

**The Perception of Honour among the British-Pakistani Community in Watford,  
United Kingdom.**

Zubaida Metlo

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Modern Languages and Cultures  
University of Leeds

April, 2012

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no question from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgment.

## **Dedication**

Parkinson Tower a symbolic re-birth of the ruined Hindu temple 'Kamber Tikano Tower'

### **Acknowledgement**

This dissertation could not have been completed without the support of a great many individuals. It is a collective journey, a challenging intellectual task that would not have been possible without all the valuable support in my life.

Without a doubt, the main contributor to this dissertation is my supervisor Dr Zahia Salhi, whose constant intellectual insight and input brought this document to completion. I owe a debt of gratitude to her, for her unflagging encouragement over the past few years, helping me to nurture what once only seemed like a dream: researching about women's lives who suffer from cultural ethos. She provided me with a space to express my fears and frustrations; she listened to my concerns, and helped boost my confidence and faith in myself. Without her, I could never have completed my academic journey. She used to say to me, despite all my hardships, that I was doing "brilliantly".

I would like to thank all the participants in this study, especially those who gave so much of their time, generosity, and support. Without them, there would have been nothing to write about. My gratitude also goes to my academic friend Dr Kaveri Qureshi, who provided me with direction, and enriched my understanding of the complexity of the area. She made sense of my data, and supplied me with enlightened and constructive criticism during the early drafts of my work. I hope that I have done some justice to her suggestions. Thanks are similarly due to Dr Marta Bolognani and Dr Mwenza Blell, for their earlier support. Not less important is the help I received from Nada Al-Otaiby, who was a real boost for me both personally and professionally; Christine Chattle and Nadia Anwar both corrected my English; and David Chu, who supported me in computer difficulties. I thank all of them. Despite such assistance, I remain solely responsible for any problems with the project.

I'm thankful to Janet Morton, a librarian at the University of Leeds, for helping me locate research material. I'm also thankful to Professor Qadir Khan Rajput, a Vice Chancellor (MUET), who granted me a study leave to go abroad, and Professor Mark Williams who helped me secure funds, without which I would not have been able to complete my project. I must equally express my gratitude to Seija Frears, who provided special prayers and initial moral support to settle me in Leeds. Indeed all my Leeds friends have been a great support in my struggle as a self-funded student. I am exceptionally grateful to my friends Emma Reinhardt, Sabrina Qureshi, Bridget Fenn, Caroline Smart, Vivienne Hayes, Jacek Leszek, Anita Mir, Shabnum Moti and Nafisa Shah, for all their love and enormous encouragement.

After working tirelessly for what seemed like a marathon of writing, I have received an inspirational Arabic proverb from Hussain Al-Qarni - which truly encouraged me: ‘a good horse is one who runs fast at the last moment’; I appreciated it and found it very useful. I also found it very comforting when Abdullah Al-Fouzan used to ask about my children, who live far away from me, and Dr Christopher Bartle’s insightful conversation re-energised me greatly. I will never ever forget Eman Elsayed, and her cheerful talk, which kept me going at my submitting stage. They all wanted to lift my spirits throughout this challenging journey, and helped me in ways that only dear friends and fellow PhD students can.

I’m also grateful to my siblings who live all over the world, but never far from each other. They never left me alone. I’m indebted to my loving sister Saeeda Sahar, who would always phone and ask how I was coping, and to the various support of my brothers, Dr Ali Gul, Mujeeb Rehman and Amar Jalil, particularly, the comfort they provided to my children in my absence. I thank them all with all my heart, and I believe they will get rewarded for such kindness.

My special thanks go to my children who never let me down, showing incredible patience in coping with their lives without me, always giving me great news of their good grades/awards from school, and proving how talented and gifted they are. I deeply regret not being able to attend many of their award ceremonies and school activities. It is certainly exciting that, whilst most parents receive their children’s degrees, in my case, my children will receive mine. They were with me when I received my MA degree in Leeds University, and were proud of my success, after the hard choices and great challenges we all had to face together. They look forward, once again, to accompanying me at my PhD award ceremony.

This dissertation is dedicated to the Parkinson Tower, which became a source of inspiration for me in my academic journey, and a great reminder of the ruined ‘Kamber Tikano Tower’ that I have always deeply honoured. I also dedicate my work to the female victims of honour killings, the women who have died and those who have survived, particularly in Sindh, but also all others whom I have not reached yet, but hope to do so one day. I dedicate my thesis to my father, Pir Muhammad, who has great faith in me, and to my mother, Gul Afroz, who is the prime source and emotional anchor of my journey. She eagerly awaits to see my PhD degree, has an eternal love for me, and prays for me with great spirit. Finally, I dedicate my work to my three children, Komalta, a peace-giving angel, and Halar and Mir, my two sons and glittering stars. They are all the strings of my soul and an inspiration source of my life.

