. Methods of Data Collection	71
E. Problems Encountered in the Field	76
 <u>CHAPTER 4</u>	
The Sikhs - A Historical Perspective	81
 <u>CHAPTER 5</u>	
Women in Kenyan Sikh Culture	101
5.1 Education	102
5.2 Western Influences on the Sikh Women	114
 <u>CHAPTER 6</u>	
Marriage, family structure and Women's Roles in the Joint Family	160
A. Marriage	160
B. Family Structure	173
The Organization of the House	198
Running the House	203

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

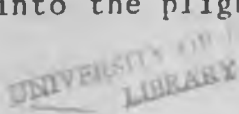
	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>CHAPTER 7</u>	
Major Changes in Sikh Women's Life in Nairobi During the last 15 years	257
<u>CHAPTER 8</u>	
Summary and Conclusions	295
Bibliography	
Appendix - Questionnaire	

LIST OF TABLES

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>TABLE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
5	1	Levels of Education	103
	2	Levels of education according to age-group and place of origin	105
	3	Education authority	109
	4	Number of Languages spoken	114
	5	Club Member and official according to age group	124
	6	Freetime activities	129
	7	Women's Occupation	147
	8	Occupation as factor of age, education, and place of birth	155
6	9	Marital status and patterns of marriage	165
	10	Education and its influence on dating men before marriage	167
	11	Living place as a married couple	196
	12	Living with married son	216
	13	Wishing to live with a married son according to age group	216
	14	Education and living with a married son	218
	15	Husband intervention patterns in wife-parent or wife-brother conflicts	221
	16	Daughters-in-law's rights	228
	17	Clothing being worn	231
	18	Decision-making on number of Children	243
	19	Risk of Pregnancy Trying to get a son	245
	20	Education and trying for a boy and birth control	247
	20A	Is your husband consulting you regarding family and household problems	254
7	21	Basic Changes	272
	22	Education by basic changes	285
	23	Women's status as they see it	289
	24	The correlation between being consulted and the opinion of the women's status	290

Abstract

This study focuses on the Sikh Women of Nairobi. On a wider scale, it adds to our understanding of the Sikh people, who represent a Pariah group, and who until recently were not distinguished by most of the world's population from other Asian Communities. At the same time, the study provides some insight into the plight of women in the Third World.



The need to understand the status of Third World Women who in many places are underprivileged, and sometimes even oppressed, was emphasized at the U.N. Women's Conference (including the N.G.O.) that took place in Nairobi in July 1985.

The present study, therefore, contributes to the understanding of the status of women by giving a detailed account of the state of affairs in one immigrant community in Kenya.

More particularly, the study is interested in mapping out the changes that have occurred in this community with respect to the status of their women.

(ii)

This study of the Sikh women in Nairobi, was therefore a small attempt to provide such information, which is missing not only on the Sikh community alone, but also on Third World immigrant women in general.

The study which was carried out between 1985 and 1986 found that by immigration from a rural environment in India to an urban environment in Kenya, and from agricultural to business and artisan occupations, there have been both, structural and cultural changes at the level of family and community. One of the major consequences has been a trend towards relative equality of sexes in the family. Women are now exposed to high levels of education attainment, engaged in wage labour and can go to places unaccompanied. These are things women would not have been allowed to do in the past. Moreover, under the Kenyan law, women can now ideally inherit from their husbands, which traditionally was not possible, because of the rule of premogeniture in the Sikh community of Kenya.

The study, therefore concluded that the status of women in the Sikh community in Nairobi is definitely higher today than when the Sikhs first

. (iii)

arrived early this century, although many changes have taken place within the traditional framework. Despite those changes, however, women are still lower in status than the men. One way of explaining what has happened is that with time, every culture must change to accommodate new ideas, in order to survive as a distinct culture. To be specific the research found that the Sikh community has been responding and adjusting to the local circumstances, in its own way, due to its special characteristics of a Pariah group, although most of the changes result from responses to Western influence rather than the African ethnic cultures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Writing a thesis it is not a one man creation. There are always several people whose significant contribution make it possible to complete a writer's work.

This work would not be completed without the assistance of the following people.

- My family, especially my husband, who backed me up all the way, financially and especially morally.
- My supervisors Drs. P. Walji and J. Akonga. Their guidance and constructive criticism enabled this thesis to meet academic standards.
- All the Sikh women who participated in the research, the Chairman and Chairladies of the Sikh community, all the Sikhs, who welcomed me so openly, opened their house and heart, and enabled me to become an integrative part of their community.
- My friends who had faith in me and pushed me on.
- My typist, Mrs. H. Ngatiah.

To all of you my thanks and gratitude.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction and Problem Statement

The Sikh community, was until recently, virtually unknown in many parts of Europe (except England) Middle East, Far East and the American continent. Even to those who were dimly aware of their existence, the Sikhs were regarded as a section of the Indian community with no separate identity from such better known groups as the Hindus, Moslems, etc.

The world's attention was drawn to this community after the attack (by the Indian army) on the Golden Temple on June 3, 1984. The reaction of the Sikhs, which climaxed in the assassination of the Indian Prime Minister - Mrs. Indira Gandhi - by her Sikh guards on October 31, 1984, put their name on the map of world affairs.

Today, the Sikh problem is known all over the world. They are fighting for political and territorial autonomy. The consequent clashes with the Indian Government are becoming increasingly serious. Its effects are felt within and outside India. It involves disturbances in Punjab, and

related activities in India and various parts of the world (excluding East Africa), where there are Sikh people. All over the world, Sikh communities react bitterly to the killings of Sikh political figures as well as innocent people, by the Indian Government and Sikh terrorists alike.

The Sikh problem in Punjab is today one of the "hottest" points on the world's map of political animosity - characterized by restlessness, terrorism, and insecurity. It can be compared to the civil wars in Lebanon and Nicaragua, and to the political conflicts of the kind found in Ireland and various other places in the world, where two or more groups within the same country, are involved in religion - based struggles, for power or secession.

Such pockets of restlessness frustrate the world's desire for peace, love and unity. It is, therefore, necessary for us to know the people involved, in our case, the Sikhs. We need to know their culture, religion, and social background.

This study focuses on the Sikh community, especially on its women. Coming from a part of the

world where there are no Sikhs, the author's first encounter with them was in Nairobi.

Even before one gets to know them closely, the Sikhs have certain outward features which tend to mark them as a distinct group, in a culturally heterogeneous city such as Nairobi. Of such characteristic Sikh features, the turban is perhaps the most outstanding. But equally characteristic are their beards and bracelets.

The Sikhs are a religious minority both in India and in East Africa. Over the years, they have suffered from oppression by various political regimes in India. They have had to fight for their survival. Just as the Jews have been killed in millions for their Jewish faith, so have the Sikhs lost thousands of lives because of their belief in Sikhism.

The Sikhs and the Jews in the diaspora are typical Pariah groups, according to Weber's model (Weber 1952). Therefore there are a lot of similarities between the two communities; the way they lived, separated from others and maintaining ethnic solidarity which led them to economic

success. These striking similarities fascinated the author a great deal, making a study of Sikhs an interesting subject to her.

To reduce the scope of the study to a manageable size, the author decided to focus on the Sikh women, paying particular attention to their status and role in the Sikh community, since its emergence in Nairobi. The study is further limited in terms of locality since it is mainly concerned with the role and status of Sikh women in Nairobi.

The decision to study Sikh women (as opposed to men) was influenced by the event that acted as the "push" factor for this study. The United Nations Decade for Women which, together with the Forum 85, occurred in Nairobi in July 1985.

The issues that were stressed included the need for equality between women and men, the uplifting of the status of women, where they were still oppressed, and, in more general terms, giving men and women equal rights and opportunities in all fields, starting from the home (family) and extending it to the economic, cultural, and political affairs of the wider society.

Studies on women's affairs are now done in many places all over the world. It is, therefore, appropriate that such studies be done in Nairobi too. Since the Sikh community is a minority group and, apparently, a fairly traditional one, it is interesting to investigate how issues such as equality, which were raised in Forum '85, apply to this community. In addition, the author also found this community suitable for such a study because it is a Third World community, and it is important to find out how these issues apply in the case of Third World women.

This study sets out to investigate the whole spectrum of the life cycle of the women in question. In broad terms, life cycle is a universal phenomenon, but each culture has its peculiarities in terms of how an individual member of the culture or a section of it, e.g. its women, experiences the cycle. Each culture is characterized not only by its peculiar attitudes to various aspects of people's lives, but also by its definition of the different stages which constitute an individual's or group's life cycle and the behavioural patterns associated with each stage of the cycle.

In this study, we, therefore, look for people's life styles and the roles they play (in society) at different times. Since a person's life cycle consists of various stages, we are interested in noting the changes in status, if any, during a woman's life cycle. In addition to changes in status, we would also like to identify the different activities of roles which a woman is expected by her community to perform, at each stage in her life cycle. Furthermore, we shall consider the rights and privileges of a woman at each stage in her life cycle.

By studying the Sikh women's life cycle as it occurs in reality, we shall be able to see to what extent it conforms to their tradition, noting:

- (1) how they have been treated in the holy book - The Granth Sahib, and
- (2) how they are treated within their present community.

To elaborate on this point, let us note that Sikhism is a philosophy of life, which is defined in a fairly detailed manner. The holy scripture (Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib) guides the people quite clearly on each aspect of their life: how to worship, how to dress, how to conduct family life, etc.

The roles are specified in the Rehat Maryada, which is a further guide on the Sikh way of life, in addition to Adi Granth.

The following text on how to worship God will illustrate the precision of these guides:

"He who calls himself a Sikh of the great Sat Guru should rise early and meditate on God's name. He should rise early, take a bath and make an effort to wash himself clean in the Pool of Nectar. By repeating God's name according to the Guru's instruction all his evil deeds and mistakes will be washed away. Afterwards at sun rise, he sings the gurbani and throughout the busy day he should discipline his mind to live in God's presence. The Guru's disciple (Gursikh) who with each breath and every morsel of God contemplates my lord God becomes pleasing the Guru's mind". (Adi Granth 305).

The same degree of precision applies in the specification of the duties and social relations of men and women, so that there should be no misunderstanding (as to who should do what). The following text illustrates the thoroughness that goes into the definition of a woman's position in society and how she should be regarded by the man:

"From the women is our birth, in the woman's womb are we shaped, to the women are we engaged, to the women we are wedded. The woman, yea, is our friend, from woman is our family. If one woman dies, we seek another; through the woman are the bonds of the world.

Why call a woman evil, who giveth birth to kings.

From the woman is the man, without the woman there is none;

Nanak; without the woman is the one True Lord alone.

The fortunate and gracious, pear-like, mouth that utters the Lord's Praise is luminescent. Nanak, and it sparkles in the True court" (Adi Granth 467).

The holy books, in these texts give women a very high status, right next to God Himself. The scripture gives women a position higher even than that of men. But does the practical life of a Sikh woman reflect this? If it does, then things are as they ought to be within their community. However, since it seems to us that there is significant discrepancy between the practice and the word of the holy book, it becomes interesting for us to investigate why this discrepancy exists. What causes the deviation in practice from the specifications of the holy book? It is the search for

answers or explanations to the questions raised above which constitute the primary objective of this study.

We cannot, however, ignore the fact that we are going to study these women outside their (native) homeland. The Sikh women that we are going to study are an immigrant community in Kenya (Nairobi). This raises the question - is it possible that the Sikhs who immigrated into Africa were a group with a special type of mentality, different from that of their kinsfolk whom they left back home?

Are Kenyan Sikh women different in their attitudes towards life, from their mothers, grandmothers who arrived in Kenya, during the beginning of the 20th Century, guided by the ascribed tradition?

To provide some information on this question, we shall compare the statements given by the elderly informants to the actual facts. The old informants told the researcher about their life style and attitudes towards different aspects of life, at the time of arrival to Kenya. Their way of life was directly connected to the style that prevailed in India at that time.

While doing this, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Sikhs who remained in India must have undergone social and cultural changes too, and their life style and status of women are different from that which is prescribed in the holy scripture, as the ideal. It is common that religious practices deviate from the ideal model, due to life circumstances irrespective of being mobile or constant. In our case it is more understandable, since, as a migrant society, the Kenyan Sikhs have been undergoing some changes on the socio-cultural plane. Such changes could lead to some innovations in their way of life and, as a result, would cause, among other things, a change in their women's social position.

In addition to innovation, there are other agents and consequences of change in such a migrant society. We need to consider some of these with regard to the Sikh case. Living in Kenya exposes these people to various other cultures in addition to the Indian ones based on such religions as Hinduism and Islam. Over and above the broad substratum of African culture, there are the pervasive Western influences which are finding their way into almost every society.

In the light of these observations, one may ask the following questions:

- 1) Have these factors affected the Sikh community and, if so to what extent?
- 2) In what ways have they influenced the women's daily lives?
- 3) Have the changes affecting the community had a political dimension and, if so, what is the significance of this for the Sikh women of Nairobi?

At the time of Guru Nanak, (15th Century), the founder of Sikhism, the condition of women in the Indian society was deplorable. The birth of a female child was regarded as a curse. Female infanticide was widely practised. Discrimination against women (Purdah), child marriage, polygamy and trade in women were common features of the Indian society. A widow, in this society, was not allowed to remarry and self-burning (satti) was considered sacred.

Sikhism made a frontal attack on all these social practices and gave women a status equal to that of men. It was a social revolution. Guru Nanak regards a man and woman as two limbs of the same body. Both are to be treated with equal dignity. In line with this philosophy, the practices of female infanticide, adultery, and Satti were condemned. A Sikh woman was not only to be treated with dignity in the home, but was considered equal to her male counterpart in all the domains of the society's social organization. Like the man, she was allowed to go through 'baptism' (Amrit) and to take up arms implying full equality.

Sikh history is full of glorious examples of cases where women used arms not only to defend themselves (from attacks on either their lives or honour), but also to fight for the nation and the right cause, just like their male counterparts.

Guru Nanak never, in his teachings, portrayed a woman as an inferior human being. In his famous poem "Gurbani", he puts himself in the position of a woman who takes care of her true husband, God.

According to the view discussed above, women and men are equal in status. In fact, women may even be higher (than men) since they are next to God - they are the creators of men. Thus, there is no doubt about the dignity of women in Sikh philosophy. The question that arises is whether or not it is reflected in the day-to-day aspects of Sikh life here in Nairobi.

In addition to looking at the life cycle and role of women among the Sikhs of Nairobi, this study will also investigate the nature of specific organizations within this community, which look after the welfare of individuals and families. It is possible that some Sikh women do not know about the existence of such organizations and their activities.

The formation of organizations, on ethnic and/or religious basis, is a common phenomenon among minority groups in urban centres.

Such organizations help the individual (in the group) to cope with problems relating to such issues as family crises, the hardships of living in a foreign

environment and other difficulties that may be made lighter by cooperative action.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

Our investigation has revealed that there is very little ^{that is} known about the Sikh community in Kenya. There have been studies on such Asian communities as the Ismaili Lohar-Wadha, Gujar-Suthar, etc. Such studies include those of Walji (1980, 1974, 1978, 1971), Mangat (1960); Desai (1965). However, no research has been done on the Sikhs as a community.

Now as it came up as a political issue that attracted world's attention, it would be advisable to learn about these people's culture in general, with a focus on the community in Kenya.

The findings of this study will, therefore, throw some light on the Nairobi Sikh community, which is the largest sub-section of the Sikh population in Kenya. By providing information on the Sikh community, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge (and literature) on the Asian communities in Kenya. The findings will thus be beneficial to

future research on the Sikhs and the Asian community in general. On the economic plane - because the Asian community in general, and Sikhs in particular, are successful and wealthy people, leading in business and professional occupations as engineering, constructing, architecture etc., the study is significant because it will throw light on their family background, giving some explanations for their success in other areas of life. The Ministry of Education will find it useful to know the high educational desires and aspirations of this group, as a change in attitudes toward education, giving boys and girls equal opportunities. This is important for future planning and of building schools, educational schemes and teachers training.

The most important beneficiaries of the study are the women themselves. While participating in the research, women can look around and become aware of facts that they disregarded, or could not react to, because of the fear of bringing it up loudly, in public. Participating in the research gives them backing and opportunity to speak up, to put their foot down on issues that usually were forbidden, and demand their rights openly. This new awareness would be the greatest benefit to the Sikh women themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

As said in the problem statement, the community we are dealing with is a complicated one. It is a Pariah, immigrant, minority group whose life is ideally defined by holy scriptures.

A look at the literature will expose us to other communities in similar situations, who were exposed to new experiences, social values, and different ways of adjustment. The aim is, therefore, to see what changes have taken place, and what similarities and differences, there are, between the Sikh community in Kenya and other similar communities elsewhere.

We shall divide the review into two parts:

- (a) general literature review dealing with:
- immigrant minorities, for example, the Poles and the Jews in the USA, and
 - immigrant women and the way their status has been perceived. Here we shall use the example of women in Asia.

- (b) Specific literature review, dealing with Asians in East Africa, Sikhs in East Africa as part of the Asian community and Sikh women in particular.

Among the Polish peasants in America for example, there was a continuous infiltration of outside influences from the rest of the American society. There were new ways of doing things, behaviour values, etc. There was, therefore, a need to institutionalize the relationship with the rest of the American society, which was not homogeneous.

At first, all the organizations that existed within the community were related to the old, original social order as it was in Europe, but as the contacts with the wider society became more frequent, and new social values were introduced, the situation demanded adaptation and readjustment. "New attitudes develop in the members of the group which cannot be adequately controlled by the old social organization, because they cannot find an adequate expression in the old primary-group institutions"¹ Some level of socio-cultural disorganization within the Polish community resulted.

The community in such situations tries to fight back the process by strengthening the tradition, but due to continuing connection with the neighbouring society, this campaign may fail, necessitating institutional ways of expression rather than suppression. The desire for Americanization among the Poles was high and it was reflected in class revolution, and participation in national life. For example, the individual needed to satisfy his immediate pleasures that were not available in his homeland - satisfying these needs in a new social environment caused a breakdown of the isolation as a community, and exposure to new values. This meant that the peasant's old social system did not fit in this new environment. There was a need for adjustment. From examples given by the authors, we can learn how attitudes to marriage and family life began to change causing the degradation of social values, as money substituted for pride, "due to increasing acquaintance with new values".² This led to the lessening of communal solidarity as individualism set in.

We can better understand what happened if we understand Thomas's "four wishes"³ that are basic to human adaptation the wish for new experience,

response, recognition and security. If those were good for Americans, the Poles were not going to be exceptions. However, for the Poles, this resulted into increased crime rate, family instability, etc. On the other hand the desire for security makes one incapsulate oneself in his community, as the future is unknown. The second generation's desire for new experience is always stronger than the desire for security, as they are living in known conditions. The youth are therefore, the first to develop new attitudes and import new values due to higher educational standards and imitation of values of the outside societies with which they are in touch.

It may start with changes of dress, manners, leisure activities, revolt of the youth against tradition and its bearers, etc. After the revolt, the youth find out that there are some basic essential traditional mores for which there is no substitute in their lives, and if they want to belong to their community they have to accept them. This means that a migrant community is likely to retain some of the fundamental elements of their culture brought from their former environment.

The Jews, on the other hand, were scattered around the world since the year 70 A.D. Their religious practices and the way of expressing their philosophy of life have been considerably shaped by the historical events and by the different cultures in which they have lived for many generations.

The essence of the Jewish religion and its basic concepts have been kept through generations. So Jews from two different corners of the world will have a large amount of commonality between them, and they will be able to interact on common grounds without much problem. The prayer book, the synagogue, the symbols and the language of the religion will be easily understood and shared by both .

This is partly because the Jewish culture is part of the Jewish religion, and it is known that non-material aspects of culture, especially religion, change very slowly.

At the same time, their different backgrounds will cause deep rooted differentiation in the meaning, expression and interpretation of Judaism, and in the level of their identification with its essence.

The Polish and Jewish communities in America are interesting in relation to Sikhs in Kenya, because they are migrant communities, which had to re-locate to different environments. However, the Jews in America and Sikhs in Kenya are closer to each other than the two are to the Poles in America, because unlike the Poles, the two are religious communities. This means that it is difficult to separate religious and cultural matters as classical religion provides the ideal charter for social life. The question is whether environmental factors (cultural and non-cultural), have had a similar influence on the religions, through the generations, i.e. leading to deviation from the classical form of religion.⁴

As noted above, Judaism like Sikhism, is both a religion and a philosophy of life, which is expressed in every aspect of human life. It includes not only man's relations to the supernatural forces but also the laws, customs, beliefs, norms, values and perceptions which rule man's life.

The Jewish community in the USA was established in 1652 and over the years, its size increased, but the boom was during the 20th century, when more Jews came in from Eastern Europe due to political circumstances. In the beginning there were legal restrictions on the Jews preventing them from holding public offices and academic positions and from working in banking and other professional areas. They suffered restriction of movement and trade, and were banned from entering or becoming members of social clubs. This is probably similar to what happened to Asians, Sikhs included, in Kenya, during the colonial period .

As a response to the restriction, the Jews established their own schools, colleges, clubs, hospitals, self help groups and other institutions. They incapsulated themselves in their communities. Thus, although the restrictions were eventually lifted, the Jews had had time to become aware that they were not just Americans, but American Jews.

Today, the American Jew expresses his belonging to the Jewish people by attending the synagogue and by celebrating Jewish festivals, using Hebrew as

the language of prayers, while he feels free to participate in secular life as much as possible, but keeping his minority status identifiable.

The American Jew is not distinguished from the majority by his physical appearance, dress, language, general education, political view, socio-economic status or his goals in life. He adopted the majority's culture and way of life, except the religion, and yet, at the same time, he feels that he belongs to the Jewish people wherever they may be residing in the world, including Israel. He lives in a blend of Americanism and Judaism.⁵ Living in the USA, however, causes very basic differences between the American Jew and the Israeli as a result of the impact of the American culture.

The question of his identity in the dominant society is crucial: he lives in a Jewish sub-culture, different from the majority culture. This fact affects the expression and practice of his Judaism. For example, the Jewish holidays are celebrated with a strong influence of the general culture. Thus, for instance, Hanuka is linked with Christmas, Passover with Easter. The Holidays have lost their

meaning since they are not national holidays in America. Jewish education is part of the general education, those who attend public schools have to participate in daily prayers, which are Christian, unless they are excused.

The traditional customs about the Sabbath, which is the Jewish rest day, are not observed, as Sunday is by law the resting day, and if a Jew wants to keep the Sabbath, he loses a working day. So they adjust themselves to the majority, as much as possible. We can conclude, that by adopting American culture in form of norms, values, dress, food, art, etc, the American Jew is acculturated, but not assimilated as the Poles were. The reason for it is that the Jews became a pariah group, with all its special characteristics, that have their impact on the adjustment process. The subject of pariah group will be elaborated in the theoretical framework.

In the above literature, we have dealt with ethnic emigrant minorities and how they have tried through history, to readjust to new environments. Of special interest to this study is how women emigrants act in the new situation.

In the early 1970s, efforts to end discrimination against women and to ensure their equal participation in society provided the impetus for most initiatives taken at all of those levels. Those efforts were also inspired by the awareness that women's reproductive and productive roles were closely linked to the political, economic, social, legal, educational and religious conditions that constrained the advancement of women and that factors intensifying the economic exploitation, marginalization and oppression of women stemmed from chronic inequalities, injustices and exploitative conditions at the family, community, national, subregional, regional and international levels.⁶ These efforts culminated in the World Conference in Mexico City in 1975, ushering in the women's decade.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) started doing women studies especially in the Third World even earlier. They recommended that steps should be taken to eliminate exploitative treatment of young women at work in line with ILO Convention No.111 Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, and ILO Convention

No.122 concerning Employment Policy, 1954.

Legislative measures guaranteeing young woman their rights should be enforced.

Governments should recognize and enforce the rights of young women to be free from sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. In particular, governments should recognise that many young women are victims of incest and sexual abuse in the family, and should take steps to assist the victims and to prevent such abuse by education, by improving the status of women and by appropriate action against offenders. Young women should be educated to assert their rights. Particular attention was on women who moved from one place to another, as they become even more vulnerable than the local women.⁷

Richard Ankers (1981) "Research on Women's roles and demographic change" , is one of the well known studies in this field, as well as C. Oppong's "Seven Roles and status of Women"⁸ (1980). The core of the research project on women's status roles and demographic change, is concerned with the economic contribution and activities of women and how in turn,

they are affected by factors as family type and size, area residence and migration. These studies have focused mainly on the status of women. Status is a very ambiguous word used in different connections. Status means a social position, which may have little or more, power, honour, esteem or prestige. There are no unified indices of measurement of "status of women" as is evident in many studies (Oppong 1980, Giele 1977, Boserup 1970, Sanday 1974, etc.)

Whyte (1977, 1978), in his research came up with fifty two different variables relevant to the position of women vis-a-vis men. But still he concluded that there is no key variable to measure women's status. Oppong introduced the Role Theory, as the framework for looking at the women from their different roles, as a basis for making conclusions about their general position. According to the role theory there are three types of status; Economic - which is based on possession and wealth; Political - which is based on power of decision that makes others act; Social - which is based on five criteria. Such as subject of admiration, deference, imitation, source of suggestion and centre of attraction; and they can be measured.

Goody in his book "Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups"⁹, makes it more clear. A person's status is not stable, but consists of different stages in his life cycle. It is a combination of two domains in which a person lives. The domestic domain and social domain. There is reciprocal relationship between the two. Every member of a society is simultaneously a person in the domestic domain and in the "political-rural" domain. His status in the former receives definition and sanction from the latter. This perception fits into the study of the Sikh women, when dealing with their different statuses in different stages of their life cycle, and the relationship between their status on community level and family level.

Having the tools for measurement and understanding what "status" is comprised of, we shall look at some of the studies on migrant women in similar conditions as the Sikhs are.

The latest comprehensive examination of female migration from rural to urban areas and changes in the status of women is presented in the book "Women in the Cities of Asia, Migration and Urban Adaptation"¹⁰: edited by Fawcett, Khoo & Smith (1984) More

attention is drawn in the last two decades to women's migration in the world - notably the higher proportion of women moving from rural to urban areas. This change is associated with new occupational roles of women in the urban economy and way of life. Entering into these roles implies not only a change in status for women with a rural background, but also new policy issues, that have its influence in other fields as economic, cultural and demographic.

Fawcett et al have noticed a trend of migration of women, which is a matter for research itself. What is more of interest is the linkage among migrants, which is a process of adjustment, and societal changes that provoke it and are its consequences.

As they compiled researches done by many sociologists, antropologists and economists, they came out with the conclusions, that female migration is different from male migration, as causes are different, and consequences differ. They distinguish between single and married women migration. The latter tend to play a different role in the urban setting.

As an outcome, changes in the family as an institution, are a central component of modernization. The loosening of traditional family bonds may be reflected more sensitively by changes in female migration. It has its impact on fertility and family structure. Thadani and Todaro bring up several theories for women migration "pull and push" theory, "the marriage" theory which is relevant for the Sikh women, etc.¹¹

In some cultures, marriage is a major way of upward social mobility for women and this may imply moving from rural to urban area, in search of a higher status husband. Another pattern is a bride moves to her husband's home, which is correct in the Sikhs' case.

More data about migrant women's status, is in R.A. Bulatao's work "Philippine Urbanism and the status of women"¹² His data show that migrant women's status is lower than the non-migrants, especially in big urban areas. In small cities, they are better off.

The most relevant topic in the book by N. B. Graves¹³ to this thesis is the adjustment of different ethnic groups in urban areas in New Zealand.

She uses different strategies of migrant adaptation. She provides a clear demonstration that cultural values can have a major effect on the style and success of migrant adaptation. The Polynesian migrants are group-oriented, therefore ethnic organizations, clubs and informal relationships are useful means for their adaptation and not the formal government procedures.

Looking at the Polynesian as a minority group, they are lower in status compared to the dominant society, because the latter failed to help them to assimilate in to their institutions, and did not accept the Polynesian values. The Polynesian women, as a result are lower in status in spite of their notion to absorb western cultures.

Having discussed the general literature on minority communities and the status of women, now we shall turn to a review of a specific minority community, namely: the Asians in East Africa.

To start with the historical background, we should specify that all Indians are treated as one unit, as opposed to the other major groups in Kenya (Europeans and Africans), in order to indicate how the Sikhs fit into the general picture.

The main stream of migration from the Indian subcontinent to Kenya, for the purpose of settlement, started early in the present century, although we could trace Indian contacts with the East African region to many centuries back. Such early contacts were due to trading activities. The first to arrive were the workers imported mainly from Punjab by the British colonialists for the Kenya-Uganda railway.¹⁴

The majority of the Indians who migrated at the beginning of this century did it voluntarily, due to various reasons. The poor and hard conditions in rural India, and the stories about prospects for employment and trade in British colonies in East Africa, formed the "push and pull" factors respectively.

After the Second World War, what had been a steady stream, increased to a flow, causing laws restricting Indian immigration to Kenya in 1949. ^{to be institutrd} 15
Since then there has been no major group immigration of the Indians to Kenya. The few, who have come here, have been either on a contract basis or on short visits.

The immigration stream followed the common pattern: first adult males, when they had settled women and children followed. It is obvious that the Indian immigration contributed to the increase of population in Kenya. Despite this fact, they never became a strong group numerically or politically. a fact that was mentioned by D.P. Ghai in his book "Portrait of Minority, Asians in East Africa" (1970). He is justified in his conclusion that Asians are in this weak status, due to lack of cohesiveness, ambition (political) and limited vision. Their history in East Africa can explain this phenomenon of isolation.

The most striking features of British colonial rule, was the "compartmentalization" of society according to racial, economic, social and political discrimination and segregation lines, a phenomenon which formed the base for the Indians' supremacy in the economic sphere.

The structure looked as follows:

At the top, were the White Europeans, the rulers; the intermediate position was occupied by the Asians (a pariah group), owing to their economic power and race. At the base were the numerically powerful Africans. The Asians were not accepted by the Europeans who were their immediate reference group. Unwilling to get assimilated into the indigenous culture, which they regarded as alien and inferior, the Asians became "increasingly isolated; falling back on their own resources to provide basic services and amenities through the organization of communal self-help projects"¹⁶ Within this set up, racial tensions existed between the Europeans and Asians, in which the former saw in the latter a political and economic threat, and between the Europeans and the Africans, to whom the land belonged. The Asians were precluded from acquiring land rights since the best agricultural land was reserved for the Europeans, and the rest for the Africans. This resulted in a high concentration of Asians in urban areas.

As urban residents the Asians dominated trade and commerce, a privilege from the colonialists, as they were deprived of opportunities in agriculture. This fact made the Africans angry, as it interfered with their traditional ways of commerce.

The Asians' role in the development of the economic life of the country was crucial. By 1948, 82.2% of the Indian working population in Kenya was engaged in private industry and commerce.¹⁷

Although most of the Asians still engage in commerce, some are professionals among whom are Sikhs. Most of the Sikhs are skilled workers, engaged in such technical occupations as engineering, architecture, masonry, businessmen etc., and are known to be courageous soldiers or skilled farmers "who have turned the Punjab into the breadbasket of India. The 2% of the sub-continent's populace, who supply 70% of its food grain requirements".¹⁸

The Asians today are an immigrant minority in Kenya's pluralist society. Small in numbers, they are marked out by race and wealth. Their economic position is very strong, and out of proportion to their

numbers. Moreover they are concentrated mainly in urban areas of Kenya.

