

**PERSPECTIVES, ISSUES AND CONCERNS
OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS
ABOUT THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN IN THE K-12 SCHOOL SYSTEM
IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

By

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines the issues, concerns and perceptions of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the K-12 school system in Canada. The researcher spent six weeks interviewing immigrant parents living in St John's, Newfoundland who had children going to school in the K-12 public school system.

The interview data collected was subjected to qualitative analysis and yielded a number of emergent categories and themes. The study was driven by the general research question: What are the perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the K-12 school system in Newfoundland, Canada? The following were the subsidiary research questions:

- How do the immigrant parents perceive the education their children are getting in K-12 in St. John's?
- What support systems are made available to these parents by the schools?
- What is the extent of immigrant parent involvement in schools and how can it be maintained or improved?
- How can the information about views and concerns of immigrant parents be used for the betterment of the education system in Newfoundland?

The study found that immigrant parents had various issues and concerns about the education system in Newfoundland. The study's findings include a discussion of immigrant parental involvement, support available to them within the school system and the suggestions given by them. The findings are valuable for other stakeholders in the education system to

consider and take adequate steps to address the problems faced by these parents and their children.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving parents,

Mr. Amar Singh and Mrs. Surinder Kaur,

who gave me a reason to do my best and succeed;

even more loving in-laws,

Mr. B.L Verma and Mrs. Neelam Verma,

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

All stakeholders in education- teachers, administrators, parents and community, to name a few, contribute immensely towards the education of children in a society. While teachers are in direct contact with students, school administrators have a challenging role in managing a school. Equally important are the parents who are known as the first teachers and who have expectations for the education of their children. Immigrant parents in any country are no exception. In fact immigrant parents are known to have high expectations for the education of their children (Kim, Sherraden, & Clancy, 2012). It is worth noting that immigrant families come to Canada generally seeking to provide a better life, education and career opportunities for their children than what might have been available to them in their home country (Anisef, Brown, Phythian, Sweet, & Walters, 2010).

Immigration involves stress and problems for any individual. Immigrant children, therefore, are vulnerable to many other problems apart from those that non-immigrant children would normally face. In their new system of education these children find it totally different from what they have seen back in their home country and they may suffer academically. Where English as a Second Language (ESL) is a major identifiable concern, these children may excel or lag in one or several other academic subjects. They may easily transition into the new system or they may face academic, mental, social or emotional difficulties adjusting to the new system. In this situation, the concerns of the immigrant parents about the education of their children are understandable.

Where parental involvement is the utmost requirement for children during their transitional years, the parents may not be able to give them time due to their own limitations, academic or otherwise (Zhou & Zhang, 2011). Studies about parental involvement suggest that there is a lack of parental involvement due to various incapacities of the parents and also that the schools have a significant role to play in the involvement of immigrant parents in the education of their children (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008; Kauffman, Perry, & Prentiss, 2001).

Immigrant children going to school bring along with them a culturally diverse background into the classrooms. This is certainly a challenge for educators but despite that, what is required is to ensure their inclusion in the Canadian classrooms. Since immigration and changing the demographics of schools in Canada is increasing, it is important to study the perceptions of this increasing population in order to prepare for the myriad of challenges related to it. The parents are better able to explain these problems that mainly arise due to the different environments in the home and the host countries.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the experiences, perceptions and problems of the immigrant parents in a new system of education where their children are exposed to the school culture, climate, educational ideology, curriculum and pedagogy which are very different from that of their own country. The support system available to the students and parents were examined through this study.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

It is evident that immigration in Canada is increasing. More and more immigrants are coming to Canada as foreign workers or international students with families. Immigrant children going to school bring along with them a culturally diverse background. Those who begin their schooling here are at an advantage but those who have to face transitions in the middle of their school years are assumed to have problems settling into a new place, language, curriculum, and pedagogy. There may be some others who transition easily into this new system of education. These issues, concerns and perceptions can be best explained by their parents since these children are too young to be able to do so effectively, especially when they are in the primary and elementary years of their education.

The challenge in this study was to analyze the concerns and perceptions of immigrant parents and to examine the support system available to them and their children. The study was also challenged with the problem of analyzing parental involvement, barriers to such involvement and the nature of the support systems available to these parents in the education of their children.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by a general research question and several subsidiary research questions.

General Research Question

What are the perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the K-12 school system in Newfoundland, Canada?

Subsidiary Research Questions

1. How do the immigrant parents perceive the education their children are getting in the K-12 school system?
2. What support systems are available to these immigrant parents within the school system?
3. What is the extent of immigrant parent involvement in schools and how can it be maintained or improved?
4. How can information about the views and concerns of immigrant parents be used for the betterment of the education system in Newfoundland?

1.4 My Interest in This Topic

Creswell (2013) asserts that researchers have a personal history that situates them as inquirers and an orientation to research that informs their research. While doing one of my graduate courses (Education 6940: Administration of Student Services in Post-Secondary Education) for my Master of Education degree, I was particularly drawn towards the topic of internationalization of post-secondary education. The course highlighted problems, concerns and experiences of students in post-secondary education and how some countries in the world have been competing against one another to attract international students, giving them more accessibility to services, helping them to make an easy transition and settle into the new place and program of study. This made me think of the students in the Kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) school system. Where volumes have been researched and published about post-secondary students, the students in K-12 facing similar problems seem to have been overlooked.

I personally know a number of students who have been facing problems not only because of the language but in the curriculum and pedagogy areas as well. A recent talk with a parent revealed that he was unhappy with the Math education his son was receiving at a school in St. John's. My own experience of taking a few undergraduate courses has not been very convincing about how the new teachers are prepared to pedagogically handle the diversity in the classrooms. The curriculum outcomes framed by the provincial Department of Education do not seem to match these children's knowledge regime one way or the other.

Hence, I decided to concentrate my study around immigrant parents whose children are studying in various schools around the city and interview them to document their experiences about the education of their children in the public school system in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), Canada.

1.5 Significance of the Study for Research and Practice

Since parents are directly involved in the education of their children, it becomes important to uncover their concerns and perceptions about the education of their children. All parents bring along a set of expectations and desired educational outcomes for their children, previous experiences about the education systems in their homeland and the ability to draw comparisons between the previous and current systems of education to which their children are exposed. Things change when their children are exposed to the education system in Canada which may be similar or completely different from their own country. This gives rise to challenges, difficulties and perceptions of these parents about the Canadian education system which are deeply rooted in the differences between their own and Canadian cultures, social

systems, values and opinions on matters like schooling, moral education, and parenting practice (Chi, 2012).

Parental expectations and attitudes influence children's academic success (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). This emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. The study should provide valuable information about how immigrants view and assess the Newfoundland and Labrador education system as compared to education systems in other countries. The issues, concerns and perceptions so expressed by parents can be a valuable resource for teachers, school administrators, school boards and teacher training institutions in their planning and their decisions about curriculum, pedagogy, policies, practices and teacher training modules in a manner to best serve the needs of the increasingly growing immigrant population in schools.

The existing studies mainly focus on the concerns of Chinese parents, and Muslim immigrant parents about ESL education and religious education (Guo, 2007; Guo, 2011; Karmani, & Pennycook, 2005). Some studies point out concerns of parents about discipline, acculturation, and the quality of Math education in Canadian schools (Chi, 2012; Gu, 2010; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2007; Waters, 1997). Ninety-eight percent of the parents in a study by Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey (1998) reported differences in educational ideologies. It is therefore necessary to document such concerns of the immigrant parents.

Since there are not many studies about perceptions of parents about the education of their children in the K-12 school system in Canada, this study would add value to the literature because it is a study that does not focus on any one aspect but as many aspects as the immigrant parents articulate during the course of this study.

1.6 Terminology

For the purpose of this study, the following terms and working definitions were used:

- immigrant parents: those who seek permanent residence in a country other than the one they were born in. It also includes those who migrate voluntarily, for educational or economic purposes. It does not therefore include refugees or those who have sought asylum.

This study includes immigrant parents of children who have transitioned from a different system of education in another country.

- children (of immigrant parents): the children born to such parents and studying in the public school system in Canada.

The study refers to first generation immigrant children who have transitioned from a different system of education in another country. First-generation immigrants are those who are foreign-born residents of Canada.

- K-12: the system of public school education from kindergarten to grade 12.
- Academics: the main subjects of study such as, Math, English, Science, and Social Studies.
- co-academics: extra co-curricular subjects such as, games and sports, arts and crafts, and Physical Education.

1.7 Assumptions

The study was conducted on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. The participants had perceptions and concerns about the education of their children in the K-12 system of public school education.

2. The participants in the study, given the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, were willing to truthfully share their perceptions and experiences with the researcher.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic and my interest in it. It further explains the purpose of the study, the research problem and the significance of the study. Major terms used in the study have been explained. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on immigrant parents' perceptions of various issues related to the education of their children. The existing literature covers a number of themes as discussed in the chapter. Chapter 3 describes the research design, and the methodology used in the study. Chapter 4 discusses the interpretation and analysis of the study data. Various themes and sub-themes emerging from the data so collected have been explained in detail. Chapter 5 states the findings of the study in the light of the research questions which guided the study. Limitations and delimitations of the study have also been discussed. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the study, and the conclusions and implications of the study for a number of stakeholders in the K-12 system of education in Canada.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Providing a better education to their children is a major reason for the immigration of families to Canada (Urquhart, 2010). Upon arrival when they face the education system here, some parents may like the ideology followed by the western system of education, while others may find it confusing and not up to their expectations in various respects. As a result, parents sometimes may feel torn between the hangover of expectations from the education of their children which they have due to past experiences and the new scenario that they find in the host country. These parents arrive in Canada with a set of expectations but they may find a different reality.

2.1 Immigration in Canada

In the highly globalized modern world, people moving across the nations for better opportunities in life are common. For many generations, people have been crossing international borders in pursuit of better avenues of work and living. The history of immigration in Canada dates back to the 17th century when the land was first colonized by the French in Quebec and then by the British in Newfoundland. Ever since then, immigration in Canada has been growing and its patterns have changed tremendously over the years. The immigration policies in Canada have welcomed immigrants from all over the world. Its efforts to retain skilled and talented immigrants have made Canada a preferred destination for people all over the world. "Canada is a multicultural society and its ethno-cultural make-up has been shaped over time by immigrants" (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 6). Better working and living conditions in Canada have attracted

immigrants from all over the world for years as temporary workers, many of whom later decided to stay in the country as permanent residents.

"Canada is a nation with an ethno-cultural mosaic as indicated by its immigrant population, the ethno-cultural backgrounds of its people, its visible minority population, linguistic characteristics and religious diversity" (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 6). In 2011, Canada had a foreign-born population of about 6,775,800 people. They represented 20.6% of the total population, the highest proportion among the G8 countries. Between 2006 and 2011, around 1,162,900 foreign-born people immigrated to Canada. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population in Canada. Canada's three largest census metropolitan areas – Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal – accounted for 63.4% of the country's immigrant population and 62.5% of recent arrivals. Out of these, Toronto had the largest share of foreign-born. The National Household Survey results showed that Asia (including the Middle East) was Canada's largest source of immigrants during the past five years, although the share of immigration from Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America increased slightly (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Migration involves change of culture, language, and socio-economic status for the individuals and families. Besides individuals, families comprising of the young and elderly adults and children of various age groups have been migrating to Canada. Immigrant children aged 14 and under who came in the last five years accounted for 19.2% of the newcomer population (Statistics Canada, 2011). It is worth noting that even though the immigrant families experience a decline in occupational status and disposable incomes (Li, 2003), social networks (Kilbride, 2000) and familial supports (Liamputtong, 2001), they come to Canada seeking to provide a better life, education and career opportunities for their children. These children either

begin their schooling in the host country from scratch or continue from their last attended grade in their home country.

These children, when they go to school find themselves in a totally different environment. Some of these are able to do well, others lag behind. Apart from these children, the parents feel disadvantaged due to their lowered socio-economic status and other immigration-related stress.

2.2 Education in Canada- An Overview

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility. The public education system in Canada consists of ten provincial and three territorial systems (Canadian Education Association [CEA], 2007). Each province has a number of school districts which function under a department of education in that province; it has its own set of regulations governing K-12 education. Canada is the only federated nation within the membership of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that has no direct federal involvement in elementary and secondary education. Canada lacks an integrated national strategy for education; however, provincial and territorial school systems across the country are incredibly similar (CEA, 2007). Although there is no central authority of education, the provinces try to be somewhat consistent through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The CMEC was formed in 1967 by the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education to provide a forum in which they could discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively, and represent the interests of the provinces and territories with national educational organizations, the federal government, foreign governments, and international organizations (CEA, 2007). CMEC is the national voice for education in Canada and, through CMEC, the

provinces and territories work collectively on common objectives in a broad range of activities at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. It is also important to acknowledge that despite all provinces having many similarities, there are some significant provincial and territorial differences in curriculum, assessment and accountability policies, as well as many regional variations in approaching educational reform (CEA, 2007).

The public education system in Canada seeks to provide equal, free and quality education to all the children in the country until the age of 15 or 16 years (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2012). Private independent schools and charter schools exist as an alternative form of public education and give the parents a freedom of school choice, thereby enforcing accountability and quality of education (CMEC, 2008). Needless to say, these schools are expensive and most parents cannot afford sending their children to these schools. There are some significant provincial and territorial differences in curriculum, assessment and accountability policies, as well as many regional variations in approaching educational reform. On the international front, Canada earns an “A” on its Education and Skills report card, ranking 2nd among 16 peer OECD countries (Brochu, Deussing, Houme, & Chuy, 2013). According to the CEA (2007), Canadians are more satisfied with their teachers than they are with the system as a whole. In a survey by CEA (2007), 19% of Canadians had significant confidence in their provincial governments when it came to educational policy, 45% had some and 33% had little or no confidence. This tells us that there is certainly something lacking in the system and it is nothing unusual for immigrants to experience this deficiency. Anisef and Kilbride (2008) advocate the need to identify why, how and where the education system in Canada fails to meet the needs of immigrants, instead of trying to ‘fit’ them into the existing educational system. The authors list several school related factors that are responsible for the failure of the education

system that include lack of a diverse perspective in the curriculum, inadequate testing methods, teacher biases and lack of cultural awareness in disciplinary decisions (p. 25).

2.3 Factors Influencing Immigrant Parents' Perceptions

As stated earlier in chapter 1, challenges and difficulties faced by immigrant parents and perceptions of these parents about the Canadian education system are deeply rooted in the differences between their own and Canadian cultures, social systems, values and viewpoints about matters like schooling, moral education, and parenting practices (Chi, 2012). Immigrant parents from different countries, with different cultures, and different socio-economic and educational status have different perceptions of, and expectations for, the education system to which their children are exposed. Their expectations are derived and conditioned by particular social, economic, educational, religious, cultural, historical, and family circumstances (Li, 2001).

2.4 Encounter with Canadian Schools

Immigration involves exposure to multiple cultures, languages, ideologies, religions, customs and traditions. Canada's cultural and linguistic diversity can be attributed to the long history of immigration in this country. This diversity strengthens the social structure of Canada but also poses some challenges both for the newcomers and hosts. Immigrant parents bring their values, language, culture, religion, and educational backgrounds to schools, enriching the educational environments (Guo, 2012). They also bring in expectations for the education system in Canada which are based on their previous experiences in the home countries. Apart from differences in pattern of education, instruction and pedagogy, immigrant parents have to face many difficulties in the education of their children because of cultural, religious and linguistic differences, time constraints and lack of knowledge about the system. Ninety eight percent of the

immigrant parents in a study by Zhang, Ollila, and Harvey (1998) reported differences in educational ideologies.

Behrman, Shields, and Hernandez (2004) and Anisef and Kilbride (2008) point out the strengths of immigrant families such as intact healthy families, strong work ethics and aspirations, and cohesive communities despite their generational gaps. They also point out challenges faced by these families, such as lesser education, low income and no benefits, language barriers, discrimination and racism, and the lack of support. They also emphasize that there are substantial variations in immigrant families' assets and challenges across different countries of origin. Some of the challenges and concerns as they appear in the literature have been discussed in this chapter.

2.4.1 First Language and Cultural Concerns

Canada is a country of cultural and linguistic diversity. The nation is becoming more and more a multilingual and multicultural society in the wake of growing numbers of immigrants. Immigrant families bring along with them a rich cultural heritage in the form of their own cultures and languages which add to the diversity of the country. However, problems arise when the children of these culturally and linguistically diverse families begin their schooling. The problems associated with culture and languages depend on the extent of similarity or differences between the culture and language of their home country and the host country. It also depends on whether these similarities or differences are accepted or not in the new culture (Amjad, 2013). Diversity can create problems if differences in knowledge and skills of these children are undermined. What is considered as desirable in one country may be considered undesirable in Canada and vice versa. A "good" child in other cultures may be expected to obey and "respect"

their parents' decisions about various aspects of their lives, whereas, children in Canada learn about individuality, independence and their own decision making (Urquhart, 2010).

English and French are the two official languages in Canada. Languages of the immigrants are not used in formal environments. As a result, the immigrants feel that their children might forget their linguistic identity. Ngo and Scheifler (2005) state that immigrant children do not have adequate access to culturally competent support at school because decisions regarding language instruction and services are often taken at the discretion and will of school administrators.

Guo (2012) found that children's schools often misinterpreted students' behaviours due to a lack of knowledge of students' cultures and also ignored children's previous language knowledge. Parents informally taught their first languages and cultures to their children at home. Parents provided a number of reasons for passing on their linguistic values to their children (Guo, 2012). For some, teaching and preserving the first language and culture was an important means of staying connected to relationships, cultural values, and identities forged in their home countries. Dealing effectively with diversity is a key issue in the present school system. Schooling of immigrant children should be examined within the socio-cultural context of Canada and also in the context of the home culture in which the children are raised.