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the related concepts of honour and shame in the British-Pakistani community in Watford. "Honour" - symbolic term and fluid entity - disturbs many people's lives. Scholars link it to patriarchy as it is embedded in cultural patriarchy (familial, hierarchal and kinship based). The phenomenon has been verified through an explicit set of values and evidences which works in personal and communal form affecting and subordinating women's position in family and community.

Honour process has a lifelong application to women's lives which starts ideologically from birth and in practice from pre-puberty. In practice the woman is expected by close family, extended family and community members to avoid any physical contact with a male which might result in romantic intimacy or sexual relationship before or outside marriage. The research questions evolving during field work were deeply grounded in community beliefs constantly producing and reinforcing multiple complexities in controlling young British born women's lives to produce family's required reputation as an ethnic identity in the community.

Young women are being indoctrinated in ambiguous, intimidating, and patriarchal ways to follow rules for modesty, facing harsh consequences if they cross the line. Women's modesty and their marriage are a central component in honour culture. The main concern noticed is that parents live in apprehension that their daughter might get involved in a relationship outside the family's preference as they intend to keep their ethnic identity intact through their daughter's modest behaviour. Marriage demands women's utter modesty, sexual purity and dutiful role being a daughter, wife and a mother.

Inter-generational tensions were observed, parents were more inclined towards their group identity. Young British born adults criticise caste values; young British born women, while inclined towards Islamic teaching if Islam appreciates women's rights, differ from their elders in being uncertain about continuing to live by patriarchal/honour dictated codes. They were courageous and confident in negotiating for social change while trying to keep parents happy.

Three generations were involved in this study, females being the main participants in the project, but equally men's contribution was found highly useful to understanding the community concerns and cultural practices.

### Glossary

*Arabic, Urdu, Sindhi and Punjabi words, some of which appeared more than once in the text*

<i>Abiro</i>	Chastity, shyness, dignity and reputation.
<i>Amanat</i>	Something holding temporarily
<i>Baithuk</i>	The women's area of the house, back room
<i>Beizati</i>	Shame or bad reputation
<i>Biraderi</i>	Local agnatic lineage, blood-cum caste unites.
<i>Burqa</i>	An all-enveloping veil
<i>Dars</i>	Islamic education, lesson.
<i>Dupatta</i>	Long rectangular, thin scarf worn by Pakistani women.
<i>Fitna</i>	Chaos, discord, temptation, enchantment.
<i>Ghairat</i>	Protection of honour, jealousy, courage, modesty and shame. It is a complex concept which applies to both men and women, and stands opposed to <i>be-ghairat</i> , shamelessness, without a sense of honour.
<i>Ghrara:</i>	A pleated, long skirt.
<i>Geebat</i>	Backbiting
<i>Ghughdam</i>	Innocent lass
<i>Hijab</i>	Muslim woman's outing hiding her hair and body contours
<i>Hijabi</i>	Women who wear the veil
<i>Haya:</i>	Reputation
<i>Iffat</i>	Chastity, dignity
<i>Izzat</i>	Honour, prestige
<i>Ismat</i>	Chastity
<i>Jirga</i>	Tribal council
<i>Jaedad</i>	Property
<i>Kismet</i>	Destiny, fate
<i>Kashmiri</i>	Resident of Azad Kashmir
<i>Karo-kari</i>	The terms <i>karo</i> (black man) and <i>kari</i> (black woman) is employed as a compound noun for 'honour killings'. 'Black' suggests a lack of morality, not skin colour or other racial category.
<i>Lajari</i>	Shy
<i>Lena-dena</i>	Literally 'taking-giving' gifts
<i>Lihaz</i>	Consideration
<i>Mel-jhol</i>	Socialising
<i>Madrassa</i>	Quranic school
<i>Mafadaat</i>	Vested interests
<i>Majazi khuda:</i>	False gods
<i>Malik</i>	Master or owner