The Asians in Kenya, are like the Chinese in Indonesia. In a research done by Professor Spuller (1965), from Indiana University, there is a parallel between the Chinese and Indian minority groups.

Both are disliked by their surrounding society, rejected by the elite, though their contribution to their host country is essential. The Asian image by the African is that they are self-centered, impolite, humourless, petty traders who are after their money (Bharati 1970). They become an object of suspicion and hatred by the Africans and of disdain to the whites.

Through racial isolation and the solidarity of their religious sub-communities, little is known about them by Africans and Whites, contributing to the suspiciousness against them. The only thing known about them publicly is their predilection for business affairs.

The factors involved in running a business are "not tied up solely with monetary profits"¹⁹ The business is run by the family, which is "the unit of social interaction among the Asians. It is the family alliance itself with others to form the group for conducting corporate activities"²⁰

It is therefore said that, Asians "imported" their culture, religion and all their spiritual inheritance. As they are not a united group but a diversity of heterogeneous religious groups, they were unable to establish a firm and cohesive front (Ghai, 1970).²¹ The caste system was 'imported', but not all of the caste divisions survived the journey across the Indian Ocean. The major groups are Gujerati, Letana, Hindus,^{and} Punjab. Their religion and linguistic divisions persisted as a feature of the community. There is no cross-cutting the lines. The divisions within the Asian community are deeply rooted in their traditional beliefs and ideas of social organization. For example, economic and business relations are based along caste and kinship lines (Desai 1965).

The castes in E.A. are well defined, and there is no group which is not clear about its own image, vis-a-vis the other castes. Trade exclusiveness is a criteria of caste belonging. Many caste names are occupational therefore people are recognized by those caste-names.

Among the Sikhs, the Ramgariha are ranked lower than the Jats. Ramgarahas are identified as craftsman by tradition, while the Jats are landowners.

Today, however, some Sikhs buy land for agriculture, regaining their image as farmers (Jats). The Ramgarahas are well known as good fundis, craftsmen of the highest skill. (Bharati, 1970).

Belonging to a certain caste gives the person his social status. This is why one does not marry across castelines. Bharati studied the subject and found that marriage negotiations are conducted along the old endogamous line. The second and third generations, who would like to be identified with modern social aspiration, will deny the caste system, claiming that endogamy is breaking down, and

that intercaste marriage is frequent. This subject will be studied in this thesis empirically as it regards the Sikhs, but Bharati found that this claim was untrue.²¹ Even the Ismaili, who are ranked as the most modern, among the Asians, still practise it.

For them the notion of social exclusiveness within a general framework, refusal to integrate with neighbours of different race and religion are natural. On the other hand, the British system made it impossible. From the African and European point of view "Asians do not mix" (Ghai, 1970), which means they do not intermarry, they do not really socialize with others, even with Indians of other castes. The reason for that is in the morality, religion and ethical themes that guide them. The cultural value system is strictly religious and there is no trace of secular evaluation of moral situations (Bharati, 1972).

"Indian joint family" is another imported feature, that is based on the relations among adult males, rather than on the conjugal bonds between spouses.²²

A joint family consists of a man and his descendants or brothers and their descendants. The women who come into the family by marriage and those who are born into it but are unmarried are also included in the joint family.²³

The relationships between man - woman are parallel to those in the Indian situation²⁴. No affection is allowed to be shown in public neither between spouses, nor father-son, father-daughter.

Sexual relations are a horrible duty, according to the Indian women, to satisfy the man and his family by giving birth. According to Bharati (1970, 1972), who did an "investigation into the stagnation and changes, which the belief system and value orientations of Indians expatriates embody"²⁵, Indian women, less than 35 years old, are interested in sex in a manner that their older peers would not approve - for enjoyment. It means a social change. An item which was a taboo, even talking about has become common.

With regard to assets and property, in the past, everything belonged to "the family". Women did not inherit their husbands' property. It went to the son who became the head of the family. Today, the laws of inheritance have changed. Women are supposed to get their shares in property which implies that there is a social change.

According to the studies done on Asians in East Africa, there are signs of western culture impact, such as using modern contraceptive, to reduce birth rate. Another overwhelming evidence of Western impact is on the technological side rather than cultural, and on Indians in E.A*, rather than in India (Ghai 1970).

It can be generalized that "all Asians", in spite of the diversity in their group, are better educated, their houses are of a higher standard than the local people, better equipped and have better chances of self improvements, when compared to their situation in the homeland. For example, Asian women drive in Kenya, men smoke, Sikhs shave and cut ^{their} hair etc.²⁶ Literature on secular items like sex, violence, success, good marriage etc. are found in Indian houses.

*East Africa

They use external symbols of European culture, but there is no assimilation. To conclude, the Western impact provides the form rather than content of modern living among the Asian minority. The Western culture in its ideological sense-humanism, self-reliant, love marriage, autonomous value judgements, secularism - all these did not transpire the Asians, modern technology - did!

Bharati, (1972), Ghai, (1970), Walji, (1980), Rotchild, (1973), all came to a same conclusion. This minority group, has the special phenomenon of adaptation, which is neither assimilation, nor acculturation but a kind of isolation, into a pariah group.

The Asians look inward to their families and subcommunities and not outwards to the surrounding society.²⁷ We thus, see that unlike other minorities in similar circumstances, for example, the Poles and Jews, who acculturated and assimilated totally, accepting the values of the dominant society. The Indians neither assimilated nor acculturated and remained segmented in communities.

The Sikhs, as a part of the Asians, were never dealt with in separation. Whatever was right for all the Asian group was proper for their sub-community. Although it is mentioned that they are the skilled and the professionalists among the Asians, a feature which singles them out of the unit. Otherwise, the Sikhs are similar in their transitional patterns. There is no adequate literature on them in particular so we treat all Asians as one unit, when in fact Sikhs are different, as their religion is different. It may mean different strategies of coping with or accommodating changes.

Sikh women, are not mentioned in the literature at all. As the group is not dealt with separately, women, who are in a less important position in the Indian society, are not mentioned at all. How does the migration and new conditions affect their lives and position? On the basis of the literature review on other migrant groups, mainly in Asia, we might expect that the status of women will be either lower or remain the same as in their country of origin.

The present study aims to find out what changes if any, have occurred to the Sikh women in Nairobi. To summarize the literature we can say that there is concensus regarding migrant societies. An immigrant minority may have either an ethnic or a religious basis. There are patterns of social change, which affect the community as a whole: disorganization and adaptation to new social values. Women of minority groups are in a lower position compared to the local society.

B. Theoretical Framework

The study is focused on a society which emigrated from its original homeland to another environment. During this move, there were two major transitions:

- a) The shift from a rural community in their homeland to an urban society;
- b) The change in occupations, from agriculture and military life, to commerce, trade and professionalism.

These transitions must have had some influence on the family developmental cycle of the Sikhs which we discussed in chapters 1 and 4. We may assume therefore, that there were some changes in these people's social structure, ^{and} culture, which may have resulted in different status and roles for the individual.

Sikhism began as a religious movement. Later when the community had grown, it got a political overtone. Sikhs view themselves as a separate entity - group of people, with a different conscious. They have developed their own ideas, created a new social structure, different from their surrounding societies in India. The latter looked upon them as outcasts, inferiors, a group of trouble makers that should be eliminated, though the Sikhs became well known as

soldiers, agriculturalists and succeeded in maintaining their own society. Having seen the history of the Sikhs, the author came to the conclusion that they became a pariah group, according to M. Weber's categories, as introduced in "the Ancient Judaism" (1952).

Weber classifies the characteristics of a pariah group as follows:

- 1) They are disliked by the dominant group. The relationships of guest-host may vary. The guest may be legally and conventionally privileged or underprivileged. Both are good reasons for being disliked. Weber therefore used this term to discuss the situation - status of the stranger group, of a minority group, of patterns of segregation and status relationships.
- 2) Mostly they are skilled people - artisans. And "special craftsmanship and middlemen service have frequently been the contribution of groups of "guests" to their "hosts".²⁸
- 3) Their standard of living, is mostly higher than the dominant society, although in some cases as the Okiek or Dorobo among pastoralists in Kenya, or the Gypsies in Europe, their status is not high.

Weber said,

"The socio-economic situation of the guest people is

determined by and dependent on the socio-economic order of the territorially dominant people"²⁹

- 4) They stick to each other to the extent of being endogamous. They themselves create their own "ghettoes", living together, marrying each other, and strangers are not accepted.³⁰
- 5) Have ideology of superiority. "Even Pariah people who are most despised are usually apt to continue cultivating in some manner that is equally peculiar to ethnic and to status communities: the belief in their own specific honor". Even more they glorify their situation. Even ritually segregated, the Pariah people do not accept the image of the outgroup, no matter how obvious and strong the dominant society will inflict its attitude.

According to the facts researched, the Sikh group is a perfect example of the ideal Pariah Group Model, just as it is true of the Jews in America, as we have noted.

Under the framework of a Pariah Group, we want to find out, how the Sikh women in Kenya adjusted to their new environment. The study is therefore, basically a study of social change and persistence or change and continuity.

In the course of human history we have data proving that cultural changes occurred in existing societies. When talking about cultural changes we are interested in the following:

1. What causes the change, external and internal factors that generate this shift in culture ?
2. What is the process by which culture change takes place ?
3. What models and methods are available to study a cultural change ?
4. How is this concept of culture change related to associated phenomena such as diffusion, innovation, evolution etc.?

There are different approaches to what is the primary factor in culture change, but all are agreed on three general major factors;

1. Any change in the ecological niche occupied by the society may result in a cultural change. Such a change may take the form of:

- a) Natural environmental change; or
- b) the migration of a society from one ecological environment to another.

2. Any contact between two societies with different cultural patterns bring about change. Diffusion of values and acculturation can cause changes in the two societies

3. Any evolutionary change within a society is a factor of critical importance

There are three frameworks within which to discuss culture and/or cultural change

1) That of patterns of culture - which are typical to a certain society only (R. Benedict, 1934).

2) That of social or human ecology (Howely, 1950)³²
Deduction from the general principles of ecology about the human community, produced the human ecology theory that cultural

phenomena are part of it. Howley makes the community the focus of interest. His view is that the environment is not the main factor determining the various modes of life, but it surely plays an important role. Culture itself is not static, it is adaptable and modifiable in relation to different conditions. Man is capable of an extraordinary flexibility and refinement in behaviour. Life is an aggregate phenomenon of struggle in the course of which individuals adjust to one another and to the environment, in ways conducive to more effective utilization of the habitat. Culture is a contract of behavioural uniformity which makes life more effective. Men have the power to control their surrounding environment, to create equilibrium of relationships.

Man has the facility of accumulating methods of coping with different situations in life. The adaptability of human behaviour is man's greatest asset. Man changes his behaviour in accordance with his natural landscape and the population he lives in.

3. The situational approach - redefining of situation

Cultural change can be in attitude and behaviour of individual members of a society. It can be in adapting or rejecting values different from the individual's. The concept of "reinterpretation" as a process of cultural change can be seen in the "Polish peasant". In this process, old meanings are ascribed to new elements and values. Such changes may bring innovation which can lead to unforeseen results. This point too was brought up by Herskovitz in "Cultural Anthropology" (1955).

To clarify this point we can say that the Polish peasants and the American Jews were acting according to a model that can be referred to as "definition of the situation". They redefined the situation they found themselves in. They reinterpreted their old values to adjust to their new situation. Both looked upon the American society as their reference group, which leads us to another theory that might be used as well,

the reference group theory. They want to be like "them" not to be unique, to become part of the American nation.

The Poles have made all efforts to assimilate, to become Americans in all aspects of life - dresswise , foodwise, education etc. When we consider the Sikh case, we find that it is impossible to incorporate their way of adjustment within this model. Being a Pariah group, with its identifiable ideology of uniqueness, they did not follow the common known way of other emigrant minorities, but it responded to their environment.

When dealing with two cultures influencing each other or the dominant influencing the minor one, the people will adjust themselves on the basis of two qualities: utility and compatibility, i.e., what appears to be good for them, and how easily they can be fitted into the existing culture configuration.

The cultural change will be effective only if it meets the needs of the members of society. When a new trait is introduced its acceptance depends on whether it is good enough to make acceptance worth the trouble.³³

The same is true for compatibility. Acceptance of a new cultural element is accompanied by changes in the culture configuration. If a new trait is in conflict with important traits in the present culture, it will be rejected. A new trait which is in line with a particular interest of the group will be adopted immediately.

To summarize the cultural change theory, it can be said that it is a common phenomenon when two cultures come into contact, whether it is interaction of cultural systems or conflict between the two, the result is change. It can take place in a variety of ways; by contact, inventions or accumulation. Changes occur in differing degrees. If two groups come into contact and each maintains its distinctive identity and value systems we call it accommodation, or isolation. It is the way

most Indians in East Africa follow. Further adaptation is acculturation. Acculturation takes place when two groups tend to maintain their separate identities, but take on some characteristics of one another's culture - like the American Jews. It is not identically the Sikhs case, , as here we talk of reciprocal influence while with the Sikh there is only one way of influence - on the Sikh and not vice versa.

When the identities of the groups are fused, assimilation has taken place - a phenomenon which is not applicable to the Sikhs in Nairobi. Talking about social change as a result of interaction of individuals from different groups leads us to the fact that any contact of two people is based on communication. It is signs and symbols that make social organization possible. Clyde Kluckholm (1949) in "Mirror for man", gives an example of a American orphaned baby, raised as a Chinese child. The boy did not find his image among the Americans, though he looked like them, but he felt at home among his cultural peers, the people who were like him, or who were his mirror. With them he could interact and communicate.

To become a functioning member of human society the individual must learn to communicate. When he learns to communicate he learns a set of symbols that have meanings. Language is the means of communication. It is the mechanism by which organization of a social system takes place. The symbols are related to the culture. The same symbol can be interpreted differently by two cultures, a fact that caused problems among emigrant ethnic minorities and the dominant society.

Therefore, in a harmonious society communication is of vital importance. Language is shaped by the environment. It comes with norms, expectations and group reaction. Communication is not always words, it may be certain gestures, or facial displays.

All language involves cultural premises, it is related to one's relation to the world or to role playing. Any time one involves himself in a social situation, or in role playing, he always considers the action of other people and the response to those actions.

People are his mirror and vice versa. He adjusts his behaviour, continually, in accordance with the behaviour of others. George Herbert Mead introduced the concept of generalized other "meaning" one responds to a generalized set of expectations and not to any person or specific group of individuals".²⁵ We can use C. H. Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self, as the mirror, our image of others' responses towards us. As was said above each person plays different roles simultaneously. Due to his position in society, a man can be a father, husband and salesman at the same time and fulfil his roles according to the social expectations. The "others" are his feedback, how well the role was played, and it would not work without a means of communication-language. Language shapes our realities. People are dependent on symbols to tell

them what reality looks like and how they are supposed to respond to this reality. As a system of symbols, language is an agent of social control, and is bound to specific situations. Language regulates social conduct which is related to the motives of the social actors, the people. The motives are oriented with the actor's behaviour involving the future consequences of his action. Language is the basis on which the structure of human society and the relationship of the individual to this structure depends. Language means communication between people, it increases the adaptive powers, of humans permitting redefinition of situations; it permits accumulation of knowledge, it allows one to transmit learning, it enriches human expression and interaction. This is the way to learn a given culture and to transmit it. There is interdependence between language-communication theory and culture. This is in the sphere of cultural change. If people did not have the tools for communication there would be no interaction, and no change and the societies will remain unchangeable. This study deals with a Pariah group that undergoes social, cultural changes, as result of interaction and communication with the surrounding communities.

Having discussed the models of cultural changes in emigrant minorities and the tools for studying them, we shall look into the model and methods of measuring the change, as inflicted on individuals. Our focus in the study is the status of the Sikh women in Nairobi. Therefore, we shall refer to C. Oppong's study for the International Labour Organization.³⁴

C. Oppong developed a conceptual and methodological approach, that will enable us to measure a woman's status. She developed a method based on role theory. "A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When we put the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, this is performing a role".³⁵ Linton emphasizes more the cultural context of roles. "Role will be used to designate the sum total of the culture patterns associated with a particular status. It thus, includes the attitudes, values and behaviour ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying the status!"³⁶

Women fulfil several roles during their life cycle. Oppong identified seven major roles. By measuring these roles, we can establish the status of a woman.

The seven roles she suggested are!

- 1) Parental Role
- 2) Occupational Role
- 3) Conjugal Role
- 4) Kin Role
- 5) Domestic Role
- 6) Community Role
- 7) Individual

For data collection, the researcher used the role theory framework as suggested by Oppong. This method is relevant for both qualitative and quantitative data. This is a way for measuring changes in women's position, relating them to surrounding changes such as economic, demographic, and migration - that are taking place.

On the basis of the above cultural change theories, and the framework of women's roles, we shall look into the changes in roles, ^{and} status of Sikh women, implying changes in social culture and social structure and all this occurs under the umbrella of a Pariah group. Is there a change in the Sikh women's status? If yes, in which direction? How do they see themselves in this new type of society? Do they feel any change

from the ascribed roles in the scripture, how do they fit into the changes that the community as a whole undergoes.

We try to answer these questions in the following chapters.

Hypotheses

1. By virtue of being a pariah group and an immigrant minority, the Sikhs have adapted to the new situation through a combination of some traditional and some new values and roles.
2. Because of the shift from India to Kenya from a rural to an urban setting, it is likely that the Sikh women have acquired a higher status in their community. This will be tested by examining the following: amount of independence, level of education, labour force participation, leisure activities.
3. Being an immigrant minority the Sikh women have lower status compared to the women in the surrounding communities; this can be attributed to the social encapsulation or isolation.

Notes

1. Thomas, I. W. and Znaniecki - The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. Octagon Book, N.Y. 1974, p.11240.
2. Op.Cit., - p. 1159.
3. Thomas, W. I. - The Unadjusted Gi, Harper and Row, N.Y. 1967.
4. Holm, J. - The Study of Religion, Sheldon Press, London 1977.
5. Janowsky, O. - The American Jew, the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972.
6. U.N. Women Decade, Publication A/CONG 116/C2 CRP17, 19 July 85, Nairobi.
7. Ibid.
8. Oppong, C. - "A Synopsis of Seven Roles and Status of Women". ILO, Working Paper No.94, SEP 1980.
9. Goody, J. - Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups.
10. Fawcett, Khoo,Smith- Women in the Cities of Asia Migration and Urban Adaptation. Westview Press/Boulder, Colorado, USA 1984.

11. Thadani, V. - "Female Migration, a Conceptual
Todaro, M. Framework", Excerpted from
"Women in the Cities"
12. Bulatao, R.A. - "Philippine Urbanism and the
Status of Women",
Excerpted from "Women in the Cities"
13. Graves, N.B. - "Adaptation of Polynesian
Female Migrants in New Zealand",
Excerpted from "Women in the Cities"
14. Walji, P. - "The Asian: Minority in Transition"
Dept. of Sociology, Seminar Paper,
June 1980.
15. Op. Cit - p.9.
16. Op. Cit - p.7.
17. Op. Cit - p.9
18. Sihra, K. - Sikdonm, p.5
19. Desai, R. H. - "The Family and Business
Enterprises among Asian in East
Africa", University of Nairobi,
p.4.
20. Op. Cit - p.2
21. GAI, D.P. - Portrait of Minority in East
Africa.
22. Goody, W. J. - The Family - PrenticeHall Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
1964.

23. Bharati, A. - The Asians in East Africa, Jahina and Uhuru. Nelson Hall cor, Chicago, 1972.
24. Op. Cit - p.118
25. Op. Cit - p.4
26. Ghai - Op. Cit. p.60.
27. Rotchild, D. - Racial Bargaining in Independent Kenya, p.38, Oxford Press, London 1973.
28. Weber, M. - Ancient Judaism, preface p.23 The Free Press, N.Y. 1967.
29. - Ibid.
30. Op. Cit. - p.416
31. Op. Cit - Preface p.25; p.375.
32. Howly, A. - HUMAN ECOLOGY, Ronald Press, New York 1950.
33. Steward, J. H. - Theory of Cultural Change University of Illinois Press, Urbana 1973.
34. Oppong, C. - "A Synopsis of Seven Roles and Status of Women" ILO Working paper No.94, Sep 1980 Geneva.

35. Linton, R. - "The Study of Man" in Role, Structure and Analysis of Family by NYE, F.I. Saga Publication, Beverly Hills 1976.

36. Linton, R. - "The Cultural Background of Personality" in Role, Structure, Op.Cit. p.77-8.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

A. Site

In order to study Sikh women, Nairobi was chosen as the site of the research. - Nairobi is an urban area which has the largest proportion of the Asian population in Kenya. According to the 1979 census, there were 78,600 Asians in Kenya, of whom approximately 50% lived in Nairobi. However, since then the Asian population has declined further, but the proportion remained. According to Nandra, the Chairman of the Asians communities in Kenya, there are in Nairobi about 35,000 and it was the most appropriate choice since 15% of the Asians there are Sikhs. There are Four Sikh temples in Nairobi - Singh Saba, South C, Pangani and Bazar temple. It was therefore, easy to conduct the study, to participate in ceremonies at the various temples and to take part in community activities as well as visiting the households.

Most of the Sikhs in Nairobi are engaged in professions such as architecture, building and engineering, commerce etc. Nairobi, as the capital

and the centre of industry, attracts the people who engage in such occupations to reside there, and this is the reason why the majority of the Sikhs live here and why it was picked out as the site of the study.

Secondly, being a migrant population, the Sikhs live in towns. In fact most of all the Sikhs living in Kenya reside in Nairobi. To facilitate ease of conducting interviews Nairobi was divided into three main units, according to residential concentration. Westlands, Parklands and Pangani was unit one; South B and C, Nairobi West was unit two and unit three was the combination of other areas.

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, a sample survey was conducted. The sampling universe for the present study constituted the women of the Sikh community in Nairobi. To make the study as reliable and representative as possible, the author restricted the sample from the set of women included in the sample frame, three types of women were chosen; namely those who:

- 1) are married, including divorcees and widows, and who constituted the majority of the sample;
- 2) are single, constituting of the young girls over 16 years.
- 3) Have lived in Nairobi for at least five years upto the time of the interview.

This requirement guaranteed that we only dealt with immigrant or migrant women, who had time to adjust to the local Sikh way of life and become member of the community.

The sample of women chosen according to the criteria, gave us a comprehensive perspective of women in different stages of their life cycle, representing different phases of status.

b. Sample Size

The intention was to have a sample of 150 women, 50 women from each of the units already referred to. In interviewing members of an extended household, I preferred to interview women from all generations represented, namely: mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, grand-daughter (if she was old enough),

young unmarried daughters who lived with the family and so on. The actual sample consisted of 122 cases, divided as follows:

48 cases - Unit 1, Westlands, Parklands and Pangani.

40 cases - unit 2, South B and C.

34 cases - Other parts of the city.- Unit 3

The reasons for having 122 cases in the actual sample were as follows:

First, some women started the interview willingly but, towards the end, refused to continue, claiming that it was too personal. So those uncompleted questionnaires were not analysed.

Secondly, three of the women were sick and were hospitalized for a long time. And seventeen others were away on safari either within Kenya or abroad. The researcher tried to reschedule the interview for the last two categories of women, but they refused to fit into any modified schedule, giving various excuses.

C. Sampling Strategy

Considering that the community chosen is rather large, and given the constraints of time and money, it was necessary that a representative sample be selected. The random sampling strategy was therefore used. The sampling frame, from which the sample was taken consisted of a general list, given to the researcher by the Chairman of Sikh community and membership lists of each temple in town including a list of members of the Sikh Women Society (S.W.S), which does not include all the Sikh women.

As the lists were not compiled recently, they were not accurate. There were changes due to emigration either abroad or within Kenya out of Nairobi, or loss of life. The first step during field work was to delete the names of those who were still on the list of the members of the temple, but actually not there. Then the systematic random sampling technique was used to pick the respondents. This method was the most suitable, because the sampling frame consisted simply of a list of names. From the list of the S.W.S. members every seventh name was picked out arbitrarily and from the temples

lists, every twenty fifth one was arbitrarily taken. It was felt that these sampling methods provided a representative sample of the whole population.

D. Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis

In order to approach the people the researcher attended all functions in the temples and with the help of the secretary or another official of the temple, made the necessary contacts with the women selected from the temple, for the sample.

In order to avoid subjectivity during the interview process, the researcher used the Emic approach, i.e. from the people's point of view. This meant finding out, how the Sikh women see themselves, what are their self perceptions. This method rests on the assumption that the researcher eliminated his/her own cultural conditions, values and ethnocentric attitudes while studying the people. The researcher is required to report what actually happens and interpret his data from the standpoint of his subjects. This is opposed to the Ethic approach which is "an approach to a society

or its culture that makes use of pre-established categories for organizing and interpreting data". (Swartz, 1976).

This is basically a study of the Sikh culture, but focusing on women. According to Marvin Harris, culture refers to "behaviour patterns associated with particular groups of people, that is to customs or to a people's way of life"². Behaviour patterns and way of life can be interpreted and described from the people's point of view, or as Malinowski said, "to grasp the native's point of view"³.

When studying the Sikhs we shall use "culture" as the "acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and general social behaviour"⁴ or, in other words, the Emic approach - "an approach to the analysing of a society or its culture that makes use of the categories of the people studied for organizing and interpreting data or that takes the discovery of these categories as an explicit research objective or both"⁵.

In order to make sense of culture, we have to elicit the categories that Sikh women use, and by which they make sense of their life cycle as Sikh women. The study will therefore, be both, qualitative and quantitative, so that we can deal with attitudes and norms of behaviour. Thus, besides the administration of a standard questionnaire containing closed and open ended questions, two other methods of data collection were used. These were:

- 1) Participant observation at community level
involved participating in different ceremonies such as weekly prayers, Satsangs, engagement, pre-wedding ceremonies, weddings, religious functions, e.g. Guru Nanak's birthday etc. which took place in the temples. These served the purpose of finding out the roles the women play in a social, community function, their duties and how they are carried out. Though the ceremonies were in Punjabi language, there was a reliable translator next to the researcher, explaining simultaneously, what was going on. On each occasion the researcher stayed among the women and observed how things were done, who did them and what was the women's

role in each function: In order not to be outstanding the researcher was dressed as they were and behaved like one of them so as to make the women feel at ease, and not play a role.

Field Observation

Family or individual level involved, visiting the houses, spending time with the women either in the kitchen, or eating, sitting together in the living room sometimes alone, sometimes when other members of the family were in, to see how they acted or were acted on by their men, in-laws etc. Sometimes, the researcher just sat in the house, watching what the women of the household did, how they shared the duties of the house among themselves, when and where they ate, took care of the children and entertained guests. The women spoke English among themselves and with the children, and with the mother-in-law either in English or Punjabi.

2. Interviewing using a questionnaire was done in English.

This method proved to be the most appropriate technique, as there were open ended questions, dealing with values and attitudes, as an attempt to elicit more information. The researcher did all the interviews by herself, as attempts to use an assistant from the Sikhs did not succeed. The interviews were done privately, in secrecy, so the women interviewed, could speak as freely as possible, openly and sincerely, to avoid embarrassment, because of the personal nature of certain questions. Doing it this way, enabled our interviewer to elicit more information regarding attitudes and the position of the women in the house.

3. Interviewing Key informants

- a) The researcher is acquainted with some of the chairladies of the Sikh Women Society and with religious or spiritual leaders. They enriched the data by providing useful information on the status of the women in their society;

b) informal discussions with the ladies during social gatherings either in the temple or in people's houses was another method of data collection. About ten men approached the author requesting to be interviewed and this opportunity was exploited to get some idea on the men's point of view on their women. Some women (three) requested their husbands to be interviewed, and it was done. The information obtained was used in explaining family relationship and why women should not participate in wage labour.

4. Problems Encountered in the Field

The selection of a representative sample was problematic. One problem faced during the sampling was the fact that several families emigrated to Canada, USA, UK and have been out of the city since 1982, but still appear on the membership lists. This problem was dealt with by deleting the names from the sampling frame. To locate the people's houses was also problematic, as the study covered almost all parts of the town. Women are fairly mobile and go either overseas or on local vacation trips.

When they were at home in Nairobi, some were busy with family duties, or having guests or preparing for holy celebrations, which caused delays in the interviews. Moreover, when it was possible to contact the respondents, they generally did not give on the spot interviews. One had to arrange appointments to see the women later and even then, some would not be there at the arranged time necessitating a number of revisits. At first a research assistant, a Sikh student at the Nairobi University, tried to carry out some interviews but it was fruitless. The women refused to talk to her because she was one of them. They were not ready to talk about family or personal problems, as they know each other on a face to face level, and did not wish to have their problems become public. Therefore, all the interviews were carried out by the researcher herself, an exercise that was very time consuming.

Initially, the researcher as an outsider was welcomed by everyone. In fact they felt honoured and flattered that someone had found interest in the community as to be able to come and study it. For some women the appearance of the researcher in the house was like a new wind that might bring some

change in the community. It was a kind of vent-off. In fact, the appearance of a stranger that became a part of them during ceremonies made it easier for them to talk openly, as they knew, that any information that was given would not reach the ears of other members of the community. Several times, when the women knew where the researcher was due to come they organized a kind of group therapy, in which the researcher just listened to the issues they discussed.

After a short period of having those interviews, some elderly women, who were officials in either the S.W.S. or temples, approached the researcher, asking her to stop interviewing and accusing her of having brought some trouble within several joint families. Knowing the favourable attitude of the younger generations towards her and the interviews, the researcher had to face the ladies and to explain to them that if problems arose it was not she who caused them. They were there all the time though no one wanted to talk about them. No one was willing to hear of the existence of problems-neither the husbands, as a matter of convenience, nor the in-laws as a matter of pride.

The explanation was accepted. Since they had no answer, they had to admit the facts and the interviews were completed. Some were disqualified due to missing data or interrupted interviews.

Men's interference was another problem faced during the research. They wanted to be present when their wives were being interviewed - a fact which caused the women embarrassment and in some case, psychological stress.

All these problems coupled with the respondents' suspiciousness of and sensitivity to any kind of research, which touched on their personal lives caused some difficulties. However, the suspicion and sensitivity of the respondents was overcome just like all other problems, so that eventually the researcher was able to get a lot of cooperation during the interview which was very fruitful and elicited a lot of important data. The interview was carried out in English with no language barriers which might hinder good communication.

The data was processed by the computer using the SSPS program, used for analysis frequencies, cross-tabulation and chi square, giving the significance of the variables.