2.4.2 Religious Concerns

Canadian demographics showcase religious diversity as well. A little over 1 million individuals identified themselves as Muslim, representing 3.2% of the nation's total population. Hindus represented 1.5%, Sikhs 1.4%, Buddhists 1.1% and Jewish 1.0% (Statistics Canada, 2011). Every individual in the country has the right to practice his or her religious faith. The same is applicable to the immigrants. Religion is deeply rooted in most immigrants and parents

want their children to keep it alive. For immigrants, religion and language are ways to stay connected to their roots. Immigrants, however, find it difficult when it comes to instilling religion in their children. Since public education in Canada follows a fundamentalist Christian curriculum with its calendar specifically fitting the needs of Christians (Karmani & Pennycook, 2005), and does not teach religion as a part of the curriculum, little attention has been paid to how minority parents negotiate their religious practices within public schools. They therefore, call for the recognition of religious diversity and the acceptance of religious symbols, exemptions from certain classes (swimming and sex education for girls), and prayer accommodation in the public schools where their children would attend. School administrators' concerns and their responsibility to maintain a secular school environment certainly bring the issues to a crossroads (Guo, 2011). This is a difficult situation for parents who wish to keep their home culture, religion and language alive in their children but see themselves failing in the absence of any support from the schools. As a result they have to resort to training their children at home about their culture, language and religion and hope that these are sustained in their children.

2.4.3 English as a Second Language Concerns

It is unreasonable to expect that all immigrants would be well versed in English which is known as the official language of the world. As such, international students in most of the schools in western countries are put into ESL classes so that they can assimilate well into the mainstream. However, there are issues related to this. First, many teachers regard learning English as a second language as crucial for ESL students before they move to mainstream classes, whereas the parents feel that their children would learn better being with the mainstream children than alienating them into such ESL classes. Second, there are two pedagogically

competing views of language learning- the formalist and the functionalist (Guo, 2007). The formalist view of language is associated with the language acquisition approach to language learning, whereas the functionalist view of language is associated with the language socialization approach to language learning. Within the educational culture of Canadian schools, ESL programs typically involve socialization processes. The teachers take a language socialization view and believe that ESL programs help ESL students acquire proficiency in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The parents however, favour the language acquisition approach over the socialization approach since they feel that gaining thorough knowledge of content and rules of grammar is important for language learning. There is considerable dissatisfaction with the communicative language teaching approach because there is no formal instruction on English grammar and vocabulary. Third, the parents perceived the ESL course to be a time consuming process, that had no credit value and also, that it had a lower content level which held their children back in comparison to their Canadian peers (Guo, 2007).

The success of such ESL programmes for language skills is debatable. In the United States, 32 reading interventions designed for English language learners were reviewed and none were found to have strong evidence of a positive effect on children's reading comprehension except for a few that were found to have positive or potentially positive effects for at least one improvement outcome (Espinosa, 2013). In another study in Vancouver, parents expressed dissatisfaction with the length of time that their children spent in the ESL program (Guo, 2007). They perceived that the ESL program was not academically challenging for their children and complained about the low level of content. Parents also expressed confusion with the multilevel, multi-age grouping of children in the ESL program and their desire to place their children in the

appropriate grade level because they viewed grade level as an indication of their children's achievement and progress in English (Guo, 2007).

2.4.4 Math Education

In the most recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Canadian students' Reading, Mathematics and Science test scores were sixth, 10th and eighth, respectively, among the OECD countries. However, the fact that Canadian scores in Math have declined over 9 years confirms the state of Math education (Brochu, Deussing, Houme, & Chuy, 2013, p. 30). In a study in the U.S, despite their optimism about opportunities for their children in the U.S., many immigrant professionals were not pleased with the quality of the United States' educational system, especially in middle and senior high schools. The participants perceived that U.S. secondary education had weak curricula and low expectations, especially in Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry (Chi, 2012). Gu (2010) in a report comparing Mathematics education of China and the U.S. called the U.S. Math curriculum as "a mile wide and an inch deep" (p. 23).

2.4.5 Parental Involvement and Parental Problems

Parental involvement is a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and child (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008). Anyikwa and Obidike (2013) described parental involvement as the participation and support of parents at school and at home, which directly and positively impact the educational performance of their children. Parental attitudes influence their children's academic success and are valuable resources for immigrant students. With respect to parental involvement in their children's education, Domina (2005) puts forward three benefits. First, parental involvement socializes children; parents who are involved send a message to their children that education is important, and these children are more likely to

value education themselves. Second, parental involvement provides parents with a means of social involvement; involved parents get to know other parents, teachers, and administrators who may then discuss their children's performance with them. Last, involved parents get access to information about their children; if they know their children are struggling, parents are in a better position to intervene. Families with high educational aspirations for their children provide more out-of-school learning opportunities for them. Parental involvement not only boosts the child's academic achievement and cognitive abilities but also helps develop social and emotional strengths (Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006) as teachers are able to effectively communicate their strategies, plans and curriculum offering opportunities to enhance home and school-based learning. Increased participation of parents also improves the child's academic self-confidence (Hung, 2005) and has a positive impact on their later school achievement (McBride, Justin Dyer, Liu, Brown, & Hong, 2009). Children of immigrants are influenced by their parents' views about education.

Parent involvement varies according to families' ethnic and language backgrounds, their socio-economic status, their formal education and resources available to parents. Many immigrant parents in Canada even if they want to get involved, may lack language skills, knowledge of the specific subject or lack of access to tutoring services to support their children in terms of parental involvement. Teachers feel disappointed by parents' requests outside their defined roles (Urquhart, 2010). The lack of effective communication and a culturally-sensitive approach impacts parents' participation in school meetings or school councils. Many teachers wrongly interpret a lack of parental involvement as a lack of interest and concern (Urquhart, 2010). Teachers may think that immigrant parents do not care about their children's education whereas many immigrant parents indicate that education of their children is the main reason for

their immigration. They are, in fact, frequently dissatisfied with the effectiveness of programs designed to bridge home-school communication (Guo & Mohan, 2008).

In a study on Chinese parents' involvement, Zhong and Zhou (2011) report that factors such as a lack of English proficiency, commitments to time, demanding jobs, cultural differences, and unfamiliarity with the Canadian education system create barriers to immigrant parents' active school involvement. The immigrant parents themselves attribute their inability to meet their parental obligations to their own limited understanding of institutional rules and resources, lack of fluency in English or French, lack of time or energy, or financial and emotional stress (Ali, 2008).

Li (2002) concludes that cultural and linguistic differences prevent immigrant parents from intervening more often in their children's education. The parents, who are able to intervene, do so using informal learning to familiarize themselves with the Canadian education system (Liu, 2007). Often the parental knowledge that immigrants hold about their children goes unrecognized by teachers and school administrators (Jones, 2003) due to the deficit model which perceives differences as deficiencies (Guo, 2012). This parental knowledge could be drawn from their own educational backgrounds, their professional and personal experiences of interacting with schools in their countries of origin, their current understanding of the host country's education system, their own struggles as immigrant parents, and their future aspirations for their children (Pushor, 2008). Teachers' lack of understanding about cultures, traditions and family lifestyles could reduce the family's possibilities of getting involved in their child's education. By involving parents, teachers can enhance their knowledge of their students' cultural context and can exercise culturally appropriate educational services (Waanders, Mandez, & Downer, 2007).

2.4.6 Dropouts

High-school graduation is a prerequisite to advanced education and training in Canada. Consequently, the educational and occupational futures of those who drop out of high school are severely curtailed. Canada, too, pays an economic and social penalty when immigrant children fail to integrate into the school system, perform well, and subsequently contribute to the broader society (Anisef, Brown, Phythian, Sweet, & Walters, 2010). When asked about their main reason for dropping out, school factors were most commonly cited by early school leavers. Rossiter and Rossiter (2009) note that immigrant youth in low-income families may feel compelled to get jobs that conflict with school schedules, in order to contribute to family income. Therefore, immigrant youth who work part-time or full-time in addition to attending school are at a higher risk of dropping out. Moreover, those children who struggle with language barriers, unfamiliarity with the school system, teacher attitudes, and little discipline are more likely to go astray and drop out of school. School-related factors were found to include boredom, or lack of interest in classes, difficulties with school work and with teachers, expulsion, and missing credits (Bushnik, Barr-Telford, & Bussiere, 2004).

2.4.7 Racial Discrimination, Injustice and Bullying

Tyyskå (2008) indicates that children of immigrants are at a higher risk to drop out, fail, be suspended or streamed into non-academic courses. Some reported being placed in ESL classes, despite the fact that English was their mother tongue. In other cases, qualified students were discouraged from taking the courses that would allow them to enter university. Anisef and Kilbride (2008) indicate that visible minorities face significant challenges coping with the school system, at the base of which are school policies, the discriminatory attitudes of teachers and the

organizational structure of school where the achievement or success among minority youth is not encouraged. Another cause of concern for parents is that their children may be subjected to bullying because of perceived differences of language, colour, race (Doyle & Aboud, as cited in Larochette, Murphy, & Craig 2010). Rossiter and Rossiter (2009) consider verbal bullying and name calling at school a significant problem that prevents the integration of immigrant/refugee children.

2.4.8 Academic Concerns

There are a number of other ways in which the Canadian system of education differs from that of the immigrants' home countries in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, educational ideologies, disciplinary procedures and homework policies. For example, the Canadian system does not consider class ranking to be part of the norm of evaluating students in Canada since they are more concerned with student progress and differentiated instruction whereas it is more emphasized in Asian countries (Zhou, 2013). One of the concerns of parents was that schools in Canada were often not strict enough with students, offering too much indulgence and too little discipline. Immigrant parents often feel disappointed by the lack of discipline in class and the lack of “respect” for teachers that is permitted in school because they feel that this situation has negative consequences for their children’s behaviour at home. In Western countries the concept of education is mainly focused on academic objectives whereas, to immigrant parents, education is not only about academic learning. It is about “values training”, character building and moral training (Urquhart, 2010).

The style of teaching and learning in Canada is marked by flexibility, creativity, and autonomy. Instead of emphasizing standardized content and curriculum, teachers in Canada

provide guidance only; learning is open-ended and at the initiative of individual students.

However, Asian immigrant parents have been known to often ask for teacher-led instruction, a homework policy, regular study, dress code or uniform, frequent meetings between parents and teachers, conduct reports and additional extra-curricular activities (Guo, 2007). This is primarily because western people value children's natural development whereas eastern education focuses on classroom teaching and exam writing.

Yet another concern related to the absence of a federal department of education or integrated national system of education, is that the curriculum differs more or less among provinces (CMEC, 2008) which causes problem for students who might have to move between provinces. Moreover, many immigrants do not find the content challenging enough for their children as compared to the curriculum in their own countries. Adding another dimension to it, there is nowadays an increasing demand for multicultural curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogy that the students can relate to and which will inculcate respect and awareness for all cultures among students (Lee, 2014).

2.5 Summary

This chapter entailed discussion about the topic from the existing literature. The chapter included a glimpse of immigration trends and an overview of education in Canada. The experiences of immigrant parents of the education system in Canada have been discussed in terms of their concerns and perceptions regarding first language, religion, culture, Math education, ESL programs, parental involvement and parental problems, drop outs, racism and bullying, curriculum, pedagogy, homework policies, discipline, educational ideologies and the absence of a uniformity of curriculum across provinces.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Chapter 3 provides a description of the research design, the researcher's role in the study, and the data collection and analysis procedures used in the study. Data issues like trustworthiness, validity, credibility, and transferability have been discussed along with the various steps taken to address those issues. Ethical issues and the steps taken to address those issues have also been discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

Creswell (2013) refers to research design as the plan or proposal that involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods to conduct research. The selection of a research design is based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researcher's personal experiences, and the audiences of the study. Since the research problem in this study can be best addressed with an in-depth knowledge about the perceptions of parents, the qualitative genre was determined to best suit this purpose. The strength of qualitative research is in its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Creswell (2013) maintains that details can be established only by talking to people, allowing them to tell their stories, not impeded by researcher's preconceptions and what the existing literature says.

A qualitative study begins with assumptions and the use of an interpretive/ theoretical framework that informs the study. To study the research problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting, sensitive to the people and places under the study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and

which establishes patterns and themes. "The final written report or presentation includes voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change" (Creswell, 2012, p. 44).

Creswell (2012) makes a strong case for using qualitative research when:

- we want to explore a problem,
- a complex and detailed understanding of the issue is required,
- we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their stories thereby minimizing the power relationship between researcher and participants,
- we want to flexibly convey the stories without restrictions of formal structures of writing (p. 48).

Narrative Ethnography Approach

The researcher not only selects a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method to conduct the study, but also decides on a type of study within these three choices. Strategies of inquiry (approaches to inquiry or research design) are types of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs (or models) that provide direction for procedures (data collection, analysis and report writing) in a study (Creswell, 2013).

According to the requirement, detailed personal accounts of experiences and perceptions are required from a culture sharing population (immigrant parents) to best answer the research questions. This exploratory research study therefore used narrative ethnography as a methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the views and perceptions of the immigrant parents about the education of their children in Newfoundland. Narrative research considers personal accounts of participants which are then retold or re-storied by

the researcher into a narrative chronology (Creswell, 2013). Ethnography is the study of shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and languages, rituals, interactions and life stages of a culture sharing group (Creswell, 2013). The ethnographer adopts a cultural lens to interpret observed behaviour in a culturally meaningful and relevant context (Fetterman, 2010). Since the main purpose of the study was to explore the issues, concerns and perceptions of the immigrant parents about the education of their children in the NL K-12 school system, it was decided that narrative ethnography would be a desirable approach. Thus, the choice of methodology is reflected in the nature of data to be collected and the characteristics of the participants involved.

3.2 My Role as Researcher

I, as a researcher, was the primary means of data collection, interpretation, and analysis. My role during the study was of an etic researcher (Fetterman, 2010) which is being objective while looking at the situation being external to it. I approached the parents through their respective religious organizations and contacted the volunteers through the memberships of their organizations. I recruited some participants through snowball sampling. I had no connections with any family personally. It is worth mentioning my background as a researcher. I am an international student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Due to the interest that I developed in the topic during my graduate coursework, I decided to choose this topic for my Master's thesis.

Agreeing with the need to indulge with the participants for obtaining rich data, Patton (2014) warns us that the researchers should define their role clearly because personal relations could develop during the research process. Hatch (2002) reminds us that boundaries may be

needed to define the research relationship between investigator and participants, and when or if the relationship will come to an end with the conclusion of the research project.

Throughout the study, as a researcher, I have maintained a to-the-point role. I contacted the parents professionally and made them aware of the study purpose and process, conducted the interviews and exited from the site. Throughout the interviews, I assumed an interviewer's role and avoided any situation where the parents could consider me their advocate or have any such expectations from me. There was no characteristic of any bonding developed or any emotional vulnerability in me as a result of my interactions with the parents.

3.3 Recruitment of Participants and Site

In November of 2014, the researcher was given formal approval by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) to recruit participants for the interviews from the membership of various social and religious organizations. These organizations based in St. John's were an effective means to reach out to the immigrants residing in the city of St. John's and surrounding cities. The participants were members of these organizations and regularly attended meetings and religious proceedings at these organizations. It is worth mentioning here that these organizations are not only religious in nature but they also provide a social platform to the immigrants where they can connect with their community, religion, culture and language. The researcher had to contact the heads of these organizations (personally, telephonically and through e-mail) that included the Hindu Temple, the Newfoundland Sikh Society (NSS), and the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANAL), for assistance with the study in recruiting participants from their membership. The heads of these organizations were e-mailed a study proposal that enabled them to consider the purpose, methodology, confidentiality and

anonymity, and the pros and cons of the study. They provided conditional consent letters upon approval by the ICEHR at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Since the researcher could not entirely depend on participants to volunteer for the study, she had to use snowball sampling to get an acceptable number of participants. The researcher wanted to use a purposeful sample of a diverse mix of participants and she has been successful to an extent in getting a maximum variation sample. Maximal variation sampling is a form of purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples individuals that differ on some characteristic (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) states that purposeful sampling is one in which the researcher intentionally selects participants and sites to understand and learn the central phenomenon. The members of the organizations were sent circulars through the list serve of these organizations by their heads upon receiving the copy of approval from the ICEHR at Memorial University, requesting the members to voluntarily participate in the study. The organizations also displayed the information about the study on their notice boards.

Three volunteers contacted the researcher and the rest of the participants were recruited using the snowball sampling. The interviews were conducted between November 2014 and February 2015. The participants were contacted and apprised of the study, its purpose and methods. The participants were interviewed at the time and location as agreed upon by them. The researcher visited some participants' homes to interview them. Some of the participants chose to come to the researcher's house while a few met her in their offices. The interviews lasted for a maximum of a little over an hour and a minimum of twenty seven minutes.

3.4 Background of Parents

All the participants were immigrant parents currently residing in St John's and neighbouring towns. Since most of the immigrant population in Canada comes from Eastern countries, there was a mix of Chinese, Indian, Bangladeshi, Italian, Philippino, Nepali and Nigerian families. Some of these parents had also lived in other countries including Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Kingdom, and other Canadian provinces such as Ontario. These parents worked in a variety of occupations and professions in Newfoundland: doctors, engineers, farm workers, pharmacists, students and housekeepers. The sample for the study was culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse. Not all parents could speak English fluently. In fact, there were sets of parents who knew only basic English. Another characteristic was the different ages of children and grades they were attending at school. The grades ranged between kindergarten and high school.

3.5 Establishing Rapport with Participants

Establishing rapport with participants prior to the interview is important as this can have a positive effect on the subsequent development of the interview (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008), will make the participants feel comfortable and encourage them to proceed and disclose information (Bryman, 2008). The participants were contacted over the phone and through e-mail when they had agreed to participate in the study. The venue and time for interviews were decided as per the participants' convenience. It is worth noting that in this study requiring people to volunteer to become participants, there was a lack of initiative among people to come forward and volunteer to participate. Some parents had concerns regarding anonymity. Once these people were contacted individually, explained the purpose of the study, the process,

and assured confidentiality and anonymity, they readily agreed to being participants in the study. The researcher was cordially treated when she went to the houses of some parents where sometimes both parents took part in the interview. At other times, the participants offered to come to the researcher's house. Some parents were in their offices when they were interviewed by the researcher. None of the parents expressed any objection to being audio-taped. Parents answered all the questions even though they had the liberty and option to not answer a question if they so wished.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Qualitative genre uses various primary or secondary data collection methods according to the need articulated in the research problem. The choice of methods depends upon what is (the question of the study) to be known and how (from what sources of data) best it can be known (Merriam, 2014).

