

My Journey to Canada

Vasanthi Packirisamy immigrated to Canada from India in 2016, she was twenty-nine years old. The following narrative is based on an interview conducted with Mrs. Packirisamy on May 30, 2021.



Vasanthi Packirisamy visiting Niagara Falls in Toronto. Dated 2017.

My name is Vasanthi. I was born in India. My life would have been completely different if I hadn't married. Most of my reasons for moving to Canada were related to my family after I got married. I think I wouldn't even have thought of Canada or moving anywhere if it wasn't for my marriage.

I don't think I wanted to leave India, I think I just wanted to come to Canada. I still like India and I identify myself as an Indian. There were some factors that made me come to Canada but it was not related to any factors that made me leave India. If I had to say a reason, I would say I had some family issues which made leaving India seem like a good option.

My husband was living in Canada. He was the one who wanted to bring us to Canada. I think it was one of the major reasons. Our kids only saw him maybe once a year for a month. And it's hard. I thought it was important for them to live with and grow up with their dad. I thought it was important for me too. It was because of the opportunities that Canada had offered. I looked at the opportunities it offered for my kids. It seemed to have a good educational system, I also thought it would be a better place for my kids to achieve their dreams. It was a good place for my kids to grow up and study in. That is a big reason that made me want to come to Canada.

I didn't know anything about Canada at that time so I didn't find any bad things directly related to Canada. But the biggest downside was leaving my family in India. I didn't know when I was going to see them again and that was scary. I would also be going to a completely different country and suddenly be living a completely different lifestyle. I was very scared. The pros are all the reasons I said before. I was happy that my kids and I got to live with my husband.

The hardest thing was leaving my family. It was very hard. But also things like me not knowing English. I did not know English. It was very low. One of my daughters knew it a little bit and my husband knew English. And that was what we relied on. I remember one time going through the airport security and the boys and girls had split up. And I felt so new and lost to all of it. I just started realizing at that moment how different my life would be.



Vasanthi Packirisamy right before marriage in India. Dated 2005.

We moved to Medicine Hat, Alberta. It was hard getting used to it. It was hard getting used to the new lifestyle. One struggle was getting Indian food. It was very hard to find some Indian things in Medicine Hat. Near the end of 2016, my family moved to Toronto. It was different because Toronto was more multicultural. There were many Indian people. There were also a lot of temples and Indian stores which made me happy. We recently opened a restaurant and it was a very big and different moment in our lives. I would never even have thought of something like this a few months ago but it happened. And it is a big accomplishment for my whole family.

I like Toronto the most because of all the things we have been able to do here. I like how much I have grown as a person here. I am proud of the ways my kids have grown here and I like it here. I feel like a completely new person. I have changed in so many ways. I have gotten a lot more confident, brave, and independent now. I identify myself as being an Indian and I don't think that will ever change. I was born and grew up in India so I don't think I could ever look at myself as a Canadian.