Notes

1. Swartz, M. J. - Anthropology, John Wiley & Sons Inc., N.Y. 1976, p.687.
2. Harris Marvin, The Rise of Anthropological theory, N.Y. Growel 1978 p.16.
3. Malinowski, B. Argonaunts of the Western Pacific, from the Ethnographic Interview, by J. P. Spardley, N.Y. Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1979.
4. Spardely, J. P. See (3) p.5.
5. Swartz - Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SIKHS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"A Sikh is any person whose faith is in one God, the Ten Gurus and their teaching and the Adi Granth. In addition he or she must believe in the necessity and importance of amrit (initiation) and must not adhere to any other religion. Sikhism is concerned with individual life and corporate life as a member of the Sikh community"¹. Guru Nanak founded a spiritual group in the 16th century in Punjab. He was born into turbulent times, the death of the Muslim Lodhi dynasty and the taking over of the Muslim Moghuls. At that time the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims could not have been worse.

"The age is like a knife", wrote Nanak, "Kings are butchers. Religion hath taken wings and flown. Praises of murder are sung and people smear themselves with blood instead of saffron"². Into this epoch of destruction Guru Nanak brought new winds. He started preaching peace, truth and love.

a) The basis of his message lay not in the synthesis of the two (Hindu and Muslim) warring creeds, but in giving a new depth and dimension to the basic concepts of both, while denouncing the outer manifestations of each. The core of his philosophy is that there is one universal God, whose principal attribute is truth. "There is one God, External truth is his name, Creator of all things and all pervading spirit, fearness and with hatred, timeless and formless beyond birth and death, self enlightened. By the grace of the Guru he is known"³.

b) In Hinduism and Islam the concept of one God is stressed, but it was Nanak who proclaimed the concept also of one man. While to the Muslim and the Hindu, only one particular path could lead to a man's salvation, according to Nanak, you can reach truth by work, worship and charity.

c) All paths that led to the same goal were sanctified and worthy of man's highest attention and esteem. According to both, the final revelation had either been made by God, through the Veda or the Quran. According to Nanak, God revealed himself from age to age and, though the truth did not change,

its interpretations and media did, according to the demands of the times. Nanak's scripts were written in Punjabi so that everyone in this area could understand them, adopt it if he liked. He tried to make it simple and to be understood by all people. Guru Nanak saw the evils of the caste system, therefore preached for universal brotherhood. This was a revolutionary idea of a casteless egalitarian society.

In the Hindu and Muslim religions, women are considered inferior to men, they come to serve and obey men, but Nanak brought a new message "Men and women alike, make merry as God, the Lord master, has extended his mercy on them".⁴

d) God does not shower his gifts on the chosen races but on all men at all times. It is man who has to search out and exploit God's elements and distribute them in equality and in good faith, therefore, man is to be blamed for other men's misery. The life of man and equally that of the woman are sacred and they were not originated in sin. His spiritual ideas are justification for the material. He did not believe in miracles. He was teaching man not how to overcome others but how to

overpower himself. Nanak did not believe in sectarian self-contained state, based on geography, race, language or even religion. He believed in the universal man and universal state which are the creation of a universal soul - truth.

Nanak introduced the institution of dining together - the langar, at which all Sikhs eat together irrespective of their caste or previous religion. In 1600 when the Golden Temple was built, it had four main doors facing the four corners of the earth, to signify the openness of Sikhism to all people. Nanak was a teacher and a family man. He believed that religion must be something that everyone can live in their daily life. He preached not only equality, but also simplicity and realism. His cent was in Kartarpur where he preached, wrote hymns to praise God and all his followers settled down there. The village established itself around the person and was united and loyal to him. When he died on September 22nd 1539, he left behind him a not yet fully developed Sikh religion. His successors continued the way he started. There were ten Gurus, and each one added his contribution to develop a mature religion.

Guru Angad, the 2nd Guru compiled the first part of the Sikh scripture - The Granth Sahib or Adi Granth, partially from Guru Nanak's preaching and partially from his own personal reflection. The movement grew slowly but steadily. Each Guru chose his successor. The 3rd one was Guru Amar Das, the 4th Guru Ram Das who was the founder of the Sikh holy city of Amristar. On a site granted by the Mogul Emperor Akbar, he started to build the Hari Mandir - the Lord's Temple which was completed by the 5th Guru Arjan. Today it is known as the Golden Temple. Arjan enlarged and compiled the Granth Sahib and in 1604 placed it in the Golden Temple.

During the time of Akbar's successor, Jehangir, tension arose between the Sikhs and Muslims. Its cause was personal (breaking of marriage) and political. Arjan was accused of supporting rebellions against the Muslims.

He was tortured to death by the Muslims. His son Har Govind took over the Guruship. At the time the political situation between the Sikhs and Muslims became worse as the former established a Sikh army. The Sikhs are known to be brave and good soldiers,

even today. The name "Singh" means a lion, a symbol for all the Sikhs that fight like lions for their survival. At this time the authorities began to be alarmed by the growth of Sikh influence. After the death of Hargobind ⁱⁿ Kartarpur 1645, the unity of the Sikhs weakened. There followed short periods of rule by the seventh, eighth and ninth Gurus. The last one was tortured to death by the Muslims.

The 10th Guru, was a fine cavalier, swordsman and archer, as well as a distinguished poet and great teacher. He was the one who decided that no more Gurus would be appointed. During his time Sikhism achieved its most distinctive character. Instead of having a Guru as the leader, he established the Khalsa - the brotherhood of baptised Sikhs. The Khalsa was founded in 1699 in Anandpur when Gobind baptised the first five members and made them drink Nectar from the same bowl, signifying the casteless nature of the Khalsa. This religious ceremony was also an initiation into the military order of the Khalsa.

The five features (K's) that distinguish a Sikh are: 1) Kes - the unshaved hair. 2) Kanga - a comb to keep it in place; 3) Kach - knee-length cotton drawers 4) Kara - steel bracelet and 5) Kirpan or Khanda - sword or dagger.

- 1) The unshaven hair indicates the acceptance of God's will.
- 2) The comb symbolizes cleanliness and purity.
- 3) The shorts were suitable for riders and warriors.
- 4) The bracelet symbolizes the power of the will and strength of Sikhism.
- 5) The sword represents power - the Sikhs will defend Sikhism by force, if necessary.⁵

Women are initiated equally with men, and they too are obliged to wear the five K's. The innovation in Sikhism regarding women's status was revolutionary. First, the idea of their equality to men was a protest against the Muslims and Hindus. In Sikhism women were not considered unclean during menstruation. Women's activities were not subject to

periodic restrictions. They were expected to have equal responsibility and were recommended to wear Kamiz, tunic and Salwar, trousers, rather than Saree, to enable them to ride horses and participate in battles to defend their faith. Initiated women are called Kaur, lioness or princess. A religious ceremony can be conducted by a woman - another revolutionary move.

Guru Gobind predicted his death in the hands of the Muslims and, therefore, declared himself the last human Guru. After his death Sikh leadership went to the Granth Sahib. It contained all the preachings and hymns by the Gurus, their spiritual predecessors Nanak and Angad, and others such as the works of Arjans.

The Granth Sahib or Adi Granth is the holy script according to which the Sikh live their daily life. In addition they have the Rehat Maryada. Sikhs believe that it contains answers to all questions, and doubts. Each family has a Gurdwara a place of worship at home, where they read prayers from the script and sing hymns.

After the assassination of Gobind by Muslim in 1708 in Nandar, there were no more Gurus. The Sikhs were organised as an army, fighting the Muslims all the years. They were a threat to the Afghan Emperor, who invaded the Punjab area of India many times. Being a Sikh exposed one to the danger of being murdered, therefore, they had to develop all kinds of survival techniques. They developed guerilla tactics, and were famous as courageous soldiers. They had the support of the peasants. Fighting the Sikhs was like fighting the wind. Under Ranjit Singh the Sikhs expelled the Afghans from the territory which they had occupied for nearly six centuries. This victory caused the massacre of Sikh farmers by the frustrated Afghans. 30,000 old men, women and children were murdered in Kup on February 5th, 1762. The Sikhs won a sovereign state but not for a long time. In 1809 Lord Minto, the Governor of India, concluded a treaty between the British and the Sikh Maharaja, Ranjit Singh. This resulted in war between the two (1845 - 1848), which the Sikhs lost. When the British invaders appeared, Sikh militarism revived. They again became united and proud of their unique culture. Although they lost their battle, they were respected by the conquerors and became the "backbone of the Indian Army".

The British employed Sikh troops for their colonial ventures. From this point we start meeting the Sikhs in East Africa. The first group arrived in 1895 as railway builders. As it has been said before, this group was not the core of all Asian communities here, but it was definitely the core of the Sikh community in Kenya. Many Punjabis came as carpenters, masons and blacksmiths to assist in the building of the railway. The British army brought troops to East Africa to fight rebellions in Uganda and to quell the Somali Mazrui rebellion at the Coast. Many of the soldiers were Sikhs.

The first well-known Sikh pioneer was Sardar Kala Singh, in 1896. To the Africans his name became synonymous with Sikhs. He arrived to work on the railway, but soon joined a trading enterprise, as a partner. He travelled far and wide in Kenya and became very famous.

It usually happens that where a Sikh is, a gurdwara is established. The first one was established in Kilindini in 1898, then more were built as the Sikhs expanded in Kenya. The main traits of the Sikhs are:

- 1) Being a minority, in their country and abroad; which leads us to another vital point, namely;
- 2) The Sikhs do not base their brotherhood on territory, language, colour or caste, but on religion in its widest sense. The soulful man is always elicited and not the man of power, or self-centered affluence.
- 3) The means for any acquisitions are to the Sikh, more important than the ends.
- 4) Believing in the universal state and universal man, they look for a better future, based on their religion - which is democratic, secular (in out-look) egalitarian and casteless. This religion does not divide man from man on the basis of colour, religion, nationality, or on political and economical grounds. This is their tool of adjustment and survival.⁶

The Sikhs Daily Life

As we have mentioned already, the Sikhs live according to their scripture. The daily routine should be carried out according to the Rehat Maryada - the guide to the Sikh way of life. It starts with the worship of God, in the morning, after which a Sikh can start performing his daily duties.

Dressing and Socializing

The Sikh dress differently from the other Asian groups. We have already stated the reasons for this. Women should wear a muslin scarf around their shoulders or over their heads when they are in the company of males or in the gurdwara, for respect. In Sikhism there is no place for social separation of men and women. In India there is a cultural tradition by almost all religious groups, of men and women not socializing together. The Sikhs brought this tradition only for religious ceremonies, where they sit separately in the same hall. Men sit on one side and women on the other. In India, they worship together in the villages, but eat and socialize

separately. Here they eat together, but are separated during the prayers. When sitting in the temple you can see all men wearing western clothes and a turban, while all the women are dressed in their traditional clothes. Compared to men, who adopted the European style completely, the women stick more to their traditional clothes. The younger generation of women adopted European styles but for social gatherings and ceremonies they prefer their traditional dresses.

The Turban

It is the most conspicuous item on a Sikh man. We have already mentioned that it is not one of the 5 K's, but has its own symbolism. Wearing a turban symbolizes social identity and cohesion. The length of turban is changed at one's marriage ceremony, or when the head of the family dies. There are special colours for daily use and for ceremonial occasions. During a wedding ceremony the bride's family provides new turbans to all the males in the groom's family.

Birth - Janam Sanskar

The Ceremony of Name-giving

Baby boys and girls should be welcomed equally as gifts from God. When the mother recovers, the family goes to the gurdwara to give thanks. A special dish - Karah - is prepared and a piece of brocade or silk is given as a present to the Guru Granth Sahib. Thanks giving hymns are read. Then the Granth Sahib is opened at random and the first word of the left hand is read to the parents. The name is given with the first initial of the word. It is announced in public adding Kaur for a girl or Singh for a boy. After that the Anand special hymn is read and the Karah - the sanctified food is served. And, with that, the ceremony comes to an end. Birth has a number of social customs, the baby is born in the husband's home. The wife's parents visit their daughter, bringing clothes and presents for her and the mother-in-law and a turban for the father-in-law. Money gifts may be sent as substitutes by relatives living at a distance. The baby may be given a golden Kara - bracelet. The tradition even specifies the presents that should be given to each person in the joint family.

What has been described above refers to the traditional community in India; how these traditions are practiced in Kenya, will be described in Chapter Five.

Marriage

Social mixing among the Asian groups is restricted. This rule does not exclude the Sikhs. Boys and girls have no opportunity to socialize or date and engage in courtship as in the Western societies. In this group, marriages are arranged by the family. As we have said earlier, marriage, like business, is not a personal matter, it is a family matter, as two families are going to be related. Generally the parents will look for a suitable partner for their child. As they love their children, they will look for the best one, the most suitable partner. Social status and economic position of the families play a role too. The two parties have to agree and then the procedure goes on. Marriage cannot be before the ages of 18, for girls, and 21 for boys. These are the rules in India, and they are obeyed by the Sikhs. Nobody is allowed to marry before reaching the prescribed age.

A Sikh should marry a Sikh. The success of a marriage is almost guaranteed, as the true life of discipleship to the Guru's teaching is completely carried out in the household and in a united family. Though they stick to each other, strangers are invited to join and convert to Sikhism. Not by a missionary, but voluntarily, creating more Sikh families, spreading all over the world.

A couple is not allowed to meet in private before a decision is made. They may meet on a number of occasions in company and each will be informed about the interests of the other. "Wedding is both, a social and religious occasion",⁷ meaning, a social gathering giving opportunity to see and be seen and a religious service. In India, the wedding usually takes place at the bride's village. But it can be anywhere as long as Adi Granth is present. The concept of Sikh marriage is not a social contract, but aims at the union of two souls, like the union of God and man, which is the goal of Sikh piety. According to Sikh faith, "The bride should know no other man except her husband, so the Guru ordains. She alone is of a good family, she alone shines with light who is adorned with the love of her husband. There is only

one way to the heart of the beloved, to be humble and true and to do his bidding. Only thus, is true union attained. They are not man and wife who have physical contact only. Only they are truly wedded who have one spirit in two bodies".^{7a}

In addition to the hymns of the Adi Granth, there is the Rehat Maryada, which guides daily life. For example, "A man should enjoy his wife's company and women should be loyal to their husbands, a Sikh should respect another man's wife as he would his own mother; and another man's daughter as his own daughter."⁸ There is no prohibition against widows or widowers remarrying if they wish.⁹

There is a special ceremony for weddings. The couple goes round the Guru Granth Sahib four times. Each time the Guru shows them the various responsibilities of household life. First they have to praise God, as he is the soul of the universe, he brought them the good luck. As the bride goes over to the husband's home she has to treat her in-laws as her kinsmen. She is to obey them and forget about her own family. The moment she moves to the husband's house a new chapter is opened in her life.

Death

This is the last stage in the human cycle. No deliberated signs of grief should be shown. The relatives should seek comfort in the Adi Granth and try to accept God's will. The dead should be cremated. The cremation ceremony is an occasion of family gathering. The body has to be washed and clothed. All the 5 K's should remain on the body. During the funeral, hymns are sung. A relative lights the funeral pyre. The evening hymns are sung during the cremation.

On returning to the house of the deceased, the relatives wash their hands and faces and it is customary to complete reading the Adi Granth. This usually takes ten days. (It is similar to the Jewish customs of the funeral journey, but the Jews bury the dead, and then, for seven days, the relatives sit in the house of the deceased to mourn and pray). What has been described above is the traditional way of life according to their scripts. How it is practised in reality is what we are looking for and will be described in the relevant Chapters (6,7).

Notes

1. Cole, W. O. and Sambhi Piara Singh - The Sikhs - p.169, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978.
2. Sihra Kirpal Singh - Sikhdom - Sikh Commonwealth, Middlessex England, 1985, p.20
3. This is the Mool Mantra. The first Guru's poetic utterance describing God. It is written in the Gurmukhi script. The Translation was done by Sambhi Piara Singh
4. Adi Granth 628, 5th Guru Arjan elaborated Guru's Nanak ideas.
5. Salvadori, C. - Through Open Door, Nairobi, p.197-8.
6. Dr. Gopal Singh - A History of the Sikh people (1469-1978). World University Press, New Delhi 1979.
7. Cole - Ibid. p.115
- 7a. Adi Granth - Ilyme 788
8. Cole - Ibid., p.175.
9. Cole - Ibid., p.177.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN IN KENYAN SIKH CULTURE

It has been hypothesized that the change in circumstances following the migration from India to Kenya is likely to have led to a change in Sikh women's status. The women would gain a higher status in their community in Kenya, and they would become freer and more independent.

By independence, in this study we mean greater geographical mobility, increased educational and occupational opportunities, and more say at home within the nuclear or extended family. The women manifested this independence by making decisions on their own or participating in making decisions regarding family matters and their own personal problems and wishes.

Our data shows that independence in the sense of ability to move freely, exists among these women. 89 out of 122 women drive, meaning that women are allowed to go out unaccompanied. In fact 96 of the women have their own cars for their own use, although some of them do not know how to drive. It can be observed that living in this urban setting caused

changes in the women's roles, as the women had to do shopping, while their husbands were at their place of work. This was a new role that did not exist in India or even in Kenya, twenty years ago. The same is applicable to driving children to and from school. Given the immense size of Nairobi, it is not always possible to send children to a nearby school. So, one needs to be mobile in order to take ones children to school in good time every morning and go for them when school ends.

If the situation had remained as it had been in India, with women locked up at home without the possibility of going out or moving on their own, living in Nairobi would have created problems and difficulties for the men, as they would have to perform all the duties which the women are doing today, a fact which would disturb business or the regular working day. This role played by Sikh women in Nairobi, was therefore, a response to or an adaptation to a new environment with its own expectations.

The first step for adjustment and change is based on education. Did the movement from a rural

society to an urban one have any effect on education in general and on women's education in particular? The answer is given in the following table.

TABLE 1(a) LEVELS OF EDUCATION FOR SIKH WOMEN

	No.	%
None	5	4.1
Primary	9	7.4
Ordinary Level	50	41.0
Advanced Level	18	14.8
College/University	40	32.7
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	122	100.0

TABLE 1(b) PROFESSIONAL ARTISAN TRAINING

	No.	%
Yes	26	21.8
No	93	78.2
N.A.	3	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	122	100.0

Illiteracy and primary education is very low - 11.5%. This percentage consisted of women who are over thirty five years old and most of them were born

in India. Only three women who have primary education were born in Kenya. It can be inferred from the data that the Sikh's attitude towards the education of girls has been positive.

Being an agriculturalist did not require Western education. It is an occupation that can be passed from mother to daughter by observation and explanation. In Kenya the situation has changed. Education has a higher value - it is a key factor in life of the dominant society, therefore, the people living here have to adjust themselves to the general value system of the majority. As a result

more and more Sikh girls are becoming well educated. The average educational standard is 'O' level, but there is an increased tendency towards a higher level. Forty of the tested women graduated from college or university, which is surprising, considering what we know about the general attitude of Asians towards girl's education. Twenty six of the women had professional education, specializing in certain skilled areas, e.g. dressmaking, designing, art, etc.

Table 2 will show us that these women's level of education relates to age and their place of origin.

TABLE 2: LEVELS OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS AND PLACE OF ORIGIN

2(a)	Age group/ Origin	Primary	'O' Level	W Level Univer sity/ College	None	Total	%
	16-22	1	7	6	0	14	11.5
	23-35	2	27	33	0	62	50.8
	36-45	0	14	15	2	31	25.4
	46+	6	2	4	3	15	12.3
	TOTAL	9	50	58	5	122	100
	%	7.4	41.0	47.5	4.1		100
		No %	No. %	No. %	No. %		
2b	Kenyan	5 4.1	36 29.5	42 34.4		83	68.0
	Indian	4 3.3	8 6.6	13 10.6	5 4.1	30	24.6
	Others	-	6 4.9	3 2.5	-	9	7.4
		9 7.4	50 41.0	58 47.5	5 4.1	122	100

SIGNIFICANCE 0.0000

What is learnt from the above data is that the place of origin has a strong impact on whether a woman becomes highly educated or not. Being born in Kenya means that your chances of being highly educated are high. As it is shown, those born in Kenya have the highest percentage of university level, they constitute 22.9% of the 34.4% of the general sample; the same is true for 'O' levels. The Kenyan born women constitute the highest portion of the sample of 'O' level i.e. out of 41.0% of the total 72% are Kenyan born. What we can learn is that the change to a new environment played a role as a catalyst for better education. The Kenyan policy of educating both girls and boys, was a tool for the change in attitude.

We are dealing here with the first generation of Sikhs born in Kenya which forms the majority of the sample of the eighty three women. Sixty of them were below the age of thirty-five. Only 30 women emigrated from India and 9 women came from other places.

Besides the place of birth, age is also a factor in whether a woman was highly educated or not. For example, those 5 illiterate women were 45 years and over, originated from India where the attitude towards education at the time was negative. As we go up in age groups we notice a change. Out of the 30 women of Indian origin, 10 had university level education in India. On the other hand, going upward to the 2nd age group, which consists of more than 50% of the total sample, education is well spread. The basic level is now 'O' level, as the minimum required from a woman who calls herself educated. This is the group in which further education is indicated more clearly than in the first group. As they are young they had not completed their education yet, but the inclination is to climb up the ladder of education. There are no women that were illiterate under the age of 35. Statistically as appears in Table 2, there is a strong correlation between age (the independent variable) and education (dependent). It appears that the younger a woman is the better the chances of obtaining high education. On the other hand, the

older one is, the less educated she is, because the attitudes towards education were different in the earlier days. It is a linear correlation meaning age has a major impact on ^{the} level of education. The importance of education for the Sikh women is related not only to themselves but also to their off-springs. The aspirations, of the majority of the women, in the sample, for children's education, are very high.

What role does the mother therefore play in her children's education? In India, women did not involve themselves in ^{the} educational affairs of their children, as they themselves were not well educated. Today, in Nairobi, women are the ones who drive them to and from school, they attend parents' evenings and take an active part in educating the the children at home.

As the men are more involved in their business or wage labour, which usually necessitates their being away from home for long hours or days, it is the women who are usually in charge. The women take care of the men's responsibilities, while they are away or working long hours and coming too tired or

too late to be bothered with school problems. If it is a nuclear family, she has more duties than in an extended family, and the responsibility for the children's education is hers. She helps them with their homework, when necessary, implying that she is educated enough to provide such help. The mother, who is usually at home when the children come from school, has the time and patience to take care of their problems. In the olden days, the father was the authority on all matters including education. Nowadays the picture has changed, as Table 3 shows.

TABLE 3: WHO MADE DECISIONS REGARDING EDUCATION

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Mother	19	17.6
Father	28	25.9
Both	60	55.6
Others	1	0.9
N.A.	14	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	122	100

We see that, in the case of mothers 17.6% of the sample took over all responsibility and authority in matters relating to the education of children. The reason for it may be, as we have said before, that women are more involved than they used to be in their children's education. Men are either away or too busy to handle it, and they have left this duty to their wives, as they know that they are well educated and can be relied on to handle this matter. 55.6% of families share this authority equally between the spouses. Still we can see that there is a certain group which acts in a more traditional manner. The father is the authority on everything including education. This group is however, small and represents a quarter of the sample.

In the sense in which we use it here, education is part of the socialization system. The child has to be taught how to distinguish between right and wrong and between good and bad. The teaching is done in various ways. One is by punishing him for misbehaviour and rewarding him for good conduct. In olden days the father was the authority, so he was the one who punished and rewarded.

Today, mothers can also punish as evidenced by 51 cases (47.7 %). In 39.3% of the cases both parents take part in punishing and rewarding children, while in only 12 cases (11.2%) the father is the only one who does it. This also indicates a change in the roles of mothers.

In fact, when one is a minority in a foreign country, in order to maintain his tradition and identity, he has to teach the children their language as a tool for communication with the old generation, and religion; for these two form effective boundaries for ethnic identification. In the Sikh community in Nairobi, women promote the Punjabi language, by organizing classes in each temple and giving religious lessons. Thus, they play the major role of maintaining the tradition. To enable children who do not know Punjabi to pray, they write prayers for them in the Roman alphabet, as they mostly speak English and Swahili languages, at school, home and place of work.

When the respondents were asked who would be chosen for higher education if both sexes expressed their wish, 29.5% answered, that boys are preferred as they are the one who will have to support their families in the future. 21 women (17.2%) insisted that girls should be given preference, as it is important nowadays that girls become independent - able to take care of themselves. 45 women (37%) were however, opposed to the dichotomy and demanded equal chances for both, boys and girls. It is equally important for girls and boys to have a profession, to be able to earn a living independently.

To sum up, we can say that Sikh women are more educated in Nairobi, than they were in India. This change is due to the change of place, a shift from rural to urban life, from agriculture to professionalism and trade. With the change of the circumstances in the physical, human and political environments, new needs arose that had to be fulfilled. The response was adjustment by changing the roles of the women within the family. Today, they are more appreciated by the men as they are

considered equally from the educational point of view. They are also appreciated for their contribution in the education of the younger generation. The high aspiration of the women for higher education for their children as the key to success in life, and the emphasis on equality of the two sexes in educational matters, which is Kenyan government policy too, indicate a new trend, meaning a change in attitudes.

Living in Kenya has had an impact on their life style. They have had to adjust themselves to the physical and human environment, to the new circumstances, a fact that causes change in attitudes, in roles, and consequently, in the status of the women. It is a fact that some change has taken place, but probably not enough for the women, as they strive for more equality with their men. This can be appreciated by some focus on Western influence on Sikh women.

5.2 Western Influences and Changing Life Style of
The Sikh Women

As a direct consequence of education, we have the variable of Westernization, which is exposure to Western European cultures. We shall examine its extent and impact on Sikh women here. Being educated by Kenyan standards, means that one has a common language in which to communicate with all the other educated Kenyans. English is the official language of the country, so all people living in Kenya have to know English in order to participate effectively in official discourse. Another widely spoken language is Kiswahili, the national language. Knowledge of English and Kiswahili, which usually comes after mother tongue acquisition, leads to trilingualism among educated Kenyans. This is confirmed by our data as given in table 4 below.

TABLE 4: NO. OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN

<u>Actual No.</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
1	1	0.8
2	14	12.3
3	45	36.9
4	47	38.5
5	14	11.5
6	<u>1</u>	<u>0.8</u>
	122	100.0

The mean in this table is 3.508, meaning that generally the women speak at least 3 languages, but in fact we see that the majority speak more. Punjabi is known by all. It is a cultural must. A baby is first taught Punjabi. This is the first link to Sikhism, and only when one joins the kindergarten does he/she start learning how to speak English, the language of school education. Except for one old lady who emigrated from India 50 years ago and speaks only Punjabi the majority of the Sikh women speak English or Kiswahili besides Punjabi. Kiswahili also functions as a kind of official language, as we have newspapers and also broadcasting on Radio and TV in Kiswahili. Some of the old women, speak only Punjabi and Kiswahili and they have never learnt English. Using Kiswahili enables them to communicate only with fellow Kenyans including their own community. Again we refer here to old women of over 60 years that emigrated about 50 years ago, and managed to learn Kiswahili for basic needs. The two categories playing a small role, representing only 13.1% while the other 86.9% speak 3 or more languages, which again gives us an indication of a higher level of education and

readiness for interaction with other groups, as language is the tool of communication. The most popular languages among the Sikhs are Punjabi, English, Kiswahili, Gujerati, Hindu, Urdu and French.

The range of languages gives us a clue as to whom these people interact with, mainly their own community, followed mostly by other Asian groups. The interaction is mainly of a social nature; they meet for social activities, they have a common language, they watch their films, the majority being in the Hindu, and Gujerati languages as there are very few films in Punjabi. Knowing the language enables them to entertain themselves by watching these movies. When asked if they listen to the VOK Indian program which is in Gujerati or Hindu, 92 women confirmed that they listen to this programme daily. The meaning of this high percentage (75.4%) is that they are in contact with the whole Asian community. All announcements are made during that programme. This includes news, future events, and social functions. By listening to the programme they are "in", not cut out from the Asian community, they know what is happening, be it local or foreign affairs. The

women are today more interested in the outside world, in their surrounding and the radio is one tool of communication with their human surrounding.

Here we understand the importance of language as a symbolic means of interaction between groups, as a key to communication, and a means of influencing each other. The TV station does not broadcast in Hindi or Gujarati, so there is a substitute - video. The Indian movie industry is one of the most developed in the world. They produce the largest number of movies in a year. It is recorded on cassettes and is exchanged in libraries. Indian movies are of two types. The modern ones, which deal with all present-day topics, including love, violence, sex and science fiction - which is equivalent to the American and European industry - and the movies about olden times, centuries back, when India consisted mostly of peasants. Here we can find films based on religious stories, historical events, etc.

The older women prefer the second type while the young generations want to be up to date in their tastes. Our findings show that, in a week 14.3% of the women watch Indian films daily, and 56.3% of the women watch them 1-3 times a week.

To strengthen this point we can refer to the question of free time activities. There were four answers to this question. The women answered according to the relative importance of each activity. On the second place of importance we find video watching, meaning they do communicate massively with the other groups, as it is obvious that some traits or models are retained by the Sikh women. In these new type of films, the women are exposed to phenomena that were taboo before.

Speaking about sex was^a disgrace, but today they can see it openly on the screen. On the same show, they may see violence in all fields of life and it must have had an influence and caused change in attitudes towards some of the values. Influence is cumulative and at a certain stage those exposed to it demand some of the things they see, hear or read through such media.

So far, we have been referring only to Asian communities. But the interaction does not end at this point. As we have pointed out, earlier, Nairobi is a multiracial city, with all the traits of a European urban setting. It was indicated in

Chapter 2 that Asians as a group, looked upon the European as their reference group. This was made possible because Nairobi is a center of all foreign missions. So there must be some influence of the European on all the other residents on the city.

Another source of general information and a means of being updated, is the newspaper. 69.7% of the women read it daily (a daily newspaper and magazines) and 12.3% between 1-3 times a week. It is even more than the cases of listening to the Indian programme on VOK. Sikh women are therefore advantaged in their knowledge of English through which they are in touch with their surrounding neighbours. For example, since the video arrived, they significantly reduced their going out to movies. They now go only to very good, usually English movies. At home the video is working almost non-stop. According to our data, 16 women watch daily an English movie, and 51 watch one, 1-3 times a week. We cannot disregard the children who watch children's programmes only in English. You find "Hi man" in a Sikh house as well as in an English people's or Danish people's house. The children watch only

English programmes: they seldom watch Indian movies which are usually screened in the evening, when they are asleep.

So we have a kind of socialization done through the English movies and programmes. The children speak, dress, and act like the heroes. They try to identify with them. The result is that it is very hard to draw them back from the influence they have already internalized. This is true for the children as well as for the women.

Watching European movies, brings out issues that until now were hidden from the women. Love, sex, violence, feminism, adultery, etc.

We found that the educated Sikh women wonder why they cannot be equal to the women they see in the movies, why they have to be treated differently within the family circles. For various reasons, almost each Sikh family has a representative either in the U.K., U.S.A. or Canada. Since life there is completely different they have to adjust, "to behave in Rome as the Romans do". When they return to Kenya they cannot simply ignore or forget what they have

acquired abroad. They try to change the ways here - the degree of success depending on the woman and her family. There were women who were born in the U.K. and came here for marriage. Their group is almost completely Westernized. You cannot reform or re-educate them in the ways of the local Sikh community and they bring a new spirit to the women. We can only learn about these influences indirectly as there is no direct measure or criteria for westernization. In this study we looked at:

- 1) their leisure activities, what are they doing during their free time.
- 2) their occupations and
- 3) the family structure.