Seidman (2012) states that the primary way a researcher can investigate an educational organization, institution or process is through the experiences of the individual people. Seidman further argues that, "if the goal of the researcher is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experiences, then the interview provides a necessary, if not always, sufficient avenue of inquiry" (p. 10). Since this study needs an account of perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the NL K-12 school system, it was decided that it would be best to use the interview method for data collection. In-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences. Seidman (2012) validates the importance of interviewing in qualitative research

and states that, "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning that they make out of it" (p. 9).

The literature on qualitative research methods classifies interviews into three general categories- structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Merriam, 2014; Patton, 2002). This study utilized the semi-structured approach to interviewing which contains a mix of more or less structured, open-ended questions. This type of interview is guided by specific issues or a list of questions to be explored; however, there is no rigidity about the exact wording or the sequence of questions (Merriam, 2014). A total of eleven (11) interviews were conducted between late November 2014 and February, 2015. Each of the interviews was audio recorded, transcribed and returned to the interviewees for verification.

Another method of data collection used in this study was direct observation and taking field notes during the interviews. Observation is useful in overcoming discrepancies between what people say and what they actually do, and helps unearth behaviours which the participants may themselves not be aware of (Patton, 2002). The observational data, known as "field notes", consists of text recorded by the researcher during the qualitative study (Creswell, 2008, p. 224). The researcher made "reflective notes"(Creswell, 2008, p. 225) during the study about the sense she made of the participants and situations. The notes were kept in a journal which was later used in the data analysis process.

3.7 Data Analysis

After data collection using interviews and field notes, the next step was to organize the data and analyze it to make sense out of it. The goal of qualitative data analysis is to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings (Patton, 2002). Qualitative

data analysis has been often termed to be a complex process, time-consuming, and creative endeavour (Grbich, 2012; Suter, 2011). The challenge in qualitative data analysis is to reduce data, identify categories and connections, develop themes, and offer reflective conclusions (Suter, 2011). The author affirms that qualitative data collection and analysis usually proceed simultaneously. Grbich (2012) supports the view that preliminary data analysis is an ongoing process and takes place every time data is collected. Qualitative data are often reduced into meaningful chunks (categories), usually by coding, and interpreted in the light of relationships that emerge from data reduction (Suter, 2011).

The data analysis for this study was completed using a computer, but no computer qualitative analysis program was used for same. The data obtained in this study through interviews was transcribed and saved in the form of MS-Word files. The researcher had decided to present the data according to themes in the later chapter of this study. The data needed to be converted from respondent-wise files to theme-wise files. So, the first task was to code the parents' responses using a different colour for each parent. The second task was to read each of the transcribed interviews for what Creswell (2008) considers a "preliminary exploratory analysis" (p. 250) in order to obtain a general sense of the data. Creswell further suggests that, coding is the process of segmenting data to form broad themes, and although there are no set guidelines for coding data, some general procedures do exist. Each time the researcher read an interview transcription, some broad categories immediately emerged from the data. She bold marked the transcribed data pertaining to each category and added corresponding comments in each interview transcription word file, describing in a phrase what the conversation conveyed. She made as many different MS-Word files as the number of categories and named them Category 1, Category 2, Category3. . .and so on. The next step was to cut data (coded in different

colours parent-wise) pertaining to each of the broad categories and to paste them into separate document category files, consecutively numbered as Category 1, Category 2, Category 3. . . and so on. This resulted in having responses of all parents (coded using different colours) category-wise in separate files. The next step was to find themes in the broad categories. She read the category-wise interview again and bifurcated it further into themes and sub-themes by adding descriptive phrasal comments for each theme or sub-theme. She followed the criteria that if she found one similar to what she found in the previous interview data, she coded it using the same phrase but if she found any different themes, she assigned them a new descriptive phrase. The researcher thus had a certain number of themes in every category of interview data. To avoid any confusion, a list of codes was made. The data was also stored in duplicate in the researcher's flash drive. The unitized data was re-read by the researcher along with the field notes and significant data regarding each of the themes was highlighted to be used as quotations. Coding certainly provided the researcher with specific data she could use and other insignificant data that did not provide evidence for the themes in this study was discarded (Creswell, 2013). The data so selected was used towards answering the major research questions in the study.

3.8 Data Issues-Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, one of the major challenges is to ensure data trustworthiness or validity. The search for quality, or the criteria with which to ensure quality, which traditionally in positivist or post-positivist paradigms meant validity, reliability and generalizability, is essential for the research to be accepted (Loh, 2013). Hammersley (2008) admits that “guiding principles and lists of relevant considerations” (p. 160) are important in helping to assess research quality. The problem of criteria seems to be the most difficult and important problem in determining the quality of educational research (Smith, 1990). However, the research community relies

predominantly on the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985). Seale (1999) accepts the consensus reached by the larger qualitative research community and accords importance to the critical and influential work by Lincoln and Guba. He recommends that qualitative researchers incorporate the procedures outlined by these authors into their work where relevant. Using the same criteria for trustworthiness or validity, the researcher attempts to establish the credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity or generalizability), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity) of the study.

3.8.1 Credibility or Internal Validity

Credibility seeks to ensure that the study measures or tests what is actually intended. It refers to the "rigor in the research process" (Gasson, 2004, p. 95). Credibility can be ensured by prolonged engagement with participants; persistent observation in the field; the use of peer debriefers or peer researchers; negative case analysis; researcher reflexivity; and participant checks, validation, or co-analysis, thorough description of source data, and rich, thick descriptions which involve deep, detailed accounts not only of participants' experiences but also of the contexts in which those experiences occur (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Morrow, 2005). The term "thick description", first introduced into the literature of qualitative research by the noted anthropologist Clifford Geertz in 1973, in a seminal essay titled "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture", has been supported by the research community.

To ensure the validity of this study, the researcher has resorted to the use of participant or member checking. Member checking shifts the validity procedure from the researchers to participants in the study by taking data and interpretations back to them so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and the narrative account (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The interviewees were given their transcripts which they verified to be true and later, interpretations of the same in the light of research questions, for further verification. The researcher also used rich and thick description of data by giving out detailed accounts of experiences as narrated by the participants. This researcher has used quotations from the interview data at various places to ensure a deep, dense detail of the experiences of the parents in the study.

3.8.2 Transferability - External Validity or Generalizability

The often cited criticism of qualitative research is lack of generalization. Transferability refers to the extent to which the reader is able to generalize and apply the findings of one study to other situations (Morrow, 2005). Morrow further states that:

This is achieved when the researcher provides sufficient information about the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher-participant relationships to enable the reader to decide how the findings may transfer. (p. 252)

Since all observations and findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of individuals and are defined by the specific contexts in which they occur, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are generalizable and applicable to other situations and populations. The generalizability of this study, therefore, depends upon the readers as to how much they see the context and population of the study to be similar to their own.

3.8.3 Dependability or Reliability

Dependability or reliability demands that “the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques” (Gasson, 2004, p. 94). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (2002) agree that with regards to the researcher's ability and skill,

reliability is a consequence of the validity in a study and without reliability, there can be no validity. Morrow (2005) suggests that reliability can be "accomplished through carefully tracking the emerging research design and through keeping an audit trail" (p. 252). "An audit trail is established by researchers documenting the inquiry process through journaling and memoing, keeping a research log of all activities, developing a data collection chronology, and recording data analysis procedures clearly" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128).

For the purpose of establishing the reliability of this study, the researcher has explained in detail the processes utilized within the study such as, the research design, its implementation, and the operational details of data gathering (maintaining interview schedules and journal).

3.8.4 Confirmability or Objectivity

Confirmability or objectivity ensures that the findings of the study are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics, preferences or bias of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data during the entire research. As suggested by Lincon and Guba (1985) in their classical work, the audit trail could include an audit of raw data, field journal, interview schedules, research design, and an analysis design to trace the course of the research step-by-step via the decisions made and procedures described.

Since the researcher has maintained all records of raw and processed data, a journal of field notes and interview schedules, and the framework for analyzing data to arrive at various themes, establishing the confirmability of results should not be a problem.

3.9 Ethical Issues

To comply with the ethics in conducting research with humans as laid out by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the researcher followed these procedures:

- approval was duly obtained from the ICEHR at Memorial University of Newfoundland;
- the religious organizations involved were sent study proposals and their permission to recruit participants from their membership was obtained;
- the study purpose and process was clearly explained to the participants prior to each interview and consent letters were duly signed by them;
- participants were informed of their rights and their option to withdraw at any time during the study ;
- data (field notes, audio tapes interviews and transcripts) were stored securely (using password protected files) and were treated as extremely confidential;
- the identity of the participants, their children and the schools their children attended was kept anonymous using pseudonyms; and lastly,
- the transcription was done by the researcher herself to ensure confidentiality.

3.10 Summary

This chapter explained the research methods and methodology used in the study along with the procedures followed by the researcher to recruit site and participants, establishing rapport with participants, conducting data collection, conducting data analysis, ensuring trustworthiness of data, and complying with ethics. The use of narrative ethnography was deemed to be the best for answering the study questions.

Chapter4

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter discusses the various categories and themes that emerged from the data. The categories discussed in this chapter are parental perceptions, issues and concerns, parental involvement and support systems. The themes and sub-themes within these major categories have been discussed in detail with specific reference to various comments and quotes from the participants in the study.

4.1 Emergent Categories and Themes

Thematic analysis, put simply, is a categorizing strategy for qualitative data. Researchers review their data, make notes and begin to sort it into categories. The researchers thus move from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes. Braun and Clarke (2013) define thematic analysis as, "a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 120). The authors explain a theme as something important about the data in relation to the research question that represents a patterned response or meaning within the data set. They articulate that the first step in thematic analysis is to "immerse oneself" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87) in data by reading and re-reading it.

This study aimed to explore the perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the NL K-12 school system. The data was collected from the participants using interviews and field notes. The analysis of data resulted in the emergence of various categories such as, parental perceptions, issues and concerns, parental involvement and support systems, and parental suggestions. The themes and sub-themes within these categories have been discussed in detail.

4.1.1 Parental Perceptions

The parents were asked for their perceptions and views about their goals of education, their expectations for the education of their children, achievements and growth of their children in the host system as they see it, and the system of education in Newfoundland.

4.1.1.1 Goal of education. Ameeka hailed from Nepal and felt that education should give her son, who was in grade 3, a sense of awareness to help them to distinguish between right and wrong, and to choose the right for himself:

He should be able to know everything. Education seemed to be more of bookish knowledge. . . it should be a practical thing. He should be able to know and realize what is good or what is bad. . . it is like saying that this is good for me to do and this is not. He should be able to realize the difference between the two things and be able to think for himself and trying to find out how he can excel in his career. . .

Smriti Singh, whose son was in grade 12, was concerned about the transition to university and said that:

. . . up to grade 12, they have to be ready for the competition that they are going to face in the university. . . and (education should) give them an idea of what they would like to pursue. . . through grade 12, the subjects that they would like to go ahead with, assuming that they are going to university.

Mitesh Ahuja's daughter was in grade 4 and he perceived the goal of education to be "overall development" of the individual. He further added that:

. . . it is not about just getting good grades and getting admission in medical or engineering. It is about responsibility, because you are born on this earth and you have a responsibility towards everybody. . . so that's how it's not just study, study, study. . . it is the real meaning of study. . .

Mrs. Jhajj, who had come from Italy, perceived that education should be job-oriented and something which should help her children to get jobs. She said that:

we wish that our children should study and get good jobs. . .

4.1.1.2 Parental expectations. Parents echoed their expectations for the education of their children. Aameeka admitted that:

The problem being parents is that you want your child to excel good in his career and what I felt is like the reason why we came to here as well is like what I have learnt in my. . . when I was small, I have learnt that whatever the things that you learn in the cradle that (they) last in grade 10. . . that's what made me feel that he should be able to know good things that will inspire him to be a good person in his life.

Mrs. Lucy, who was also from Italy, had two sons in grade 5 and 8. She expressed her expectations about the choice of career for her sons, in saying that:

I want that. . . like my son wants to be doctor or engineer... and I also had a dream that he becomes a pilot. . . however I wouldn't force him. . . it is good. . . whatever a child would like to be.

Chang was from China and his son was in grade 8. He had high expectations for his son:

. . . probably you'll think strange because (that) I am from an eastern country. . . and academic performance is quite important in our culture. I always hope he can go to a renowned university like Oxford.

Mrs. Smriti Singh, who aired similar expectations, was quite worried about the social integration of her son. When her son initially started school in the province, she reported having, at the back of her mind, concerns about adolescent problems and fear of racism and thought that academic excellence was a way to social acceptance in a foreign country:

I expected him to do well and to be in the top of the class. . . and he was a good student in India too. . . so I didn't really think that would be tough for him. . . but I was more concerned about the social aspect of education. . . I wasn't worried about the study at all. . . I was more concerned about being in the teenage group and adjusting in the new atmosphere. . . where he was the only single coloured person in his whole class and that too wearing a "*patka*". . . but he overall. . . because I always told him that if he excels in other work, other children will look up to him and he wouldn't feel any problem with adjustment. . . his teachers will be happy and he should be able to blend in there. He did well and there was no bullying at all. . .

Mrs. Holy Patrick, who hailed from Nigeria, had lived in Kuwait and the United Kingdom before settling in Newfoundland, Canada. She had high expectations from her son who was in high school. Focusing on the relationship between easing into university transition and high academic performance, she talked about the need to perform well in school:

when you want to get into the university. . . you will get any course he wants at the tip of his finger. . . that is because you have done so well with your high school and subjects. . . at least I want that he has an average of 80 so that he is able to pick any course of his choice and there will not be any restriction or will (not) be not achieving enough in any subject that can block the way of getting into a course of his own choice.

4.1.1.3 Perceptions about the system of education in Newfoundland. Parents' perceptions of the system of education in Newfoundland included both positive and negative views based on their experiences.

Ameeka was concerned about the adequacy of the system, though her son liked going to school very much.

. . . he seems to be enjoying the school. He doesn't say that I don't want to go back to school. He is enjoying the environment in the school but I am worried that whatever education is being given for that class is that enough. . . that is the question. . .

Having said this, she added further:

I guess that he has lots of questions and he asks a lot of questions in the class and it has made him confident as well as active, extrovert. . . that is what is happening and he is able to get mixed up with the people no matter from which part of the country they are. He is very friendly. He is enjoying the company. . .

Ehsaan, who was from India and had lived in Toronto as well, expressed her concerns with regards to university transition:

I think that besides (providing) for broader competency in dealing with the world and all those sort of things, morals and incorporating of character and the like. . . to

know about how to take care of themselves and how to manage things I think that there shouldn't be much of a gap between grade 12 and university all across Canada. . .

She compared the public school system with the private school system and said:

. . . if I compare to. . . let's say. . . a private school in Canada. . . then no, they are not preparing him for what I feel every child should get the opportunity for. . .

Similar concerns were put forth in by Chang who perceived that:

. . . in here. . . I think that the purpose of education is quite different from what I had expected. . . I think the aim of education in this country is to prepare citizens for a democratic system. . . democratic country. . . so academic performance is not really focused on too much in this country. . .

Though he liked the atmosphere of schools in Canada and the fact that it was good to educate children to become responsible citizens in a democratic society, he admitted that he was still a conservative person from an Eastern country. He added that:

. . . you know I think the aim of this country is good. . . it is good for everybody but for some people. . . you know for me. . . I still hope my son, he can meet some challenges . . . he can do himself some academic achievements, be a scholar in his future. . . so I think probably. . . I won't let him continue his public education. . . continue his education in a public school in Canada. . . probably for the next semester I will change him to a Roman Catholic school. . .

Mrs. Jolina, who was from the Philippines, perhaps tried to look at it through a cultural lens:

For me this system is not that good. For example. . . sex education is not that much important. . . the way I look at it. There should be a little bit more effort for the students to do something more to excel. . . give them a little more, extra work to excel. . .

She shares part of her concerns with Chang who perceived that:

I think. . . education system in Canada does not really challenge the potential of the students. . .

On the other hand, a number of parents expressed satisfaction with the system. A few parents who earlier expressed their resentment about a particular aspect, talked about the brighter side of the system too.

Mr. Ahmed, who had lived in Saudi Arabia and India before coming to St John's, was very much impressed by Sir Ken Robinson's philosophy; he talked about the aims of education and expressed his satisfaction with the system:

The education should facilitate teaching, not teach them. . . not force them to learn something. . . that's what I feel. . . and how it is doing it here. . . maybe they are doing good. . . as far as I know based on my experience. . . it is a better system than what I find where before I was. . .

Mrs. Jolina expressed her satisfaction with the system in terms of transferability from one school to another:

. . . it is centralized. . . in our country it is different when you transfer from one school to another school. . . takes a while, a lot of work, effort. But in here, when you gotta go to different school. . . transfer to other school, you don't have to bring anything. . . you don't have a problem. Only gotta go, say you want to transfer here. . . that's it. . . everything is in the system. That is very comfortable.

However, looking at it broadly, Ehsaan expressed her concerns about transferability within provinces, when it came to transfer of credits:

Transfer of credits is a hard thing. . . annoying thing to do. I think they should be more smooth across Canada. After all, it is only one country we are talking about. I think the standard of education across high schools and university should be brought up to par. . .