<i>Mard</i>	Man
<i>Majzoob</i>	Saint
<i>Mirpuri</i>	Resident of Mirpur district
<i>Mardanigi</i>	Mainliness
<i>Mullah</i>	Religious leader
<i>Mehram:</i>	A relative within the prohibited degree of marriage
<i>Maulvi</i>	Officiating priest of a mosque
<i>Namaz :</i>	Daily prayer
<i>Naajaez</i>	Prohibited
<i>Mujboor</i>	Bound
<i>Nat</i>	Ode
<i>Nimani</i>	Innocent girl
<i>Pagal</i>	Crazy
<i>Purdah</i>	Literally a curtain denotes the institution of gender segregation and the seclusion: of women; sometimes also the veil
<i>Punjabi</i>	Resident of Punjab province
<i>Quom</i>	Tribe or caste
<i>Rajput</i>	Caste
<i>Sabar</i>	Patience
<i>Shalwar-Kameez</i>	Pakistani attire
<i>Sharam</i>	Shame
<i>Sharia</i>	The law, including both the teachings of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet
<i>Sharif</i>	Noble, of noble descent
<i>Shia</i>	The minority sect of Islam, literally 'followers', denoting followers of Hazrat Ali
<i>Sunni</i>	The majority sect of Islam, literally 'one of the path' the path being the example of the prophet.
<i>Sagawatti</i>	A marriage deal
<i>Sindhi</i>	Resident of Sindh province
<i>Tafser</i>	Interpretation
<i>Umma</i>	A people or nation, used to refer to the people/nation of Islam
<i>Wazifa</i>	Recitation and meditation of Quranic verses
<i>Zalim</i>	Cruel
<i>Zamin</i>	Land, earth and property
<i>Zan</i>	Woman
<i>Zar</i>	Gold, wealth
<i>Zat</i>	Caste or identity



## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	vi
Glossary.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	ix
Appendices.....	xii
Prologue.....	1
Problem and Purpose.....	2
Introduction.....	3
<b>1. Literature Review: Patriarchy, Honour and Shame.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	9
1.2 The Concept of Patriarchy.....	10
1.2.1 Social Structure and Patriarchy.....	10
1.2.2 Cultural Patriarchy.....	12
1.2.3 Feminism and Patriarchy.....	13
1.2.4 Economic Imperatives of Patriarchy.....	13
1.2.5 Psychological Effects of Patriarchy.....	15
1.2.6 South Asian Patriarchy.....	16
1.2.7 Alternative Forms of Patriarchy.....	17
1.3 Domestic Violence.....	19
1.3.1 Domestic Abuse in South Asian Communities.....	21
1.3.2 Honour Based Violence.....	25
1.4 The Culture of Honour.....	26
1.4.1 Honour Culture in the South Asian Context.....	27
1.4.2 Crimes of Honour.....	28
1.4.3 Honour Killings .....	30
1.4.4 Meaning and Concepts of Honour.....	31
1.4.5 The Role of Marriage Settlement in Honour Culture.....	37
1.5 Honour and Shame in the Hegemonic Patriarchal System.....	42
1.6 Summary.....	45
<b>2. Honour in Pakistani Communities.....</b>	<b>46</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	46
2.2 Honour Cultures in Pakistan.....	46
2.3 Honour Killings in Pakistan.....	48
2.4 The Lives of Women in Pakistan.....	52
2.4.1 Women's Access to Education in Pakistani Society.....	55
2.4.2 Marriage System in Pakistan.....	57
2.4.3 Women's Empowerment and Honour Ethos.....	58
2.5 Summary.....	60

<b>3. Pakistanis in the United Kingdom.....</b>	<b>61</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	61
3.2 The Migration Process.....	61
3.2.1 Pioneer Pakistanis in the UK.....	62
3.2.2 The Effects of Migration.....	63
3.2.3 Arrival of Pakistani Women in the United Kingdom.....	64
3.3 The Dynamics of Migration.....	66
3.3.1 They Can Never Return Home.....	67
3.3.2 What Have They Brought with Them?.....	68
3.3.3 Caste, Class, Sect and the Biraderi System.....	69
3.3.4 Building the Origins Ties.....	71
3.3.5 Preserving Culture as an Identity.....	72
3.3.6 Cultural Calcification.....	73
3.4 Purdah and Gender Segregation in Britain.....	75
3.4.1 The Letting Go Process.....	76
3.4.2 British Pakistani Females and Honour Crimes in the UK.....	79
3.4.3 Control of Female Sexuality.....	79
3.4.4 Forced Marriages.....	81
3.5 Summary.....	82
<b>4. Methodology.....</b>	<b>83</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	83
4.2 Study on Gender and Honour.....	83
4.2.1 Modesty and Marriage.....	85
4.2.2 Why Research Honour?.....	86
4.2.3 Selecting the Setting of the Investigation.....	87
4.3 Epistemology.....	88
4.3.1 Cultural Context.....	88
4.3.2 Feminist Epistemology.....	89
4.3.3 The Politics of Feminist Approach.....	91
4.3.4 Feminist Research Methodologies.....	92
4.4 Assessing both Genders.....	94
4.5 Initial Contact.....	96
4.6 Exposure to the Daily Life of the Community.....	97
4.7 An Intrusive Task.....	98
4.8 Productive Discomfort.....	100
4.9 Research Ethics.....	103
4.10 Protection and Confidentiality.....	103
4.11 Obtaining Informed Consent.....	104
4.12 Rapport: a Delicate Balancing Act.....	105
4.13 Locating Instances and Generating Material.....	108
4.14 In-Depth Interviews.....	109
4.15 The Sampling and the Labelling of the Sub-Group.....	112
4.16 Qualitative Data.....	114
4.16.1 Data Analysis.....	114