(1) Freetime Activities

Most Europeans in Nairobi belonged to a club. Being a member of certain clubs was a status symbol. As the Asian looked upon the Europeans as their references group, and the elite clubs were only for Europeans, consequently the Asians created their own clubs, imitating the English ones. First it was

based on ethnic or religious communities, leading to the creation of such clubs as the Aga Khan, the Goan club, Gymkhana etc. The Sikhs created the Simba Club, with all the facilities. Lions Club was open to all but the majority of the members were Asians. So was the Lioness Club for women. The clubs are today open to all, but still there is the core of the founders. A Sikh will go to Simba and not to the Goan's club. There they feel at "home". At first only the men were members, but now some women do join. Membership to a club included sports activities, social gatherings, dinner etc.

Out of the sample total 41.8% of the women belong to clubs or organizations, and 14% of them are officials in their organizations. Most of the women who are club members or belong to any organization are over 30 years old.

TABLE 5: CLUB MEMBER AND OFFICIAL ACCORDING TO AGE GROUP.

AGE GROUP	CLUB MEMBER					OFFICIAL		
	Yes	%	No.	%	Total	Yes	No.	
16-22	2	3.9	12	16.9	14	0	0	-
23-35	23	45.1	39	55.0	62	4	22	26
36-45	13	25.5	18	25.4	31	5	13	18
46+	13	25.5	2	2.7	15	8	5	15
	51	100	71	100	122	17	38	55

Significance 0.006.

The above table shows that women are becoming more aware of their needs. Looking at the age group we see that the larger participation is in the second group, but if we had a sub-division of ages 23-30, 30-35 most of the women would belong to the second category and as the age increases they show more willingness to participate.

There is an explanation for this phenomenon. One usually expects younger people to be club members, in our case it is vice versa. When the women are young, bear children and have to take care of them,

they are tied up to the house and are very busy. But when the children grow older, the mothers have more free time to spend. As they do not work, and the children are in school most of the day, they look for other activities to keep themselves occupied instead of staying idle at home. This is the role of a club or organization, which provides various activities, to fill the women's life.

In 1974, eight Sikh women founded the Sikh Women Society, which became a forum for discussing social problems, that needed to be solved. Until then, the women had no other medium through which they could socialize. The organization was founded as a religious and charitable society. In addition to propagation of the Sikh religion, the society looks after the needs of others and donates cash or goods whenever needed. There is an elected committee which plans the activities. They publish a monthly newsletter through which the members are informed of their activities.

Most of the activities are of a charitable nature - visiting in hospitals, sending congratulations and money gifts on birthdays and weddings, giving

cash donations to the needy from other groups, supplying cooked food monthly to Dagoretti Children's Home, the Blind School at Thika, Mother Teresa's Home and the Salvation Army. Social activities include a monthly meeting of the members - where they talk and have tea. Big events which take place once a year include Dashmer dinner for money collection, the "baby show" accompanied by entertainment for the children, a bazar, fancy dress competitions for children and adults, sports days, drama, a donation of water tanks to the people of Kikuyu rural area and Kimakimwe Primary School, Machakos. Recently there was an outing for children, camping at the Makindu Temple, which included money donation to the needy in that area. On the religious side, they organize Punjabi classes for children and adults, Satsangs for Guru Granth Sahib, and special prayers on special ceremonies, publishing of the "Gurbani Krishma" (The prayers in Roman letters) and distributing it among the members of the Sikh community.

The S.W.S. is today a strong organization that has a voice in the Sikh community activities. The women have become more and more aware of themselves and their contribution towards the community. The social services and religious functions are first

carried out within the community, for the benefit of their own people, then they are made available to others. They used to have a section which dealt with family problems but, it is not effective today, as women refrain from coming for advice. This is a kind of a social counseling service. They keep the institution of Satsang alive, either in temples or in private houses.

Once a week, women gather in each temple for religious singing. Usually older women participate but, lately the researcher saw young girls coming too. The older women teach them to play the harmonium and other instruments and to sing. It is important to maintain their communal identity. Satsangs are organized in private houses, usually in the afternoons. It is a kind of social gathering with religious flavour. Even here it is mostly the elderly women who participate, usually accompanied by their daughters in-law, who are the drivers of the mother-in-law. This is a way of involving the younger generation in such activities. In general, from the communal point of view, women are more active and participate more than men.

This kind of activity is approved and blessed by all, therefore, it encourages the women to work more for their temple or community in general, as they are more respected by all the members. Going back to the table, we find that it is the elderly women who take an active part in the organization and communal activity. There is a significant correlation between age which is an independent variable and being an official in a club or organization (tables 5). The older a woman is, the more time she has to spare for communal or public activities, since there are no children bothering her and she does not have an interest in the new activities that younger women engage in. So she is ready to devote herself to public service, especially when there is a reward for it such as being more honoured and respected by the people of the community, i.e. gaining a higher position, or status among the women. This was one aspect of free time activities that was an outcome of external influences.

Now let us consider actual activities performed by the women. Each woman gave 4 answers graded according to their frequency and the relative importance of each activity. We shall refer to the first two answers as they are the most frequent, and obviously the most important.

TABLE 6: FREE TIME ACTIVITIES BY AGE GROUP, EDUCATION AND BIRTH PLACE

A. AGE GROUP	NONE		PRAYING SATSANG		READING		TV/VEDIO		STICHING KNITTING SEWING		GARDENING		SPORTS ACTIVITIES		SOCIALIZING GOING OUT		OTHERS		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
16 - 22	0		0		6		1		5	4.1	0		0		2	1.7	0		14	11.5
23 - 35	0		1		9		9		24	19.8	1		1		13	10.7	3		62	51.2
35 - 45	1		2		3		1		11	9.1	5		2		5	4.1	0		30	24.8
46 - 1	0		4		1		1		7	5.8	0		1		1	0.8	0		15	12.5
	1	0.8	7	5.8	19	15.7	12	9.9	47	38.8	6	5.0	5	4.1	21	17.4	3	2.5	121	100
SIGNIFICANCE = 0.0055																				
B. EDUCATION																				
Primary	0		0		0		1		7	5.8	0		0		1		0		9	7.4
'O' Level	0		2		8		6		21	17.4	2		2		5	4.1	3		49	40.5
'A' Level	0		1		5		1		7	5.8	0		1		3	2.5	0		18	14.9
College Univ	0		1		6		4		11	9.1	4		2		12	9.9	0		39	33.1
None	1		3		0		0		1	0.8	0		0		0		0		5	4.1
	1	0.8	7	5.8	19	15.7	12	9.9	47.3	38.8	6		5	4.1	21	17.4	3	2.5	121	100
SIGNIFICANCE = 0.0003																				
C. PLACE OF BIRTH																				
Kenyan	0		3		13		11		30	24.8	5		5		14	11.6	1		82	67.8
Indian	1		3		5		0		12	9.9	1		0		6	5.0			30	24.8
Others	0		1		1		1		5	4.1	0		0		1	0.8	2		9	7.4
	1		7		19		12		47	38.8	6		5		21	17.4	3		121	100

SIGNIFICANCE = 0.4297

The most common and popular activity is stitching, knitting or sewing. We have a total of 47 women or 38.8% who do it as their first activity in their free time. The explanation is that it is almost a must for all girls to learn these creative manual skills. From childhood girls are taught to sew, stitch and knit. Initially they do it for fun to copy their Mummies or Grannies - but when they get older they have to know it properly. Most of the women stitch their own clothes, as well as the clothes of the other members of the family, especially children and women.

If you are supposed to make your own clothes, then the first thing you do when you are free of other obligations is stitching, or knitting or sewing for yourself or for your family. The women became highly skilled as they go to classes for cutting, designing etc. Some of them turn it into a profession. They earn a living by stitching and embroidering other people's clothes.

If a woman is known for her good designs and high quality, she will be "flooded" with orders.

Usually they stitch the traditional Punjabi suits. All Sikh women know how to stitch this kind of dress. The more fashionable clothes are made by the professionals. This is one reason why such a high percentage is engaged in this kind of activity - it is necessary. Another explanation is that since they do not go out as they wish and they have no outside contacts, they have to fill their time with some creative activities, (in order "not to get mad" according to some quotations) that are approved by their mothers-in-law, who keep a close watch on them all the time. Painting, for example, wastes time and money, though it is creative, it is not approved. An activity such as stitching is approved by all, as you do not waste your time for nothing - you make new clothes. So it is a good way of combining creativity and productivity. It is also a way of creating closer relationships between mothers and their daughters and between grannies and grand daughters. When the mother is doing her stitching, the little girl sits next to her and tries to imitate what she does. The girl learns to sew and embroider. She feels happy when there is a nice result since they start it from childhood as a game, they get used to it and doing it when they grow up.

We can deduce from this that as the women become older they abandoned this activity and shift to others, perhaps because of the need for glasses. This kind of activity tires the eyes, and it needs concentration and patience, which after a certain age is lessened. Secondly, the older women already have daughters-in-law who can do it for them, so they need not bother if they find it inconvenient.

Thus, though this is the most popular activity, the majority of the women engaged in it belong to the second age set, 23-35. We also notice that the group that is most involved in it, is that of women who reached 'O' levels, followed by university graduates. It means, that even in craftwork, you need a reasonable degree of formal education so as to understand what you are doing - to know how to do it in the best way without wasting material. As this group of 'O' levels fall mostly in the category of the second age group, there is obvious connection between age and education and the fulfilment of house duties.

To summarize, we can say that this kind of activity is, to some extent, a necessity for all women, though some stages of a woman's life cycle demand it more than others. The degree of one's involvement in it is influenced by such factors as age, education and place of birth, with a higher statistical significance to education and age. It is part of young women's socialization scheme and part of the social norm of the community which are fulfilled by women of a certain status, of whom the community expects it.

The second most popular activity is socializing or going out. 17.4% are engaged in this activity as their first priority for leisure time activities. It is a great step towards equality. While the men are free to do whatever they like - going out by themselves, drinking, going to cinemas etc., the women are supposed to stay behind at home, to wait for the men to come back. Here we found a new phenomenon that was not familiar even 20 years ago in Kenya. Women accompany their husbands when they go out in the evenings say, to a restaurant, which has now become very popular among the Sikhs. Usually, on weekends one could see a lot of Sikh families eating out.

It is another aspect of Western influence and modernization. They go out to various restaurants where they eat European or Chinese food. Women accompany the husbands to other places of entertainment, e.g. Casinos, cinemas, theatres and usually visiting friends or other relatives.

Social life has become more active. There is a big influence from other members of the family who stay abroad and have already absorbed the European way of life. They bring it when they come here for a visit, as they have already internalized this kind of life, and the Kenyan Sikhs who visit abroad cannot encapsulate themselves in the old system, they have to behave as others do. This is a great step forward. When such a change comes in, it starts as a small stream and then it develops into a flood. This is what the researcher predicts will happen in the coming ten years. More women will participate in this activity. For each change there is a reason.

Let us see what explanation can be deduced from our data for this change. First, who are the majority of the women who participate in this social

life? Although they belong to the second age group, i.e. women between 23-35 we cannot ignore the others.

This group constitutes over 61% of the group of the 21 women. It means, these young women had been influenced by some factors that caused them to act the way they did. First, we learn that of the 21, 67% are Kenyans. This means that the environment they live in has had its influence on their behaviour. They adjust themselves to behave like the others. As the Europeans were the Asians' reference group, they learned from them that women accompany men to social functions, they go to the clubs and they have their own kind of socializing. This is what was imitated by the Asians.

Many of the Sikh men and women had their education either in the U.K. , USA or Canada. So it is obvious that they learnt this behaviour while they were away, where they acted as the other students did and, when returning to Kenya, they cannot simply leave behind everything they have learnt and go back to old systems. Some men tried to have them do so, but it did not work, as the women were strong enough in their position to put their foot down and demand their rights.

The third activity in importance according to the statistical frequency is reading - 15.7%. The women read, among other things, religious or historical books as well as novels, magazines and newspapers. Most of the reading is done in the English language, as few women are able to read Punjabi. Reading is an acceptable activity. It is done indoors with almost no money expenses as you can exchange books or magazines between friends or one can also use library materials. It is acceptable because the mother-in-law is satisfied that the young woman stays at home, does not have all kinds of modern craziness and is not exposed to any bad influence.

According to our data, the majority belong to the second age group (23-35). These are young married women that have to stay at home, as they are not allowed to go out as they wish or to do whatever they want, so reading is a kind of an outlet. One can be influenced very much by books. The influence may be emotional as well as practical. The world of books contains practically every kind of experience one may be interested in.

Again, the majority of those who read widely are Kenyan born. However, what is more important is the level of education. It is obvious that women without education cannot participate in reading activities. The majority belong to the 'O' level group and upper levels as they have the knowledge and the interest to widen their horizons, be it in specific subjects or general knowledge. The second major group is the age group of 16-22. This is understandable. Some are still students, so they have to read, others are staying at home most of the time, so this is a socially acceptable means of occupying oneself.

The fourth major activity in the hierarchy is watching video and TV. There is no doubt that this is a Western product that has been adopted by all. The films are either in English or some other Asian language. This is a kind of relaxation. You sit and watch very passively. Video libraries are one of the flourishing sectors in Nairobi. They supply all kinds of films, starting with children programmes to love stories, comedies, action science fiction, violence and even pornographic movies.

The majority of the women who watch video as their first choice belong to the second age group. They are the young wives who have to stay at home. They are not allowed to go out for socializing so this is the substitute. They are educated - majority with 'O' levels; 11 out of 12 are Kenyan born. It shows that, in Kenya, watching TV is a common activity, accepted by all other cultural groups and it fits very well in the traditional way of life of the Sikh women. Here one sees a significant difference between Kenyan Sikhs and those of Indian origin. There is not even one woman from India for whom watching the video became a major activity, while the activity predominates among the Sikh women born in Kenya.

Modern electrical equipment such as TV, Video and musical systems are found in all Sikh houses, at least one of the above items. This is pure Western adaptation. Since they have videos at home, they stopped going out to cinemas. It is more convenient to stay at home and watch. The younger generation become addicted to it and can spend hours in front of the TV. It has replaced many other activities,

such as reading, for example. Why bother if you can watch the film? We still do not know the cumulative influence, but the future, will bring it up.

The other activities include praying or Satsang, gardening and sports. We would like to draw attention to sporting activities, as it was never practised by women in the past. Although they constitute only 4.1% of all, sports have a great significance. Participation in sports is another index of freedom. It shows a move towards equality and registers Western influence.

In the Sikh tradition there is not such an activity as sport. They were fighters and agriculturalists, but laid no emphasis on physical education. It is a new value penetrating their society. The British engaged a lot in sports in their clubs, the Asians imitated them, and women started to be interested in sports. Although it is a small percentage, it is still a beginning. At school, girls got familiar with P.E. classes, which were compulsory, and some developed an interest in it and made sport their main activity, as other European women have. We see that all the 5 cases

are Kenyan. It means, they absorbed this value, which is part of the Kenyan value system. They put an emphasis on sporting activities in the schools and industries. Among the Europeans in Kenya, it is very developed. Golf, tennis, squash, rugby, swimming etc. are playing a major role in daily life - both at the personal and social levels. The activities take place in clubs, where one has the opportunity of meeting people of all colours and race, they change information about each other. Members adopt some of the newly learnt skills, values, and attitudes and either drop some of their old ones or add new ones on top of the old systems.

The women who engage in sports are, to our surprise over 23, (the younger ones have other kinds of activities) and as expected, they have at least 'O' level education. It is a big step in women's liberation, because if you engage in sports as a main activity, you must be free enough to move around without restriction, to engage in social activities at the same degree of importance as men. Analyzing the second response we found that the most

popular activity (28%) is watching TV and video. Again it gives us an indication first of economic status, as it is associated with well to do people, and secondly, of strong Western influence. As it was pointed out earlier, it is a kind of mixture of cultures, Eastern and Western. The Eastern side is that the women are at home, not exposed to strangers and their influences, and the Western side is watching the Western movies with all their cultural content. The latter has a great influence on the Asians. Even the modern Indian films have the same influence as the Western ones since they deal with the same subjects, only the language used is different.

To summarize our observations on this subject, we can identify 3 major activities for leisure time. The first one is stitching, knitting, sewing or embroidering. There is not one woman who does not engage in this activity, at some level of priority. This is an activity that is traditional. Women are expected to fulfill this kind of duty by making clothes for themselves and for other members of the family. This is the way it was done before in India, it is the way it is still done here.

It is a traditional women's activity that has not been affected by time or place. The only change in it is in the priority given to it relative to other activities. Most women give it first priority, the way it used to be, others who are more educated and engage in other activities push it further to second and third places, but its importance is still there. Some women became so skilled in it that they turned it into an occupation. They stitch for other women, from all communities, and the money thus earned is either contributed to the family budget or becomes their own pocket money. Here we see that the tradition is strong, it is a kind of instrument of adaptation to the actual circumstances.

The two other activities, socializing and watching TV or video are consequences of Western influences. The first is an imitation of the European way of life. This life style was imitated either by watching Europeans here, or when studying abroad and internalizing their social values and life, or from watching films, or even from reading books. The moment one starts going out for pleasure, to satisfy one's need for entertainment and curiosity

the way others do, appearing in public places and enjoying the new experiences, then there is no going back. One has more contact with other social groups learns more and adopts what is convenient for oneself.

Watching TV and video is a very good indicator of Westernization and economic status. If you want to be "in" then you have to have the latest technologies - TV and video are the ones. It brings the Western culture indoors. It means the family is well to do enough to have all these items, and as a result, more exposed to the mass media influence. It shows the fast adjustment of the community to new ideas, it completely contradicts the tradition, there the emphasis is on praying and praising God. The person who prays more is the successful and the happy man. By introducing these technological developments, praying is postponed or done very briefly. One only fulfils his religious obligation but no additional time is spent on it, they prefer to watch a good movie.

It was indicated above that another Western value which was adopted by the Sikh women is the

love of sports (swimming, squash, tennis). It is a result of education and environment influences. It is an aspect of internalizing a European value, the importance of keeping the body fit. Keep fit classes are the latest fashion, squash, golf and other games became common and popular with the women. There is a tremendous influence of the European culture on the Sikhs. They adjusted quite a bit, but did not abandon all their traditional activities. The women are engaging in activities similar to those of men - meaning there is a change in their status in the community. The men accept these new activities. They view women in a different light. The women have become personalities in their own right. They have gained respect, they have a higher position in society. It means that Sikh women in Nairobi, therefore, have a higher status due to the change of circumstances through living in Nairobi and urban setting. Thus the data confirms our second hypothesis that the women did gain a higher status.

Another point of view from which to tackle this problem in women's occupations. By looking at our next table, we shall get a picture of the

varieties of occupations in which Sikh women engage and the reasons behind it. This will be another measurement or tool to verify or falsify our hypothesis that women have gained a higher status.

TABLE 7: WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONS

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Housewives	72	59.0
Teachers	20	16.4
Secretary-Office Work	11	9.4
Medical/Paramedical	3	2.5
Professional Artisans	6	4.9
Artist	5	4.1
Student	3	2.5
Running Shop	2	1.6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	122	100.0

The data present that 41% of the sample are engaged in wage labour. It is relatively a high percentage of women in labour force. Walji in her study (1981) found only 15% of the women employed. This relative high rate is significant, because it shows a new trend and new attitudes toward the women.

It means they have gained power in their society - namely higher status. It reinforces our hypothesis that in Kenya the Sikh women gained a higher status. The majority (59%), in spite of the high level of education, are housewives. This fact needs further investigation why it is so.

If we compared them to any Western society with equally qualified women the difference would be glaring. The majority would be working outside the home and very few would be housewives. What is the reason for this phenomenon? Is it the tradition and the way of life which keeps the women at home? Is it the husbands who constrain them? Or is the answer to be found in themselves? There is no easy explanation as there are several factors which contribute to this phenomenon. In our opinion the traditional way of life, of the Sikhs and their customs, are the main causes of the women's being housewives in spite of all their formal qualifications.

According to their customs the women's place is at home. It was the common social norm all over India. The woman has roles to play within the home.

It is not written in the scripts, but as it was a social norm approved by all Asians, the Sikhs were not exceptions in this regard. Women are in a lower position in the family, therefore, they must stay at home. Their duty is to serve the men in all ways during almost all their life cycle. Only when they become mothers-in-law their position is changed within the family, but not within the community. The Sikh woman is still lower than any man in the family, even the youngest son, as she does not have a say or participate in decision making nor is she free to do what she wishes. We are referring to old customs that were strong in the traditional Indian society. They are still strong here today and, in particular known cases are even stronger than in India today. The families which practice the joint family system stick to the old customs.

The old mothers-in-law are narrow minded due to their low level of education. They are not open to change because they are afraid of losing their power over the young women, so they restrict them by forbidding them to engage in wage labour.

By doing so they feel powerful and believe that it is for the benefit of the family, if the woman stays at home though she may be a university graduate, an interior designer or an accountant. In this way she will not be exposed to bad manners and influences. The main point is that the old women are afraid of the young ones because they are more educated and the moment they start earning money, they may disobey the old women, as a consequence of their new kind of power - the economic power, which is comparable to men's power. If this happens, the old women will lose their leadership and the young women will be able to put their foot down on matters over which they have no traditional rights. Thus, they will introduce new modes of behaviour that contradict the traditional way of life.

The momentum of the economic independence, of working women, is frightening the older generation. They cannot understand or accept the fact that change is taking place in their own community. It started with girls' education and continues with different activities which were unknown either in India or even in Kenya 20 years ago. Nowadays, all

girls attend school, at least upto 'O' level, looking forward to university. Nevertheless the tradition is still strong and many of them stay at home.

Let us look at the husbands as a factor. Do they have anything to do with the phenomenon? The answer is partly yes. They are partly the cause of many women's staying at home. As almost all the men are engaged in what we call "free occupations" or businessmen and are educated, it was amazing to see that they object to their wives going out to work. When this issue was brought up in informal discussions with men they gave the following reasons as their explanations of what was happening.

The common reasons were "there is no need for her to work, as she gets all she needs. She gets pocket money, she gets clothes and food, she is financially supported by me so there is no place for her to engage in wage labour". When the researchers probed the men further on the point of the rights, mental needs, desires to progress and self development in the fields in which the women have had their education, the men felt uncomfortable

and tried to avoid the issue by giving the excuse that the women have to take care of the children until they grow up.

Another excuse was economic. If a woman earns an additional amount of money on top of the husband's income, then the taxation will be very high. It is therefore, not worthwhile for the woman to work outside, as the total income of the family diminishes and the expenses are higher, as they need extra help in the house. There was no attempt to relate the discussion to women's rights or wishes.

Another excuse was that if the women go to work, the old mothers-in-law will be lonely in the house, and they can be offended. In general all the answers given seemed to be rationalizations. Between the lines you get the message that the men are not interested in letting their wives engage in wage labour. Is it the power of tradition or social norm or being unable to accept the change in the status of the women in the family? It is a psychological fear that men have to get over.

We can conclude that men's attitudes are a barrier to the women who wish to work outside the home. These attitudes may be attributed to tradition. The data shows that this barrier is weakening as women do participate in wage labour and look for more jobs. This problem was brought up very clearly in the interview. The women complained that they were not allowed to work in spite of their qualifications. No one shows interest in their wishes. They demanded more freedom. They felt trapped. On one hand they have high education, on the other hand they cannot fulfill their wishes or apply their knowledge because they are restricted. They feel that there should be a change in attitude. They constantly cry for equality and freedom. This is one side of the coin; the other side are the working women.

There are women who enjoy being housewives, as they do not like to be tied up to any obligation. They are happy with their circumstances. As it was mentioned above, there is no economic need for women to work, as almost all Sikhs are well to do. For their women, working outside the home, has only social and psychological benefits - it makes their life

more interesting ^{and} more meaningful. Those who enjoy staying at home find other ways to enrich their lives by various activities, community activities, social work within the community, socializing, clubs, sports etc.

To summarize, most of the women are house wives inspite of their education and qualifications. The reasons for it are the strength of the tradition, combined with the men's fear of the creeping change in women's status and, in the case of some women one's own will. But the fact that 41% of the women do engage in wage labour does prove that there is a change in attitudes towards the women and, consequently, in their status. There is a move towards getting women out of the house. It is a big step forward to higher status.

The most common occupation for Sikh women is being a teacher. It is accepted because it is respectable, there is no danger of being exposed to strangers and bad influences. The teachers are the key to the children's education. Therefore, it is highly appreciated and approved by the community. Out of the 50 working women, 40% are teachers.

The next in occupational priority is being a secretary or doing office work. 22% of the working women are engaged in this activity. It is approved because some women work in family businesses, so they are being watched all the time. Others have to come from more liberal houses than the very religious houses. There is a trend towards professionalism. The women engage in very specific fields such as architecture, interior design, X-ray technician, veterinary medicine, librarianship etc. The women who engage in the above mentioned occupations can say that they feel equal to men. They are on the same level. They have a profession and they earn enough money to make them economically independent. Therefore, they consider themselves equal to men. Men have no superiority over such women. Here it is clearly proved that these women have gained a higher status even equal status to men, as a result of the circumstances they are living in. The independent variables that have influenced or played a role on the dependent variable occupation, are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8: OCCUPATION AS A FACTOR OF AGE, EDUCATION AND PLACE OF BIRTH

A-Age	Housewives	Teacher	Secretary	Medical	Professionals Artisans	Artist	Student	Running Shop	Total	%
16-22	4	2	3	0	1	2	2	0	14	11.5
23-35	39	10	5	2	3	1	1	1	62	50.8
36-45	17	6	3	1	1	2	0	1	31	25.4
46-1	12	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	15	12.3
	<u>72</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>122</u>	—
	59.0%	16.4%	9.0%	2.5%	4.9%	4.1%	2.5%	1.6	100	100

Significance - 0.2571

B - Birth place

Kenyan	41	16	10	2	5	4	3	2	83	68.1
India	25	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	30	24.5
Other	6	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	9	7.4
	<u>72</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>100</u>

Significance - 0.3649

C - Education

Primary	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	9	7.4
'O' Level	36	4	7	0	1	0	1	1	50	41.0
'A' Level	9	1	4	0	2	1	0	1	18	14.8
Col. Univ.	14	15	0	2	3	4	2	0	40	32.8
None	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4.0
	<u>72</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>100</u>

Significance - 0.0015

According to these statistics the strongest relationship is between education and occupation. It can explain all cases of the sample, while the age variable explains only 75% of the cases, and place of birth only 63%. Nevertheless out of 20 teachers, 16 are Kenyan, 15 university educated, and the average age is 23-35. In other words we are dealing with the 2nd or 3rd generation that has been born in Kenya, educated here and reached the highest level of education. It proves that environment - ecological and human factors have their influence on the members. Secretarial jobs are done by women of 'O' and 'A' levels only, mostly young ^{ones the} in first two age groups and mostly Kenyan. The explanation is the same.

There are no university graduate in this fields. There is no need for such high level and it can influence a salary expectation in this career. Among the professionals 4 out of 6 belong to the first two age groups, ^{the} majority are Kenyan, with a high level of education, 3 are university graduates, 2 'A' level and 1 'O' level. Becoming a professional requires education and professional

training. The students are obviously young as they are still in their process of education as a basis for their future careers.

We can see that the higher the level of education, the wider the range of occupations with a tendency for professionalism. Being Kenyan has its own impact on the variety of occupations open to one, and of course age plays its role, too. The younger you are the better are your chances of having a good education and the variety of occupations you may choose from. The older you are the less educated you are likely to be and less likely it is for you to engage in wage labour.

To conclude this subject, the variety of occupations bring about change in the Sikh community. It is a change in attitude towards women's achievement and consequently a change in their status. Although the traditional way of life tends to confine women to household duties a large number of the women (41% of those in our sample) have broken these barriers. They are ahead of their sisters in their insistence on equal career

opportunities for people with the same qualifications - regardless of their sex difference. A man and a woman in the same occupation have the same status and get equal treatment.

The commonest and most appreciated occupation among women is teaching. Therefore, most of the women university graduates prefer this occupation as it is approved and highly recommended for women within their community. There is no danger of being exposed to strangers when you are dealing with children. The next common occupation is office work. The reason is that it is usually done within family business, so the women working under supervision are safe and sound there.

All other occupations need more professional training and more open minded families to allow the women to engage in them. It was said in foregoing paragraphs that the old way of life is cracking. More and more women will join the working women in the near future due to the circumstances they live in. This supports our second hypothesis that there

is a change towards equality, and that women have gained a higher status. As we have shown at various places in this chapter most of these changes are consequences of the Western influence.

In addition, the investigation of women's activities and organizations revealed the significance of the part they play in the Kenyan society, especially in providing for the needy, through their welfare organizations and social services. Through these organizations they give aid to those in need without considering their colour or race. Such activities bring honour and respect from the Kenyan society, which adds to their community status and recognition.

CHAPTER SIX

MARRIAGE, FAMILY STRUCTURE AND WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE JOINT FAMILY

A. MARRIAGE

The family is based on bonds created between pairs of individuals of opposite sexes. The bond between each pair is accomplished through the process of marriage. Each culture has its own process of bringing two young people together in matrimony. There is the Western way, in which the spouses choose each other - love related and the parents do not take an active part. It can be mixed marriage, i.e. mixed races, mixed religions, or within the same group or class. When we relate to a traditional, religious society like that of the Jews, Arabs or Sikhs, we see a different pattern in which people marry within their own people and classes. The spouses play a passive role as it is for the family to decide.

In the Hindu religion there are two systems - the Northern Aryans and Southern Dravidians. The North represents a patrilineal system, the South a matrilineal one. As they lived together side by side for many years, each group took over the customs of

the other. The assimilation was by intermarriage. Hence, the Southern became patrilineal. The marriage takes place within the caste. A male is born and lives all his life in the house of his paternal kin, while the wife is brought from another family, from the same caste.

In the matrilineal system the girl is brought to a relative's house which is well known to her and she is not a stranger there. The marriage will tighten the bonds between the two families much more than in the patrilineal system 1.

The patrilineal system represents a different experience for the young bride. Instead of going to a well known house, she has to accommodate a completely new set of customs, behaviour and people. In earlier days she had to lose her connections with her own family and therefore, had little protection from them. Today, it is the matrilineal system, with all its meaning for the women, which is the dominant system. The marriage is arranged by two families to create an alliance between the two. The partners cannot object. In fact, this is the ideal in the Sikh community as they adopted the common prevailed

marriage system. The Sikhs, as all Asian groups, created their own social categories, in which marriage is arranged accordingly. The parents are responsible for the marriage, as they see it for their own benefit. The girl's parents will choose a young man who seems to be the most suitable partner for her, in their own view. If the girl is highly educated, they will find for her a young man on the same or higher level of education, who will be able to provide all the needs of their daughter, materially and intellectually. This means that they will have a common language not only on daily needs, but regarding cultural needs as well. The boy's parents will do the same. They look for a good companion for their son in all the aspects of married life. When the parents on both sides come to an agreement, that marriage between the two parties is the right decision, and all the monetary arrangements are satisfactorily finalized on behalf of both parties, then the wedding takes place. This used to be true, until recently. Nowadays, as girls are educated, mobile, open minded and aware of their surroundings, there are new trends in the system. After the parents' decision the prospective spouses are introduced, so that they can learn

and get to know their future partners. After this process the girl can accept the chosen boy or reject him. When she agrees, the arrangements start more seriously. All arrangements for the wedding are negotiated. Gifts are exchanged, and the future spouses get to know each other better. This goes on until the wedding takes place. If the girl disapproves of the choice, then the whole process is stopped. The parents look for someone else. We could see the major change in attitude towards the girl's feelings. In previous days, she could not refuse her parents' choice, and she lost her identity after marriage. Living side by side with the Hindu they adapted the way of mistreating the women, though the Sikh religion tried to change it. But the "power of the habit" was stronger. They had no rights at all. They could not speak up or eat together with other members of the family. Their place was in the kitchen. They first served the men and in-laws, then the children and they were the last ones to eat, alone. They could not go out of the house without permission. They could not do anything they wanted without permission. They had to obey all other members and serve them. In other words, women were like "slaves" from the moment they got married.