Mrs. Holy Patrick was happy to find that the system included volunteer work and recognition for the same as well:

Part of what they are doing. . . there is something they call. . . career path. It is part of what they are teaching them. They have to achieve some hours of career. . . it could be something like volunteering to do something. . . it could be to keep shop or volunteer to do community work. . . to help the less privileged. . .

Mrs. Smriti Singh added about organized operations of the system and equal opportunity for all in it:

I find that here, the day to day work is more well planned. . . the courses are more well planned. . . without any stress at any particular time. The teachers are sort of involved in the day to day. . . average students can be part of that learning experience. . . rather than just the good students. . .

Mrs. Priya Ahuja echoed her satisfaction about the individual attention her daughter was receiving:

Here, the ratio per teacher per student (students per teacher) is very low. . . there are very few students for one teacher. . . so they are given more focus and everything. . .

4.1.1.4 Children's achievements and growth. Parents were asked about their children's achievements and growth ever since they had been in the education system in Canada. Almost all the parents had positive stories of their children's achievements and growth in terms of academics, co- academics and life skills.

Ameeka painted a comparative picture of the situation in her home country and Canada:

Back home, though the education was there. . . the only thing is the environment wasn't there. . . because of most of the time there were curfews and all the stuff Nepal had. . . because of political situation. . . in a month they usually had to stay home for ten days or something like that and even then you had to pay the whole month fee and all that stuff. . . and at that time you feel like okay. . . is he getting enough education or not. . . and what happens is they are loaded with all of the knowledge of different stuff at the same time. . . which might make them confused. . . so realizing that also. . . though situation is changing back home as well. . . coming out here is like they have to go everyday. . . he used to say back home. . . he used to say tomorrow is a holiday. . . no matter what. . . he wanted to stay back home. . . he didn't want to go to school. . . after coming here. . . the change I have found is that he never says that he. . . tomorrow he doesn't want to go to school. . . because he wanted to. . . that's a good thing that he is loving to go to school. . . and the company he is getting is also good. . . he is making friends and adjusting himself. . . and we thought that it might be quite difficult for my child to adjust with people with different cultures. . . the way of our speaking English is quite different to that of Canada. . . people staying here. . . that might be a problem we thought. . . but he adjusted pretty well. . . he has made friends, and he loves the company of his friends. . . he seems to be happy with that. . . we are also happy. . .

She added further to the positive note and in the light of the background she had in her country, attributed the growth of her son and his achievements to the Canadian education system:

In terms of education in Canada. . . it's more of child centred rather than teacher centered and back home it's more of teacher centered than child centered. . . though it doesn't mean more of child centered only. . . I guess it has made them more confident enough and proactive. . . so that's good , they are able to bring whatever the talent whatever the skill they have. . . they are able to present them in front of the class and he doesn't feel shy. . . that's a very good part of it.

Ehsaan, talking more about academic achievements, and comparing the achievements and growth of the child in two places, commented that:

I believe that he is. . . he is doing almost as good as he was doing there and here. And as of now, I think he is getting about 90% in his classes in. . . all his classes. So I would say he is doing good.

Mrs. Lucy felt relaxed that her children were gaining academic momentum:

Progress as of now is happening gradually. . . they have started from zero. . . because of different languages. . . Italian there and English here. . . so it was difficult in the beginning. . . but now we feel a little relaxed. . . because the children are gradually learning. . . so I am a little satisfied.

Ahmed was all positive in speaking about his children's achievements and growth in terms of co-academics:

It is about one year's experience whatever I am talking about and I feel that the accomplishments of my kids are tremendous. . . in this one year, particularly in terms of extracurricular activities. I always feel that these extracurricular activities were missing in my children which they are getting here now. . .

Mr. Mitesh Ahuja was extremely happy and excited about his daughter's growth in this system:

the first thing to me is the language barrier. . . so in India, although she was in English medium school, but here when she came. . . it is totally like. . . English. . . there is no second language. . . so initially she had little bit transactional (transition) phase. . . but then she really picked up fast. . . that was a really. . . one achievement I would say. She improved a lot. Another thing is the confidence. . . the level of confidence you'll see here is far different. . . at this grade is superb. . . another thing is, the decision power is really, really great. . . that is what I have seen in her. When she was back in India and now what she is here. . . is totally different. . .

4.1.2 Issues and Concerns

Parents talked about various concerns and issues that they faced in the K-12 system of education in Newfoundland. The issues and concerns are explained in the form of quotations below.

4.1.2.1 Homework. All the parents had a concern about little or no homework. Ahmed believed that there should be more homework for children:

I am coming from a culture where we . . . went to a school where we have a lot of assignments, homework, but this is quite missing here. . . whatever is the reason behind that. . . there could be some reason definitely. . . but I think that there should be more of homework and assignments.

Ameeka, reflecting upon her experiences back home, talked about the effect of “no homework” on her son:

Back home, no matter for a child in class one they usually get homework you have to do. . . each and every time they come back home they usually have homework to do. . . so probably an hour of work that they have to do and submit it the next day. . . here what I find is that they have study. . . the only thing is that they just don't get homework. . . and it doesn't make them feel that I have to go back home and study too...

Chang also confirmed the lack of homework and said that:

It is a cultural shock for me because everything here is quite different from his previous school in China. In here, they don't have many assignments. . . they have assignments but not many. . .

Mitesh and Priya Ahuja had similar concerns until their daughter's teacher alleviated those concerns:

. . . hardly once or two times in a year she gets homework. I am talking about my daughter's school. . . I know my friend's daughter, she gets homework every single day. We asked the teacher why she is not getting homework. . . the teacher said. . . she doesn't require. . .

Mrs. Jhaji had another problem associated with homework and assignments. She talked about “little or no homework” in schools:

. . . I am not that educated. . . so I don't know. . . my children tell me about their problems. . . that they face. . . like my daughter told me. . . she has a problem that they don't give enough homework. . . so she doesn't know what to do. . . but in Italy they used to give her homework. My son gets homework. . .

She furthered the conversation by articulating her resentment about the way homework is checked:

If they give any homework, they correct it in the class but they don't explain properly how to correct mistakes. They go quickly about it. Even in a quiz, they say that answers are incorrect but don't explain why it is incorrect.

4.1.2.2 Curriculum. Almost all the parents except two, believed that the curriculum was not upto the mark. Ehsaan put it very simply and rather straightforward in comparison to Ontario:

In general, I believe the curriculum in Newfoundland. . . let's talk about Science, is easier than the curriculum in Ontario. I am pretty sure it is true. . . it is easier. . .

She went on to compare the system of education in Ontario and Newfoundland and even beyond K-12 and commented:

You can't possibly compare the first year Physics course at Waterloo to Memorial. . . there is a whole different bargain and I think this is causing Newfoundland to be not so forward as other provinces. There is got to be more grads from Newfoundland who go on to become famous... they graduate from Memorial and go on to other provinces. . .

Ameeka painted a comparative picture of her home and host countries, and pitched in with similar concerns:

. . . it seems to be like a very slow process. . . because back home at the age of my child, in class 3 they probably might have to do a lot of Social Science, Science. . . all the different subjects and they have to do a whole lot of homework on different subjects and might be able to know lots of things about Science. . . though it is more of bookish knowledge. . . here they are gaining more practical knowledge.

However, she was quick to point out that:

The type of things that he has been doing are a bit slow in comparison to back home. . . but I might be wrong because in terms of what I have heard is that. . . they in terms of

psychology and grasping capacity of the child, they give that much of knowledge which is good for the children.

Mrs. Lucy compared the curriculum in Canada and Italy and said:

In Italy, the children were exposed suddenly to advanced things from basic things. They used to go slow initially and then speed up. The level of Math is high there. . . Math here is okay. . . Science is high there. They used to experiment there a lot.

Ahmed also agreed that the curriculum is a step behind what they have already seen:

. . . the standard of education here is lower than what used to be where I was. I was in Saudi Arabia before and they used to teach similar to Indian ICSE standard. So I feel that my children. . . what they are doing in this grade. . . have already learnt in one grade before that. So education wise. . . yeah. . . they are little behind.

Ahmed also talked about the effect of this on his son:

I don't know it is good or bad, but he gets behind. . . right. He is just like. . . staying from one year at the same subject. . . he is doing again and he is losing interest in going to the class. . . learn new things. Even the teacher says that he answers everything whatever I am teaching, so there is no point attending class. So I don't know it is a danger or not.

Mrs. Jolina put her concerns as:

Actually the subjects are not that hard. . . not like in our country. you need to work hard at that end. . . it is different that kids don't have to stay long to study. Kids don't have to do a lot of work in school. It is very relaxed. I think students are being spoiled. . . I am thinking they have less work done.

Mrs. Holy Patrick was the only parent to not feel much of a difference between the curriculum in Newfoundland and her previous place. This might be attributed to the fact that unlike others, her children were attending the education system in a western country, in the United Kingdom. She called it merely “a rearrangement”:

I don't know about the curriculum of all the provinces but with what they have in place I think it is quite up to standard. Because my son came in grade 11, so the curriculum here is just a bit different from England, but some part of the curriculum that he has done earlier in the earlier grade. . . may be in grade 10, that is they are now doing here. . . but there are some that they have done here that he didn't do over there. So there is a little bit of rearrangement. In all, the curriculum covers what needs to be covered.

Although their daughter was attending school in a different system back home, Mitesh and Priya Ahuja seemed happy about the way the curriculum in Newfoundland was, even if they agreed that it was slow:

The way they are making buildings. . . the way they grow in steps. . . I think they are going right. . . okay I say they are going slow. . . but they are building their brains slowly. . . at the continuous steps. . . the curriculum from second to third and third to fourth is going step by steps and slowly. . .

Priya added precisely that:

They are going slow but they are firm and focused.

4.1.2.3 Methods of teaching. Parents expressed their views about the methods of teaching in K-12. Ehsaan had a positive word about the method of teaching in schools:

There is a lot more hands on in Canada than in India. . . and they try to explain to you things a lot more. They try to for example, in Physics to provide better understanding of the "why" and not just to "how" to get the answer to the problem.

Ameeka was happy to see her son getting along well with the methods adopted in school:

I think it is child-centered so that is pretty much good. . . it is more involving students rather than teacher speaking a lot. . . that's what I wanted. . . the children should be able to answer back and ask questions. . . and he has been awarded for being more talkative, asking lots of questions. It's like. . . it's good.

Mitesh Ahuja had a very good example from her daughter's school:

I would like to make a point in here. . . saying how the system is different here. In India when we do tables, we just mug up. We make rhyme. . . two ones are two. . . two twos are four. . . but here, they don't say like that. . . they say skip by two. So 2, 4, 6, 8, then skip by 5. . . 5, 10, 15. . . that is how they do multiplication but in India we used to do the tables. . . but in here, they teach to skip. . .

Chang mentioned that the methods of teaching nurtured creativity:

I think the system in Canada encourages creative thinking. In my country, no. . . it is examination. . . and there is always standard answer for certain questions. That is the worst thing in China. Here there is no standard answer for any question. . . this is quite good.

However, he was not much approving of the “too less study, too much play” approach, especially the use of too many videos in teaching:

I think the students they should study more and you know. . . for some of his teachers, they let the students watch videos quite often. . . I don't think that is really good for the students. Educational videos. . . if that is the purpose for video. . . for instance. . . sometimes the teacher ask them to write something about the video they watched. I think that is good. However, they watch too much. . . and every Friday they have not much study. The teachers and students, they enjoy themselves every Friday. It is just like Sunday or Saturday. So I think that is not really good for my son.

Uzma Aslam from Bangladesh, whose daughter was going to kindergarten, had a different picture of the methods of teaching in her daughter's school. She liked it as compared to methods of teaching in her own country:

She played, but she doesn't know what she learnt exactly. But when she came home, I saw she learnt from there, lots of stuff. But she doesn't have an idea what she learnt. So they play and learn.

Yeah, that is really good, I think she has learnt from them lots of stuff. . . you know different countries, there were different kinds of ways of education. . . like that is binding of the books. . . but here, no. . . they don't depend on the books. . . they are playing with them. . . and they learn lots of stuff. . . yeah. . . their way of education is totally different from our country. I like it very much.

Mrs. Jhajj, however, seemed unappreciative of the fact that the children were given less examples during explanation of Math or Science concepts:

. . . they give less of examples. . . say in Math or Science. . . they give one or two examples. . . they should give more examples.

4.1.2.4 Discipline/Moral education. Ehsaan described the implicit existence of moral education and discipline in the schools saying:

I believe not. . . there is no moral education. I think that whenever there is any issue for example, a child doing something wrong, they do address it. They try their best to discipline the children and tell them this is right. . . this is wrong. So as opposed to having a moral education class and just learning theoretical aspects of moral education, they do enforce it I think. They might have had the content when he was younger, but at the level he is, they don't have it. They get to decide what's fair and what's not fair. They don't have short stories about morals but he was exposed to those when he was younger.

Ameeka expressed her concerns about the morals her son was acquiring in the school. She talked about the difference in the ways of moral behavior in Canada and her own country, and the one thing she was most concerned about:

I guess that sometimes the discipline. . . the type of respect that they have to show to the elders. . . and all those stuff. . . it is quite different to that of our culture. . . ours is like more of. . . every time you have to respect your parents and teachers. . . they seem to be taking it (parents and teachers) up seriously like more of their friends. . . it is true to some extent taking your parents as friends is also good but a bit of a discipline in terms of. . . is that kind of discipline gonna be enough for them to be a good person?

She explained the way the moral aspect is dealt in the school:

They have been sent story books where they have to rewrite it after reading that story book. . . they have to write it down in their own words. . . that what they have learnt. . . whether they would recommend that book for other friends to read or not. . . or have they experienced similar kind of situation in their life. . . as per the story books something like that. . . so it gives a bit of moral thing.

Mrs. Holy Patrick explained another way how the schools dealt with this aspect in senior classes:

Mainly, the school puts that to the parents. I am saying in high school there is not much. . . it may be in junior high. . . like in high school, you could smoke but not inside school property. It may not be enforced, but it is there in high school.

Chang believed that there was not much discipline in Canadian schools and explained how it was bargained by students:

In Canada, I think in public schools there should be more discipline. . . some students they are. . . in China even the hair styles of students. . . the school asks the students to have certain hair styles. . . grow very short hair and boys almost have hairstyles. . . have stipulated. . . they cannot have other kind of hairstyles. . . that's not so good but in Canada my son told me some of his classmates they. . . girls. . . they put the makeup. . . and some students they cut their class regularly. For example, the girl I mentioned with heavy makeup seldom comes to school and it is said she was sick. However, some classmates told my son she was not sick. . . she couldn't get up in the morning. For instance in certain days it was rainy, some students will cut their class. That's unacceptable in my culture. . . so if the schools stipulate more strict discipline and I do believe the Canadian students will be more successful because they are so intelligent.

Mrs. Jhajj had another aspect of discipline to talk about, which to her perception went unchecked in schools:

. . . here all students have phone and use them in school. It is okay in high school but not in junior high. They have computers which they can use so I think there is no need for phone in grade 7-9.

In kindergarten, however, Uzma Aslam explained how moral education was an essential part of activities:

They have. . . slowly, slowly, slowly. . . how to increase their manners, how to increase their politeness, how to increase their honesty. . . they are children, they have hidden things sometimes, their teachers learn them, teach them that don't say like that, you say like that. The way of thinking she divert to them. . . I appreciate that. . . So they learn a lot of morals like how to love your younger sister or brother, how to love your parents, how to talk to your parents, everything they are learning day by day slowly. I see it. . . sometimes children are not sharing with each other. . . so that is the main thing. . . they learn to share.

4.1.2.5 Subject specific concerns.

- **Math education.** Chang spoke about the Math education his son was receiving in Canada. He compared the Math education in China, India and Canada to support his views:

For instance Mathematics, I think the content probably is one year like behind China but I think maybe not because the Canadian students go to school earlier, probably one year earlier than China. For Mathematics in India there is a . . . student will recite a Mathematical. . . multiple. . . yes. . . the tables. . . in China. . . there are also the tables. . . in here, the children use calculator a lot.

Similar concerns were expressed by Ehsaan about the state of “mental Math” education:

In India it is the pressure of going into a professional field right after grade 12. Say you want to go to med. (medical) school, you need to take pre-med. (pre-medical) courses in grade 11 and 12. So you don't really need to go to university or post-secondary or undergrad to be able to go to med. school in India. . . so there it is lot more fast paced and it has its own shortcomings which are a lot. . . I think that in terms of Math for example. . . yes, they do a lot of mental Math and they are not allowed to use a calculator until they had a major, major Math problem in Chemistry and Physics in grade 11 and 12.

Ahmed also felt that the Math education was not up to the mark and expressed his concerns about it:

Let's take the subject of Mathematics, the standards which they are teaching here are quite low. I am just comparing. . . maybe it is good for here. . . whatever is the reason behind that I don't know, but my son who is in grade 7 now, he already learnt whatever there was in grade 5. So in terms of that he feels that everything is already learnt. So he doesn't like sitting in the class because I know that he is learning whatever, whatever has been already taught to him. So in terms of that, I am not sure how this education standard or subject or syllabus is made.

Mrs. Smriti Singh emphasized the need for advanced Mathematics for those who would want to pursue a career in Mathematics but sadly commented:

I found that curriculum level of math could have been better. The curriculum should be higher from the beginning. In grade 8, 9, 10 it looked like as if they were going round and round in the same place. I didn't find them moving.

When I say that Math is behind, the pace is slow. There is no stress of exams but overall they do get the basic knowledge for university. They accommodate all students of all categories. They don't go out of the way to work on a child who is more interested and advanced.

Mrs. Jolina, however, advocated that only basic Math should be a part of the curriculum:

In Math, they did improve something in Math. They give the mark really hard to everybody. Now what they did to high school, they give little bit more basic which everybody could grasp and if you wanted to go to university you could further the Math which qualify to go to university. . . which is very good because the student who is not really good in Math will not have a lot of frustration.