4.16.2	Participants' Observations.....	115
4.17	Summary.....	116
<b>5.</b>	<b>Watfordian Pakistanis.....</b>	<b>118</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	118
5.2	Three Generations of Watfordian Pakistanis .....	118
5.3	An Overview of Watfordian Pakistanis .....	120
5.3.1	Rules and Responsibilities.....	123
5.3.2	Community Concerns.....	124
5.3.3	Human Rights.....	128
5.4	Negotiation for Social Change.....	131
5.5	Identifying Honour Issues.....	136
5.6	Summary.....	138
<b>6.</b>	<b>Modesty in Relation to Honour.....</b>	<b>139</b>
6.1	Introduction.....	139
6.2	Modesty: A Complex Notion.....	139
6.3	Western and Pakistani Attire.....	146
6.4	Cultural Interpretation of Pakistani Clothes.....	149
6.5	The Significance of the Hijab.....	154
6.6	Gossip: A Powerful Tool for Social Control.....	159
6.7	Summary.....	165
<b>7.</b>	<b>Dynamics of Marriage for Watfordian Pakistanis.....</b>	<b>167</b>
7.1	Introduction.....	167
7.2	Conflicting Views on Marriage.....	167
7.3	Conventional Marriage as a Silent Marriage.....	169
7.4	Patient ( <i>Sabar</i> ) in Marriage.....	170
7.5	The Role of Caste in Marriage.....	172
7.6	The Role of Faith in Marriage.....	179
7.7	Woman's Choice in Marriage in Liberal Families.....	181
7.8	Community Concerns about Marriage.....	183
7.9	Moulding and Governing Phenomenon.....	186
7.10	Marriage of Compromise .....	187
7.11	Summary.....	191
<b>8.</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>203</b>

## Appendices

<b>TABLE 1. British Born Pakistani Female Participants'</b> .....	<b>212</b>
<b>TABLE 2. Pakistani Born Female Participants'</b> .....	<b>213</b>
<b>TABLE 3. Male British &amp; Pakistani Born (including one White) Participants'</b> .....	<b>214</b>
<b>Map 1. Map of Watford</b> .....	<b>215</b>
<b>Map 2. Map of Pakistan</b> .....	<b>216</b>
<b>Announcement: Information about the Research</b> .....	<b>217</b>
<b>Information for the Participants</b> .....	<b>218</b>
<b>Information sheet for Participants in Urdu Language</b> .....	<b>219</b>
<b>Police Report</b> .....	<b>220</b>

## Prologue

As there has not yet been a great amount of socio-economic and religio-cultural research into Pakistan, it is highly difficult to understand its social and political systems. In these systems, most people face severely complicated familial and communal politics, which in turn affect wider social issues because of several ideologies and different laws (tribal, *Shari'a*, and state law) which are in use. Being a Pakistani woman, I have many questions regarding people's (particularly women's) lives in the Pakistani community, which have in part been caused by tragic events which I have witnessed. Consequently I was keen to investigate the role of these ideologies in the Pakistani community in order to deepen my own and other people's understanding of Pakistani society.

My MA dissertation ('Honour killings in Sindh, Pakistan,' Leeds University, 2004) explored the killings of people/women due to honour norms, socio-cultural structures, patriarchal dimensions, gender discrimination, and domestic maltreatment of female women and children. I wished to continue this research on a more empirical level, yet due to personal safety concerns and to lack of a strong research in Pakistan, it was impossible for me to continue my research in Pakistan.

Honour killings and honour crimes are crucial topics to address. The BBC<sup>1</sup> reported recently that every day eight honour killing incidents take place in the United Kingdom. Great numbers of forced marriage cases occur amongst Pakistani immigrants and high incidences of women violations and honour killing cases occur in Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> More research is required to understand this phenomenon; Nazir Afzal (OBE),<sup>3</sup> the Chief Crown Prosecutor, has recently challenged the U.N Population Fund's annual figures of honour killings worldwide (5000), since he had discovered that in 2011, 5000 women were killed due to honour killings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone.