They stopped belonging to their original family, they became legally the property of the new family, and property does not have rights. Sometimes, they were cut off from their family completely. It was forbidden to have any contacts. Even if the girl was miserable, she could not complain to anyone. This was true of the situation in India and in Kenya when they just arrived, and went on for many years. Now, a girl can meet a boy, but they are not to be left alone. This kind of behaviour was not acceptable even 15 years ago. Only in the last decade (according to the women interviewed) did this change start to take place, as part of the regular procedure. Dating men before engagement was looked upon badly, and would spoil the chances of a good marriage.

Even today, this attitude still prevails, but not strictly as it was, because circumstances have changed, as we can see in table 9.

Table 9: Education and Its Influence on Dating Men
Before Marriage

Level of Education	Yes	%	No.	%	Total	%
Primary	1	11.1	8	88.9	9	100
'O' Level	18	40.0	27	60.0	45	100
'A' Level	7	41.2	10	58.8	17	100
University	16	45.6	19	54.4	35	100
None	0		5	100	5	100
	<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>	
	42		69		111	
			missing		11	

42 represent 37.8%

69 represent 62.2%

We can expect and accept educated girls to be more liberal and open minded regarding she-he relationship. As education is according to the Western patterns, you expect the young generation to behave accordingly. The environment exposes them to Western and Indian new films dealing with the subject. Youngsters usually immitate their heroes, but the above table shows us the opposite. The majority are

not influenced by the new modes or the Western education they got, they behave according to their own way of socialization. Nevertheless, there is a group of 37.8% that due to education are changing their behaviour regarding men. They do see young men, but not in privacy -there is always a cousin in the shed. It is a major change, because nobody pointed them out as prostitutes, as was done before, yet it is not accented as a common norm by the community: Women, educated as they are, should remain behind the screens until they get a status of engaged women, then they are exposed. Education has its influence, but not as much as it was expected. Tradition is still stronger. As a result we can see that most of the marriages are still arranged, but we have also love related marriages that were accepted by the family.

My data indicate that out of the women who are married and engaged, only one has a non-Sikh husband. This indicated that the Sikh community as a unit is endogamous. They fulfil the order of the Gurus that a Sikh should marry a Sikh.

Table 10: Marital Status and Patterns of Marriage

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Pattern</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Married	104	85.2	arranged	95	87.1
Single	13	10.7	Love	14	12.9
Widow	2	1.6	No answer	13	
Engaged	3	2.5			
	<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>
	122	100		122	100

Religion and tradition therefore still provide the Sikhs with the social norms used to govern behaviour, the same way Moslems are guided by the Koran and the Jews by the Bible.

The marriage system has therefore, remained the same as in olden days.

Out of 109 married^{and} including engaged, 95 cases, representing 87.1%, were arranged marriages. 14 cases, representing 12.9%, were love related marriages. If we had run the questionnaire 15 years ago, it would not have looked the same. The tendency then was towards 99% of arranged marriages, and if there was a love related marriage, the couple had to go through "hell on earth," to bring it to existence, due to resistance from parents.

The data, however, indicates that marriages arranged by both parents, of the bride and of the bridegroom, are still the norm. But a new wind seems to be blowing across the Sikh community in Kenya. There is a new way of getting married through love affairs. The Western style seems to be gaining momentum. The new wind is however, blowing within the old system. It appears that the rules of the game itself have remained the same. We have a good example of the "Polish Peasant" on how old values are dressed in a modern suit to fit the new environment and new circumstances. There is a process of redefinition. The values are redefined without losing the original meaning and strength. The same is happening here. The arranged marriage system remained, but within that frame, there are changes. Parents do consider their daughter's opinion, as she is not only a product of the Sikh community, but is also exposed to her environment, which is a combination of the Western and African societies.

What happens when the marriage does not work out? The woman faces problems and misery. She might be beaten by her husband and even in-laws. Mental cruelty against her will make her life unbearable. When such a case happens then the two families sit down and talk.

There are channels of reconciliation. As both parents are responsible for the marriage, they have to find out a solution to make it work properly. The Sikh did not envisage divorce. out no matter what. The families will do their utmost to bring peace between the couple.

When there was no other choice (when all ways of reconciliation did not work out) then the woman was returned to her parents and the marriage did not exist. We can call it a kind of divorce, de facto. Such cases were very rare since reconciliation usually took place.

Today in such cases, the women can run away to their parents. In the olden days it was a disgrace; today it is acceptable to the parents and they will defend her.

Another phenomenon they are facing is called legal divorce, or statutory divorce, in the court of law. The first case of legal divorce took place in Nairobi about 5 years ago, according to the information we got from the chairwoman of the S.W.S. It is well known in the community because it was the

first one. Until then all was done within the family, or community in serious cases. The author met a woman who was divorced 3 years ago, and has now remarried again. Another case known, is of a woman who left the house, because of her husband's cruelty, and was living with her brothers until they settle the matter. In the olden days, even before independence, such a woman would be a disgrace to her family and they would be ashamed that they didn't bring her up properly. Today, they understand that the circumstances under which she is living are unbearable for her, and will try to change it for the better.

We can observe a change in attitudes towards the women. ^{There} is more understanding and consideration of their feelings. We learnt about 2 divorces in 1985. It might be that there were more but did not come to our knowledge. The people speak about divorce freely. It became more and more popular among the Sikhs who live in the UK, USA and Canada, as they are exposed to the Western culture. When they return to Kenya they bring the values they have internalized abroad. Today, husband's or in-laws cruelty is a cause for divorce. Adultery ^{and} drunkenness are good enough

reasons for divorce. The divorce which takes place in the court, includes the division of property between the spouses, which is also a new fact they have to get used to. In the olden days, if reconciliation was not effective and a woman was returned to her parents, with no share of their property.

Today things are different, which makes the divorced woman's life easier, and she can remarry. What kind of relationship can we expect from such a marriage? When the marriage is love related, the main value in the connection is love, but what happens in arranged marriages even when they meet each other and know each other before? The women's explanation was that their way of socialization prepares them for their duties as wives.

They learn to respect the husbands as love is cultivated in due course. Consideration and caring for each other is the key to the perfection of the system. It also constitutes the system's greatness or worth.

To conclude this topic we may refer to our hypothesis. We have assumed that not all values are abandoned and not all new values are accepted, and this has been verified by our data. We have learnt that girls today are much more educated. We may, as a result of this, assume that they will be more liberal and open minded regarding their own future life. Yet to our surprise, the reality is different. In spite of all the changes, they still stick to their old traditions regarding marriage and family life. The majority do accept the arranged marriage system, and consider it preferable. Their reason for it is that this system worked out well for many years. It had proved itself better than love related marriage, so why look for adventures, when you have a sure and known way. The love marriage may be more attractive, but it is more dangerous. Therefore, the old known system is as good for them as it was for their mothers, but with modifications.

Having seen how marriage is brought about we should now examine family structure and the relationship there.

B. FAMILY STRUCTURE AND WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE JOINT
FAMILY SYSTEM

The family is the primary social group in the hierarchy of human social organizations. In its most elemental form it consists of two spouses (the parents) and their offspring (the children). This elemental form of the family is known as the nuclear family, and it is in this sense that the word family is generally understood in the Western world. In other parts of the world, Asia and Africa included, a study of the family cannot be restricted to the nuclear family.

The relationships between the spouses in a family vary from one place to another. In Western scholarship, four patterns of such relationships have been identified:

- 1) the owner-property pattern;
- 2) the head-complement pattern;
- 3) the senior partner - junior partner pattern; and
- 4) the equal partner pattern.

To understand the family group in the Sikh community, we observed the bonding process in all the patterns.

The family has its own internal mechanisms for taking and executing decisions. The interactions between the family members may make family life harmonious or full of conflict. The cumulative effect of all these family interactions, constitutes what is called socialization, especially in so far as it determines the personality and role-awareness of each member of the family. The tasks and duties of family life are divided up and grouped into roles and each family member is cast in a particular set of roles. Then each one depends on the others playing their roles to enable him to play his; or else he must induce others to change their roles so that he also can change his.

The family roles are clustered. Once a member establishes a particular cluster of roles as his, he is supposed to keep to his own cluster and not dabble in the activities of another role. For example, the role of a mother clusters such activities as cooking, housekeeping, and taking care of the children. The internal logic of such family role allocation requires that whoever does one of these duties shall do the others as well. The roles are associated with each well-defined individual status

within the family set-up: mother, father, son, or daughter. Broader distinctions such as the parent-child opposition may also be used to define roles.

Family interaction, as outlined above, can be explained by the broad parameters of role theory. When a group, such as a family, is formed (in this case, by marriage), a role structure is spontaneously developed. The two processes involved in the development of a role structure are: differentiation and allocation. Differentiation refers to the grouping of activities to form a role package, so that if A, B and C belong to one package, then whoever does A also does B and C but does not do D and E if these belong to a different package. Allocation presupposes differentiation, and refers to the assigning of specific roles to particular individuals.

In the family the basic role differentiations are culturally predefined into what husbands do, what wives do, what male children do etc. But choices are still available among alternative kinds of parents' roles, and the skeletal roles are subject to elaboration and modification. We are talking here of a modern Western type family, in which the partners are

equal. The modification of roles is due to the circumstances the family lives in and depends on time and place. From this perspective we are able to understand the theoretical framework of role changes in the family's structure, among the Sikhs of Nairobi. We can identify two principles in this process. One is the search for a viable position and the other is the functional requirements of the group.

Having a viable position means, that the individual participates in some activity and he establishes an identity in the group; it is not necessarily a winning or satisfactory position, but it is a position from which the individual can avoid being forced out of the game.

The functional principle refers to the combination of roles that are better and more useful for the group to accomplish its aims. These two principles, constitute the basis for the hypothesis we can use for the change in roles of the women in Nairobi. Due to other changes, such as higher education, they looked for a better position within the family. Due to the needs of the men who are

working long hours, sometimes far away, the functions they had to fulfil, are now being fulfilled by their wives.

As role theory is, mutatis mutandis, applicable to all the patterns, we shall look into the patterns themselves, how the structure is reflected in the women's statuses and roles within the particular pattern.

1) Owner-Property Pattern:

In this pattern, women were legally considered minors. It was the dominant pattern in the 19th century. A married woman and all she possessed were legally considered to belong to her husband. "Her very being was considered to be merged into his; the two were one, and the one was the husband".^{1a}

The position of the man was that of an owner, the wife was the property. This position or status indicates how the two persons stand in relationship to one another, but, within this status, each one has a distinct role to play. The woman's major role was of wife-mother. She had to provide him with children - it was one of his basic rights.

The marriage contract implies both rights and duties for both parties. The rights of one partner were the duties of the other. In this pattern we find the following norms of wife's duties:

1. Her main task is to please her husband, to care for his needs and those of the household.
2. She has to obey him in all matters.
3. She is to bear children that carry on the husband's name.
4. She has to train the children so that they reflect the credit on her husband.

From the husband's point of view, these are his rights. In such a structure, the woman has no existence independent from that of her husband, legally she is considered a non-person. By definition she is an extension of him - of his interests, needs, desires, etc. His power over her is beyond dispute. The husband is the boss and the wife must be subject to him.

It is difficult to know whether or not some felt oppressed, as there is not enough data. In the

owner-property arrangement, societal norms allowed wife-beating, for example, and there was little women could do about it. No alternative roles were open to women in this pattern.

In 1848, at the Seneca Falls (New York) convention, the first women's rights conference, injustice in owner-property marriage laws and customs were singled out for special attention^{1b}. This pattern is reviewed because there is a similarity to the family relationship of the Sikhs in Nairobi.

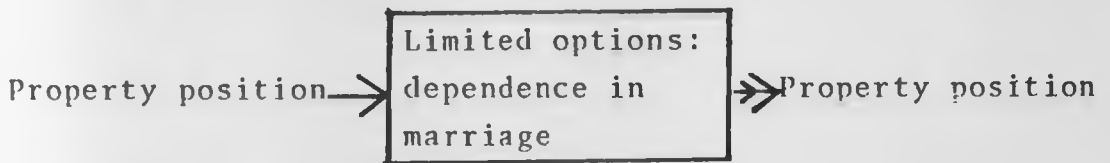
2. Head-Complement Marriage Pattern

The position of a husband as an owner and a wife as his property projects the husband as a head and wife as a complement. Here the wife's rights and the husband's duties increase. It is no longer a one sided system, in which the wife has little more than survival rights (food, shelter, clothing), while the husband is the beneficiary of her services.

In this pattern the husband has to meet his wife's needs of love and affection, sexual pleasure, understanding and open communication. He has to support his wife financially while she fulfills her role as the family coordinator. In this pattern, both are expected to fulfill rights and duties with respect to each other. It is associated with the husband-father role and wife-mother role. The norms associated with the roles spell out the duties and rights of the couple. Power is no longer rigidly fixed within the established norms as it was in owner-property pattern. The wife is not expected to submit to the husband without question. She is free to express her own opinions on a particular issue, but at the end gives in to her husband's wish. The final decision is still the husband's, but it differs from his rulership as performed in pattern 1. Here, as the head of the family, he has to consider his wife's opinion when making decisions. He may allow her to make some decisions on her own. The final decision is, however, his. This is an important change, as women participate in power. The husband has lost his power of an absolute leader. Although he still has final authority, his role now is of a president in a democracy rather

than of a totalitarian dictator. In this constellation, women started to participate in wage labour. This option elevated the wife's power potential. Various economic and legal changes meant a great recognition of women as persons in their own right, causing profound changes in the marital balance of power.

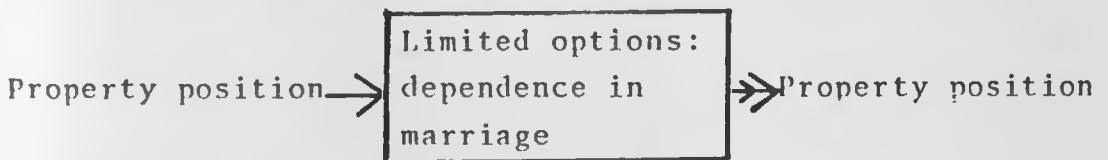
Fig. 1: The Movement away from the wife's position as property



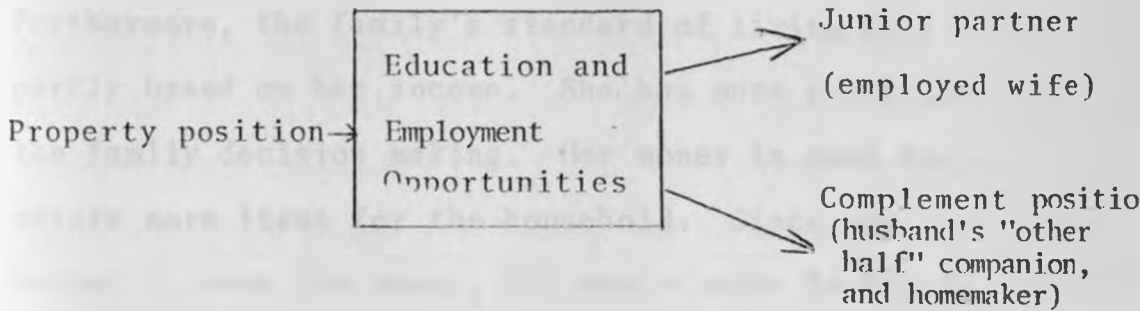
Where no alternatives existed for women, the property status continued in an ongoing line, as though a ray of light were passing through a plain sheet of glass, remaining unchanged.

than of a totalitarian dictator. In this constellation, women started to participate in wage labour. This option elevated the wife's power potential. Various economic and legal changes meant a great recognition of women as persons in their own right, causing profound changes in the marital balance of power.

Fig. 1: The Movement away from the wife's position as property



Where no alternatives existed for women, the property status continued in an ongoing line, as though a ray of light were passing through a plain sheet of glass, remaining unchanged.



When alternatives for women opened up through employment opportunities and options, the property position "line" was bent like a ray of light passing through a special lens, bending it in two directions. (see note 1 p.173).

3. Senior Partner and Junior Partner

When the woman takes an income earning job, she is no more in the position of a "complement" to the "head", but her position is changed to that of a junior partner. As a result, the husband's position as "head" is changed. He becomes a senior partner. This shift results from the economic input the wife brings now to the marriage. It means, she is not totally dependent on her husband for survival.

Furthermore, the family's standard of living is partly based on her income. She has more power in the family decision making. Her money is used to obtain more items for the household. Since she helped to earn the money, she has a voice in how it is used.

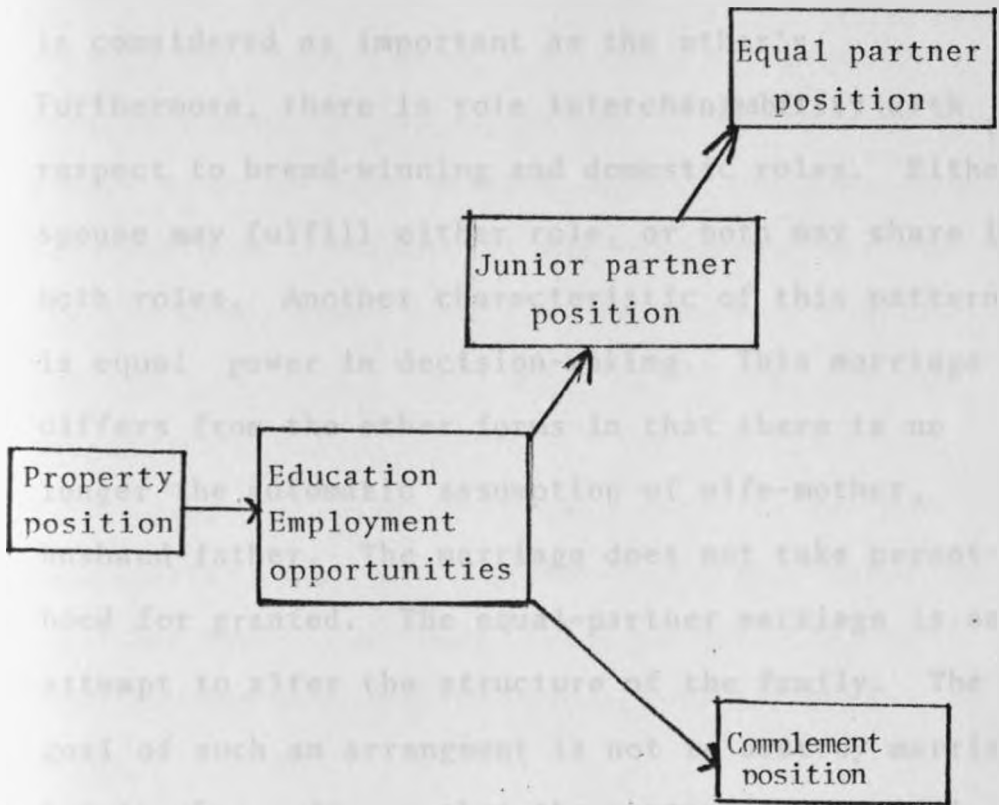
The point to be stressed is that the actual or potential power stemming from a wife's employment removes her from the position of being an adjunct to a benevolent head whose ultimate jurisdiction is undisputed. As a junior partner, the wife has a greater share in the power and the husband a lesser share than in the other marital arrangements discussed.³

The husband is still in command, as he has more economic power over his wife. Although he is a partner rather than head, he is the senior partner in the relationship. He continues to be viewed as the chief family provider, and through him the family derives its social status. But the distance between him and his wife narrows, and his power is not quite so final and definitive as in the previous cases.

Women participate in wage-earning labour not only from the necessity for more income but also for self fulfilment. The woman is after personal

achievements and rewards. The evidence that has come out of research (Scanzoni, 1975b; Bowen and Finegan 1969; Whelpton, Campbell and Patterson 1966)⁴ indicates that women are interested in working out of choice. Their employment behaviour become more and more like that of men. Nevertheless, as a junior partner, the wife is expected to have children and to be responsible for them, as this is a basic assumption of parenthood, which exists in all types of family. Household cares and family needs must predominate over her work goals and, therefore, she is prevented from high achievement endeavours which characterize her husband's life. Each pattern of the Western structures is reflected in the Sikh structure which is composed of several patterns, Western and Eastern. The majority of the Western world and industrial societies are represented by the senior partner-junior partner pattern.

Fig. 2: Three possibilities in the movement away from a wife's position as property



4. Equal Partners

In this pattern both spouses are equally committed to their careers and each one's occupation is considered as important as the other's.

Furthermore, there is role interchangeability with respect to bread-winning and domestic roles. Either spouse may fulfill either role, or both may share in both roles. Another characteristic of this pattern is equal power in decision-making. This marriage differs from the other forms in that there is no longer the automatic assumption of wife-mother, husband-father. The marriage does not take parenthood for granted. The equal-partner marriage is an attempt to alter the structure of the family. The goal of such an arrangement is not to destroy marriage but to change it, so that the partners can fulfil individual aspirations unhindered by gender-role stereotypes and traditional ideas about division of labour.

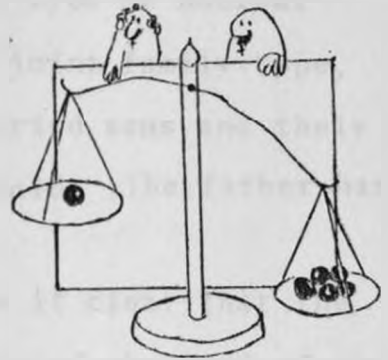
In this type, role interchangeability contrasts with the rigid role specialization which occurs in the other marriages.

In this case both have the right to a career and to be provided for. In other patterns the husband is the provider and the wife's right is to be provided for. As a result, the husband in this pattern can share the wife's status and prestige resulting from her accomplishments, just as she has always done. In this pattern, having children is not always a must. Because of the responsibility for the children, women tend to forgo serious careers and their rewards. Here women can choose between a career and having children. Therefore, in this structure, the roles of husband and wife are not necessarily attached to father and mother roles as in other types. If they choose to have children both parents are equally responsible for their care....

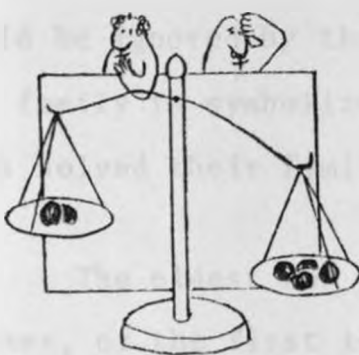
Figure 3: How the balance of power changes according to the the four marriage patterns



Owner-property
pattern



Head-complement
pattern



Senior partner-junior partner
pattern



Equal partner
pattern

The wife's power has more weight as her position moves from property to complement to junior partner, until in the equal partner the balance of power between husband and wife is equal (Scanzoni 1981).

These are the 4 major patterns in the Western Society. They are not rigid, distinct categories in the sense that each marriage fits exactly in the one model. There are movements between categories. Today we face new structures, with women being senior partners or single parents.

As opposed to the Western type of nuclear family, the Eastern family is a joint family type, consisting of parents, their married sons and their wives and children in one household. The father has the power over all members.

The Vedic scripture makes it clear that the family's property is the property of the head of the house, usually the father, and the other members of the family have only a moral claim upon it, that could be ignored by the father. This ownership over the family is symbolized in legends about how various Gods solved their family problems.^{4a}

The eldest son is the one to succeed his father, or the first to establish a new household, but it is not clear when it takes place - while the father is still alive or after his death. The literature is very ambiguous. Macdonell and Keith⁵ studied the family structure of the Hindu joint family and, according to the data they got, concluded, that there is no clear indication of the patriarchal family as being the only form of family. Impartibility of family property and the strong powerful father, as the head of the house was the most practiced form. The Gods Dharmasitra and Manusamhita stressed father's control over the family and its property.

Husband-father position in the Hindu family is clear. Regarding the wife-mother's position we find the following:

"A wife, a son and a slave, these three are declared to have no property; the wealth which they earn is acquired for him to whom they belong".⁶

The wife could not have any property, except the property under the category of woman's property, that was given to her on the wedding day by her brothers, parents and husband. When a mother dies, her property is divided equally among brothers and sisters.

This discussion can help us understand the true nature of the Sikh family structure. The father is the owner, but there are some rights of property to the wife, referring to women's property only, and inheritance rights to his eldest son. As literature is ambiguous, women's status is ambiguous too. Dharmasutra placed the woman "as a God as were the father and the teacher". Gautama placed the women as low caste.

Katyayana said that women have the right to inherit the husband's property in one verse, in another it is denied. As it is very unclear in the scriptures, we shall refer to the social norms practices by the Hindus.

In the Vedic age, women had a higher status in society than in the post Vedic age. In the Vedic age, the woman was considered the other half of the man, as Brahma divided man's body into two. By marriage the two halves united to form a whole entity. They had rights of education and could participate in religious rites as active partners.

In the post Vedic age her status deteriorated. She was deprived of the right of education; she was married very young, when "her breasts are not yet developed". She was denied any religious activities; her main goal was to bear a male child.

Manu expresses the idea of wifehood by the negation of her personality. The husband has "to be worshipped as a God by a faithful wife, even if he be destitute of character or seeking pleasure else-

where or devoid of good qualities. A woman attains paradise, not by virtue of any austere penance but as a result of her obedience and devotion to her husband, alive or dead. Respect and obedience is their only duty. By the fulfilment of that duty alone they succeed in attaining heaven".⁷

When the husband goes abroad, the wife has to observe a life of restraint, avoiding amusement, ornaments, participating in social activities and staying locked in the house (as^{has} been said by Yayuvalkya).

Manu looked upon a wife as a mistress in her own home. Even in her own domain she has no voice. Furthermore "Even in the home nothing should be done by a child, a young or even an old wife independently!"⁸ To justify the low status of the women, Manu stresses a prejudicial view in respect of women's sexual appetite. "Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age, they give themselves to the handsome as well as to the ugly, just for the fact that he is a man. It is the nature of the women to seduce man in this world ... she can make a man slave of lust ... Woman was created for infatuating man and hence there is nothing more heinous than woman....

A woman should never think of independence from her father, the husband or the sons because by so doing she will make both the families contemptible".⁹

Manu, the Epic and Phranic writers, attributed the weakness of men to the woman. Flirtation on the part of men is not condemned, as their Gods did the same according to sages. The women on the other hand, are held up as the embodiment of lust and sexual impulses.

The above citations explain why women, in the joint family in the Eastern culture, were oppressed and treated as slaves. There were movements in Hindu history to change the women's position. A woman confined to the home, often lived the life of a domestic servant or was a child bearer to her husband. The husband could tyrannize the wife in various ways and for various reasons. If he did not like her he may force her to commit suicide, to make room for a second marriage. Dowry payment and related customs provide a good reason for the humiliation and even the beating of women. Oppression of the daughters-in-law by the husband's family was frequent.

Sometimes the family stand by the suffering woman or save her from husband's cruelty; sometimes it ends with the women's suicide. Nowadays, there are new social laws which stand on the women's side, yet the force of the tradition is so strong that the injustice finds no challengers. Today in India there are laws enforcing education for women, women participate in the labour force, in women's organizations for liberation and changing of social laws. At the same time the traditional ideal is strong, as Sati- self burning.

Even in urban settings this is true and is considered as very resistant to change, though technology and industrialization do have an impact on the family structure.

A study by Aileen D. Ross (1961) was done in India regarding the Hindu family in its urban setting. She refers to middle and upper class families, looking at how the urban setting affected the Hindu-joint system. Her finding was, that in urban settings in India, the traditional Hindu family is moving towards the small family unit, which affects family

roles, and changes modes of behaviour. Those who shifted to the Western nuclear system felt guilty, and had inner conflicts, for not living up to the traditional expectations. We can see the dilemma of people when circumstances force them to alter their patterns.

This brings us back to our subject matter, the Sikh family. If we compare the joint-system to the Western patterns, we may say that this structure resembles the first pattern - the owner-property pattern.

In a migrant society, traditionalism is usually stronger than in the homeland. By sticking to the tradition, the people feel secure. This phenomenon is true for all migrant societies, and applies to the Hindus in Kenya too. The Sikhs, emerging from India, adopted the joint-system of their Hindu neighbours. With the new circumstances in Nairobi, let us see how they manage their family structure. To which pattern do they fit: the East or West or is there something in the middle which characterizes them in their urban setting of Nairobi, far away from their homeland?

They have their own tradition of a joint-system, but do they follow it or is it altered due to the new circumstances?

The question asked by the interviewer was: "Where do you live with your husband? In a joint-family or in your own home?" The data we got was as follows:

Table 11: Living Place as a Married Couple

	No.	%
A) With in-laws or joint system	90	78.9
Own house	24	21.1
No answer	8	
	<hr/> 122	<hr/> 100
B) Do you own a house, in addition to your living place?		
Yes	59	53.6
No	51	46.4
N.A.	12	
	<hr/> 122	<hr/> 100

We can notice from Table A that the majority of married couples do join the traditional joint family, meaning that the tradition is still very strong. Some do it out of no choice, as they do not have their own house. From section B of table 11 we can see that 53.6% do own an additional (their own) house, but still live within the joint family, and their private house is rented to others, while they have the choice of living by themselves. This phenomenon makes one want to know why. What is the cause or the power behind it? The answer is tradition. Even nowadays, its power is very strong and it does not matter how educated one is or if one participates in wage labour. The tradition says that when a woman is married, she follows her husband to his family. The fact, backed up by the data, is that the majority follow the footsteps of their ancestors. It happens that later at a different stage of their life cycle they separate, and there are reasons for it, but the first years of marriage are lived under the umbrella of the joint family. In some cases of more traditional or religious families, this is one of the groom's family's condition to the girl's family. If she is interested in the marriage match, she has no other choice but to accept this condition.

The Sikh men are indifferent in regard to their living place, therefore, they tend to fulfil their mother's wish, which is usually to live in a joint family system. As was mentioned above, the girls are socialized towards this kind of life, although some of them do not accept the system as it is due to the changes that are taking place in the community.

The Organization of the House

Usually it is a big compound as it has to include members of families with their offsprings.

Every couple has its own bedroom and bathroom. This is their private piece of ^{their} world. There they are free to do whatever they like, in anyway they like. Other members of the family are not allowed in unless invited. This room is cleaned by its owner. Bedrooms and bathrooms are not supposed to be cleaned by maids or anybody else. It is the women's duty.