- **ESL.** ESL was a concern that all parents spoke about. However, many parents agreed that their children were doing better, had settled well into the system and were no longer taking ESL classes. Mrs. Lucy, whose children knew only basic English in Italy, recollected and narrated her initial problems with English:

No one learns anything from merely knowing the letters of alphabet. Person should know how to make sentences to communicate. All this is necessary for a child to know but they didn't know anything there except letters of alphabet.

Chang was of the view that English was a major barrier for his son to read and receive information. He shared his views about the ESL class his son was attending at a public school

and his concerns about inadequate English proficiency of his son, especially when he wanted to transfer him to a private school:

I think ESL classes worked very good for him for some period of time but now the Eastern people always set higher expectation. So still, English is a barrier, major barrier for academic performance. I think my son sometimes, it seems to me he is quite confident about his English. However, we talk about to transfer him to St. Pat's and he worried about his English. He told me his English was not good enough and he worried a lot about that.

Mitesh and Priya Ahuja talked about how their daughter eventually settled into the new system:

In the beginning she was in ESL... she had an extra teacher for English who was giving her lot of practice with computer and reading books to make her comfortable with pronunciation here. It was for only one year or maybe 6-8 months, and thereafter she never went for that language course and after that she picked up.

Ameeka explained her son's encounter with ESL classes:

When he was in class 2, ESL was there. There is a teacher who I think that they have a program for the students like for immigrants itself who in terms of pronunciation and everything they are gonna be looking at. They categorize them whether they need help or not. So when he was in class 2, he attended 2- 3 times and after second term, he doesn't need to get into ESL program. . . that's what the teacher said.

- ***Spelling instruction.*** Mrs. Jolina voiced her concerns about spelling instruction emphasizing that children should be encouraged to write more:

It is like a bit more effort for the kids to know how to write, to do spellings properly, because kids nowadays they don't want to touch anymore pen, they are always on a laptop or computer and the spelling is worst than I could ever imagine. If I was a teacher they will fail and that they should encourage the kids to write essay, to write by pen not by the computer because there is nothing to see that they really write.

Ameeka also had the same concerns about spelling:

They just don't give too much attention for spelling which I wanted. When I just go through whatever he is writing, he might not be sure what spelling it should be. So, I make him correct that. That this is not the right spelling and I tell him that spelling is very

important in no matter what you write. Otherwise it's gonna make you meaningless. . . what you wanted to say.

However, she disclosed that she had shared her concerns with her son's teacher:

... I have told that to the teacher and the teacher said that they are gonna be doing from second term onwards. They gonna be making more focus on spelling so that's good.

4.1.2.6 Transition to university and transferability of credits. The parents, whose children were in high school and soon to graduate, shared their concerns about the gap between high school graduation and transition to university.

Ehsaan strongly emphasized the need to make the transition smoother in addition to providing the basics that every education system would generally provide:

I think that besides for broader competency in dealing with the world and all those sort of things, morals and incorporating of character and like to know about how to take care of themselves and how to manage things, I think that... I think there shouldn't be much of a gap between grade 12 and university. All across Canada a better management of the curriculum should be followed in all the high schools so that certain students when they go to university they don't have the advantage or disadvantage when they see the material.

Mrs. Smriti Singh shared similar views about the kind of transition she believed the present education system should provide:

From my point of view he should have got the basic competitive and to understand how it is going to be, it is much harder in university and I feel that is missing in high school because they don't really faced with any tough challenges in school and university is suddenly a different world altogether where they have to come. The level is higher, there is more stress and pressure so that's real. I feel that in high school the pressure is not even half as much as it should be.

Not only transition to university but also in terms of inter-province transfer, Ehsaan shared her concerns about the transferability of credits:

Transfer of credits is a hard thing, an annoying thing to do. I think this should be more smooth across Canada, after all its only one country we are talking about. I think the standard of education across high schools and universities should be brought up to par...

4.1.2.7 Bullying. Parents of children in high schools, including a parent who deals with children involved in cases of bullying, expressed their concerns about the epidemic.

Ehsaan not only talked about student bullies but also shed light on the fact that sometimes teachers could be intimidating as well:

It seemed like the teachers were getting away with swearing in the classroom which is sort of bewildering to me. I have never seen that happen before and apparently it is a small community so nobody really cares they get away with certain comments that might be unwelcoming of a teacher.

So when they try to be friendly, they might say something that may be offensive to an outsider like me who are not used to such sort of friendliness. To me it might seem like a teacher shouldn't say this. It's like you run the chance of getting sued in Ontario. They know it is not gonna happen in Newfoundland. People are nicer or in general more friendly.

Mrs. Jolina, whose child had to unfortunately go through the trauma of being bullied, narrated her story while at the same time she appreciated the role of teachers in protecting the children at risk:

There is a kind of bullying in St Abc. When I went down there to see what happened and my son doesn't even know that but they did something on it and it doesn't have any more bullying there and some of the teachers are aware of bullying. They are trying to get my son away from that person, what they do is that they get him out of that spot and bring him to somewhere else. They are trying to protect the student.

Mrs. Smriti Singh who works with children with behavioral disorders shed some light on the problems associated with bullying and confirms that bullying is rampant in the schools:

I do see so many other children who are in high school, in my patients too, who have a lot of problems in high school. I do hear that so and so child is having behavioral problems in school and the teachers are not accommodating. So any child who has ADHD and other difficulties, they may have problems. If a parent is involved I am sure they can get things done if they want, extra accommodation and things. In my case I didn't need to, but I know of a lot of children in my patients who have had problems like this and they had to get extra accommodation and they complained that they didn't have all the support from teachers. Bullying especially is very, very common. Luckily I didn't have that experience but I have seen a lot of my patients who have. I do have the perception that bullying is rampant.

There was however, Mrs. Holy Patrick, who denied the occurrence of any such incident with her children or having heard of any such thing. She, in fact explained how the very characteristic of Newfoundlanders as a warm and helpful community has helped her children settle into the school system:

This particular community as you know and see it anywhere, is an exceptional community because of the friendliness. People are very friendly, you are welcome at any time. The children do not have any problem with the other children. In fact, in the whole graduating students I think there are only four black boys. They are all welcome; they go about in a group. My son is into several activities and even when we go to watch the activities, they walk together as if they have known each other for ages. So I don't see whatsoever what may be called discrimination or prejudice. May be because of this community, the parents are friendly, their children are friendly and they can go at any length to help you.

4.1.2.8 School related problems.

- *Choice of academic and co-academic subjects.* Parents of children in higher grades expressed their concerns about the choice of academic subjects:

Ehsaan had her tale of woes to narrate:

One of the worst things is that at his school, any student will not be able to take Physics, Chemistry and Biology in grade 11 at the same time which is at the university level. This is bewildering to me when I found out first. I thought that every child should get the opportunity to take all those courses.

She shared the possible reason for this inadequacy in the system:

A major concern has just been perhaps lack of funds or they say there are not enough kids to take Physics. So it is understandable that you can't bring a teacher in because there are not enough students to take Physics. That's been the only shortcoming I think or the problem with the school.

She also expressed her concerns from her experience about the sports being offered in the school:

A lot of kids in a lot of public schools in Canada I have noticed that they have restriction with regards to which sports they can offer. It is even more limited in Newfoundland because it is a very small community and they don't have enough funding and the sports

they really play are ice hockey, volley ball, cross country. They don't offer anything like chess or well, those outdoors for instance but they don't offer other sports.

- ***Disciplinary measures.*** Aameeka had a story of perceived injustice to tell that the school's disciplinary measures were not up to the mark. She narrated the incident and emphasized that any act of misconduct should be investigated, established and then punishment should be given to the offender:

When he was playing in the playground, one of the boys from lower class, class 1 or something like that came up to him and said hit me and he said that it is not a good thing to do and being a senior he felt bigger than him and he said that it is not good to fight with each other and that time he was picked up by the playground supervisor and he said that he was fighting with the child, and when his mom was asked she said that Anees is not that kind of boy who does involve in a fighting because the class teacher who had previously taught him has been defending him saying that he is not that kind of person. When they both were taken to the office they said that okay that fighting was started by the small boy but even then he got a letter and I was not happy with that. I went back to school and asked the teacher, that what's wrong. I know my child. . . he is not the kind who would get involved in a fighting and all those stuff. He might not have instigated that. . . she was like okay fine and then talked with the teacher. The teacher told me that yeah it is not Anees's fault but even then it was involved with two boys, it had to be sent like it is a mandatory incident report that has happened. So that's the very recent one which I was not happy with. . . though it wasn't his fault. It's written that for one day he wasn't able to attend the recess so that means not only the incident report has been sent home, he was not able to take part in recess for one day or something like that. So until and unless he has any fault, that should not be there, no matter. . . informing the parents is good. You should inform the parents that this is what has happened in the school but apart from that if there is no fault the action shouldn't be taken. Please. . . that's what I feel and that's what I told the teacher also and the teacher said that you are true but this is what the school has to do. Hope this doesn't repeat, that's what I told my child that if anyone comes to you and says fight with me, you go to the teacher and tell her that. Ok he is trying to do this to me and let them handle the case, rather than saying that this is not good. . . and getting the incident report.

4.1.2.9 Cultural concerns. Parents reported a number of cultural concerns about various related aspects like sustaining first language, and preserving cultures, traditions, religion and

related practices in their children. A number of parents reported cultivating desirable behaviours and attitudes in their children informally at home.

Ameeka, who was concerned about her son forgetting their home language said:

Mostly Saturdays I make him write down in Nepali which is our language so that he might (not) forget that language. That's what I just don't want because if anything happens, we have to go back, he has to read that and he might not be able to recognize the alphabets too.

Uzma explained how she tried to keep her language and culture alive in her daughter:

Basically, at home, I don't use English with her. I do everything from my culture. . . outside if she will talk in English, I have no problem, but inside the home, I will talk with her in my language. I have to give her my culture. She has to learn religious things. I give it to her at bedtime also. Basically I have to. . . slowly I have to tell her that this is her culture, that this is our culture. So you should follow our culture. Yes, you should go to school and you have to do that.

I provide her another Sunday school. We have a community, a Muslim community. So there they go to Sunday school and learn lots of things.

Mrs. Holy Patrick, although she knew a lot about the ways of parental involvement, admitted not having heard of any cultural programs in the school that enforce cultural learning and connecting children to their cultures:

I have not seen that. I have not seen the involvement of culture. I have no idea. . . there may be but I am not aware of any programs. I am not aware of any cultural program because I remember that when we were in Kuwait, when they wanted to talk about culture, they will have their own days that they celebrate and ask the students to wear their clothes and bring their meals. They had an "International Week" but I have not heard anything like that here. When you hear of international week, it could be related to culture, language. I don't have any kind not here, it could be because that would bring culture diversity. There are only a few blacks in their school.

Mitesh and Priya Ahuja mentioned that the school's practices and curriculum merely touch on the multicultural topics and that was not so in the grade of their daughter, but it may become common in the higher grades:

I don't know much about practice but they cover all these topics as well. I have seen I don't know which book it was but they are taught about Gandhi and all but that is

superficial. Suddenly it goes away for one year and never comes back. So, they are doing multicultural education. . . they ask about presentations like making posters and stuff. I don't know about this level but I know a girl who is Canadian, grade 11, they had this topic and they had a presentation on this topic.

With my daughter, no, but I have seen this with other kids in different schools. They do it.

Mrs. Jhajj narrated how she reiterated to her children about staying connected to cultural roots, and had suggestions to give when asked about any cultural practices in the school. She narrated how her son was involved in some cultural volunteering:

I think they should invite parents more often for parties and stuff if they want to improve. It is more where there are more immigrant students in school. My son does "International Club" and all students from different countries share food and culture there.

We keep telling them not to forget our culture and language, and not to pick up any bad habits from here.

Ehsaan, who had seen a multicultural society in Ontario stated that:

There are a lot more cultural events that happen in Ontario like black history month, Sikh days and different cultures. There are not many international cultures in Newfoundland.

Ameeka shared what his son was made to do in school that connected him to his country and culture:

He has been getting story books mostly related with Nepali things. Like last week he brought a story book that was related with the mountains like Himalayas and he was reading about who was the first person to climb the mountain and all the stuff. It is good to know that they have been including those story books in their curriculum and making them realize that these are the cultures too or these are the things that are available in their country, rather than giving them more knowledge about Newfoundland or Canada itself. They are trying to teach about different places.

He was able to present his own country. I guess he was asked to give a presentation about Nepal so that's what he did and nothing more than that.

Ahmed saw the inclusion of culture mainly for the purpose of cultural accommodations that he expected from the school:

I talk about culture with them just to make her or him understand my children there. . . sometimes some cultural aspect does not allow something to be done in the school for my

children so I try to talk to them on this aspect. Yeah, they are welcoming on that, they try to accommodate what I am saying, other than that I think culturally, not much of other interaction.

Mrs. Jolina was worried about sex education that was provided in the classes which perhaps her culture or religion did not allow at her children's age:

They teach about sex. You have to get the kids to be aware and you have to be very careful when it comes to sex. That encourages the kids that it is okay if you have condom. . . I don't think so. . . at 16 until 20. . .

4.1.3 Parental Involvement and Support System

4.1.3.1 Parent's foot forward. Parents narrated how much they were actively involved with the education of their children. Most of the parents admitted that they had a dearth of time to contribute to the activities in the school. Replying to whether the communication was mostly initiated by school or her, Ameeka said:

Yeah, most of the time in my case it is from me to the school because what happens. . . before I was doing my study too I wasn't able to give that much time. . . though I wasn't able to attend most of his PTMs at that time. I usually used to write it down in his diary to the teacher addressing that these are the things you need to be careful about my child and if you have any issues then do let me know because I might not be able to attend that program. So, usually it got from the home to the school and vice versa. I would get a reply from the teacher as well. So in my case it's more from my side.

Lucy explained how inspite of not being good at English, she was involved in the education of her two sons:

We check his homework and copies, what they have written for him and what he has done in class. They have given me an email id where all curriculum and homework are given. If you want to meet a teacher online, you could do that.

Mrs. Holy Patrick gave a picture of how parents could involve themselves in school activities but admitted that she had not been a part of many of those activities:

There is something called parent teacher evening. We go to meet the teachers of various subjects and discuss about the progress, what you can do to support him and we ask the teacher how do you think you can be of help and what area is he weak in, what area does he need help so it is a general discussion between teacher and parent about the progress of their studies. Another way is extra-curricular activities. . . of recent they are

raising funds they call it Safe Grad. They get all parents of graduating students to help with the Safe Grad, you get some tickets then you sell for them. So these are part of what you do to help with his studies.

4.1.3.2 Extra efforts at home. The parents reported being actively involved in teaching their children at home, not just academically but about other aspects such as culture, religion, and language as well.

Ameeka explained how she indulged in teaching her son at home and what topics she covered during that time:

I make him do a piece of handwriting if possible or Mathematics or make him read the things like he brings the story books now in class three. In class 2 they just don't have anything to do but now they have been given a work to read and paraphrase that story in their own words...so that's the only homework that he gets. So, what I make him do is read that whole story book and make him write down in his own language though if he wants to ask me (for help) I just don't give him. If he is writing incorrect spelling I tell him this it is not the correct thing to write down but the only thing is that he is able to bring out his ideas and write them down, that's the difference like for class 3 student, he can write a paragraph on his own. I guess the literature base is improving but apart from that he doesn't get any Math homework or Science homework. I am a bit worried that whether he is knowing the Science thing, like the simple things leaves and all those stuff.

Priya Ahuja, narrated that she tried teaching her daughter some mental Math, but was stopped by her teacher:

Whatever I was teaching here, like in last grade, I was teaching her in advance. I was practicing her, making her do Math practice but it came next year (in the course). So that is what the teacher told me, to slow down, don't try to do that home. We will do it here. So I left it there and okay fine I am not gonna do it.

Mrs. Holy Patrick talked about her efforts to preserve and sustain culture and language in her children:

We have communities. So number one part of my culture is clothing, there is particular clothes from cultural perspective, which I got for my daughter. Talking about the food, we have African shop, you can go there and buy food. We have friends, families, we get together and through that there is transfer of culture. When we are amidst our people, we use our language. Visiting our country can also help preserving culture.

Ameeka further shared her efforts to preserve the first language, and how her son was keeping up with her efforts and acquiring values by imitating his parents:

He has not forgotten his culture... if u see a person you say *namaste or dhohey*... it means you want blessings from them. This is what you need to tell him again and again. You have to do it. He remembers that and it's nice he is following us like when we say he seems to be imitating us so that is good. The one thing we asked him to do is not to speak English at home with us. Sometimes when he does that, we say we don't understand that, what were you trying to say, okay say it in Nepali, because obviously he is gonna be learning English by any way but he might forget our language. . . in order to make him feel that okay Nepali is also there.

4.1.3.3 School's efforts to involve and support parents. Parents talked about how much the schools have helped them so far by providing them required support. Mrs. Lucy shared her experiences about this:

No, not at all . . . they said we should go to the New Canadian Association (Association for New Canadians) and they said that we do not have permanent residency so they cannot help us and I became upset and even cried in the temple.

Though my younger one is cared for well now. They give extra classes to both of them now, they even make them do their homework.

Upon being asked whether there was anything else to involve parents apart from parent teacher meetings, she narrated:

No apart from parent teacher meetings, they don't do much. I want that and I keep visiting my younger son's school and keep meeting his teachers but the elder son's school, I haven't heard that there is any PTM or something like that. They just informed the day the classes were to begin and nothing after that. I was wondering if I should talk to them now that he has got the Report Card.

I think that the children need more support from school. They have to do more because we ourselves do not know English. I wish that whatever he wants to be, doctor or engineer, the school should encourage him for that.

She narrated further how her children began to settle in with the help of some friends:

I have a friend who is a Canadian. She called up the school saying that the child needs help so then they have arranged a teacher for him and they teach him thrice or four times a week. They teach him English and help him with homework after school.

Mrs. Jhadj shared similar concerns as Mrs. Lucy:

They don't tell us where to find anyone we need to talk to. They tell us to go to the ANC but they also don't help us because they say they help refugees, not us and we do not have permanent residency yet.