The concept of honour causes problems on multiple levels, and in order to address these issues, we need to increase our understanding of the resonances of control<sup>4</sup> behind this concept. Therefore, I have investigated why people practice honour norms and how these norms lead to honour crimes amidst Pakistani immigrants living in the United Kingdom.

---

<sup>1</sup> BBC television Panorama Documentary entitled 'Britain's Crimes of Honour', March 2012

<sup>2</sup> See Jafri (2003:viii)

<sup>3</sup> Nazir Afzal's presentation to Hertfordshire police in October, 2011

<sup>4</sup> These questions will be covered in the key questions.

## **Problem and Purpose**

In the early stages of the project I wished to pursue the following questions: What cultural contexts did the first immigrants find themselves in upon their arrival in the United Kingdom? What facts motivated them to extend their cultural practices into their next generation? How are these practices perceived by young people, and what concerns do they have by performing such norms?

My initial goal was to interview victims of honour crimes amongst the same community, but later I found out that it was extremely hard if not impossible to access these victims. The Watford police told me that most of the women who are victims of family abuse are placed in refuges all over the United Kingdom and that, as a student, I was not in a position to reach them. However, a few participants in this research shared their experiences regarding family maltreatment of young women, which led me to investigate the complicated variables behind the formation of honour as a concept: for example, gender power relations, respect, religion, abuse, honours/patriarchy, marriage, veil, caste/class, and 9/11.

My initial aim was also to focus more on young adults (women) but similarly the old generation was a very influential cultural group, so without their contribution it would be impossible to analyse the scale of this practice and its transmission and continuity from one generation to the other.

Considering the intensity of the crimes of honour, I chose to explore the following variables: the culture, the family and the community setups, beliefs and their interaction to each other within and out of their community. At every scale I intend to observe the community's issues and their way of life, its views about honour ideology and people's desire to keep such practices and pass them over to their children.

### *The key questions:*

- What are British-Pakistanis' perceptions about the concept of honour?
- In what ways are the honour norms reproduced and reinforced amongst the British-born Pakistanis in Watford?

This research will explore the concept of honour in the community and its practice and transformation into new generations. It will also look at the consequences of deviation from certain rules.

## **Introduction**

The characteristic of honour forms a strong part of the South Asian identity; wherever South Asians live, they are determined to uphold themes of honour both on the personal and the communal levels. It is, indeed, very fascinating to examine the role played by honour (and its flip side, shame) in their life experiences. In order to explore how the dynamic of honour and shame work in Diasporic Pakistani communities, I chose the British city of Watford because Pakistanis living among this white-English pre-dominated population area are particularly concerned with maintaining their ethnic identity and in consequence, they are very concerned about honour. What makes this research most relevant, in addition, to the above factor is the fact that the British Pakistani community in Watford has never have been researched before.

Honour is a strong aspect of identity that suggests notorious associations; it is a complicated, intangible, fluid and abstract notion which dictates an unwritten manifesto and verbal guidelines to the community. The unwritten code of conduct works differently according to different situations and its loyalties are uncertain and unequal towards men and women. However, honour possesses a strong social and personal value in the eyes of the family/community. The man is the core person responsible for constructing both a personal image and a communal image as an honourable person in Pakistani society. A man can achieve a prestigious place in the community as an honourable person by ensuring that women under his protection are sexually pure, socially modest and personally obedient. Such ideas constantly motivate a man to control his women's sexuality, socially and personally.

The ideology that honour belongs to men and shame to women creates different roles and positionalities between these two groups; women are considered to be physically weak, sexually impure, as well as being non-intellectual, while men are precisely the opposite. Controlling women's sexuality has a great value (positive and negative) in the honour system since it is believed that women are unable to control their sexuality. Women's natural identity (simply being a 'woman' without any associations of a relationship) has been symbolically hijacked and converted into male ownership as a woman becomes a man's daughter, wife, mother and sister. By contrast, a man can still be a man to possess his natural identity being a man and an individual. A man does not need ownership because his sexuality does not have the same value a woman's does. However, such guardianship can become a contested and problematic phenomenon by serving a personal, familial, communal/tribal and, sometimes, national agenda of ownership. Women's actions have been idealised and utilized in a process of sexual categorization; for example, it became crucial for a father to have a pious and

modest daughter, because a virgin daughter has social and monetary value. Similarly, it is important for a husband to have a chaste and dutiful wife to provide free domestic labour and to engage and involve her in maintaining family and cultural values. In order to support the ownership agenda, it becomes crucial to police a woman's every activity and movement, regulating what she has to do or not to do; where she has to go; what she has to wear; what she has to say and to whom. Such unending (and unwritten) codes of conduct are being maintained through cultural norms: through physical gestures, verbal control, emotional blackmailing, and, ultimately, through abuse. If women deviate from the honour ethos, they could be ostracized or punished. Sometimes the punishment can be severe, even amounting to death. The heterosexual relationship in marital form is encouraged and legalized for control in familial and communal setups in order to maintain the social patriarchal order.