When children are born, they stay for a while with their parents. As soon as they reach the age of 3-4 they move to their own room. Children of one family, usually share a room; if there is no problem of

space each child has his own room, but in large families, they have to share. Sometimes girls share a room with their grandmother and boys with their grandfather. When the children reach the age when boys and girls cannot share a room due to physical changes, starting at teenage ages, then the need arises, either to add more rooms, if there is enough space and money, or, as is happening nowadays, the family splits. The couple with the older children moves out of the main house, to their own house, if they have one, or buy a house or even rent one and create a new household.

Now we turn to the communal areas: the kitchen, dining room and the living room, where guests are entertained. A central open area - patio - is where most of the housework is done - washing, ironing and storage. It is also the children's playing area. Inside the house, around the patio, are located all the bedrooms. Of course there are bigger houses with many bedrooms and public areas, two or more kitchens and several bathrooms, to make life easier.

Food is prepared for all members in the house kitchen. What is cooked has to be eaten by all. There is no private cooking, or separate dishes. It reminds one of the way of life of a kibbutz in Israel. One kitchen and one dining area for all the people.

The system has its advantages and disadvantages. Generally, children eat first, either in the morning before school or at lunch time for the younger ones, or when they come home from school. Then the men follow. The last ones to eat are the women. The actual details of family life vary from one household to another. There is one family type which still sticks to the old traditions. Women, especially the daughters-in-law, are treated as it was over one hundred years ago. In fact they are the property of the household. They have their duties, but no rights as human beings. They are not allowed to speak to their fathers-in-law or other men in the house, except their husbands. They have to cover their heads in front of other men in the house, which is very inconvenient when one is doing the housework, or when it is hot. They are not allowed to eat together with all the members of the family. When the others eat, they serve the in-laws

and men in the dining room; they themselves eat last in the kitchen, sitting on a small stool on the floor with the plate on their knees. It should be noted that there are educated women of 25 years and above who are trapped, as they say, in a very orthodox family system in which the mother-in-law is the dominant person in the house. As the mother-in-law may be uneducated, there is no way of changing the system as long as she lives, and her sons will obey her wish simply because it is their mother's wish. Some men are even afraid to appeal to their mothers to be more liberal with their wives, as it may hurt the mothers or lessen the respect towards them. So there is no point of arguing even with the husbands or appealing to the mother-in-law. At this stage in the life cycle, being a mother-in-law, the Sikh woman has more power and authority than the men.

The young women have to cope with it, as it is the only way to make life bearable. Life is usually better in their private rooms, where they are generally respected and treated nicely by their husbands, especially when both are educated and more Western oriented.

The other type of joint-family, the more common type, is the one that is adjusted to the new way of life. It is, as was mentioned above, redefined - the system has remained the same, but the practice is different. Women are treated as individual personalities. They are part of the family, but not its property. All members of the family - in-laws, brothers, all daughters-in-law and children - dine together. Usually, it is done in the evening when everyone is back home after the day's activities. It can be called "the happy hour", when the family has a reunion. This is the time when problems of the house are solved. Everyone has the right and opportunity to speak up. Each one can give ideas and solutions to problems or make suggestions for improvement.

The in-laws respect their daughters-in-law, give them the privacy and freedom they need. Nobody interferes in anybody's business. Problems between the couples are solved between the two and only major personal problems are brought out to the in-laws, who are the judges and the main authority in the house. If there are no in-laws, then the eldest brother is the authority.

Between the two extreme models, we have the intermediate group. Those families who practice a little of what we find in each of the extremes. They are more modern, but still the daughters-in-law are being held backwards in several ways. For example, they may all eat together, but she may be prevented from going out, socializing, participating in wage labour, or even having a maid for her child, while all other needs are fully supplied. There are a lot of variations in this group. Each family has a different way of adjustment to our time, each family has its emphasis on different items or activities, so we cannot generalize about this group, as there is a wide range of variation. It is however, definitely more liberal than the orthodox type. The variations in the type and extent of adjustment depend on time and place. These variations are comparable to a range of slightly different tones of grey occurring between extreme white on one end and extreme black on the other end.

Running the House

A joint family is a kind of operation. In order to make it work smoothly, there should be

planning, division of labour, and, most important, a proper network of relationships between the members. If all cooperate, then the organization works perfectly. Compared to the Western family system in which the man and the woman share equal rights and duties in the family and in the society, the situation here is different. According to the Grant Sahib, men and women are equal in the eyes of God, as he created them equal and both bring him joy and happiness. This is the ideal, but we would like to see how close the reality is to this ideal. Are there major diversions from it? If there are, what is stronger - the ideal or the customary behaviour of all other Asian groups that influence the Sikhs? Or are there any variations within the community itself with respect to this matter?

The joint family is a customary Asian system that the Sikhs adopted, i.e. continued the system as it was the way they used to live before becoming Sikhs. It is not mentioned in any scripture that this system is the preferred one for the Sikhs, therefore, we assume that it is a continuation of a traditional way of life, an adopted social norm. Let us see how it works.

First, within the family structure, there is a hierarchy. The head of the house is generally the father-in-law. When he passes away, the mother-in-law takes his place, if she is still alive. Otherwise the eldest brother takes over the leadership. After the father-in-law and mother-in-law, stand the first son and his wife, followed by the second son and wife and so on. While each one has to obey all persons above him, men usually obey the men and the mother, whereas women obey both.

The person who runs the house is not always the one who is the head of the house. Being the head of the house is sometimes only a respectful position, it is like an Israeli president, who is honoured by all, but has no political power. The old man who is not working can be there, or the old mother, but it is the eldest son who makes the major decisions regarding the house, then come the other brothers according to the order of their birth.

There are households in which the in-laws do run the house and make decisions alone, but as there is a change in the system, even this is affected. It is no longer the father, mother, or

eldest son alone who decide how the house should be run. It has become a family concilium (council), where everyone has the right to speak up and express his ideas. Then all opinions will be taken into consideration. The best and most suitable idea will be accepted by all or the majority^{and} then it applies to all the members. In this situation, opinions and decisions are not forced; people operate by family consensus. Nevertheless, the most powerful person in the house is the father, when he is alive and is working.

We said earlier that Asian business is usually run by the family. Here too the father is the one who makes the crucial decisions. He may consult his sons, but he has the veto power. There is a reason for it. It is hard to run^abusiness smoothly on the basis of the opinions of many different people, which are often clashing. Where there are too many sons in the family, the business is split between the father and eldest son. The other brothers then split into two groups, one group stays with the father, and the other joins the eldest brother.

The women do not have a say in business matters. It is a men's world. The men have the duty to provide for the family and they should not interfere in household matters. A complete separation exists between the house and business. As usual there are always exceptions. We came across men who not only bought the furniture for the house without consulting the wives, but also interfered in matters concerning the kitchen and wives' dresses.

According to the tradition, as women were locked up in the houses, the men used to do all the shopping and bring it to the house. While some men have not adopted to the new changes, the majority have. As the women have become more mobile and free, there have been changes in role allocation within the family.

Each nuclear family in the household, contributes its relative share in the family budget for running the house. Usually the mother-in-law is responsible for the expenses. In case she is old or sick and cannot perform such duties, the eldest daughter-in-law takes her place. She decides what

kind of food should be bought and what kind of dishes should be cooked each day. Today the system has become more liberal as there is division of labour in the household among the women. In some cases all make the decisions together, so none of them should be frustrated, and the wishes of all the couples regarding house decoration, equipment and food will be fulfilled. By considering everyone's likes and dislikes, a family prevents disagreements among the members and creates more harmony. The food is cooked for all in the central kitchen to please everyone. Cooking, like all other housework, is done in turns. It is obvious that all families have help in the house, but most of them do the cooking themselves since they are prejudiced against strangers cooking their food.

If one daughter-in-law is sick or cannot fulfil her duties on a particular day, another one will take over and fulfil all the duties of her sister-in-law. The same is true regarding the house work. If there are many people in the house, and the help is not enough the daughter-in-law has to give a hand. Even here there are turns.

Shopping is done by ^{the} mother-in-law with the eldest daughter-in-law or any other daughter-in-law. There is another variation in shopping practices too: each woman is responsible for different items - one for meat, one vegetables, and another ^{one for} grocery, etc. Again, it varies from house to house. We cannot make a generalization about who shops what, but it is generally accepted that shopping is done by the women of the house, either in turns or in some other way that they may agree upon.

Regarding cleaning the house, we have pointed out that bedrooms are done by their owners and the public areas by the househelpers. Washing is done for all, except the expensive clothes and underwear, which the women prefer to do by themselves, in order not to spoil anything valuable and private. Except for such special clothes, ironing is done by househelpers, with the help of the women in turns. Entertaining guests or visitors is done by the daughters-in-law, helping the mother-in-law, as this is the women's duty.

Today, as change creeps in, men take the part of offering drinks to the guests. Although the Sikhs are not supposed to take alcoholic drinks, they adopted it and play the same game as the Western men.

It sounds very good if it works the way it is described. It is more idealized than it works out in practice. It is very important how the young woman is accepted by her in-laws. If she is welcomed as their daughter, it helps her to adjust easily to the new family and participate willingly in the household duties. If she is treated as it was in olden days, then her life offers little to delight a woman's heart.

According to Sikh traditions, the mother-in-law is the dominant person in the house, and her say is followed in most household matters. This is the highest position a woman can reach in her life. It has been mentioned earlier that a woman's life consists of stages which make one life cycle. One starts on a low status in the first years of marriage and climbs higher up the ladder when one gets

children and becomes older, until one reaches the end of the cycle by becoming a mother-in-law. In this position the woman has the highest status in her life, respected by all and even dominant over the men in the house.

In the olden days, mothers-in-law treated daughters-in-law very badly. It was a kind of revenge for all her own earlier poor and miserable life, and it became a perpetum-mobile.

Today, things are different. More and more families accept the brides as their own daughters, knowing that their daughters should be treated the same.

Until now, we have been dealing with the joint system, which is the majority or main stream family structure, but we cannot eliminate, or ignore the growing phenomenon of nuclear families. Twenty-four cases out of 104 married women do live alone and 8 did not answer as they were single and did not know the issues that concern us in this study. It means that there is something that causes the joint family

to break up. What are the reasons for this phenomenon? Let us look at some of the suggested ones.

Lack of Privacy

There are women who cannot stand the idea that everything is shared by everyone. "Mine is yours and yours is mine and everyone's". This type of woman wants her own privacy. She cannot stand a situation in which, whether it concerns her relationship with the husband or the way she wants to bring up her children everyone has a say. She cannot do anything without someone's interference or remark. She cannot have^aprivate social life, as she cannot invite people to her bedroom, the only place, where she has some privacy in the big house. She cannot invite anyone she likes unless it is approved by in-laws or elders. She cannot cook whatever she likes, as it is a joint kitchen. Any temptation to eat alone with the husband or family is impossible in a joint system.

The children who are in school do not have a private quiet place to do homework, as they share rooms with brothers, sisters or cousins, and there

is always noise in the house. Clashes between children lead to clashes between mothers.

Mother-in-law, daughter-in-law relationship

If relationships are good then there is no problem, but when there are frequent misunderstandings between the two, or between daughters-in-law, then bad feelings, mistrust therefore often exist between them.

- Crowding and lack of space

As the family grows the house becomes more crowded. There is no place for new members to join. If there is no place for expansion, the only solution is division into nuclear family units.

These were the main reasons for splitting up the joint family. They are, in other words, the disadvantages of the system. To balance it, we have to bring up the advantages of the system, and it is the young couple's decision to which we may turn our attention. The advantages are only there when the

life and atmosphere in the house is harmonious. The division of labour in the household is fair and you can have more free time for yourself, if it is done properly. This advantage can turn into a disadvantage very easily, and you can find yourself working all day, everyday, but in a different duty. Therefore, it can be good or bad depending on how it works out. Having more free time can give you some opportunity for studying or other activities that you are interested in.

Another advantage is bringing up children in a good and healthy atmosphere, among other children. Babysitting is no problem. The couple-parents, do not have any mobility restrictions because of the children. They are free to go for a short period or for a while on vacation, knowing that their child will be in good hands - will be taken care of. Women who participate in wage labour leave the child under another sister-in-law or grand-mother's supervision, and they feel content in the knowledge that the child will be fed, dressed and taken to and from school. We have a family in which the relationship is based on mutual help and reciprocal relationships. This enriches children's soul, facilitating closeness and warm feelings among all members of the family.

The disadvantage is that, in this situation, everyone is participating in bringing up your child and has the right to scold or even punish the child, even if you do not like it.

It has to be stressed again, ^{that} it is all well when relations are good, and there are no clashes. When all members, men and women, are getting a fair and equal treatment, the system is very good. However, there is still a long way to go for a state of equality to be reached, in the majority of cases, though, there are families in which equality exists already. This is the state of affairs revealed by our data.

In order to test the hypothesis that family structure is undergoing some change, the women were asked whether they would like their married sons to live with them under one roof, with their families. The following table summarizes the results.

Table 12: Preference to Live with a Married Son

Yes	42	34.4%
No	58	47.5%
N.A.	22	18%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	122	100%
	<hr/>	<hr/>

We notice that change has taken place; more women do not wish to live together, as a reaction to what they have gone through when they were young brides. They say that they will be more loved and respected, if each one lives her own life, and they just visit each other, respecting each one's privacy without much interference. Every woman wishes her daughter a good life, not one like hers - living with in-laws. The mothers today would like their children, be they boys or girls, to stay alone for their own happiness.

From the next table we can deduce the relations between age groups and wishing to live with a married son.

Table 13: Wishing to Live with a Married Son

Age Group	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
16-22	4	0
23-35	20	33
36-45	8	20
46+	10	5

Significance: 0.0083

Women of 23-45 years, due to their experience and education would prefer that their married children establish a new nuclear family, instead of joining the big house. Still there are women who would like to live together with their married offsprings. Again, this depends on one's past experiences. A woman who experienced a good life within the joint family does not understand what is the reason for establishing a new house when you are welcomed to the main house. She is ready to welcome her daughter-in-law as a daughter, as she was treated. In fact, she is ready to give her love and affection to the comer. So she cannot see anything against living together. The older one is, the more

one tends to prefer a joint family. The first group being still young and single, do not really know what they ^{would} wish, as they do not have children.

Education has its influence on the future family. According to the following table we can see the correlation between the two. It shows that the more educated one is the less one wishes to live in a joint family. Such people would like their married sons to establish their own houses, where they will get due respect when they go visiting.

Table 14: Education and Wishing to Live with a Married Son

Level of Education	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	7	77.8	2	22.2	9	9.0
'O' Level	21	52.5	19	47.5	40	40.0
'A' Level	3	17.6	14	82.4	17	17.0
University	6	19.7	23	80.3	29	29.0
None	5	100	-	-	-	-
	42	42.0	58	58.0	100	100

Missing - 22

Significance - 0.003

Residence is related to occupation. According to our list of women's occupations, all women who are not housewives prefer that their sons live alone, not with them.

Out of 100 women who answered this question, 58 women would refuse to live together and 42 wanted to stay together. Out of the 42 women, 34 are housewives, meaning that they stick to the old way. They may be afraid of the change and its possible consequences; a kind of fear of the unknown. The majority had already made a move towards the nuclear family, by preferring to live separated from their married son, enabling each one to have his own place of living.

Considering the joint family, it appears, that where there are many women some clashes are bound to arise between daughters-in-law and mother-in-law or between daughters-in-law themselves. To live in a joint system one needs to have the mechanisms for dealing with such crises. It depends on the nature of the disagreement. If it is a minor one, it ends between the women, even without the knowledge of the men, but when it is a serious one, it is a big problem to handle.

Now lets consider the implications of living in the hierarchical system. The youngest daughter-in-law has to obey all elders, meaning she becomes a "yes woman", which later makes her feel frustrated. She might be a very intelligent or highly educated woman, but according to the system she does not have a say, while she feels she has a lot to say. When it happens that there are disagreements between the mother-in-law, who is older and not always educated, mostly narrow-minded, and traditional in orientation, and the younger generation - daughters-in-law, who are more open minded, educated and liberal in attitude, it is difficult to see how conflicts can be resolved in such cases. In particular, one wonders what steps the men take in an attempt to establish peace. Do they, perhaps, remain indifferent or take sides? If they do take sides, whom do they support? This was a very delicate and personal question. There were women who refused to answer may be out of shame to disclose house secrets. Perhaps, they thought it was not in order for someone in their position to discuss such issues. However, those who did answer did not fear to bring out the truth, as it is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Husband Intervention Patterns in Wife-Parent or Wife-Brother Conflicts

<u>Side Taken</u>		<u>Adjusted %</u>
Parents'	17	39.5
Wife's	10	23.3
None	16	37.2
N.A.	79	-
	<hr/> 122	<hr/> 100
Wife's	8	23.5
Brother's	9	26.5
None	17	50.0
N.A.	88	-
	<hr/> 122	<hr/> 100

The results are not surprising given what we have already seen in the preceding discussion. The majority of the husbands will support their mothers, no matter who is right. This is the system. From findings of this kind we can infer the power of the mother over her sons. They were brought up to believe that whatever the mother says is right and it is not easy to convince them that their mothers can be wrong. Those women whose husbands react like this are very upset and frustrated, as they sometimes

feel and know that they are right, but they are trapped between the husband and his mother with no way of escape. It may bring a lot of bitterness in them. Even in cases where the husband would support his wife in private, in public he will be on his mother's side. Such situations cause mistrust and lack of faith between the spouses, and affects the atmosphere of the household as a whole. The more educated the man, the more liberal he will be, but even then, when the honour of the mother is at stake, he will side with her. In conflicts involving brothers and sisters-in-law, the men prefer not to take sides, but when they do, they usually are on their mothers or brothers' side. Only 23.5% will backup their wives. We can see that the sense of family identification is strong, but there is a change and some do stand up for their wives. This means a lot to the wife showing that the man appreciates her, that their relationship is sincere and based on genuine love. This is a sign of uplifting the women's status in the family, not as a general rule at the moment, but as a gradually coming change in the family structure.

Most of the joint families interviewed confirmed that the system works out well. Of course, there are small clashes between members of the family, but they always manage to get round the minor problems created.

When there turns out to be a major conflict there are two ways of handling it; either the family splits or continues to live in a "hell on earth". Usually people do not like the second option, so they either leave the main house or find a way to adjust themselves to the existing situation, as they have to continue living with their husbands.

There are several families in which the system is so perfect that it is almost unbelievable - no clashes at all, very understanding and loving mother-in-law and, consequently, loving daughter-in-law.

We can correlate this perfection with being educated, broadminded and openness to the changes that are taking place in our world. Being liberal or lenient with daughters-in-law does not mean that the mother-in-law has lost her status, respect, or the obedience she deserves in the house. On the contrary it is

only a modification or redefinition of the situation. The will to conserve the traditional way of life of a joint family is still there, but it is adjusted to the new circumstances. This way you hold the stick on both ends. On the other extreme we have, even today, families living according to the norms that were practiced 50 or 100 years ago. The mother-in-law in such families, is the dictator of the house. She is a totalitarian ruler that everyone has to obey. According to her wish the house will be run. Such persons treat their daughters-in-law the same way it was done many years ago. Humiliation and treating a daughter-in-law like a house servant, or house property, is the approach. This kind of treatment will obviously bring about clashes within the family, as today's young women expect to be treated as equal human beings. Such treatment is a source of explosion and provides a greater possibility of creating nuclear families in the coming future, breaking the old traditional system, which caused misery and unhappiness to the women.

As we have mentioned previously, the roles of the family members are prescribed therefore, there are defined duties for each members of the family. We shall now outline such duties.

Mother-in-law's duties and rights

Let us first look at the rights:

1. To be respected and obeyed by all.
2. She defines the daughter-in-law's rights in the house.
3. She takes care of the grand-children and teaches them the Sikh traditions.

The duties are:

1. To run the house budget.
2. To see to it that the household is running properly.
3. To guide the daughters-in-law in their house duties, and bringing up the children.
4. To take care of the grand-children when their parents are away, or at work.
5. practising the Sikh religion and tradition.

In fact the mothers-in-law are exempted from all house work; they only see to it that everything goes well. Some do the shopping for the house together with one of the daughters-in-law, but generally, they are not occupied with household work. This is the

reason why it is the older women who participate mostly in the religious services, and are the promoters of the Punjabi language and religion. They have free time to engage in such activities as Sikh Women Society, social work, other societies, and taking part in religious functions.

Duties and Rights of Daughters-in-law

We start with the duties, as they are more prominent than the rights. A daughter-in-law is expected:

- 1 To obey and respect in-laws, husband and anyone who is older than her in the family.
2. To participate in all housework, according to the system as explained before.
3. To bring up her children in a proper way - taking care of their education generally, a duty that in the olden days was done by the father. Today, due to the changing situation, as men have less time at home, women have taken over this role in the family, which lifts their position and status in the family. They have to promote Punjabi and religious knowledge.

Every daughter-in-law takes care of all the children in the house when their parents are away or out, which is a great advantage of the system.

As for the rights, we are in a state of confusion. Traditionally, the daughters-in-law did not have any rights. This is the extreme end of the line. At the other end, we have those who are completely free and independent to do whatever they like or wish. In between we have a wide range of varieties and variations of rights, what is allowed and what is forbidden. So we cannot make a generalization, but we have the extremes and we, for the study, categorized the rights, in order to get an idea of what the situation is today. There were 9 categories used, and a possibility of 3 answers for each woman. The indication will be the first answer, as usually it is the ^{most} representative and important for the women.

Table 16: Daughters-in-law's rights

	NO.	%
1. None	12	22.2
2. To do as I wish: in dressing, hairstyles, etc.	15	27.8
3. Going out: alone or with husband	4	7.4
4. To speak up, participate in decision making	5	9.3
5. Spending money on myself	1	1.9
6. To conduct my private life	3	5.6
7. To participate in wage labour	4	7.4
8. To bring up the children in your own way	1	1.9
9. 2+3+4+5+6+8	9	16.7
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	54	100
Missing	64	

Before analyzing the statistics, we would like to explain the meaning of the categories.

Doing the hair the way you wish, or dressing up the way you like:

One of the most important features and symbols of Sikh identification is the hair. Men and women should not touch the hair of the head and should let it grow all their life. This is the reason why the men wear a turban under which the hair is kept. The same applies for women; they should not touch the hair, just comb it, and keep it clean and tidy under their veil. A girl that cuts her hair, trims it or does it in some style, has broken the tradition. We can see that all women over 30 years generally have long hair. However, among the younger ones, we see all sorts of styles: long, short, curled, plaited or cut in various styles. It gives us two indications: a) a change in the traditions; b) a change in Sikh attitudes towards their girls.

Long hair may be nice, but it is not always convenient. Every woman likes to look different from time to time; it provides some psychological satisfaction. A woman feels that she looks more interesting each time she looks different. People get bored when they do the same thing all the time without changing to something else. So they look for variety, for a way of doing even the same thing but in a different and more interesting way. The

same applies to women. A woman wants variety in her appearances and to be more attractive to her husband. Cutting the hair or styling was introduced in the Sikh community in the last 10-15 years. This means the traditions have weakened, and the parents, husbands, and in-laws are more lenient with the young women. They give them freedom to choose which way to wear their hair. In strict houses, it may be the only right that the women have^{and} therefore, we considered it very important as an indicator of change. We do not call it progress or regression as our criteria for judgement are different, but it certainly indicates a change - giving more liberation to the women, which means raising their position. Today, when there is a clash in the family because the daughter in law does not wear her hair the way the mother-in-law likes it is an opening for more serious clashes.

Like hair style, the type of dress is very important. We know that according to Sikh tradition women should wear Punjabi suit - trousers top and a veil. Sarees are usually accepted for special occasions, but not by the orthodox Sikhs. In the environment we live in, in Nairobi, we can find all types of clothes, starting from African Kangas tied or

wrapped around the wearer through various Indian traditional clothes to Western ones. Some of the women **have studied** in Europe or USA and have been exposed to the way women dress there. Coming back to Kenya, they have been already exposed and influenced by the other styles. Now they dress according to their own wish. It is a minor issue, but if it becomes the source of disagreement between in-laws, and the bride, then the relationship is going to suffer. The way women dress is a useful behavioural test for our first hypothesis - that by the virtue of being a pariah immigrant group they adapt themselves by using partly old and partly new values. Table 17 will demonstrate it clearly.

Table 17: Type of Clothing Being Worn

	<u>At Home</u> %	<u>Going Out</u> %	<u>At Work</u> %
Traditional	74 - 60.7	66 - 54.1	13 - 28.9
European	4 - 3.3	2 - 1.6	7 - 15.5
Mixed	44 - 36.0	54 - 44.3	25 - 55.6
No answer			77
	122 - 100	122 - 100	122 - 100

From the above table we again see that there has been a change in attitudes and an adjustment to time and place. At home the tradition is very strong, the majority stick to their traditional clothes.

The same is true for going out, the majority (54%) wear only traditional clothes - Punjabi suit or saree but quite a good number are using both types, traditional and European. Now it depends on the event or where they go. If it is a religious function, then it is obvious that they wear a traditional dress, but if it is a more international event, or going to the coast or socializing with Europeans, then they will wear European clothes, but the traditional dresses have not lost out completely.

What is interesting regarding dressing habits is that the men have completely adopted European styles; only the religious priests wear the traditional Sikh white clothes; all the other men wear European suits. Only the turban singles them out from other Asian men. It is the women who stick strongly to the tradition. It is a good confirmation of our first hypothesis.

Dressing is like doing your hair. You want to be fashionable, different each time, by having a free choice of what and how to dress. More educated and modern women understand it and give their daughters-in-law a free hand. But as it was said earlier, there are mothers-in-law who dictate which type of dress

their daughters-in-law will wear and even choose the materials for them as if a young woman does not have a mind of her own. Fifteen women or 27.8% of the sample have the freedom to do any hair style or to dress in any type of clothes without objection or interference from the mother-in-law. Adding categories 2 and 9 in table 16, constitute 44.4% of the valid observations.

Going Out with Husband or alone

This privilege is very important as, according to their practices, Sikh women should stay at home. Today, we can see a new phenomenon. More and more women are going out with their husbands for entertainment at public places - which they could not have done in their traditional way of life. Even more interesting is the fact that more and more women now go out alone. It is important where they go, but the mere fact that they go out alone, is a big step towards a higher status. These views are based on the information we obtained by asking whether Sikh women are allowed to go out alone; if so, when and to what sort of places? Ninety-four women (77%) confirmed the right of going out; 25 women confirmed that they had^{no} such rights; and

3 women did not answer. We then asked those who confirmed the right to go out by themselves, when they were allowed to go - day time only or any time, including evenings? 48 women (52.7%) agreed on day time; 43 women (47.3%) said they could go anytime of the day. But where do these women go? We have a long computed list of driving the children to and from schools, shopping, going to the temple, satsangs, social gatherings, combinations of the above, different classes, etc.

We can summarize by saying that there is a big change in women's position within the family, as there is a change in roles, which causes a change of behaviour and pushes the women ahead. There is a change in their position in the society too, as they play a major role in the temples, in religious and social functions, and more women gain recognition and respect from the men due to their new activities and successes. They are re-evaluated by the men, who realize the importance of their activities and achievements. By being recognized and appreciated by the men, the women gain a higher status within the community as well as in the family.

Thus, they have the right to speak up in the family and to participate in decision-making. This right is a completely new value in the Sikh community. According to the scripture men and women are equal in the eyes of God, but not so in the eyes of the human community. Women were regarded as house property, and property cannot speak up, disagree, argue or give advice. What was decided by the men was carried out without any consideration of the women's feelings. No one even thought about asking their opinion, or if they had any comment to make or advice to give. Women and children were treated equally, as they were both supposed to have no opinion of their own. Therefore, having such rights within the joint family means a big change, according to Western values - a big step forward towards equality between the sexes. The people interviewed could not remember or point out the exact date when this change started, but it was said to be very recent, between 10-15 years ago at most.

It is a result of more education for women and a change in the family roles, as explained above. There was a recognition of the fact that women do have their own views and opinion regarding different issues.

Coupled with this was the realization that women can plan and carry out projects by themselves without men's help. In the more liberal houses the young women have more say; it starts way before the marriage - the girl is asked if she wants the suggested man - she has the right to accept or reject the man. There are more strict houses that do not give this right to women. It is enough for them to dress or do their hair the way they wish. Giving them the opportunity to speak up seems too much for the older generation. They are afraid of losing their authority, especially mothers-in-law who are not as well educated as the daughters-in-law. Such cases create friction that may lead to a split in the family. Generally speaking, the presence of such rights, in some families at least, provides the necessary evidence to support the proposition that women have gained a higher status within the Sikh family and, consequently, within the society.

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
LIBRARY

Having the Right to Spend Money as She Wishes

This is an outcome of the other rights we have talked about. The moment the woman is mobile and does the shopping for the house, she starts getting money for herself. This pocket money is to boost her sense

of individuality. So she will not feel as if she is a property, belonging to someone who supplies all her needs. She wants to be more active on her own. Buying clothing materials, cosmetics, reading books, or paint-colours that she likes gives a woman a feeling of freedom, of independence and the awareness that she has her own personality. It may be that she will not be able to speak up or participate in decision-making, but will have her own money to spend. This is what we meant earlier when we spoke of a variety and variations of rights. At one extreme there are a few women who have all the rights mentioned; while ^{on the other} there are still a high percentage of women who do not have any rights at all.

Participating in Wage Labour

This is a sign of progress, as discussed in the previous chapters. It happens that there are some women who are qualified in certain professions, but the mothers-in-law forbid them to go out and practice their professional skills. This is a source of frustration and clashes. In one family there might be several daughters-in-law, one of them can work outside, while the others work in the house. The

former contributes her share to the family budget and helps in the house work on weekends, while the others do it all the week. Such arrangements depend on the atmosphere in the house. There are cases in which working women are told, as a condition for the marriage, to resign from their jobs. There are families where the women continue to work after their marriage. This is delicate and complicated. The older generation did not completely accept the changes, so we have different approaches. Anyway, the barrier has to a large extent been broken and women do participate in wage labour.

The Right to Bring up your Children in Your Own Way

In a joint family, the children are the family's children, and everyone can scold them, punish or tell them what and how to do it. There are in each family women who detest this interference in the lives of their children. Being educated, such women have their own ideas and read more books about caring for babies and bringing up children. It is their own flesh, so they want to act as they feel, and not as their mother-in-law did when the babies' fathers were born. This requires, for each mother, freedom to decide how to act, which school

will be best for the child and which way to teach him. Many women told the interviewer that they taught their children in a different way from how they themselves had been brought up. They teach the girls to fight for their rights and not to give up when they feel that they are right, not to become "yes girls". They teach them to be independent - to have their own ideas and be able to earn a living for themselves, without being dependent on any man. They are encouraged to be themselves and to develop their personalities, as they are as capable as boys are and in many cases, even better. Such an approach was taboo even 15 years ago.

On the other hand, the boys are taught to respect the girls and regard them as human beings with their own personalities. They are told to treat them as equal partners in life. This training helps to eliminate discrimination between the two, as both sexes are being educated in the same way in the same schools.