Mitesh and Priya Ahuja, however, had a different story to tell:

We usually have parent teacher meeting and her teacher is really advanced. She made a twitter page and she also has a phone number where you can text her and she replies in ten minutes.

There is lot of stuff. They also invite if you wanna come and read a story for the kids, you can go there. They also say if you wanna volunteer for several programs, they have a breakfast program. They involve parents to come over and volunteer. We are quite busy. We tried several times but because of our little one we could not make it.

Mrs. Holy Patrick shared her knowledge about the ways the school tries to involve parents in various activities:

There is a parent log in on their website where you get to see your child's attendance record, you get to see the continuous assessment, even the homework. You get to see how it is building up every day. The homework can be stored and the tests so from there you can actually monitor your children. That is part of parent involvement. There are three ways of communicating with the school. They post on their website, sometimes we get a phone call. . . computer recorded information for parents. So, the school has our numbers and they ask the parents' number to communicate, and even if your child is absent for one class you will get back call before the end of the day. Another thing is to send home a physical paper to call for a meeting. It could be a general meeting or one-on-one depending upon the situation.

I have no idea of any other special programs for parents apart from the parent evening meetings and also there is something they call school counsel. I think every year they have some nomination if you want to be part of that and it can only be few parents. That is to my knowledge.

Ahmed also voiced similar efforts of the schools to involve parents:

Because of my own engagements, I haven't gone beyond the PTMs but they do invite for voluntary activities, to be involved in the school or any of the programs, charity, organizing charities, things like that, they do ask us to come. Even when they go to field trips they ask us to volunteer so that you know we get involved more with children but normally my experience is that I have not been there and I don't know maybe I'll go in future.

Mrs. Jolina also affirmed the existence of the school's measures to involve parents in the education of their children through volunteering and meetings:

They are trying to give you lot of volunteering stuff and some activities and some meetings that we have which is voluntary if you wanna be involved.

4.1.4 Parental Suggestions

During the interviews, parents not only shared a number of concerns but also gave valuable suggestions. Ehsaan suggested about the need to have a uniformity of curriculum across provinces; to diagnose and support learners with disabilities, and to cover the gap between high school and university:

I think this should be more smooth across Canada. After all it's only one country we are talking about. I think the standard of education across high schools and university should be brought up to par.

I think the education system should also make sure that students get all the extra support they need in terms of say, disabilities. The education system should make sure that every child should get diagnosed if he might be suffering from a disability.

I think they need to give more responsibility to students in grade 12 and there needs to be a better management of the curriculum. It should be followed better in all the high schools so that certain students when they go to university they don't have the advantage or disadvantage when they see the material.

A similar suggestion regarding diagnosis of learners with disabilities was given by Mrs.

Jolina:

People if they are not responding as it should be, there must be something wrong. Like they did to my son but it took them a while before they discovered it. He came to St Abc, they didn't have a chance to discover it and he went down to Holy Xyz, and there they discovered that he had a learning disability.

Mrs. Lucy suggested having two teachers instead of one in every class who would share the work so that children could get better attention:

We miss whatever was in Italy. All teachers of all subjects had their helpers. The helper used to check all the notebooks. There is nothing like that here. There is only one teacher for 29 -30 students and she has to teach all of them and check all the work. Some teachers even had two helpers there. But here there is nothing like that. If this is implemented here, it will be a lot of support for people like us.

Mrs. Jhajj suggested that the frequency of ESL classes should be increased and there should be more extrinsic motivation for immigrants:

There is an ESL course and in the schools they call teachers from other schools. In my daughter's school the teacher comes like once a week. He should come more often like twice or thrice a week and sometimes it clashes with her classes and she has to skip the classes.

There should be more awards, certificates, scholarships. Most of the scholarships are for those who are permanent residents or citizens so there is no financial assistance for us.

Chang had a suggestion about a systemic change which he thought would greatly benefit the Canadian students:

In Canada, if they extend the school hours for one or two hours, they can finish by 4 o'clock I think and ask them to study together for a while. I think that will be good for the students and then it will be good to build a community. The students, amongst students they will have more time to communicate with each other if there is one or two hours longer, and ask students to study, to put more energy on their academic performance. What will happen, I think the Canadian students will do better.

Mrs. Jolina also gave a valuable suggestion about the evaluation of the ESL program, using homework as a tool to bring about cohesiveness in the family and increasing parental involvement, and teaching a class with immigrant students:

They have ESL for English as far as I know and it helps a lot. I think they should assess also for the people in ESL. Sometimes it is getting bored, the students, they already know everything and more. They don't have to be there, they have to be in a basic course. Although the students can voice up if they don't want to be in there anymore because my son did. He told me that he doesn't want to be in ESL anymore. He is okay with other English students, which is good. I think they should at least ask the students do you want to be sitting in ESL? ESL is included and students don't like that anymore and they are so shy to say it or just let them know. Then you can go, proceed and if you don't want to be there and go back, then go back.

More impact for the homework. A little bit more because if there is impact for homework for the kids, parents will be involved because if there is a thing like that, at least this has to be done, parent will be like okay we should go and help you here. Parent will be involved, the moral relationship of family will build in which I know because that is what we do. Their sister will come and help them with homework. That is a big impact of homework which is good and a bit slower when you are teaching especially when there is a student coming from a different country or must be a student there who is a little slow than they could ever imagine.

She also expressed her thoughts about the teacher- student relationship in the past and this forces us to think about what kind of a relationship there should be between the two:

Teachers were more compassionate, in a bit of a relationship with student. Maybe that is what I am looking for “relationship with the student” because even though the teachers are older now we are still happy to see our teachers, because the relationship and the connection that they have given to us is different from the way you are just a teacher, you are just a student. Like that... it is missing, nothing is connecting except because it is school.

Mrs. Holy Patrick suggested blending value education in during day to day activities of the school:

If I compare it back to my country, I would just talk about, they have home room here. We have assembly back home. In their home room, may be just to mark attendance, but we were talking about moral value that time. It is not only assembly, not only about giving religious advice, assembly. I remember in those ages, everyday assembly. Even if they are doing it in homeroom, it should be even if for only five minutes, talk about “do good and you'll achieve high”. It could be just like a word of encouragement and advice. It doesn't have to be from Bible or Quran, something that you know can help these kids. So value could be put into it.

4.2 Summary

This chapter presented the data collected through interviews in a systematic manner. The data was presented under suitable categories, further bifurcated into themes and sub-themes. Each of the broad categories and themes within were discussed in detail. The presentation of data used quotes from interviews extensively, pertaining to broad categories, themes and sub-themes.

Chapter5

Findings and Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in Newfoundland with respect to various aspects of education such as, academic and co-academic concerns, parental involvement and support systems available to these parents, as well as their parental expectations.

The study was guided by a general research question and several subsidiary research questions. Chapter 4 discussed in detail the categories and the themes that emerged from the data, extensively supported by quotes from the interviews with parents. In this chapter, the findings of the study will be discussed in the light of the research questions.

5.1 Research Questions

5.1.1 Subsidiary Research Questions

1. How do the immigrant parents perceive the education their children are getting in the K-12 school system?

During the interviews, parents expressed their views about education in general, their expectations for the education of their children, the achievements of their children in the new system of education thus far, and their perceptions of the system of education which their children were attending in Newfoundland. Apart from perceptions, the parents also voiced during those interviews a number of issues and concerns of an academic, co-academic and cultural nature about the education of their children. The findings have been discussed for each of the major bifurcations in detail.

- **Views about education in general**

The parents were asked about what they thought to be the ultimate goal of education or what should education prepare an individual for? Some parents were straightforward with their responses about career orientation and focused more on the fact that education should equip an individual to enter the workforce and provide them with professional employability and related skills. There were three parents whose children were about to graduate from high school. Apart from equipping the students with the basic competencies of life, they perceived the aim of education at the school level to be to prepare the students for transition to university.

The parents of children who were in junior high grades perceived that education should result in overall development of the child. These parents did not give much weight to academics but assigned more importance to other significant developments in children, such as decision making ability, confidence in dealing with situations in life, and instilling ability of expression in children.

The differences in such type of variation in the responses of the parents could be attributed to the grade level in which their children were studying. The parents whose children were attending junior high grades emphasized more on character building and holistic development, whereas the parents of the children who were to graduate soon expressed their views in terms of university transition. The parents who were not so financially stable saw education as a means to be financially viable in the host country.

- **Parental expectations**

The parents were asked about their expectations for the education of their children. All the parents had high expectations for the education of their children and expressed their desire

for their children to excel in studies, do well and be exemplary in their behavior. Some parents also saw an excellent performance in school as a guarantee for a smoother transition to university and also as a means of upward social mobility, as well as being able to avoid discrimination or bullying (Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey, 1998).

Studies suggest that Asian immigrant parents had high expectations for their children, and they placed great value on academic success (Chi, 2012; Kerr, 2007; Zelick, 2007; Zhou, 2013). All Asian parents in the study viewed academic success as an important condition for success in career and life in general. Some parents expressed their expectations of a non-academic nature that is in terms of holistic development, not measurable in grades and marks. In this study, the reason for having this kind of expectations can be safely concluded to be the same as for having the views about the goal of education in general. Another interesting thing to note was the fact that parents held such high expectations irrespective of their income levels or education.

Research has shown a relationship between education attainment and performance of immigrant children and their parents' education and income levels. However, there does not seem to be enough known about the direct effects of these two variables on parental expectations. Though Davis-Kean (2005) found that parents' education and family income influence child achievement indirectly through their association and impact on the parents' achievement beliefs (parents' educational expectations) and parenting behaviors, this study did not find any difference in level of expectations on the basis of income or education of the parents.

- **Perceptions of the education system in Newfoundland**

Parents had different perceptions of the system of education in this province. They seasoned their responses in the light of their past experiences with the education system they had experienced in their previous places of residence. It is worth noting that some of the participants had seen multiple countries and provinces, and narrated their stories based on the same, providing rich data for this study.

The participants gave mixed responses when they were asked about how they thought the education system in NL was preparing their children for what they thought to be the goal of education and their aspirations for meeting the expectations which they had for the education of their children. Two of the participants compared the public school system with the private school system. These parents perceived that the public school system was not preparing their children well to achieve success in future. The Chinese parent felt the difference in educational ideologies the same as ninety- eight percent of the participants had reported in a study by Zhang, Ollila, and Harvey (1998). Some parents felt the absence of challenges in the curriculum for their children. One parent felt that a little change in the working hours of schools could make a difference and would benefit the Canadian children as well. Transfer of credits was one point brought up by a parent. She cited the differences in curriculum across provinces that become a menace when students move from one province to another for study and also that their credits earned for a course are not at par with the requirements to enter a course and university of their choice. Parents also mentioned a systemic gap problem between high school and university. While other parents made no reference to this problem, the parents whose children were soon to graduate were more concerned about this perceived gap.

On the other hand, some parents felt that the system challenged their children's abilities co-academically, gave them volunteer opportunities and had operational efficiency. There were a number of parents who were satisfied with the system of education in NL and felt that it was better than what they had seen in their previous country of residence.

Unfortunately, there is an acute scarcity of literature about how the parents feel about the education system in NL, let alone the immigrants, given the immigration figures in the province which suggest that it is a relatively new and slow trend in the province as compared to the rest of Canada. However, the PISA 2012 results for K-12 education show that NL, is amongst the provinces that obtained an overall “D” on their report card for education and skills (CMEC, 2013).

- **Parental perceptions about their children's achievements and growth**

All the participants were in consensus that their children had tremendous achievement and growth in this new system of education as compared to the previous education system the children were attending. Parents mainly identified the achievement and growth of their children in three areas- academics, co-academics, and life skills. They presented a comparative picture of the activities of their children in the schools in the province and in their home countries to express their children's accomplishments in the host country. Achievements of children, especially in a new country, depend much on their parents' expectations, to some extent on educational level of their parents, knowledge of language of instruction, and age upon arrival. Kerr (2007) precisely explains the relationship between language proficiency, age upon arrival and academic achievements:

Children who come to a new country at a young age are likely to be less impacted by their limited English skills, since the language demands of school curriculum are lesser in early grades. Young children therefore have more time than older children to acquire good language skills before they are exposed to more demanding learning material in more advanced grades. (p. 7)

In this study, while the findings are consistent with existing research, another dimension, the medium of instruction in previous schools in the home country is seen to have made a difference in academic adaptation and achievement of immigrant children in the host country. The parents of the children who went to schools with English as a medium of instruction in their previous country had to spend lesser time in ESL and adapted better to the system because of language familiarity.

Parents had concerns about the academics of their children in terms of homework policy, method of teaching, curriculum, Math education, English as a Second Language, choice of subjects, and spelling instruction.

- **Homework**

The parents were asked about how they help their children with their homework, hoping to hear about their home involvement in the education of their children. Instead, parents' comments provided different insights about the "no homework policy" of the schools. Almost all the parents sounded their concerns about this "little or no homework policy". They discerned that their children did not have much to study after school and were forgetting their previous practice of studying at home. Parents suggested that there should be more homework so that their children would be challenged to work harder to excel.

A parent explained concisely how it was, saying "school is a place they study and home is a place they have to relax and play". One of the parents also expressed her concerns about the way

the given homework if any, was checked. She resented that the teachers merely crossed out wrong answers but did not point out why they were wrong. She wanted teachers to explain to the students as to why an answer was wrong and how to correct it.

The existing literature on the issue suggests that while the schools in North America have a "no homework policy" (Nesteruk, Marks, & Garrison, 2009), the immigrant parents especially Chinese wanted their children to be given homework (Dyson, 2001; Ran, 2001). Bang (2012) suggests that due to being weak in English, the primary method of instruction, they may lag behind their native peers in academic subjects and that is where homework, if structured thoughtfully by the teachers, can help them overcome that lag. The findings in this study are consistent with the existing literature about this issue.

- **Methods of Teaching**

Parents were asked as to what they thought about the methods of teaching used in schools. Most of the parents, especially fathers, had no idea about it. The mothers also expressed that their knowledge of the topic was limited because they had never been in the classroom when the teaching was going on. However, they were asked to express their general views about what they had heard from their children or what they could comprehend from their academic performance. The parents felt that the methods of teaching were interactive and hands-on.

There were some parents whose children were in middle years and even in high school, who perceived that the teachers explained everything too fast and that they should slow down their speed in consideration of the immigrant students or children who may have had a learning disability. In a study by Dyson (2001), the Chinese immigrant parents reported that the method of teaching lacked a well-defined instructional framework, that it was not guided by a systematic

teaching model. As a result, they perceived that it did not co-ordinate with the learning, nor did it link new knowledge to whatever was previously learned. In this study, however, in general the parents expressed their satisfaction with the teachers and their methods of teaching.

- **Curriculum**

In response to another question about curriculum, the parents presented their views about the adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum. All parents except a few felt that the curriculum of the province was not at par with what their children had been exposed to in their previous countries. They termed it "one level lower" and "easier" than the curriculum in their home countries. The parents considered that this was a concern because their children were not moving forward in terms of knowledge and since they had already done the topics in the previous class in their home countries, they were losing interest in going to the class. Another parent, painting a comparative picture of curriculum in Ontario and NL, said that it was a lot easier in NL in terms of Science and Math. There were a few parents who felt that the curriculum was age-appropriate and based on the psychological capacity of the children. A parent, whose children had attended school previously in a western country, did not feel much of a difference between the curriculums of the two places. She termed it a rearrangement of curriculum.

Many of the participants in a study by Dyson (2001) perceived that the curriculum lacked stringent academic standards and did not teach critical thinking skills, or involve exercises analyzing a phenomenon and understanding its causes and processes. In a similar study in the U.S, (Nesteruk, Marks, & Garrison, 2009) the parents were not happy with the watered down curriculum and termed it inferior and one that lacked rigor, as compared to their native countries. The parents acknowledged the potential downside of a demanding curriculum; however, they did

appreciate the strong intellectual challenges that it provided to their children. The parents in the study, in the absence of any support from the teachers, mentioned having to resort to extra classes or teach their children at home which the parents found to be quite demanding in terms of time, money, knowledge, and discipline.

Immigrant parents in the Canadian system seem generally content, suggesting that their children enjoy school more in Canada; many, however, remain concerned that their children will not be adequately prepared for the future (Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey, 1998). In this present study also, most of the parents termed the curriculum to be inadequate for meeting future demands. Most of the parents confirmed their doing extra studies with their children at home.

- **Math Education**

Almost all the parents were unhappy about the Math instruction being provided in the schools. They termed it "one to two years behind or lower" than what is in place in their own country for that level of grade. Parents identified the "mental Math" instruction missing in the Math education and resented the use of calculators at an early stage. Parents of children in higher grades were also worried about the absence of advanced Math instruction that is required for some aspirants, keeping in view that they were at the threshold of transitioning to university where they may have to either take extra courses (which of course cost additional money) to make up the gap if they wanted to pursue programs or courses of their choice, or having to settle for whatever they are eligible for.

On the other hand, a parent mentioned the advantage of having basic Math education in school. She mentioned that Math education could be frustrating for some children like her own son and it was good to have basic instruction to save children that frustration and anxiety.

However, she said that the children who wanted to further their Math education could take advanced courses. Another parent confirmed that though the system gave the children a basic education and accommodated all students of all categories, it did not go out of its way to provide any special assistance to anyone who was interested in advanced Math education.

Studies in the past in the United States with immigrant parents from multiple backgrounds (Nesteruk, Marks, & Garrison, 2009) and in Canada with Chinese parents (Dyson, 2001) show that parents have been dissatisfied with Math instruction in schools and, were of the view that the students may not have to do much in school but would inevitably have to face greater challenges when they enter university. The findings from these studies are consistent with the views and responses of participants in the current study.

