



Indo-Canadian Community Centre

AGM 2017 - Members Report

“A History of Indo-Canadians in Ottawa” Project

Abstract

Indo-Canadians are one of the most successful immigrant communities of Ottawa and the National Capital Region. The community is important, dynamic and has made significant contributions to the social, economic and cultural fabric of our multi-cultural capital. Indo-Canadians of Ottawa are a diverse group, consisting of several sub-regional and linguistic groups with their own distinct culture and heritage. In this they reflect the multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious character of their home country.

There has been no documented study of this community. The present project begins to fill this gap by documenting the growth of this community over some 60 years, from its early beginning with a couple of pioneers in 1948 to the present state where its second and even third generations are making their presence felt in both the public and private spheres.

This Report traces the growth of both the community and its institutions. These include the creation of community associations; the acquiring and building of places of worship such as gurdwaras and temples; the organization of major social, cultural and religious festivals, such as the Festival of India Ottawa, Diwali, Vaisakhi and Durga Puja; setting up of classes and schools for imparting language training in a variety of Indian languages (e.g. Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil and other regional languages); and establishing institutions for teaching Indian dance and music, to preserve our cultural heritage and pass it on to the next generation of Indo-Canadians. The important role of the community in setting up charitable organizations and taking part in various mainstream charitable activities, is also described.

The Report records the challenges including discrimination faced by some early immigrants in finding employment, while settling down in a place with a very different climate, socio-cultural environment and culinary practices from the country of their origin. It examines the participation of Indo-Canadians within the community at large, in activities such as the municipal, provincial and federal public services, academic institutions, businesses and commercial institutions, social and charitable organizations and political processes. It concludes by outlining the current challenges faced by second and third generation Indo-Canadians in becoming full and equal participants in their new homeland.

The findings of this project will be published as a book entitled “A History of Indo-Canadians in Ottawa” in the summer to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Canada.