This right is again a big change, just as the right of having a private life, inspite of living in a joint system. The ability to handle your own family the way you think best, to meet with people that you

choose as your friends, without being restricted by anyone; to listen to the music that you love, or watch the film that you enjoy. All this means having^a private life. It is very difficult to live two sets of life - one your own and the other the joint-family's . If you have enough freedom to do part of the things you like, then you get the feeling that you have your own part of the world, which makes life easier in the joint system. Again it depends a lot on the in-laws.

The last category is a combination of all the mentioned rights. A daughter-in-law who has it all is treated in every way as an equal. Her status is very high in the family - equal to the husband's.

Now, with our present understanding of each category, we can go back to the data. In a joint system we had 90 cases in the sample. Not all of them were married women, as there were 10 single girls that still live with their parents and married brothers. We shall deduct these 10 cases, so in total we had 80 married women living in a joint family. About 5 of them, had just left the main house^{and} moved to their own, but because until then,

they had always spent their married life in the joint families they answered as if they still did, regarding duties and rights. Out of the 80 cases, 26 women refused to answer at all. They found the issue too delicate or they were frightened of their husbands or in-laws, who were in the house during the interview, but did not participate.

Some girls are shy, or it might be that suddenly they set their eyes on a very painful matter. Some of them decided to keep quiet and live with it. While others poured it all out, feeling better that there was someone interested in their problems.

22.2% have no rights at all. They still live in the middle ages, according to their open answers. At least they were not afraid to bring it up openly before a stranger, crying loudly for a change in their status. By the appearances of things one could believe that some of those who refused to answer belong to this class. Therefore, we may assume, that a higher percentage is living miserably. Those who are completely equal are 16.7% which is relatively low, but means a great change in this community. 27.8% have the right to dress up and do their hair they way they like. 8.2% work outside the home. 7.4% go

out for socializing in their own time, according to their wish.

To summarize, we can say that there is some move towards equality, but there is a long way to go before it is practised 100%. It is ^{only} a small minority of 16.7% that are treated equally, and that has the same rights as men in their different life cycles.

But there are almost two times as many, depressed women; and many more somewhere between the two extremes. To bring all of them to an equal level, requires a long process, that might take years.

Decision Making

This has already been mentioned in connection with household matters. We found out that more women participate in decision making, starting from the decision concerning whom to marry and, later on, regarding the running of the house. Let us now turn to the question of the number of children. The next table below summarizes our findings about decision-making on this important family matter.

Table 18: Who Makes the Decision on Number of Children

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Husband	14	13.3
Wife	12	11.4
Both	68	64.8
Others	11	10.5
Missing	17	-
	<u>122</u>	<u>100</u>

In 14 cases the husband dictated the number; in 12 cases it was the wife; the majority of the decisions were jointly made by both spouses. The conclusion to be drawn from the table is that women, singly or jointly with their husbands, now have quite a significant say in the number of children a family may have. Nowadays the woman is an equal party in the decision-making; she can agree or refuse to have more children. It leads us to the conclusion that she is being considered on this issue as on others. She has her own opinion, meaning her position is respected. Our data further reveals that there is a decrease in the number of children. The average today is between 2 and 3 children. Only 1 woman had 8 children, and she

is in her 60's , and there were only 3 cases with 6 children. 40.6% have 2 children, 25.7% have 3, 15.8% have 1 child, 11.2% have 4 children.

The families are becoming smaller due to environmental influences. Bringing up children is very costly nowadays. You have to invest heavily in them; so you prefer fewer in number but of better quality. This is ^{the} growing tendency all over the world, that did not skip the Sikh community. Dr. P. Walji's research on "The relationship between socio-economic conditions and fertility behaviour among selected Asian groups in Nairobi", (1980), though it does not deal with Sikhs, proves that the higher their socio-economic status and the more westernized parents are, the fewer the children they get - a conclusion which affects or includes the Sikhs too. The reasons for having small families are different, and it is a separate demographic issue.

From our point of view, women's status has improved. It has been mentioned that changes have now taken place everywhere, there are still families in which the husband is the decision maker and the woman has to obey.

Birth Control, Abortion and Having a Son

Traditionally, the Asians attach great importance to having a son, as he guarantees the future and the continuation of the family. In the scripture, it is written that a baby boy or baby girl are both welcome to this world. The socially accepted norms were, however, different; ^{and} therefore, women kept on having children until they gave birth to a son. We investigated how strong this tradition still is, and the next table below summarizes our findings. The women in the sample responded to the question of whether they would be ready for another pregnancy just to try and get a son.

Table 19: Trying to Get a Son

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	51	46.8
No	58	53.2
No answer	13	
	<u>122</u>	<u>100.00</u>

We notice that there is a big change in attitudes. In fact, we can say things are getting more and more like what the scripture states. More women will be happy with the daughter they have and will not continue trying to get a son. It is a consequence of all the other changes, including education, a lifted status of the girls and women, westernization, and the abandoning of old customs. Fifty one women will give it a try. They still think that having a son is imperative because of the accepted social norms. The more educated they are the less importance they put on the sex of the child. It is enough for them that the child, whatever its sex, is healthy. The following table will show the relationship between education and trying to get a son, and education relating to birth control.

Table 20: The Relation Between:

	<u>Education and Trying for a Boy</u>				<u>Birth Control</u>		
	Yes	%	No.	%	Yes	%	No.
Primary	6	75.0	2	25.0	8	88.9	1
'O' level	25	55.6	20	44.4	43	95.6	2
'A' level	6	35.5	11	64.7	18	100	0
University	10	26.5	24	73.5	37		1
None	4	80.0	1	20.0	4	80.0	1
	51		58 Total 109		110		5
	46.8		53.2		95.7		4.3

We can see the major influence of education on family planning. Birth control, like divorce, is a new word in Sikh vocabulary. This was not allowed; even today the old women say that abortion is killing, planned murder and birth control is against God's will, as he is the one who decides if you will have children and how many. In their view, using all sorts of artificial products, you interfere with God's

activities. Mating is only for the purpose of bringing children to this world, pleasure is excluded. The woman had to fulfil her duty for the man's physical needs. Her own desire is not considered, according to them.

Today, the attitude towards sex has changed, as everything else is changing. As it was said earlier, both parties have to be considered. Birth control is practiced now very widely as a method of family planning, and even abortion, which is forbidden by God, is practiced. Having decided on the number of children they want, if they get pregnant again, some women will abort with the full consent of the husband. It is a rational decision for the benefit of the family. Such behaviour and decisions are taking place only when the marriage is based on mutual understanding, care and love, which today tends to be the basis of a marriage. Understanding leads to a warm relationship between the spouses and their offsprings. Less strictness facilitates more openness from both sides.

It is not only the education and economics that influence the size of the family: we can include political factors too. When the political situation is insecure, few children are better, as mobility is easier.

To summarize, we can say that it has been demonstrated by the data that having children is a mutual decision and not a one sided one - a man's affair. There is family planning and birth control, which are new phenomena and show a change in attitudes. The average Sikh family consists of 2 or 3 children only. It is true that having a son is important, but it is not imperative to try until a woman gets one. Girls, in the majority of cases, have become as important as boys. We cannot ignore the majority who think that a boy is a must for the family honour.

We have an example of a woman who will never forget the day she had a baby, as the most miserable day ever in her life, because she had a girl and not a boy, as was expected. While all other women in the room were surrounded with love of husband, family and friends, she was deliberately neglected, because she had disappointed them. Such people are not interested in the medical explanation, that it is the husband who determines the sex of the baby. The fact was that she failed. Obviously, it caused a conflict in the family. Although today the girl is the beloved grand-daughter, the mother cannot conceive because of the horror of that day, and she is bitter, blaming the family for it.

Regarding attitudes toward barren women, what our research has revealed is as follows. The orthodox Sikhs believe that it is God's will, so you cannot fight it. The man may marry another woman, and his first wife will take care of the second wife's children too. As well, he may tell her to go back to her family. Today the attitude towards barren woman is very modern and tolerable. They go through all medical examination, and if it is found that they cannot get children, then adoption is the answer.

In the olden days, one member of the family gave his child to this family. Today they go to India and adopt children there, come back to Kenya, and live as a happy family. The woman is not disgraced or condemned as there are two parties in creating children.

The attitudes toward women in the Sikh community have changed in practically all aspects of life. This change is for the better as it has given women the status and dignity they deserve as human beings. It is a great step towards women's liberation. Sex was once a taboo to talk about or to engage in before marriage, and was much restricted even in married life.

It was done as a duty, to fulfil God's commandment to produce children and to satisfy the husband's physical needs. The woman was a passive partner, a kind of instrument. Today such attitudes have changed, and she is an active partner in decision-making, as in any other matter. Although premarital sex is still forbidden, to ensure virginity on the wedding night, attitudes about the woman's role in sex and family matters have changed significantly.

In private family life, the woman has a say; she is an equal partner in planning her family, deciding which method of birth control to use, and how many children she would like to have. There is no more ignoring of her feelings or desires. As there are exceptions in all other matters, they are found in this intimate aspect of life as well. There is some discrimination against women in the community's tolerance of unfaithfulness to one's spouse. There is, in fact, some cruelty towards unfaithful women, which sometimes breaks families. It is a universal problem as it exists practically everywhere in the world, and women have to face it.

The data discussed in this chapter as we have indicated at various points, confirm quite strongly our hypothesis that the status of Sikh women is now higher than it was in the traditional society. They have gained a higher position in the community as well as at the personal level, due to the changing circumstances they live in. As an outcome of the changes, a change in family structure taking place. It does not mean that the structure is being broken and rebuilt into a completely different form, but there has been a change in roles of the family members within the same joint system.

The women have gained some kind of freedom, such as mobility, education and opportunity for occupation. They have been exposed to and have internalized Western values which changed their views and attitudes towards themselves. The exposure gave them the power to stand up for their rights. They realized that they are as capable as men in performing certain activities, so they have to be regarded as equal to men and get some opportunities and rights at both micro and macro levels.

If we can compare it to the Western family structure, we can see the shift from traditional - owner-property pattern to head-complement pattern and even to the next stage of senior and junior partners, when women participate in wage labour. The equal partners pattern may be found in only one case out of 122 interviewees. Even in the Western society it is not the leading mode. The process of shifting to the 2nd and 3rd patterns is occurring within the framework of the traditional joint family, although there is already a big group which has formed a Western nuclear pattern.

The women now have some power; they are equipped with tools that they can use to fight for themselves. This is a result of their environment and circumstances. It does not mean that their demand for equal rights is completely fulfilled, but there is a change for the better. They are not treated like domestic slaves, as it was in the Hindu tradition; they have gained rights and the above-mentioned freedoms. Again it is relative, because to a Western woman, what we call freedom for a Sikh woman is oppression. A Western woman would, for example, object to an arranged marriage, but for Sikh women it is liberation enough if they have a say, if their opinion is being considered.

Our next table below indicates that they have gained a higher status, that they have their own opinion and it is considered, or, in Western terms, they have shifted to the pattern of head-complement, or junior partner, if they earn.

Table 20A: Is Your Husband Consulting you Regarding Family and Household Problems?

	No.	%
Yes	51	46.8
No	58	53.2
N.A.	13	
	<hr/> 122	<hr/> 100

46.8% are being consulted by their husbands. It means a big step forward. In the traditional structure women's opinions were not considered in making decisions ^{about} household problems, which is their sphere of influence. The figures above do show that there is a drastic change. It is true that the majority is still in the first Western pattern, in which the husband is almighty, but an increasing tendency is shown towards changing the structure, due to changes in circumstances and family roles.

There is no doubt whatsoever that they have gained a higher status, and it is reflected in their life style. Women are taking an active part in a wide range of community activities. They constitute a "power group" which cannot be ignored by men, and their demands are often met. The same applies at the family level. The women have a say; they participate in decision-making, whether it is on household problems or the number of children. At each stage in her life cycle, the woman is today being considered. There are cases of almost full partnership.

This conclusion leads us to our last hypothesis, stating that women in minority groups are lower in status, and it may be reflected in the developmental cycle. The data we have provided show the opposite. The Sikh women have gained status in Nairobi; they are not considered by the outside community as lower than the Sikh men. The Sikh women are known due to their communal activities, not only among the Sikhs, but among the African communities as well. They contribute a lot to the needy African children. Their donations of money, food, and goods are highly appreciated by the Kenyan social services and other welfare organizations. Our data are, therefore, inconsistent with the last hypothesis, which, consequently, must be rejected in this study since it does not throw any light on the events taking place in our target community.

FOOTNOTES

1. Scanzoni, L. D. & J. Men, Women and Change
McGraw-Hill Book Company.
University of North Carolina,
U.S.A. 1981.
- 1a. Ibid - p.311
- 1b. Ibid - p. 315-16.
2. Ibid - p. 323
3. Ibid - p. 334
4. Ibid - p. 354
- 4a. Example: Visramitra adopted an outsider to be his successor, and put his one hundred sons at a disadvantage. Fifty rebelled against this action and he cursed them.
5. Kapadia, K. M. Marriage and Family in India
Oxford University Press,
London, 1966, Chp. 10
"The Hindu-joint Family".
6. Ibid - p. 253 exerted from the Vedic scripture.
7. Ibid - II - II
8. Ibid - p. 254 - II -
- Ross, A The Hindu Family in Its Urban Setting.
University of Toronto Press,
Canada, 1961, reprint USA 1967.
- Turner, R. H. Family Interaction
University of California, Los Angeles, U.S.A. 1970.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MAJOR CHANGES IN SIKH WOMEN'S LIFE IN NAIROBI DURING THE LAST 15 YEARS

Although we have already exhaustively outlined the various changes that have been taking place in the Sikh community in Nairobi, we wish to look at the whole question of change in the Sikh community from a different perspective. We would like to consider what the Sikhs themselves perceive as "change". The question we asked in our investigation was: "can you define the basic changes in the community today, compared to the traditional way of life, or 15 years ago?" The objective of asking this question was to get a general view from the people themselves. What major changes have been taking place in the society which had an impact or effect on the women's life cycle and status within the family and the community. The question was very provocative as the interviewee could express themselves freely on all aspects of life. By getting a wide range of answers, we were able to identify the changes and the processes of modernization which took place. Before we start the discussion, let us first look at the responses to the above question so as to identify the major changes. The answers, which are quoted from the

questionnaires are as follows (numbers in the brackets refer to questionnaires number):

- 1) "More self-conscious women have their rights, not in the shadow of husbands. They are individuals, ladies of leisure, all advantages, financially well" (54)
- 2) "Fast change, religion is less important, more Westernized. Slowly Sikhism will vanish. Drinking, cooking facilities, more freedom in handling household. Better social life- parties, casino". (51)
- 3) "More independent. Working for themselves, more respected by men. Women are aware of themselves that they are capable to do things and have not to be dependent" (113)
- 4) "No restriction between in-laws and daughters-in-law. Equal chances of education. Girls to be more independent to stand on their feet. In marriage - they are allowed to meet the other party - her choice. More love marriage". (126)

- 5) "Wealthy families have given their daughters much freedom like in Western tradition - dating, going out, having their own car, pocket money.
Education to a wider range. A girl has a say regarding marriage.
A change in food style". (105)

- 6) "It is not so orthodox in outlook. Follow European etiquette. Have developed non-involving attitudes towards friends and neighbours, give cold shoulder instead of support" (111)

- 7) "More freedom in dressing, eating different types of food, going out for entertainment. Traditional beliefs diminish" (55)

- 8) "No changes, only cooking is easier" (72)

- 9) "Not to bully daughters-in-law.
More education, freedom in talking to parents, freedom of mobility, alone too". (99)

- 10) "Girls can fight for their own rights. Women can make up their own decisions regarding family life, when mistreated can walk out".(100)
- 11) "Today's women are given more respect and equal rights like the men. Girls are given the same education as the boys". (141)
- 12) "More and more young girls and boys are getting educated and aware of external goings on. Thus, these boys (future husbands and present husbands) allow their wives these pleasures which sometimes results into problems with the old in-laws or just makes the in-laws frustrated, because these youngsters do not value old traditions". (174)
- 13) "Sikh men are giving some kind of equality and respect to Sikh women of today, especially since more of us are educated and demand our rights". (140)

14) "More freedom of mobility, change in clothing, less narrow minded, less restriction, more rights to daughters-in-law, changing the in-laws views, speaking up in the house, going out, husbands' attitude changed. More separation in families. Women become home-bees after marriage - now they start going out. Education more widespread. Love marriage is more often. In the arranged system the girl has a say". (168)

15) "Much more freedom. Money freedom. Going out to work. More open relation between in-laws and daughters-in-law. Education widespread, more independent. Women put their foot down, divorce takes place". (162).

It is apparent from the answers that there are major changes in different aspects of Sikh life.

Considering religion, our data indicate a decrease of the power of religion in the younger generation. On the other hand we noticed that the economic situation became better than it was either

in India or 15 years ago in Kenya. The women got advantages of financial gain. They became more mobile in all senses of the word; the family relationships have changed; women have a voice in the house; they take an active part in family life, and, due to new and modern facilities, life has become easier for the women and they have more free time for their leisure.

All these changes have occurred in stages. They began at some initial point and moved progressively through various stages until they reached where they are.

Let us try to put these changes in perspective. We regard "Modernization" as the independent variable, the cause of the changes. In order to measure this variable, we used four variables or factors which vary and can indicate the process of change from point A to B. The variables are: modern materialism independence, religious commitment, and family relationship. Further discussion of the variables follows after table 1.

To give a theoretical background to this process of change we could rely on Durkheim's explanation of the process involved in the changing of society from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, which is found in his famous work: "The Division of Labour".

"Under mechanical solidarity, Durkheim included - along with similitude, or communal identity, in primitive society (indeed "traditional" societies in general) - the notion of conscience collective, repressive or penal sanctions as the most objective index of this type of solidarity, and the idea of segmental structure. Under organic solidarity he included along with differentiation in modern society - the idea of the weakening, if not the eclipse of conscience collective, restitutive sanction as the most objective index of this type of solidarity, the notion of "organized" structure and the emergence of universalistic values and individualism".¹

Durkheim summarizes the differences between the two societies as follows: "In the first, an individual is bound to society without any intermediary; in the second, he is dependent upon the

parts of which society is composed. Society itself means something different in these two instances, in the first it is a totality of beliefs and sentiments, a collective conscience, in the second it is a system, in short, that exhibits a division of labour. The first is the solidarity of similarity, the second the solidarity of difference. The first Durkheim calls "mechanical" only because the parts, like molecules or inorganic bodies, have no actions of their own, the individual conscience depends upon the collective conscience and participates in such actions as the latter makes, the individual is in a sense absorbed into the collective personality, the second he calls "organic" because it produces the kind of integration we see in higher animals, where each organ has its own specialized function".²

When he talks about modern society, he refers to the society in which social order derives its power from the organic solidarity, opposed to old or traditional societies which are based on mechanical solidarity.

The mechanical solidarity is rooted in the similarities of the members of the society i.e. the

society is homogeneous while the modern society is based on dissimilarity giving rise to heterogeneous society.

According to Durkheim, the organic solidarity emerged from the growing traits of division of labour. Consequently, dissimilarities bring about independence in society, and the collective conscience of the mechanic solidarity, lessens.

Under the conditions of mechanical solidarity, the superior strength of the collective forces was indicated by reaction against violation of group institution. It is represented by repressive norms which serve to maintain the mechanical solidarity or conscience collective.

In modern societies, the division of labour brought some change. The repressive norms were replaced by civil and administrative laws, calling for restitution of rights rather than punishment. The modern-organic society, is based on different activities which are performed by different people. We are talking of division of labour as a pattern which supports the solidarity.

By sharing the duties in the society, people made contracts among themselves, and to fulfil their needs, society gives them "their sanctity and guarantee"³ that the contracts will be fulfilled in the proper way to the benefit of all parties.

The contracts between the individuals are imposing duties and obligations. The society turned to the heterogeneous due to the legal recognition of the existence of division of labour.

Modern societies are marked by moral progress and the stressing of the higher values of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice. "Even so, the social constraint continues to play a major role, as it has predetermined elements which existed prior and independently of the persons in society".⁴

Durkheim's model is an ideal type: form 1 transforms to form 2, as a result of a continuous change. The changes might be small, but the reality is already different. This theory applies to the Sikh society. This community has gone and still is going through the same process from mechanical to organic solidarity, from a closed, traditional,

homogeneous society to a more open one. Durkheim emphasizes the division of labor as the main factor, but it is accompanied by other factors too. In our study we call this process modernization, the passage from the traditional society-analogues to the mechanical solidarity to the modern society nowadays.

The other person who gives us a good understanding of this modernization process is Talcot Parsons in his famous pattern-variable scheme. "The pattern variables are a conceptual scheme for classifying the components of an action system - the actor-situation relational system which comprises a plurality of unit acts."⁵ He brings pattern variables which look upon the relationship of an actor to a situation from the actor's side, and on the other hand variables which look from the side of the situation.

He identifies 4 dimensions for the action system.⁶

1. Pattern of maintenance
2. Pattern of goal attainment
3. Pattern of adaptation
- 4, Pattern of integration.

To simplify this model, he calls it "differentiation model" of modernization, meaning passing from the left to the right, on his model from affectivity to effective neutrality; from particularism to universalism; from ascription to achievement; from diffuseness to specificity. Parsons had seen that differentiation is the main factor in the process of modernization: differentiation of home from job, the differentiation of political economy (Marx) into politics and economy, differentiation of the culture system from the personality and social systems; differentiation of economy from society; differentiation of fact from value....

Differentiation is the cutting edge of the modernization process. It splits ownership from control; it separates church from state. It cuts through ancient primordial ties and identities. Differentiation divorces ends from means, nuclear from extended families".⁷

Social differentiation was already mentioned by G. Simmel. Parsons had seen the process of change or modernity steadily, through the Protestant

reformation, Industrial Revolution - French, English and American Revolutions. He says that modernization constitutes the infrastructure for what we call today "civilization". The continuing revolution led to the differentiation. The modern man is born into a situation within the modernization process, and is socialized to a differentiated social order. This social change frees man from old ascriptive norms. He himself must confront the situation by making choices without dependence on ascriptive guidance. Differentiation on the level of culture means "refinement" distinguishing between previously used ideas, values, variables, concepts and the ones in practice.

To summarize, we can say that, in the West, the modernization process goes hand in hand with the urbanization and industrialization process. The "Land Lord" or feudal lord refined into gentleman. The emergence of cities, multiplying strangers living together, converts "tribal brotherhoods" into "universal brotherhoods" of an urban vicinity of strangers, living together without being either brothers or enemies. In urban areas you have to

frequently interact with strangers. The man coming from the country is undergoing an urbanization process to enable him to enter the society. He has to distinguish private from public relations, behaviour and intimacy in private from expression in public places. He is in a stage of transition from one society to another (mechanical to organic; agricultural to urbanized). The modernization process was related to the Western world, but is it the same phenomenon in the East?

In order to use this model for our analysis we had to identify the variables which measure or show "change" to prove that this process does take place according to the model.

If we wish to use Parsons 4 dimensions we can relate them to our study as follows:

<u>Parsons</u>	<u>Our Study</u>
1. patterns of maintenance	modern materialism
2. goal attainment	economic advancement
3. adaptation	acculturation or assimilation
4. integration	freedom inside and outside the community

According to Parsons, having all the answers in front of us, is like having raw material. You may have the material, but be unable to use it, in the form it appears. It has to be redefined. We had to find out the factors that are the indices of change or patterns of behaviour that explain the change. We had identified several elements which explain the movement from situation A to B.

The answers were regrouped into major categories. There are four major categories of change. Then we have different combination of the categories, which gives us nine different variations of the change process. Table 21 will present the data statistically.

Table 21: Basic Changes

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Adjusted %</u>
1. Modern materialism	2	1.6	1.7
2. Independent	6	4.9	5.1
3. Religious commitments	2	1.6	1.7
4. Relatives relationship	1	0.8	0.9
5. Modern+independent	25	20.5	21.4
6. Modern + independent + Religious commitment	4	3.3	3.4
7. Modern + independent + Relatives	53	43.4	45.3
8. All included	7	5.7	6.0
9. Independence + relatives	17	13.9	14.5
10. No change/no answer	5	4.5	-
	<hr/> 122	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100

1. Modern materialism - includes modern housing comfortable modern furniture, and the latest in electrical appliances, which made life much easier. They include refrigerators and deep freezers, gas or electric ovens, washing machines, mixers, food processors, electrical cutters etc. All the equipment mentioned facilitates the housework. In large joint

families we could find 2 units of cookers, oven, refrigerator as well as jiko. There is no single Sikh house without these home appliances. It might be that not all of them are found in every house, but the main items are there. As for luxurious items, there is no house without a radio and T.V. system. In very few cases we do find a black-and-white T.V. The majority own colour ones, accompanied by a video system. The video brings more "life" into the house. It is the entertainment medium, as people more or less stopped going out to movies. The video brought the movie inside the house, and for all the family, children as well as adults. It has its advantages and disadvantages such as exposing the youth to unwanted values and modes of behaviour that they previously had no access to. This point was discussed in chapter five in connection with Western influences. Every Sikh house, which respects itself, has an audio system. The more modern and well-known firm, the better.

2) Independence - includes different symbols of an independent life. Freedom of mobility - driving and owning your own car, going out alone to any place the

woman wishes, the woman's freedom to shop for the house and for herself the way she thinks is right . The freedom to speak up, in the family - be it the nuclear family or the joint family. This is very important when we are talking about women's status. They have the right to stand up and speak for themselves and not to be mistreated. The girl has a say regarding her marriage arrangements. If she does not like the man, she may refuse to marry him, and not be forced to do so. On the other hand, if a girl finds someone she likes, she may turn to her parents and ask for their help in facilitating the arrangements, if they accept the boy.

Freedom of education is referred to in all the interviews and talks. Education became one of the highest values in the Sikh community. Girls are entitled to equal education, and of a high level. More and more girls go for 'A' level and university education. They become more professional. Another outcome of education is participating in wage labour, which is a really new phenomenon. This gives women the freedom to choose for themselves whether to stay as housewives or go out working. Girls are being sent

overseas for higher education. They go to the U.K., Canada and U.S.A. This obviously leads to a change in their personality and makes them independent in all sense. The sexual life before marriage is forbidden, and this is one of the strongest traditional modes of behaviour. They cherish the freedom to make their own decisions on matters concerning husband, children, education etc.

3) Religious Commitments - This category is divided into two levels:

a) Those women who claim that religion is diminishing in the young generation, as the children and their parents were born here. This situation is becoming critical as religious ties are loosening. The children attend Kenyan schools; they speak and write English, while Punjabi, which is their mother-tongue is only spoken; the majority do not know how to read or write it. The result is that they cannot read the holy scriptures and other Punjabi literature. Their daily prayers are written in English letters so ^{that} the children may be able at least to say their daily prayers.

The young generation's attendance of religious functions is quite low. In weekly Satsangs, or during recitations of the holy book, you will not see youngsters, only elderly women and priests are usually there. If you see some young face, it is because she either drives her mother-in-law to the function so she has to be there, or has been dragged to it by the mother herself. Only if it is a social occasion, like marriage or engagement does one see many youngsters around. The young generation imitates the Europeans -dressing up fashionably (leaving behind the traditional clothes), having different hairstyles, and even cutting the hair - thereby removing one of the Sikh symbols. Men are seen in public places (pubs) drinking, which is traditionally forbidden.

b) These new modes of behaviour come at the cost of something else - religion. There are women who foresee that in three-four generations, Sikhism will disappear because the rate of assimilation in England, U.S.A., and Canada is very high, and even in Kenya religion is considered less and less important. As a result of the above situation, the Sikh Women

Society realized that the problem was growing to dangerous dimensions, and they attacked the problem by establishing Punjabi classes for children in each temple. Having religious, as well as, language classes and traditional songs, for adults and especially children. On Saturdays they have the Punjabi classes to make them more familiar with the language, religion and tradition. Nowadays all children of school age, attend these classes as a must.

This requirement will save Sikhism from extinction. These children are the hope for the future. This is the second approach, that religion is strengthening today to counter its weakening, in the past years. The women do their utmost to bring back religion and tradition through the front door and to make it the cement of the community. The situation today is that part of the community is running away from religion and the result is a weakened tradition. On the other hand, there is an enormous trend of promoting the Punjabi language and religion to regain its former strength. At the moment we cannot judge which tendency is stronger. The answer is in the future, but it is agreed by all that the religion is undergoing a change, whatever its consequences may be for the Sikh society.

4) Relationship Between Relatives - We include in this category all familial links: husband-wife, parents-children; parents-in-law, daughters-in-law, brother and sisters-in-law etc. Almost all women indicated that today the relationship between parents and their offspring is different from what it was for them. Strictness and formality gave away to more loving, warm relations. As there is more openness, children can speak to their parents freely. Both girls and boys find it equally easy to approach either of their parents when they have a problem. More affection and care for each other is shown between the two spouses and parents and their children.

Even the relationship between aunts, cousins and uncles is evidently warm . The feeling of togetherness is very strong. It is a result of the changing attitudes towards girls, as now they get more care and the same attention as boys in such matters as clothing and education.

The relationship between grand-parents and grand-children is also warmer. There is no more strictness. A girl can talk to her grandfather as freely as to her father. They are getting more

attached to each other. Sometimes the grandfather plays a major role in the girl's life. The father is usually away on business or vacation, while the grandfather is often there and all his attention is towards the grand-children. It can happen now that, the grand-daughter is the beloved one of her grand-parents, and not the boy, as it used to be. This change is an outcome of a change in relationships and modes of behaviour in the house in general. More freedom to all leads to more love and understanding, less strictness leads to more tolerance of each other's feelings and activities. All this leads to a warmer and happier community, to a very nice atmosphere for bringing up children, and to a harmonious family life.

The same is applicable to husband-wife relationships. As there is a change in picking up the spouses, it has to be based more on understanding and even love. The incidence of love marriages is increasing in the community. Thus the base of marriage today is not the official arrangement, but more personal involvement of both parties. They have to care for each other, at least, and that in time will lead to love, if it did not exist in the first place. Men are more considerate to their wives.

They want them to be happy in their houses with them. They recognize that women are personalities on their own; therefore, they should be respected, being considered in all matters, as they are not any more like a piece of furniture. They can stand for themselves, speaking their wishes or complaints and it has to be considered and not ignored. They want to enjoy their life as the men do. They demand it and the men have to satisfy them. They are no longer tools in the husband's hands, but part of his life - maybe not an equal partner, (in many cases, but in some they are equal), but a partner, who has to be considered and respected.

The relationship between in-laws and daughter-in-laws is changing too. In the previous chapter we have talked about it at length, so we just mention it briefly. In the majority of the houses the relationship between these two parties has changed. There is more love and understanding and more freedom for daughters-in-law in all senses. They eat together and daughters-in-law do not have to cover their head in front of the father-in-law or other male members of the family. She can speak to her father-in-law as to her father. The mother-

in-law does not interfere too much in her life, sometimes not at all. There is more respect for each other as opposed to the fear of the mother-in-law that existed before.

In general, a change in one set of family relationships leads to the other and, altogether, these lead to a state of equilibrium and harmony in family life. Of course to every rule there is an exception. There might be nice and warm relationships between the couples and their children, but tensions between the in-laws and daughters-in-law. In a joint family there are many ties and connections within the house. It is ideal when all of them are nice and loving, which exists in some houses, but we have to face reality even when it is not anywhere close to our desired ideal. Within one household we have different types of relations and they may not always be equally warm.

