

Understanding East Indian Culture

Meeting held Thursday, July 16, 1970

OCT 19, 70
MR Messenger
Joelyn Bohanec
Marjorie Smith

Present were: Mr. Russell McKenzie ----- Pupil Personnel Services, Vancouver School Board
Miss Joan Doree ----- Nursing Supervisor, Metropolitan Health Services
Miss Edna Fyffe ----- Metropolitan Health Services
Mrs. Helga Hicks ----- City Social Service
Miss Sachi Yakura ----- City Social Service
Mrs. ^{Joelyn} Bohanec ----- Community Development, Vancouver City
Mr. Sukhminder, Sikh Temple, was invited but prevented from attending
Miss Marjorie V. Smith ----- UBC Center for Continuing Education

Background of the Meeting

The UBC Center for Continuing Education is engaged in a program designed to assist professionals and others to gain a better understanding of persons whose cultural or socio-economic background is different from their own.

The first phase was a series of three lectures by Dr. Ernest Becker of Simon Fraser University. These were attended by 150 professionals and volunteers in Manpower, Social Work, Community Development, Health, etc.

Our hope now is to develop a program with professional persons in an area where there is a concentration of residents of a particular culture. The question is, would this be useful in the South-East Vancouver area and if so how can it be planned. An interested resource person is Professor Joe Richardson of the Department of ^{Religious} ~~Asian~~ Studies at U.B.C.

Discussion

There was general agreement that such a program would be helpful, and suggestions were made as follows:

(a) Re the East Indian Population:

It was pointed out that there are East Indian people in North Vancouver and around the Grandview school area, in addition to the South Vancouver area around Moberly school.

It was also suggested that the program might include a general orientation to East Indian culture, but with special reference to the Sikhs.

It would be good to invite a number of persons of both Sikh and Hindu background to assist in the discussions.

(b) Special Interests of Professionals:

Mr. McKenzie said that the school administration is very much concerned about the New Canadian Programs. The language problem is particularly difficult and he feels that too many New Canadian students are being referred into special education classes as slow learners.

Mrs. Bohanec mentioned that there had been discussions between Miss Linda Malila and some members of the Sikh community, regarding the need for some kind of "head-start" program for young children. There will also be a School Canadiana starting in the Temple in the fall.

(c) Topics for a Series:

Professor Richardson had suggested including something on the historical background of the community in India and in B.C. and then focussing on specific intercultural problems related to the family, government, etc. It seemed in the discussion that a series oriented around specific aspects of the culture would be of most interest, e.g. the particular values around family life as they affect relationships between parents and children, responsibility for other family members, discipline, approaches to health, etc.

(d) Participants Should Include:

- i Educators -- principals, special counsellors, New Canadian teachers, and other teachers who have many Indian children in their classes
- ii Nurses, especially those in areas concerned -- Fraserview, North Vancouver, Grandview, and Health Unit 3.
- iii Social workers -- City, Children's Aid, Family Service Centres, etc.
- iv Probation officers
- v Family Court personnel

(e) Schedule:

The group favoured having 2-hour meetings from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., a series of possibly 3 or 4 beginning about mid-October.

(f) Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the same group would come together with Mr. Damen, the principal at Moberly school, and a few others, to a meeting about mid-September.