It is important to clarify a number of facts about the Pakistani community in Britain. It is sometimes believed that Pakistanis are homogeneous, but, like many other communities, they possess a huge amount of diversity among each other in several ways. Most of these communities possess some general and similar identity features (for example, caste, class, and sect) but their fundamental ideology as Pakistani Muslims remains the same. They share their loyalties and (mostly) a collective social and cultural life, followed by certain norms. However, different group identities can contain hostilities. Most of the Pakistanis are connected within the same *khandan* (network of extended families). The *Khandan*, on both a large and a small scale, congregates to establish a *biraderi* (brotherhood). The *biraderi* works for people's collective interests and regulates their lives to keep their identity intact in the form of caste and class values which enhance the honour ethos. The higher caste has different values than the lower caste, which divide them into different class systems. The ethnographic chapters in this thesis will endeavour to address how the honour ethos operates in the context of class, sect, caste and *biraderi* system in great detail.

This project highlights women's positionality, sexuality, modesty and matrimony; all of which affect men's prestige. This thesis also aims to look at how these cultural practices affect women's lives more than they affect men's lives, exploring how women perceive, enforce and sustain their lives in the honour context. To consider this, I focussed more on women's lives but men's contributions are significant to understanding the role of honour in the community and their opinions are therefore included. Since honour operates as a continuous process, renewing its meaning to fit with each generation, members of both the new and the old generations have participated in the project and contributed fully to it.



Chapter one of this thesis looks at the patriarchal system and domestic violence as a global concept. It argues that the patriarchal system constructs several cultures, concepts and ideologies which divide people into several groups. This system contains the values of honour and shame which relate to men and women in opposite ways. Honour operates through women's sexual behaviour which is determined and policed by men. If women deviate from certain sexual rules as, for example, having a sexual relationship before marriage, this deviation could result in severe punishment or disownment. In most cases such punishment takes the form of honour killings to avenge any lost honour. In the context of immigration, the patriarchal ideology of oppression and discrimination is a core element in segregating people into two groups (for example: white and black, Western and Asian, poor and rich, and natives and immigrants). It works through structures of caste and class to encourage groups to keep a distance from one another.

Women are seen as inferior individuals and their roles and responsibilities are limited. In this context, women are seen as a commodity and a transitory object to use for any purpose including the settling of disputes between families or tribes. For that reason, a woman can be transferred for compensation, or blood money, and can be exchanged in marriage deals etc. The marriage system (early, arranged, forced, and exchange) does not allow women to control their lives. The family takes the authority to control women's lives with the support of cultural norms and religious obligations. Women are not allowed to talk about the details of their marriages because such matters are considered taboo subjects. Silence is an icon of women's modesty and purity. If a woman breaks such rules and talks about her rights or experiences, she could be considered a cause of shame for her family. Every group or caste has certain customs and values and women are made responsible for safeguarding the interests of the family or the group to which they belong and transmitting such rules to the next generation.

Chapter two endeavours to briefly discuss women's experiences in Pakistan because most of the participants of this research are a pioneering cohort who were brought up in Pakistan and then moved to Britain. Their voice is essential in order to explore what experiences they have brought with them to Britain, especially as it is believed that Pakistanis brought honour norms with them and continue to maintain and reinforce these into their next generation. This research will explore that belief more specifically by examining the ways in which women are identified as transmitters of family and cultural values to their children. The veil which segregates women from public life encourages gender discrimination. It is

believed that the veil is a symbol of honour and a religious obligation which keeps women away from the bad influence of the outer world. The veil is a form of controlling women's sexuality and reinforces male power and authority. Such practices provide men with a sense of ownership of their women and an indication of their position in the community. Most Pakistani women live most of their lives in their homes so as to protect male honour. In recent history young women have been involved in the workforce but are under high family surveillance in order to maintain the honour norms.