Generally speaking, there is a change in family relations. More love, understanding, and caring for each other are generally there. If the marriage does not work out the way it should, if say, the woman is

mistreated by the husband, she can walk out - she can ask for a divorce. The husband, too, has right to ask for a divorce if the woman mistreats him, or if he happens to fall in love with another woman. This phenomenon, legal divorce, is new in Nairobi (more acceptable in Europe) but is slowly creeping in here. Known cases of divorce go only as far back as 5 years ago, not earlier. This phenomenon is also a kind of family relationship that cannot be ignored, although its incidence is still very low; but if we take into consideration that it did not happen 10 years ago at all, it is a great change. A divorcee may remarry as a widow can, but she cannot be choosy, These are major changes as identified from the answers on the questionnaires. However, we have five more combinations of the above categories. Some women identified different changes, not in terms of the categories 1, 2 and 3 but in the following manner:

- 5) combination of modern materialism,
with independence.
- 6) combination of modern materialism, independence,
and religion
- 7) combination of all the four major categories

- 8) combination of modern materialism + independence
+ relatives
- 9) independence + relatives
- 10) There is no change at all - meaning living as
in the middle ages, in all the aspects of life
a woman is concerned about. This is the minority
that has not been influenced by the changes
we are talking about. But it exists, and it
is worth remembering.

Five women did not see any change. Everything is the same as it was before. Those who did not answer are regarded as indicating no change, because if they thought that there had been a change, they would have mentioned it. We have already said they are a very small percentage, but they do exist and it has to be taken in consideration.

From the data we can create a hierarchy of changes. The most important change is the second one - independence. 92% of the women agreed that there is a change regarding their independence, as explained before. The second in rank is the modern material factor - 75% considered it quite evident. We can

assume that those 17 cases included in category 9, did not mention it clearly, but by reading between the lines we could see that this factor does exist there too, so if we adjust the percentages we get 88.5%. The third ranking factor is family relationship. 64% do agree on a change . The fourth in importance is religion - only 11 women (9%) draw attention to this subject. Each woman has her priorities. There are 2 cases that emphasized the tangible change of modernization, 6 women emphasized the independence factor, which is for them the most important value, while all others are not mentioned. Two women stressed the religious commitments and only 1 woman had all her attention on family relationship.

We may conclude that this community is in the process of constant change in all aspects of life, with a great emphasis on women's liberation - uplifting their position or status in the society. It is shown by the data that the women in age group 2 + 3 - ages 23-45 can witness the major changes. 39 women out of the 53 major groups belong to this class. Some are young married or unmarried women and others are even mothers-in-law, that can compare their marriage period,

to the situation today; how they were treated compared to the way they treat their own offsprings.

Table 22 presents the importance of education, recognizing or demanding the changes.

Table 22: Education by Basic Changes

Level of Education	Changes									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Primary	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	3	1	9
'O' Level	1	3	1	0	6	1	2	21	11	46
'A' Level	0	1	0	0	5	2	1	9	0	18
University	0	1	1	1	10	1	2	18	5	39
None	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	5
	2	6	2	1	25	4	7	53	17	117

The educated women are those who enact the changes. They do stand for their rights as was said by one of the interviewees; they demand their self-respect, as they are aware of themselves - of their capabilities, and can effectively oppose the man. The conclusion which is drawn out of the data is that the more a woman is educated, the more rights she has and the stronger her personality. Thus, we can say that the

higher the education level the higher the status of the woman. We can see a direct linear correlation between the two variables. We have to take into consideration the men in this matter, because they are playing a major part in it. The changes in each family are a function of the husband's education and occupation too. It is not only the woman's education that is important, the husband's education too.

It was said in one of the preceding quoted texts, that boys and girls are aware of external happenings around them; the boys are either the present or the future husbands. They internalize the new attitudes they have seen and learnt from their environment, and it comes out in a form of change in attitudes towards their wives.

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
LIBRARY

We can see that Parsons' model of pattern variable is relevant to our study. There is change. The old traditional society did not disappear or assimilate into the dominant society. The change is within the society. We cannot say that the Sikh society has gone all the way from type A to type B. This is an ideal model of mechanical to organic solidarity

(Durkheim). We have the two extremes, as Durkheim said, and the Sikh society is somewhere in the middle, still having the virtues of the old traditional society, though it has gained new values and characteristics of the Western culture. The Sikhs are in between. Our data proved the fact that the modernization process is taking place within the mould of the old society. The society facing new situations had to redefine its social order, its behavioral norms and custom, but it is done still within the general frame or under the umbrella of the traditional, homogeneous society. All the changes are related or connected to one another. It is not one type of change that you can point out and say that all the community has undergone this specific change. There is a variety of changes, a variety of combinations of changes.

Referring to our hypotheses, we can say that the major changes give us a solid proof that inspite of all the changes in the environment - physical and human, the women of the Sikh community have gained a higher status due to the fact they are living in Nairobi. The transition from India to Kenya and from

an agricultural life to an urban one forced changes on the community way of life - change in the roles of men and women, even change in the family structure.

The circumstances they faced in Nairobi forced them to "liberate" the women. They had gone through the differentiation process and, as a result, the women's duties became more important, in fact, they are needed not only for the basic needs but for maintaining a proper and socially richer life. Women took important positions in the spiritual life of the community as well as in the daily business life. Though they are a minority group, the women gained a higher status than they had originally. Hypothesis two has been proved correct in all its various aspects.

Are the women equal to men or are they still in a lower status, here in Nairobi? To answer this question we shall look first at the women's own perceptions.

Table 23: Women's Status as they see it

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Relative</u>	<u>Adjusted %</u>
Lower than men	63	51.6	52.1
equal to men	58	47.5	47.9
No answer	1	0.8	-
	122	100.0	100.0

The data above made it apparent that the opinions are divided, but we can see that there is a very small difference between the two dichotomies. If this question had been answered 15 years ago, then probably the majority, if not all the women, would have agreed without any doubt, that they were in a lower position than men either within the family frame or on the community level.

Nowadays, the data show that they do not have a unanimous view. A big group had moved from point A (unequality) to point B (equality). At the same time, there is a bigger group of women who claim that they are lower in status but seem to be a bit uncertain of what they actually feel. To make it clear, Table 24 will show us the distribution of women, who are

being consulted by their husbands, or who have a voice in the house and can speak up freely. It is interesting to know how they see themselves - in what position compared to men.

Table 24: The Correlation Between Being Consulted in the House and the Opinion of the Women's Status.

	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Total</u>
Being consulted	32	45	77
	41.6%	58.4%	72.0%
<hr/>			
Not being consulted	21	9	30
	70.0%	30%	28.0%
<hr/>			
	53	54	107
	49.5%	50.5%	100

15 cases missing

significance - 0.0152

Looking at the data we can see that 77 cases out of the total sample, 72% are being consulted by their husbands or members of the family regarding family

and household problems. They have a say, a voice in the house, but still, they have diverse feelings about their status. Out of this group we learn that 58.4% do think that they are in an equal position to their men, meaning they have a say, they make decisions, they have access to the family budget, they may participate in wage labour, they are educated, having a wide, Westernized point of view, regarding the women's place in society, and see to it that all their rights are respected in the same manner as is done to European women.

Out of the same group, which is certainly advanced and educated, 41.6% do think that women are still lower. They are being considered, they do participate in decision-making though on minor issues only. The major decisions are still made by the men, and in general they are in a lower status.

For those who are not being consulted, it is obvious that they will consider themselves lower in position. To our surprise, out of those, 30% do think that they are equal to men, though no one is listening to them and they cannot make any decisions. It is not clear in which sense they see themselves as being equal.

It might be that they answered "equal" in order to please the researcher, thinking that this should be the right answer. It may distort the picture or portray a false situation. But it is always taking into consideration that some of the interviewees will answer as they do, to please the researcher, rather than giving the correct answers.

On the whole, we see that it is 50.5% who feel equal as opposed to 49.5% who feel lower, when 15 cases are missing. It supports the data presented on our first table by showing that there is a small difference between these two groups of women, almost half agree on equality, while the other half disagree and still feel lower in status, inspite of all the changes that have taken place in Nairobi.

Comparing the Sikh women to other Asian groups, looking at the women's status , the Sikhs agreed that from all Asian women, the Ismailis are the most advanced and liberal, while the Muslim women are the lowest in status. The Sikhs themselves feel that they follow the Ismailis in hierarchy. This was the women's own perception of their status in the Sikh community and within other Asian groups.

NOTES

1. La Capra, D. - Emile Durkheim Sociologist and Philosopher, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y. 1972, p.86.
2. Bierstedt, R. - "E. Durkheim"; Weidenfeld, Londong 1966, p.49-50.
3. Ibid - p.48.
4. Ibid - pp.48-49.
5. Parsons, T. - Sociological Theory and Modern Society. The Free Press, N.Y. 1967, p.194.
6. Ibid - p.198.
7. Guddihy, J. M.- The Ordeal of Civility Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1976, p.9.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the status of women in the Sikh community in Nairobi. The study focused on the community's response to social and physical environmental changes, especially in so far as they are reflected in the adjustments in the role and status of the women of this community. It investigated the question of whether the changes that have occurred in this Sikh community have placed the women in a better place compared to the life they lived when they first arrived in East Africa.

To have the necessary insight for us to answer such questions we had to examine the way of life of the whole community. We investigated the nature of the changes that have taken place in the community and their apparent causes. Further, we looked at how such changes have influenced women's roles and, consequently, their status in the community.

Our first hypothesis concerned the issue of a Pariah group in a foreign social surrounding, do they abandon or stick to the old values of their

society or adopt new ones. It became evident from the data that a migrant society does not abandon all its old values, nor does it accept all the new values of the dominant society. This is true of the Sikh women. When we asked about their way or style of clothing, the findings showed, without doubt, that the women were more conservative than men. Most of them used the traditional clothes for all occasions, very few used only European clothes, and the younger generation (2nd age group) had adopted the European styles, but for certain occasions only - either when going out for vacation, at work or meeting with Europeans. In their own community, say, in a social gathering or a religious function, they never appeared in European clothes. On the other hand, the men had adopted the European clothes: suits and jeans, and dressed like that irrespective of where they went. They have abandoned the traditional Sikh man's clothes, which are now left only to the priests.

Another example to support the hypothesis has to do with the Punjabi language. All the children who are born here speak English and Kiswahili which in Kenya, are the official and national

languages, respectively. The studies are done in English, as most of the children attend private schools; in the public schools they are done in Kiswahili and English, which are the languages of the dominant majority. Within their own community, the Sikhs have a third language, or the first one, according to them - the Punjabi language. Every child starts speaking first Punjabi, as this is their mother-tongue and it is a symbol of identity, which they, the Sikhs, as a minority group, will not allow to die. Everyone is able to speak it. This is a must; but very few know how to read and write the language. Therefore, they have published prayer books written in Roman letters, so all the children will be able to pray. This is an adaptation, or redefinition of the situation, taking advantage of the new situation, namely, that all the children know how to read and write English and to adopt it to their own needs. By so doing, the older generation, that claimed that religion was diminishing, and religious responsibilities were becoming fewer, made religion and prayers more familiar, so as to enable the young generation to participate in prayers and ceremonies, by giving them the necessary tools. Now the young

generation could not run away, or excuse themselves on the grounds of their inability to read the scriptures. Another phenomenon that seems to support the first hypothesis is the Sikh way of giving names to babies. Today, it is done in the same way as it was done a hundred or more years ago, though there is some influence from European and African communities. Thus the Sikhs use their old traditional names and the common African and European names within their present society.

Moving to our second hypothesis, we have a lot of data to support this hypothesis. We claimed that due to the changes in circumstances, in the social and physical environments, it is likely that the women have gained a higher status within the family and community.

This is reflected in many aspects of women's life. Chapter 5 dealt with this problem and data were presented that confirmed that Sikh women in Kenya are highly educated - the lowest grade achieved is '0' level while the target today is University education for both sexes with no preference. The new environment

imposed new rules of the game, which led to changes in attitude towards girls' education. There is no illiteracy at all, more and more girls join university and it is the mother who pushes them to study, to have a profession, and to be independent economically.

As education is relatively cheap for such a wealthy community in Kenya, there could be no excuse for not enrolling the girls in the scheme especially, when they have little else to do at home. The shift from a rural to an urban way of life caused more changes. The girls, nowadays are educated and trained in various professions. It started as a small stream which now is becoming to a flood of women who participate in wage labour. This phenomenon of women working outside the house and earning money for their work is quite new and shocking to the men. There are still men who cannot admit that women are as capable as men and can, just like men, contribute in different fields. The men still have the image of the woman as a housewife, who has nothing to say, and is only there to serve him.

Today, the reality has changed. The women are more educated, they know what rights are and that

they were deprived of them; so they put their foot down demanding their rights as human beings, and one of such rights is the freedom to participate in wage labour. 41% are working in a variety of occupations. It is an enormous step towards liberalization and equality.

Living in an urban setting forced the men to give more freedom, in the sense of mobility, to the women. As Nairobi is large and not everything is found within walking distance, the women became drivers. 89 women, representing 93%, drive themselves, and 80% of the sample own private cars. These figures made it very clear that a major change has taken place here and, on this matter, the Sikh women can be compared to any European group of women.

There is a chain reaction in the occurrence of the changes identified in this community. As women are more mobile and independent, they go out alone - again a major change compared to their way of life when they left Asia or during the early stages of their life here.

Nowadays women are allowed to spend their free time in different activities that force them to leave the house. These activities include sports, socializing, or various other social activities. Some have become ladies of leisure in the full sense of the word. As money is not a problem for most of them, women have their own pocket money to spend as they wish.

Western influence has crept in everywhere. As we showed in Chapter 6, there is modern equipment in the household that have made life easier. Their world of entertainment was conquered first with the T.V. and then the video dominating the Sikh family's free time at home. Adults and children are exposed by it to both Western and Asian cultures. These are very influential means of mass communication, which subtly instil values, attitudes, and norms of behavior into people of different cultures. The children absorb these values, try to immitate or even identify with what they see and apply it in their daily life. There is exposure to both bad and good values, and both are adopted. This massive exposure has its impact on everyone, including women. They learn

Western ways of behaviour, which sometimes contradict their traditional norms, but are still accepted as part of the change in their life. The data supporting the hypothesis are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The most striking and important changes occurred at the family level, altering the family structure quite a bit. In India, the Sikhs used to live in the joint family system. Nuclear families did not exist as functionally autonomous units. Marriage was arranged as tradition dictated. Our research has revealed major changes in this area of Sikh life existing simultaneously with fairly old traditional practices.

We have at various places provided evidence for the proposition that not all values have been abandoned; nor are all new ones adopted. This is very true regarding the marriage system. As we have indicated earlier, the girls are nowadays more educated. As a result, we may assume that they will be more liberal and open minded regarding their own future life. Yet, to our surprise, the reality is different. They still stick to their old traditions, regarding marriage and family life. The majority do accept arranged marriages, and consider it preferable.

They have their reasons for it. This system had proved itself better than love-related marriages. As the incidence of divorce is increasing, love marriages, put them in danger, therefore, the old known system is as good for them as it was for their mothers and grand-mothers. But in this form of arrangement, there is still some change. The girls can speak up and agree or disagree the parent's choice. This is a change in attitudes. The girl's opinion is now considered. In other words, there has been a redefinition of the situation: using the old system, but in a modernized way.

This proves that Sikh women in Kenya now enjoy a higher status. Their opinion is sought and, when they give it, it is respected. The girls have moved towards liberalization, but not yet to the same degree as men. What is allowed for men is still forbidden for women. Men, for example, are allowed to date any women; but Sikh women are not allowed to date men who are not their husbands.

Though the environment has its influence and forces, they stick to the tradition, which plays a major role in these aspects of life. It is very interesting how it works. The girls who study abroad behave there as all youngsters do. But the moment they return to Kenya, all is left behind and here

they act according to their community's expectations - meaning traditionally. This stage in a woman's life cycle, is dominated by Sikh traditions, no matter how educated a woman may be and whatever her position at work.

Major changes are taking place within the family structure. Chapter 6 discussed this problem in detail. We only want to highlight its salient features. The traditional joint-family system still prevails, but we have now another type of family - the nuclear one. It is a consequence of the environment and circumstances. A Western influence, with emerging new problems which demanded an immediate solution, opened a new way of life. Usually, a split in the joint family is caused by clashes within the family, especially between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. There are households in which the mother-in-law is a kind of tyrant, oppressing the daughter-in-law.

In some cases the conflict becomes completely irreconcilable, when there is a big gap between the daughter-in-law, who is educated and Western oriented, and the mother-in-law, who belongs to the old traditional generation. In such a case there is not

much chance of preventing a family split, if the woman insists on her right to live her own life the way she wants. Another cause of such splits is lack of adequate room. In an urban setting, space is a problem; the land is expensive and the family is too big and there is not enough room to accommodate everyone in reasonable conditions, then the family splits.

But even within the joint family system, some major changes have occurred, which lifted up the women to a position very similar or, in some cases equal to that of men.

We took the four family patterns of the Western world for comparison with the Eastern family and familial relationships. In the Sikh case, we can say that, for the majority, the owner-property pattern prevails. There are cases of the more advanced pattern head-complement pattern, that give us some indication that change is taking place. In migrant societies, traditionalism is usually stronger than in the homeland. By sticking to their traditions, the people feel secure. It was apparent from the data that this is generally true; but, on the other hand, it has been noted by Simmel¹ that a group with

minority status, whether it is tolerated, opposed or suppressed, will be highly flexible with respect to its modes of organization in order to preserve itself". In our case we have proof that both assumptions are valid. They stick to the joint-system tradition - but there are nuclear structures as well. Within the traditional frame work, there are modifications regarding division of labour within the family, changing roles between men and women; the women step in where men were before, fulfilling their duties as the new circumstances of the environment demand.

There were modes of behaviour in running a joint household. Each one had his position and duties and rights corresponding to each position. In the traditional family, daughters-in-law had only duties, no rights, except the eldest one, who had some rights. There is a hierarchy - the head of the house, usually father or mother-in-law or both; or, after their death, the eldest father's brother; then the first son and wife and so on.

The women of the house did not have any private rights. They were the family's property. Today, the reality in most families is different, though we cannot ignore those families which still stick to the old ways.

As time has changed, people have to adopt the new ways, if they want to keep their families together in a harmonious way.

There is a radical change in the relationship between the family members. The hierarchy is still there, but it is only a formal situation. Loving, caring, understanding of each other, giving more freedom, and more personal rights to daughters-in-law are the main features today. There is no segregation of women from the men of the family. Eating and discussing family matters together is the new trend. They still live in the traditional frame but in a much more liberal manner. Women do have a say. This does not mean that whatever they say is accepted, but at least they can express their opinions. In fact 46.8% are consulted regarding family and household matters. It is a radical change

in their status; they were lifted from no position at all to a complement or, in some cases, even a junior partner in the family. The women have their own opinion about this joint system. In future, one can expect a growing trend of nuclear families, as 47.5% of the women, who are mothers to young boys, expressed their wish not to live with their married sons. It means that when they get married, they will establish their own nuclear families.

In almost all joint families, women go out with their husbands for socializing. There are still cases in which the woman stays behind, while the man goes out, but generally it is more common for both to go out. The women, too, can go out alone in many families. Usually, this happens during day time when they go for their free time activities, which are influenced strongly by Western culture (see chapter 5.1). The fact that they are not locked up at home, as it used to be indicates a change in their position.

Another factor that indicates women's position within the nuclear family is family planning. The

wife is, in this case, an equal partner in planning the number of children. The husband cannot force her to conceive. Birth control methods are popular and the couple decides together how many children they want . There is a change in attitudes in this matter too. Having only girls was shameful; the couple would keep on trying until a boy was born. Today 53.2% would not try another time for a boy, if they reached the number of children they wish to have, even though these are only girls. The importance attached to having a boy is diminishing. Both sexes are considered equally important.

All the data discussed in Chapter 7 confirm that there is a change in women's status. They have gained a higher position in Kenya due to the changed environment and new conditions.

Today, the Sikh women have the power, and are equipped with the tools, to fight for their rights. They compare favourably with any other group of women in their neighbourhood - the European women, their reference group - as well as the women in the modern African families. Today, these women are

taking an active part in the activities of the wider community. They constitute a "power group" that cannot be ignored any/more. This is true at the wider community level as well as for the individual at the family level. Moreover, it is affecting all stages of woman's life cycle.

Our main task in this study was to answer the question: what is the status of Sikh women today in Nairobi? Our data, as provided in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 cannot give a clear cut answer. It is impossible to say with absolute certainty that they are equal to men; yet one cannot say they are all lower or higher in status than men. We have a vast range of variations. We can visualize it as a colour continuum, ranging from black on one end, through various intermediate shades, to white on the other end.

This is more or less what the Sikh women's situation is like. We have, on one end, some who are still leading a traditional way of life, with practically no voice; then there are those (the majority) who are in the intermediate stages, followed by those who are at the other extreme, who are more or less at par with their men.

Generally, we can say that the majority have gained a higher status, a fact that refutes our third hypothesis - that women in a minority group are considered lower in status. The fact that they are highly educated, participate in wage labour, are free, mobile, have a Western orientation, have their own activities, contributing to the welfare of the country - all these refute the hypothesis. Moreover, as we have pointed out earlier, they are not any less privileged than the other women of Kenya. We can see a continuing trend of change towards complete liberalization and equality. It is the future that will tell whether this assumption is valid or not.

NOTES

1. Theodore Abel - The Foundation of Sociological Theory, p.87, Randon House, N.Y. 1970.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ADI GRANTH or THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB, the holy scripture of the Sikhs English version, translated by Gopal Singh, Gur Das Kapur & Sons Private Ltd. Delhi - Jalandhar city, India 1960.
2. Anker, R. Research on Womens' Roles and Demographic Changes. ILO, Geneva 1980. World Employment Programme.
3. Bharati, A. The Asians in East Africa, Jahind and Uhuru. Nelson - Hall con. Chicago 1972.
4. Bierstedt, R. Emile Durkheim, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1966.
5. Bulatao, R. A. "Philinine Urbanism and the status of Women" Extracted from Women in the Cities of Asia by Fawcett et al.
6. Cole, W. E. and Singh Piara, S. THE SIKHS, Rotledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978.
7. Desai, R. H. "The Family Business Enterprises among Asians in East Africa", East African Institute of Social Research, Makerere, Conference paper, January 1975.
8. Desai, R. H. "Leadership in the Asian Community", Ibid.
9. Encyclopedia for Social Sciences, Vol3, p.527-529.

10. Encyclopedia Judaica. Keter publication house, Jerusalem, 1978.
11. Fawcett, Khoo, Smith(eds) Women in the Cities of Asia. Migration and Urban Adaptation Westview Press, Colorado, USA, 1984.
12. Gopal Singh A history of the Sikh people (1469 - 1978), Delhi, 1979 . World University Press .
13. Ghai, D.P. and Bharati (eds) Portrait of Minority in East Africa, Oxford University Press, 1965.
14. Graves, N. B. "Adaptation of Polynesian Female Migration in New Zealand" extracted from Women in the Cities.
15. Guddihy, J. R. The Ordeal of Civility, Dell publishing Co. Inc. New York, 1974.
16. Holm, J. The Study of Religion, Sheldon press, London 1977.
17. Goody, W. J. The Family, Pentice Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964.
18. Goody, J. Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups. Cambridge University Press, 1966.
19. Howly, A. Human Ecology, Ronald Press Co. New York, 1950.
20. Janovsky, O. The American Jew, the Jewish publication society of Amercia, 1972.

21. Kapadoa, K. M. Marriage and Family in India
Oxford University Press, London
W. I., 1966.
22. La Capra, D. Emile Durkheim, Sociologist and
Philosopher, Correl University
Pres, 1972.
23. Linton, R. The Study of Man, Appleton
Century 1936 quoted by Nye, F.L.
In Role Structure and Analysis
of family, Saga publications
Beverly hill, 1976.
24. Linton, R. "The Cultural Background of
Personality" quoted by Nye in
his book, Role Structure and
Analysis of Family. Saga Publication
Beverly Hills, 1976.
25. Linton, R. "Discovery, invention and their
Etzioni cultural setting" - extracted
from: Social change, sources,
patterns and consequences,
Basic Books inc., Publishers,
New York, 1964.
26. Mangat, J. S. A History of Asians in East
Africa 186-1945, Oxford, 1969.
27. McNall, S. 'The sociological experience'
Little Brown & Company,
Boston, 1969.
28. Oppong, C. A Synopsis of Seven Roles and
Status of Women. ILO, paper 94,
Sept. 1980, World Employment
Program.
29. Marvin, H. The rise of Anthrtopological
theory, N.Y. Crowel, 1978.

30. Parsons, T. Sociological Theory and Modern Society. The Free Press, New York, 1967.
31. Ross, A. The Hindu Family in its urban setting. University of Toronto Press, 1961, Canada.
32. Rotchild, D. Racial Bargaining in Independent Kenya - a Study of Minorities and Decolonization, Institute of Race relations, London, Oxford press, 1973.
33. Salvadori, C. Through Open Doors - A View of Asian Cultures in Kenya, Kenya publications, Nairobi 1983.
34. Scanzoni, L. D. Men, Women and Change, McGraw Hill, University of North Carolina, USA, 1981.
35. Sihra, K. Singh Sikhdom, Sikh commonwealth, South Harrow, Middlesex England, 1985.
36. Spradley, J. P. The Ethnographic Interview, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979, USA.
37. Steward, J. H. Theory of cultural change, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1973.
38. Swartz, M. J. Anthropology, John Wiley & Sons Inc. New York, 1976.
39. Thadari, V. and Todaro, M. "Female Migration, A Conceptual Framework" in Women in the Cities, by Fawcett et al (eds)

40. Thoman, W. I. and Znaniecki, F. The Polish in Europe and America, Octagon books, A division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, N. Y. 1974.
41. Thomas, W. I. The Unadjusted Girl, Harper and Row, New York, 1967.
42. Turner, R. H. Family Interaction, University of California, Los Angeles, USA, 1970.
43. Walji, P. "The Asians: A Minority in Transition", Seminar paper No.40, Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi, June 1980.
44. Walji, P. "The Relationship Between Socio-Economic Conditions and Fertility Behaviour Among Selected Asian Groups in Nairobi". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nairobi, October, 1980.
45. United Nations Publications for the U.N. Women Decade , Nairobi, July 1985.
46. Weber, M. Ancient Judaism, The Free Press, New York, 1967.

University of Nairobi
Department of Sociology

Questionnaire

The Status of the Sikh Women in the Community of Nairobi

Identification No:

Date:

Respondent's Address:

How are you? I am a researcher from the University of Nairobi. I am working for a survey on the status of the women in the Sikh Community in Nairobi. The survey has the support of the Office of the President. I would very much appreciate getting information from you for our study. Any information you give will be treated as strictly confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

- 1) How old are you (approx.) _____
- 2) Place of birth:
 - 1) Kenya
 - 2) India
 - 3) Other
- 3) If not Kenya - how long have you stayed in the country?
- 4) Do you intend to remain in Kenya: Yes/No
- 5) What is your marital status:
 - 1) single
 - 2) married
 - 3) separated
 - 4) divorced
 - 5) widow
 - 6) Other

6) Level of education

- 1) primary school
- 2) secondary - 'O' level
- 3) high school - 'A' level
- 4) College
- 5) Others

7) Which languages do you speak?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

8) What is your occupation (probe in detail)

9) What is your husband's occupation?

10) Do you belong to any social club or organization?

Yes/No

11) If yes, are you an official of your club or other organization? Yes/No

12) What is your contribution to your community?

13) How do you spend your free time?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

14) What is your contribution to the family?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

15) Do the Sikh women have a special day to go out alone?

Yes/No

If yes, when? _____

Where do they usually go?

16) How often do you:

	daily or almost	1-3 times a week	1-5 times a month	seldom	on special occasions	Never
Pray						
go to the temple						
read or sing; hymns						

17) Type of clothes worn at home _____

Type of clothes worn at work (if working) _____

Type of clothes worn when going out: _____

18) How often do you:

	daily or almost	1-3 times a week	5-10 times a month	seldom	Never
listen to radio: VOK					
Indian Station					
Read News-paper - Kanyan					
Punjab					
Video - English Films					
Indian / Films					
Cinema - English					
Indian					

19) Do you drive? Yes/No

20) Do you have a car for your own use, or whenever you need it?
Yes/No

21) Is your husband a Sikh? Yes/No

22) How long are you married? _____

23) Was it an arranged marriage? Yes/No

24) Did you go out with your husband alone, before the
wedding? Yes/No

25) If single do you date men? Yes/No

26) If single - what do you prefer - love marriage or arranged?

1) Love

2) arranged

- 27) As a married couple, where do you live?
- 1) with parents in-law _____
 - 2) with your parents _____
 - 3) in your own house _____
- 28) Do you own a house? Yes/No
- 29) How many children do you have? _____
- 30) Would you expect your sons to live with you after their marriage? Yes/No
- 31) What kind of education do you wish your children to have? _____
-
- 32) If you have to choose between your son or daughter who expressed their will for further education, who will be preferred?
- 1) son
 - 2) daughter
- 33) Who is the authority regarding children's education?
- 1) mother
 - 2) father
 - 3) In-laws
 - 4) Others
- 34) Who punishes a child, when he misbehaves?
- 1) mother
 - 2) father
 - 3) In-laws
 - 4) Others
- 35) Who teaches the children morals and Sikh tradition?
- 1) mother
 - 2) father
 - 3) in-laws
 - 4) kins
 - 5) others

If living in a joint family:

- 36) Who is the head of the house? _____
- 37) Who makes decision regarding the running of the house?

- 38) Who makes decision about what food items should be bought? _____
39. Who is responsible for shopping? _____
40. If a decision is to be made about buying a car, a building, a house, are you consulted? Yes/No.
41. You as an outsider - whom do you obey? _____
42. In case of not getting along with your in-laws, on whose side would your husband be?
43. If not getting along with sister or brother-in-law what is your husbands position? _____

44. Being a mother in-law, what are your duties?

45. Being a mother in law, what are your rights?
46. Being a daughter in-law, what are your duties?
47. Being a daughter in-law, what are your rights?

48. In your family, who decides on the number of children?
- 1) husband
- 2) wife
- 3) others
49. Are **sikh** women allowed to use birth control methods?
Yes/No

50. If you reached the number of children decided and they were all girls, would you try once more for a boy?

Yes/No

51. If you decide to prevent pregnancy, whom will you go to for advice?

- 1) husband
- 2) mother in-law
- 3) doctor
- 4) others
- 5) none

52. Can you define the basic changes in the community today 1985, compared to the traditional way of life.

53. Do you think that the Sikh women in Nairobi are:

- 1) in a lower position than men
- 2) in a higher position than men
- 3) in the same position as men
- 4) in a higher position than their sisters in India
- 5) in a lower position than their sisters in India
- 6) in the same position as their sisters in India
- 7) in a higher position than other women in Asian community
- 8) in a lower position than other women in Asian community
- 9) in the same position as other women in Asian community