- **English as a Second Language**

It was interesting to note that some of the parents mentioned that their children did not have any ESL problems. Few parents explained the medium of instruction in previous schools as the reason for this. Some of the parents agreed that their children were put into ESL classes in the schools, but they picked up quickly and no longer attended the ESL classes after one or two semesters. These were generally younger kids, and with younger kids, it is known that they adapt in lesser time to the new language (Kerr, 2007). It is worth noting that the educational level of parents in these two categories as mentioned so far was high. They were professionals working in medical and engineering fields. English as a medium of instruction in their previous schools held true for both these categories. However, there was a third category, whose medium of instruction in previous schools was not English nor were the parents so educated. These children had problems mostly with English. In fact one of the parents attributing the slow progress of her

children to English as a medium of instruction, quoted, "English. . . basically the problem is of English. Everything is in English. . . they speak French well. Once they know English, then it wouldn't be a problem".

These parents also commented about the state of ESL instruction, and that they were not happy with it. Two of the parents mentioned that the teacher came only once a week to the class. They wished that the frequency of classes could be increased. Another parent commented about the "boring" content of ESL classes and emphasized that the factors like content, length of time in ESL, and need to pursue ESL should be evaluated.

In a study by Guo (2007), the parents were not happy with the length of time in ESL, low level of content, assessment and implicit versus explicit grammar instruction. The parents in this study found it useful except for one parent who had complaints about time in ESL and who also talked about the need to examine boring content and assessment of ESL programs. The participants, who found that ESL was much needed, wanted more assistance from the schools in terms of language instruction.

- **School related problems- Choice of subjects, sports and justice**

Upon being asked about any other school related concerns that the parents might have had, a few parents shared their similar concerns. One of the parents mentioned the limited choice of subjects in school. She mentioned the scarcity of funds as what she perceived to be the school's problem behind this. Not confining her concerns to only academics, she also mentioned the limited facilities and options in terms of sports in higher grades. Another parent shared her experience of "injustice". She was not happy with the school's disciplinary measures and

procedure of handling cases of misconduct, and felt that punishment of any sort should not be awarded without confirming the offence.

While Taiwanese parents and adolescent students in a study by Salzberg (1998) mentioned that there was a broader choice for courses, the parents in this study expressed their concern about certain combinations that their children could not take up in schools. In another study, Chinese parents worried much more about the sports in the school that did not accommodate Asians' physical "build" (Dyson, 2001).

- **Spelling instruction**

The parents shared their concerns about the way that spelling instruction was being provided. Two of the parents were unhappy with the fact that spelling was not stressed in classes and children wrote horribly making a significant number of spelling mistakes. One of the parents said that the spelling these days was worse than she could ever imagine and attributed the cause of this problem to be over use of technology. She emphasized that children should be encouraged to use pen and paper more than typing on computers.

In terms of research, there is not as much research done on spelling as there is on reading. Existing research identifies causes occurring within the students, the complexity of the English language and of inadequate instruction (DuBois, Erickson, & Jacobs, 2007) to be responsible for the problem. Where electronic email and text messages have exacerbated the problem due to the instant messaging trend, another reason is excessive reliance on "spell checker". The findings of this study are in congruence with the existing literature and suggest that the children, even though they are in the era of modern technology at their fingertips, need to keep up with spelling ability.

- **Diagnosis and education of children with disabilities**

Two parents came up with issues regarding diagnosis and education of children with disabilities. One of the parents herself had a child who was diagnosed with Dyslexia. She shared her experience from the days when her son used to read everything "different" and she realized that something was wrong. But she narrated that it took a lot of time for schools to know about the problem and take steps to address it. Another parent, who knew a child of a relative facing the same problem, mentioned the same points about the need to diagnose and support children with disabilities.

In the past, in a study by Geva (2000), the author mentioned the dilemma of segregating phenomena associated with normal second language reading acquisition from authentic warning signs of reading failure in bilingual and multilingual situations which sometimes makes it difficult for educators to diagnose the presence of a reading disability like Dyslexia. However, that does not undermine the need to timely diagnose learning disabilities in children and extending support services to them.

Parents reported a number of concerns about co- academic problems they perceived their children to be experiencing at school.

- **Discipline and Moral Education**

All the parents in the study denied having known any explicit moral instructions in the classroom. They perceived that the moral education was more implicit and mainly in the junior high classes. It was mainly left for the parents and rather than it being from a theoretical aspect, the parents identified that it was more of a practical thing. The parents, mainly the ones who had children in those junior classes, were worried about discipline and said that it was inadequate.

Parents were concerned about a number of issues like, girls putting on makeup, absences from classes, absence of uniforms, use of cell phones in classes, and respect for the teachers and elders.

In a study on Chinese immigrant parents, Zhang, Ollila, and Harvey (1998) found that "the parents were of the view that schools often were not strict enough with students, offering too much indulgence and too little discipline" (p. 187). Chi (2012), in her study makes a mention of the moral education which the Chinese parents found to be missing in the Canadian education system. Certain immigrants emphasize morals and discipline in their children to a significant degree. Parents in such families are seen as the heads and elders are respected. The cohesiveness of families and cultural involvement keep these value traits alive in their children. According to Gibson (1988) these children accommodate without assimilating. Since culture and religion play an important role in defining discipline and values, the fact that these children receive informal cultural and religious instruction at home, sustains these traits in them. The schools however, address this issue functionally. The findings in this study are consistent with the existing literature.

- **Bullying**

One of the concerns that the parents of the children in higher grades mentioned was that of bullying. One of the parents talked about bullying by teachers while narrating an incident, where she anticipated that NL being a small place, teachers could easily get away with it. Another parent narrated her experiences of her child being intimidated in a summer school by a teacher. The same parent also mentioned that her child was also bullied by another student. She also appreciated the efforts of the teachers to protect the children from bullies. One parent who

was a doctor and handled cases of behavioral problems in children, narrated from her experience that bullying was a great problem in schools. Though the parents in the study (including this parent) appreciated the friendly nature and warmth of the residents of Newfoundland, she said that bullying did exist and that there was no support from schools and teachers towards the victims of this problem.

Though studies in the past have termed bullying as a rampant issue in schools even for non-immigrant students, issues of bullying on the basis of ethnicity and race have also been brought up wherein students not born in Canada (first generation immigrants) reported more ethnically- based victimization than those born in Canada (Larochette, Murphy, & Craig, 2010; McKenney, Peplar, Connolly, & Craig, 2006; Peplar, Connolly, & Craig, 2000; Scherr & Larson, 2010). Newfoundland is certainly a friendly province, but as narrated by the parents in this study and as is evident from the studies in the past, the problem does exist almost everywhere.

- **Cultural concerns**

Parents expressed a number of concerns that related to their culture, first language (heritage language) and religious practices. One of the concerns was that the parents felt their first language was being ignored in the education of their children. They also did not find much about their culture, traditions or practices of religion in the curriculum or practices of the school except presentations about their culture that their children were asked to deliver in the school and celebrating “International Week” in some schools. Parents mentioned that the curriculum and practices in the schools merely “touched” their culture. One of the parents also mentioned about the sex education that was being provided to teenage students. Looking at it from a cultural lens,

she detested the idea of providing this knowledge to students before they were at least 20 years of age.

Concerns have been reported by immigrant parents in the past about the absence of multicultural education. In one study, the Chinese parents did not find the “superficial” multicultural education adequate enough to balance their desire to have their children acquire the new culture and also preserve their ethnicity (Dyson, 2001). These parents expressed that the schools did not value their race or culture and requested multicultural education programs that went beyond occasional celebrations and festivals, and which should be included in the curriculum and daily practices. The parents in this study wanted more cultural involvement for children as well as parents in the school system. It has often been seen that there is generally a disagreement between education systems that are liberal, as we have in Canada and the immigrants from not-so-open cultures. In the recent past, the issue of sex education was heavily protested by mostly Asian immigrant parents in Toronto. There have also been issues about accommodation of prayer time and student dress in the past. The schools do have arts and culture in the curriculum but it does not necessarily mean international cultures. Most of the effort goes to acquainting the students with the culture and art in Newfoundland. To my knowledge, the schools do respect that a child is observing a religious celebration and do allow a day off or a certain dress to be worn. Sex education however, is an issue; although it is necessary, it is still protested by parents. There may, however, be a justified demand for providing it to girls and boys separately.

Including every culture of the world in the curriculum is not even possible because curriculum in most of the nations focus on their own Social Sciences, languages and culture, while at the same time it may touch upon the content related to other countries. However, the

schools' efforts to involve other cultures through presentations, allowing students to observe days and wear cultural dresses are appreciated. Schools, however, need to provide more opportunities to these children for cultural involvement. This will have twofold gains. Not only will it give these immigrant children a chance to stay connected to their roots and make their parents feel satisfied, it will also create awareness in the Canadian children about the world, which will give them more exposure related to becoming global citizens.

- **Efforts at home to sustain religion, language and culture**

The parents reported to value their cultures and traditions, first language and religion. In the absence of any measures in the schools to sustain these, the parents made a number of extra efforts at home to keep these alive in their children and to keep their children connected to their roots. The parents reported using storytelling, celebration of festivals, use of mother tongue at home for communication, training their children as per their culture with regards to behavior and respect for elders, communicating often with grandparents back home, food and dress, and attending get-togethers celebrating community and religious events in the city of their residence.

Immigrant parents looking forward to preserve their culture, traditions and languages, in the absence of any support from the schools informally taught their first languages to their children at home (Guo, 2013). Apart from the need to stay connected to their roots, communicate with people and relatives back home, the parents in the study mentioned the need to learn their language just in case they chose to go back to their country later in life.

2. What support systems are available to these immigrant parents within the school system?

One of the purposes of this study was to explore the support mechanisms available to immigrant parents in the schools, the invitations from and efforts of the schools to involve parents and support them and their children. While all parents appreciated the welcoming attitudes of teachers, administrators and other parents, a few narrated their problems which seem to be mainly because of their lack of information about the system. They mentioned that there was no orientation for them so that they could know whom to meet and where to go. For some problems, two of the families, when they went to the school for help, they were directed to the Association of New Canadians. Both the families reported being told that since they were not permanent residents or refugees, the association could not help them.

All the families, however, agreed that the teachers and administrators were helpful and receptive to their suggestions and problems. Two parents reported lack of initial support when their children had just begun school. Families also reported that in higher grades, the support did not come easily. As reported by three parents whose children were in senior high, there was not much effort by the schools to involve them, and there was no communication from the school unless something urgent came up. Some parents whose children were also not very efficient with English wanted support in the form of assistant teachers in the class so that their children could be given adequate time, given the fact that they were new into the system and wanted more attention, and interpreters to translate to their children and themselves during the parent teacher meetings. However, they said there was nothing like that made available to them.

Other parents mentioned that the school even used technology and websites to convey information to the parents; for example, one of the parents mentioned the website where parents could log on and see the attendance records, book appointments to see the teacher or administrator, view term grades and other school related information. Apparently, some parents

wanted more of one-to-one interaction with parents on a personal basis rather than having to use technology. Another point worth mentioning is that the parents who were not satisfied were having problems with English themselves, so it is unreasonable to expect them to be able to understand everything through a website. They may even have had no or very little exposure to technology, computers and the internet. It seemed from what the parents narrated that they expected some information coming home either through children or through a note by the teacher, which they found missing. While some parents mentioned programs aimed to support and involve parents, they also narrated their difficulties in being a part of these programs. The parents did not feel affirmed after having given suggestions to the schools; however, a few parents mentioned that their queries and problems were answered quickly by the school.

Research mentions the need to extend outreach to parents through counsellors using flexible means of communication for various parental programs and having parent councils in schools (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013). The Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO) Program in Ottawa schools to help ensure the successful integration of immigrant children and their families is a great example of efforts that could be made in this direction. Other efforts could include, but not be limited to, parenting workshops and parent support groups, ESL classes for parents, school interpreters, and training the teachers for cultural sensitivity (Elizalde-Utnick, 2010). Another effective way could be to have an immigrant parents' representative on the school council. Schools can consider establishing home/school/community liaison coordinators within schools to facilitate contact between teachers, families and communities and to capitalize on the resources of immigrant parents in reaching out to other immigrant parents (e.g., as home visitors). Another way to support newcomer families in the schools could be reaching out to various religious organizations to

which the immigrants may be affiliated and to conduct sessions and workshops for parents through such organizations. Schools can draw on local businesses and community members (particularly immigrants) as additional resources for immigrant education.

3. What is the extent of immigrant parent involvement in schools and how can it be maintained or improved?

In Canada, parents are encouraged to support their child's education by getting involved with the school and school board. In addition to helping their children succeed, this is an excellent opportunity for parents to meet people, become part of the school community and express opinions on what is taught in their child's school. Parents can get involved by volunteering at the child's school, meeting the child's teacher at parent-teacher evenings, or becoming a member of the school council (which contributes to advising and managing the school).

In this study, parents involved themselves in the education of their children in two ways- in the parent teacher meetings and giving them extra work at home. There was only one parent who knew all the ways of involvement available to them. Most of the parents reported only going to the parent-teacher meetings because of their commitments, time constraints or lack of knowledge, even though they mentioned the existence of volunteer programs in the school. However, most of the parents expressed their desire to be more involved in the school system apart from helping their children at home with extra practice in Math, reading or simply repetition of what was done in the class. None of the parents confirmed his/her presence on the school council. Parents agreed to having gone to meet the teacher in case of any urgency. There were two parents who said that most of the communication was initiated by them through the

school diary. Another parent said that sometimes it was fine not to go if the child did not have a problem. On the other hand, one of the parents even mentioned the use of Twitter for communicating with the teacher. Other methods used were telephone, email and texting. Parents of children in junior high grades were found to be involved more in communicating with their teachers than with the teachers of their children in the higher grades. The fact that the education in higher grades is more specialized perhaps explains the decline in parental involvement at this level.

Researchers, in studies related to the parental problems and inefficacies have listed various causes that deter parental involvement such as, time constraints, job schedules, no or less knowledge of the system, own language inabilities, communication styles, and no specific matter to discuss (Dyson, 2001). However, most of the parents confirmed that the subject matter of their communication was academic as well as co-academic. As said earlier, many times the lack of parental involvement is considered by schools as a lack of interest in the education of their children. Researchers suggest that schools learn immigrant parents' views on education and cultural differences on home-school communication to attract and involve parents in the education of their children (Dyson, 2001; Li, 2006; Ran, 2001). On the other hand, Guo (2013) mentions the "double speak" of Canadian schools about parental involvement. The schools actually welcome only those forms of parental involvement that support existing school policies and instructional practices. Where the teachers expect parents to take initiative to contact the school, frequent visits are also often unwelcomed by teachers.

Guo (2013) offers valuable suggestions to increase parental involvement in schools: a more effective and inclusive model of parental participation would need to recognize a full range of socio-educational norms, values, and cultural knowledge in the schoolcommunity,

which includes comprehensive understanding of the contribution of immigrant parents to their children's education. Instead of trying to get immigrant parents involved in traditionally sanctioned ways, schools should recognize the unique ways in which immigrant parents are already involved in their children's education. Educators often focus on what is lacking in immigrant families rather than on the potential resources upon which they can build.

Parents in the study themselves gave valuable suggestions which have been discussed in the next section. Schools need to build upon the knowledge of the parents. To involve the parent, schools should adopt a flexible approach rather than the rigid "fit yourself" approach. Schools cannot succeed in achieving their ultimate goal unless parents partner in the education system. Though termed as a "visible minority", the interests and growing numbers of immigrants cannot be ignored. The schools need to organize orientation sessions for parents, preferably in the language used by parents, rather than just handing over a bunch of informational papers and brochures, again in English which is known to be a major problem for immigrant parents. Giving due place to culture and language in curriculum and school practices will help attract parental involvement. All the parents in the study agreed to having given extra lessons to their children at home- informally about language, religion, culture; and Math or reading exercises to cover up the gap which they thought was there because of the differences in the level of curriculum back home and in Newfoundland, Canada.

4. How can information about the views and concerns of immigrant parents be used for the betterment of the education system in Newfoundland?

The purpose of this research is not met unless the results are used towards making a difference in real terms. The results of this research can help the schools, teachers,

administrators, school boards and teacher training institutes to become receptive to the problems of the growing immigrant community in the province and to make necessary amendments or provisions so that the newcomers feel accommodated. This somehow calls for a systemic change that is designed and initiated at the school board level and filters down for execution at the school level. This places immense responsibility on school administrators and teachers. There should be provision for orientation of students and parents to inform them about the school, practices, course syllabi, assessment and evaluation systems, communication methods, rights and responsibilities of students and parents, educational laws, and other important contact information. Apart from parents being given loads of information, there should be a mechanism to facilitate understanding the background the parents have come from. Parents can be explained what different things they are likely to see and experience and how they can help and involve themselves in the education of their children. One of the parents in the study mentioned about the need for translators. Though Association for New Canadians provides such services but for some reason, the same was not available to these parents and they suffered immensely from a lack of knowledge about the system.

ESL programs need to be continuously reviewed for their effectiveness and children need to be evaluated for their suitability to the mainstream. English language inadequacy hampers the progress of these children, in an "all English" curriculum. While this may be a reason for the content of these programs being kept simple and easy, there is a need to ensure that the children do not lag behind in terms of content knowledge and learning. The parents who are newcomers need to be explained about the "no homework" policy in place in schools in North America, so that they may choose and be prepared to deal with it at home. There can be a list of activities devised to be done at home, even though the parents may or may not choose to do them. There

are significant differences between mathematical abilities of immigrant and non-immigrant children. It is difficult to change the entire Math curriculum to suit the needs of immigrant children. This may place the non-immigrant children in jeopardy. Thinking about a more balanced approach, it is wiser to organize extra advanced Math classes for those who are interested. As reported by a participant parent, the system in Newfoundland does have a similar provision. Parents need to be more inquisitive about how they can benefit from the various programs that are in place for them and collaborate with schools to make it better. Since the curriculum is in English, and given the fact that these children struggle with English, a teaching strategy for teachers could be to group children using the same language for doing activities or problem solving (Baluja, 2001). This helps the children to concentrate on the given problem rather than having to worry about the language.