Chapter three aims to shed light on the Pakistani migration and resettlement processes, which began in the late 1950s, while in a real sense the cultural practice of honour in Britain started when families arrived in the United Kingdom. Formulating new identities was the hardest part of living in their new setting because, according to pioneer Pakistanis, the English way of life was unsuitable for their families and therefore, they were reluctant to adapt Western values. Furthermore, because they believed that at one point they would return back to their original country/home, there was no point adapting to new ways of life and therefore they kept their identity intact by practicing their own cultural norms.

What helped Pakistanis living in the United Kingdom to keep their identity intact is marrying their children into the same group and network of extended families. In this way they hold their power, positionality and control. Until the second generation, their loyalties were served by the same group and were tolerated by their children. The young women became the main source for any transition. But eventually it became a problematic phenomenon for their British-born young adults to continue such intimidating norms especially through marrying into the same caste and extended families to maintain the patriarchal structure.

This thesis looks into two groups: the parents who are keen to maintain and reinforce their ethnic ideology into their children and the British-born young adults who aspire for social change. Researching such elements need appropriate methodology to find the answers. As such, chapter four presents the ethnographic data which I gathered through qualitative methods in conjunction with the feminist approach. I believe that the feminist approach provides a chance to share a common history between those who brought the past history from Pakistan and those who are dedicated to make the modern history at their account. To reach a better understanding of their ideas about honour the following research questions were designed which evolved with the time through interview questions (see Box 3) during my field work.

- What is the social significance of honour for the British Pakistanis living in Watford?
- How is honour related to women's lives, bodies and behaviour?
- Does honour control women's sexuality? And if so then how?
- How important are women's actions to family honour, and what are the implications of this?
- Is honour linked to family's prestige and reputation?

During fieldwork, the Pakistani community living in Watford has been explored in individual and general terms. For this, the techniques of biographical and in-depth conversations have been used. At the start, participants were reluctant to talk about honour but eventually they felt comfortable expressing ideas about family norms and about the controlling behaviour of the elders in conjunction with relating community experiences. Adopting the feminist approach went well for both participants and the researcher to develop the rapport and the confidence to complete the fieldwork process.

Chapter five concerns itself with the overall picture of the Watfordian Pakistanis' cultural and economic gains. There are huge gaps between the old and the new generations. Although both groups reside in the same setting and area, they have different interests. The older generation is concerned about British born young adults continuing their original identity but the new generation intends to construct a new identity as British Muslims. The young adults are concerned about their role in the community but yet caste and sect are holding them back. The elder women meet regularly to share religious and communal knowledge in the private arena. They are more concerned about their daughters' ideas on their life choices and complain that their young adults do not listen to them which bothers them to a great level. In parallel a few young women have taken steps to negotiate with parents about their choices. They clearly mentioned to their mothers that they are not happy to marry their relatives in Pakistan and although some may make their parents happy by marrying back home, they negotiate the format of the conjugal relationship.

Chapter six endeavours to explore how and why modesty relates to the honour system. In such system women's sexual purity is of great value in the caste and class system and high status comes through economic power and women's modesty. A good image can provide better chances for a daughter's marriage. Young women's sexuality is highly monitored

through certain rules and controlling tools. This chapter explores this monitoring by examining questions like: ‘What measure would the community take to control women’s deviated behaviour in order to maintain the dress code?’; ‘Why is modesty highly required for young British-born women to maintain the religious and cultural boundaries?’; ‘Why are young women challenged to make a balance between Western and Pakistani culture?’; ‘Why has the *hijab* become merged into young women’s lives?’; Why have young women been told to wear Pakistani dress at certain times and places?’. The dress code offers multiple ways of judging young women’s sexual behaviour because it has both a cultural and a symbolical meaning. Some parents are genuinely scared that if young women wear English clothes, they might have a boyfriend. So they control their every action by watching them closely. The Pakistani community intends to live in the same area where young women can be easily judged by community members if they move into public places. Consequently, young women have been advised to behave modestly while they are out of the home. Gossip is a controlling tool which can not only ruin women’s image but that of the whole family in the community.

It is believed that marriage provides a woman with a social position and an honourable status in the community. Unmarried, widowed and divorced women do not possess a good place and image in the community. If required obligations are not being served in a marriage settlement (ie. the wife is not faithful and dutiful), the settlement becomes a problematic battlefield due to the honour ethos. If women break the code of silence, it becomes an issue of honour. Marriages within the family or caste are considered honourable but if women deviate from that they are considered to be traitors to their faith and original identity. Two narratives have been analysed in detail to investigate how patriarchal honour plays a part in undermining a woman’s position if she is not a dutiful wife or if she intends to marry into another caste: this is illustrated in Chapter Seven.