Building on their cultural, religious, and linguistic knowledge is another step to ensure parent involvement. Parental thinking about using education for upward mobility holds true for most of the immigrants. The children having seen their parents sacrifice a lot for their education automatically value familial relations. The fact that they reside in a western country with different peer behavior and cultural norms does affect them to some extent but in some studies in America, researchers have talked about the ability of immigrants, especially Asians, to "accommodate without assimilating" (Gibson,1988).

Discipline and bullying are a major problem for schools all over North America. Discipline can be enforced and bullying can be stopped by incorporating multicultural education in schools. In addition to having parents involved in the school bullying programs, and having counsellors to address the problem of bullsh behavior, researchers have also suggested that

having higher teacher diversity in the schools helps to reduce bullying (Larochette, Murphy, & Craig, 2010).

One of the limitations of this study is also the fact that considering the views of teachers, administrators and personnel from the school board would have been most helpful in analyzing the support systems available to these parents. However, that would have been outside the scope of this study. This study considers only the views of immigrant parents and looks at the system of education in Newfoundland from their perspective. A number of suggestions were given by parents in the study regarding various issues. These are:

- The education system should consider bridging the gaps between high schools and university. Children should not be at a disadvantage when they see the university content.
- Timely diagnosis of and support to learners with disabilities. Support at the school level should be ensured in terms of teacher support.
- On a broader level, the curriculum across provinces should be made on par, so as the children who need to transfer between provinces, given the likelihood that parents have to move across provinces in search of livelihood, are not at a loss. The CMEC needs to play a bigger role as an umbrella organization to ensure this.
- The use of teacher assistants in the schools such that there is not one but two teachers in the class to address the needs of the students. This will give more individual attention to the students and ensure that the work is checked and feedback provided to them.
- ESL teachers should be given more frequency in the timetable of the school. Parents reported the teachers coming once a week and they wanted the teacher to come in more often.

- In consideration of the immigrants present in the class, it would be beneficial if the teachers slowed down their pace in terms of teaching.
- One of the parents suggested that if the hours of the school were increased by one or two hours and the students were made to work collaboratively, they would be more involved with each other and the community, and this would also benefit the native students. With regards to this, I often feel that instead of having the summer breaks, schools could actually have longer winter breaks. This helps in many ways: first, the children get better and longer days to study and participate in school. Second, the weather in summer would be apt for many school activities. Third, thinking environmentally and economically, this saves a lot of money by saving energy that is used to heat up buildings in winter. Fourthly, the schools sometimes have to be closed in adverse weather leading to a loss of study days. This could be well avoided if there was school in summer and holidays in winter.
- Citing reasons for giving homework, a parent suggested that homework is an effective tool to bring together the family where parents can help their children and make themselves aware of what is going on in the child's school. The suggestion made in this chapter about a list of activities that the parents could choose to do with the children at home, in view of the existing "no homework" policy seems reasonable.
- A parent urged the need for better teacher-student relationships based on compassion and respect for each other.
- The inclusion of religious moral education in the morning assembly even if it is for a short time; this would provide students with a thought for the day which is value-based.
- There should be more awards and scholarships for immigrant students.

The information from the study can be of immense value to the teacher training institutions in order to include something about handling diverse cultures in classrooms so that they are not overwhelmed or at a loss to think of what to do when they see a culturally diverse classroom. Both, theoretical and practical knowledge should be provided to the new teachers so that they are responsive to the needs of the immigrants. Similarly, professional days for inservicing teachers should include workshops on this issue and should be held regularly. The schools can also benefit from being made aware of the problems faced by immigrant parents and their children. This knowledge would be helpful in devising programs for home-school-community partnerships.

5.1.2 General Question

What are the perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in K-12 in Newfoundland, Canada?

Keeping in mind the ultimate purpose of the study, the general question was assisted by subsidiary questions to gather responses of the parents about their views and perceptions, issues and concerns about the education system in Newfoundland, where their children were attending school in the K-12 system of public education. As is evident by the data gathered and analyzed, parents had various views about education in general, the goal of education, their expectations from the education of their children, and the system of education in Newfoundland. The parents responded in the light of their past experiences with the education system in their home countries which makes it evident that parental expectations, views and perceptions are shaped not only by educational and socio-economic status but also by their cultural identities. The parents expressed their concerns and discussed issues that they faced in the system. The parents also discussed the

extent of their involvement in the education of their children and the efforts of the school to reach out to them in order to support them. The study clearly shows that there needs to be more input from the schools which would be culturally responsive and accommodating of the needs of the immigrant parents and their children. Parents, in the best interests of their children, need to be proactive in accessing the available resources. The parents also offered valuable suggestions which can be of immense help to the other stakeholders in the education system in analyzing and modifying the existing programs, revamping others and devising new programs for truly inclusive classrooms.

5.2 Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations and delimitations are factors that can potentially weaken the study and narrow its scope (Creswell, 2013) and include:

1. Only 11 immigrant parents in the city of St. John's who were willing to participate were interviewed; and as such the results cannot be generalized due to the small number and other site related factors.
2. The participant related factors also limit the study. Parents of different educational, socio-economic backgrounds may have differences in their perceptions. Factors like their former lives in their home country, years of stay in Canada, financial status, career status, the community, and family arrangement are expected to influence the experiences of immigrant parents.
3. There were limitations to the literature available on the subject in the Canadian context. There is a significant amount of literature available in the United States (US) context. However, the existing Canadian literature mainly concentrates on Chinese immigrants.

4. The study includes parents of first generation immigrant children only. First-generation immigrants are those who are foreign-born residents of Canada.
5. The views and experiences of immigrant parents in this study may be different than immigrant parents in any other city or province because provinces across Canada have different settlement programs for newcomers.

5.3 Summary

This chapter discussed the general question and each of the guiding subsidiary questions in the light of the findings, using a number of quotations from the interviews. Findings related to each of the themes have been discussed in detail in light of existing literature. The chapter also accommodated this researcher's reflections on the various issues and presented suggestions to assist in solving the problem. The limitations and delimitations of the study have also been discussed.

Chapter 6

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

This chapter provides a summary of the study, which includes its purpose, methodology applied, and findings including categories and themes, as guided by general and subsidiary research questions. The conclusions arrived at as a result of the findings articulated in Chapter 5 have been discussed. Finally, the chapter also discusses implications of the study arising from the conclusions.

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to explore perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about education of their children in the K-12 system of education in Newfoundland, Canada. The study also aimed at examining through their lens, the extent of parental involvement and support available to them.

6.1.2 Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach to best document the views of the parents through narrative interviews. The researcher used maximum variation sampling and was successful in interviewing 11 immigrant parents from different backgrounds in terms of religion, country, socio-economic status, professions in Canada, language, culture, and age and grade of children. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and the data so collected was subjected to analysis which resulted in an emergence of broad categories and themes. These categories and themes enable the researcher to arrive at various findings and sound conclusions.

6.2 Findings

The analysis of data resulted in an emergence of various broad categories and a number of themes within those categories. Those categories and the themes were as follows:

- parental perceptions: goal of education in general; parental expectations; system of education in Newfoundland; and growth and achievements of their children in the new system of education in Newfoundland, Canada;
- issues and concerns: homework; curriculum; methods of teaching; discipline and moral education; subject specific concerns about Math, ESL and spelling instruction; transition to university and transfer of credits; bullying, school related problems; cultural and first language concerns;
- parental involvement and support systems: parents being proactive; extra efforts at home; schools' efforts to involve parents; and lastly,
- parental suggestions.

The thematic analysis provided answers to the general and subsidiary questions which guided the study. In an answer to the general question, 'What are the perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in K-12 in Newfoundland, Canada?', the study suggests that these parents have a number of concerns and issues which are partly due to their own lack of knowledge about the system. Having said this, it is not to be undermined that there is much room for initiating support programs for these parents. The study was also guided by the following subsidiary questions:

- **How do the immigrant parents perceive the education their children are getting in the K-12 school system?**

The participants in the study articulated their perception about the goal of education in general, their expectations about the education of their children, their views about the system of education in Newfoundland, and their children's growth and achievements in the host system. In addition to their perceptions, the parents also accentuated the issues and concerns that they faced in the system. Where the analysis of data depicted differences in educational ideologies, it also points out some serious concerns such as gaps in high school and university, transferability of credits, bullying, lack of cultural activities for immigrants and their children in schools, Math education, spelling instruction, and quality evaluation and need assessment of ESL programs.

- **What support systems are available to these immigrant parents within the school system?**

The parents reiterated that they needed more support from schools. They talked about the ways the schools try to involve them and also about the areas where the support was missing. Certain parents lacked knowledge about the system. Apart from teachers' efforts, none of the parents mentioned any formal, official methods adopted by schools to specifically support immigrant parents. The measures that are in place are for all parents, irrespective of the fact that immigrant parents and their children have different and complex needs.

- **What is the extent of immigrant parent involvement in schools and how can it be maintained or improved?**

The parents also mentioned how they were proactive in getting involved in the education of their children. This included helping with homework, giving extra assignments to their children at home, engaging them with their cultural and traditional activities and

language. The parents mentioned covering whatever was not covered by the formal education. Some parents expressed their own inabilities due to a lack of time to attend various meetings and to be actively involved. However, the schools need to devise interesting ways to involve the parents in school activities and perhaps establish student and parent services help centers in the schools that cater to these parents.

- **How can information about the views and concerns of immigrant parents be used for the betterment of the education system in Newfoundland?**

Parents gave a number of suggestions which can be used towards addressing their problems. The findings of the study point out various deficiencies in the system of education basically with regards to supporting immigrant parents. These deficiencies speak to grey areas where the Ministry of Education and school boards need to pay attention and employ resources for providing adequate support to the increasing immigrant population in the province.

6.3 Conclusions

The findings of the study lead to the following conclusions:

- ◆ In this study, the immigrant parents had a high set of expectations for the education of their children irrespective of their educational or socio-economic status. The parents not only cared for the academic success of their children but also their "overall development". The well-educated parents adjusted easily and had more awareness of the system.
- ◆ The parents were satisfied with the growth and achievements of their children in the system of education in Newfoundland, in terms of academics and co-academics.

- ◆ The parents who adopted a more adjusting, open outlook and tried to mingle in the Canadian life style, perceived less problems with the system of education in Newfoundland than those who perceived everything in the light of their background.
- ◆ Parents had valid concerns and issues about the education of their children which can be easily addressed by the schools and the NL Department of Education. Some concerns would require a systemic change to be addressed, which may not be easily feasible. The Department of Education needs to address the gap between its existing practices and immigrant parents' expectations.
- ◆ There was less than expected parental involvement in the school activities. Though the parents admitted putting extra efforts at home into academic, moral and cultural education, they were constrained by a shortage of time and a lack of knowledge about the school system. Parents need to be more overt in being involved with their children's education. Fathers need to assume an increased active role.
- ◆ The existing support for immigrant parents by the schools is not enough. Several organizations such as the ANC do provide help to these immigrants in transitioning to their new environment but it is better to have a support help center for parents and students in the schools where there is an immigrant student population. Translators and interpreters need to be provided to parents during meetings. ESL classes for parents, and orientation for parents about the system can be organized through this support help center. Heritage language programs which involve instruction in the students' native language along with English/French could be considered.
- ◆ Schools' efforts to involve immigrant parents appear to fail to interest the parents. Cultural inclusion in practice and in the curriculum is a key to addressing many issues

like bullying, parental involvement, and an easy and smooth transition. Having a diverse mix of teachers and staff is another measure that would support these parents. Teachers need to be exposed to training and programs in personal development, workshops and conferences to increase their awareness about culture, language, parenting practices, communication styles of immigrant parents and the parents' cultural attitudes about teacher authority.

6.4 Implications

The findings and conclusions derived from those findings have the following implications for practice and research:

- **For Research:** More research needs to be done at various levels to know about programs that could be initiated by schools and school boards to help immigrant parent and their children transition into the new system of education. Comparative studies of provinces with greater immigrant influx and Newfoundland, where immigration is gaining momentum, need to be conducted in relation to the support systems for immigrant children and their parents. In addition to learning from Canadian provinces, studies need to reflect best practices of schools and school boards across the world to sustain and manage diversity in the classrooms. Researchers also need to see how well the teacher training institutions are preparing new teachers to handle a culturally heterogeneous mix of students in classrooms. At the school level, studies need to be conducted on how to increase engagement and involvement of immigrant parents in the education of their children. At a micro level, each of the issues and concerns reiterated by parents in this

study calls for intervention through research, especially the role of cultural inclusion in facilitating easier transition of immigrants and boosting parental involvement in schools.

- **For Practice:** The study has practical implications for schools in designing new and interesting ways for parental involvement. Schools need to reflect diversity in operations, recognize the cultural knowledge of immigrants and use it to address the problems associated with parental involvement and bullying. Schools need to be open to hiring multicultural staff and training teachers for a diverse outlook in classroom instruction. Teacher training institutes need to add courses that would prepare new teachers to be sensitive to the needs of the growing immigrant community in Newfoundland. There needs to be a partnership and collaboration between the schools and teacher training institutions to develop appropriate pre-service teacher programs. School administrators and school boards need to ensure that the programs for inclusion and support to immigrant parents and their children are effective, and any inefficient programs should be overhauled or modified. There is a need to collaborate practice with research. School boards should encourage more research looking into the problems, challenges of newcomers and finding ways to ensure smooth transition into the new system. A general attitude that prevails is that the newcomers should adjust according to the host country. This point of view should give way to a broader outlook of exchanging knowledge with newcomers, especially in today's modern global world.

6.5 Concluding Comments

The study of perceptions, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the K-12 system of education in Newfoundland, Canada, has brought up challenges faced by parents and their children due to transition into a new environment which is

significantly different than their native environment in many aspects. Despite the programs that are in place in the system to help parents and their children, the parents in this study did not seem to know of many of these programs. This implies that either there are not many programs actually existing or the ones that exist are not able to help these parents. This brings up the utility of this study in helping to evaluate the existing programs and launch new programs of support to the immigrant children and parents. This places greater initiative on the schools, school boards and the NL Department of Education to roll out effective programs for support to parents and their children, and further training of the teachers. The study also calls on teacher training institutions to operate in collaboration with schools and school boards. The study is helpful to teachers and new teachers in understanding the challenges faced by the immigrant community and how teachers being the point of first contact can make a difference.

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Appendix A - Questionnaire for Participants

Interview Questions for Parents

1. How would you describe your child's educational progress, accomplishments and attainments in Canada?
2. a). What do you think education should prepare your children for?
b) How is the education system in Newfoundland helping you with that?
3. What are your aspirations / expectations regarding the education of your children?
4. How do you involve yourself in the school activities or programs at school?
5. How do you help your children in their homework or assignments?
6. Have there been any problems or concerns that you have faced with the school your child is studying in? If yes, please tell me more about it. If no, please tell me how has the school supported your child and also you as parents?
7. How are your views and suggestions taken by the school?
8. What do you feel is best about the education your child is getting?
9. What do you feel is lacking in the education your child is getting?
10. What do you have to say about the curriculum of the province?
11. What would you say about the pedagogy/ teaching methods used in classes?
12. What kind of academic or specific subject related problems have your children experienced?
13. Has English as a language been a concern for your child's education? If yes, how?
14. How much do you think is the school preparing them morally?
15. What kind of activities and celebrations are held in the school?
16. How does the school include your culture in its activities?
17. What does the school do to include you in the school activities?
18. What is the attitude of teachers and administrators and other parents towards you and your children?
19. How do you see the education system in Canada in comparison to the one you have in your country?

Appendix B - Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Title: *Perspectives, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the K-12 school system in Newfoundland and Labrador*

Researcher(s): *Ms. Jaspreet Kaur, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, jk2530@mun.ca, 709-770-9191*

Supervisor(s): *Dr. Jerome Delaney, Associate Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, E 4022, G.A Hickman Building, jdelaney@mun.ca.*

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “*Perspectives, issues and concerns of immigrant parents about the education of their children in the K-12 school system in Newfoundland and Labrador*”.

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, *Ms. Jaspreet Kaur*, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

As part of my Master's thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr Jerome Delaney about issues, concerns and perceptions of immigrant parents about the education of their children in K-12. The study involves immigrant parents who come to Canada with a hope of better opportunities for their children. The extent to which they feel included in the education of their children, their perceptions and experiences of a new system of education to which their children are exposed to, need to be unearthed. Hence, it becomes important to study their perceptions, experiences and concerns so that the related other stakeholders like teachers and administration can help them better.

The study requires detailed experiences of the participants and I would like to interview you for the same. The interviews will be up to an hour long and will occur at a place and time of your convenience. There are no risks involved due to participation in the study. Your participation will result in uncovering the perceptions, problems and concerns of the immigrant parents which would be helpful to future researchers. Strict confidentiality will be maintained with the data.

The data will be collected through audio taped interviews. It is for my ease and saving time but you may stop me from doing so if you want to. The data will be stored for a period of five years

according to the policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research at MUN and then shredded. The electronic data will be kept in password protected files.

The data so collected will be used in presentations, published articles, thesis and journals. The data will be reported using direct quotations and in an aggregated or summarized form using pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. An executive summary of the results will be made available by e-copy to all participants. However, there will be no information reported publically that could possibly identify you.

Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any question (s) if you like. There are no foreseen costs or negative consequences to your participation in this study. Your proceeding to signing the form indicates you have read and understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a participant. However, in no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time before the results are written up including up to a month after the study concludes (i.e., April 20th, 2015). Your data will be destroyed and not included in the study. There will be no consequences for you due to the withdrawal. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact:

Jaspreet Kaur (Principal Investigator), Telephone: 709-770-9191, email: jk2530@mun.ca, or

Dr Jerome Delaney (Study Supervisor, MUN), Telephone: 709-864-2071, email: jdelaney@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you withdraw before the cut-off date of April 20, 2015, any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your signature:

I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview Yes No

I agree to the use of quotations. Yes No

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date