## Chapter One

### Literature Review: Patriarchy, Honour and Shame

#### 1.1 Introduction

Power is a universal phenomenon. The way this phenomenon works in human lives and affects them provides a comprehensive insight into their achievements and failures through the long annals of history. However, in order to understand the dynamics of power, it is essential to explore the process of institutionalization of societies, i.e. what impact it has on human lives, how humans construe social and legal rules to improve living and how societies have been constructed on the basis of people who exercise power and those who experience the impact of power. Power and control are two entities that are related to each other. People have been exercising and enduring their effects in different times and geographical locations throughout human history.

The questions that become pertinent here are: what is the role and position of people in certain societies? What makes them make certain choices regarding their mutual existence? And what are the conflicts and constraints which inform these choices? To answer these questions we need first to explore the concept of patriarchy, which is closely related to the phenomena of power and control.

Gerda Lerner explains that patriarchy is a very old social system of human societies. Though it has changed faces from time to time, its core element has always remained the same: the dominance of male over female. She explains that historically it took men and women 2500 years to formulate their rules and values within family units, which could be called patriarchal families, run by a man or a father. Men have been dominating women and children within the family in particular and in society in general. Subsequently, they hold power over all institutions of society, depriving women from full access to their lawful rights (Lerner 1986: 212).

It has been mentioned above that the patriarchal system is a very old system and a creation of both male and female genders. A senior woman also holds patriarchal power at certain levels to oppress younger women. However, it is mostly men who run this system and hold power to exploit the rights of women and children. Therefore, this chapter will discuss about patriarchal dimensions of the society.

## **1.2 The Concept of Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a system of domination by which males control society both in public and private domains. Kalwant Bhopal that 'men's patriarchal power over women is the primary power relationship in human society' (Bhopal 1997: 47) and to continue that relationship men constitute many strict patriarchal rules with the support of patriarchal institutions to dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby 1989: 214). Weber believe this power game starts from the micro-unit of a family, which is considered the root cause of the patriarchal system (cited from Walby 1989: 214 ). In this system, the oldest man of the household takes on all the responsibilities and exerts control over the subordinate family members. However, among these subordinate family members there are other hierarchical relationships. Female family members are considered even less privileged than the subordinate male members of the family. Additionally, some of these males will eventually become the heads of their own households (either by leaving the family home to set up a new household or upon the death of the head of the family). In this system it is observed that women have less value than men. Within the family, such boundaries are set and such values are instilled which segregate and devalue women. Furthermore, in the ideology of many patriarchal societies, a woman's only place is within the four walls of her home, with her key duties being the performance of domestic labour and production of children. Women are not generally expected to have a public life or to be independent by forming non-family social contacts (such as in employment or education).

### **1.2.2 Social Structure and Patriarchy**

Kalwant Bhopal suggests that, '[P]atriarchy is a concept which can be used to explain women's position within society' (Bhopal 1997: 6) as opposed to that of their male counterparts. It has several dimensions and can be experienced in different forms by different ethnic groups. It has existed in many societies after and before the Roman Empire (Dobash and Dobash 1980: 44). Though its rules have modified with time, one thing has remained constant, i.e. men's supremacy over women through patriarchal power and authority. These forms of control have continuously been manifested in marital relationships in different shapes by different societies. For example, 'wife beating' is the extreme form of violation of

women's right to self-respect (Dobash and Dobash 1980; Hague and Malos 2005; Kelly 1988).

Patriarchy is a very complicated concept and has generated many discussions by different social scientists and cultural anthropologists, including contemporary British scholars. Silvia Walby says that 'patriarchy can take different forms, it is not a universalistic notion' (Walby 1989: 214), however, most scholars are dissatisfied with the way it has generally been defined. Weber states that 'patriarchy is a system in which men ruled societies through their position as head of households' (cited from Walby 1989: 213). This is a system by which a man takes charge of a family as a head; he can either be a father or a husband of the household. In reality the patriarchal ideology and structure reveals the mindset of a community. A man is supposed to keep an eye on his subordinates constantly and make sure that the patriarchal rules have been followed by his youngsters, children and women. If his subordinates do not follow family or community rules and values then he will be constantly trying to remind his wife and children, especially his daughters, of them; and if someone disobeys his orders then he will start pressurizing them even to the extent of assaulting them for not being submissive. According to Silvia Walby, 'patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Walby 1989: 4). She clearly defines the structured imperatives of society in which one individual dominates the other. Further she explores this situation with reference to social relations of contemporary Britain in terms of capitalism and racism.

Dobash and Dobash mentioned that in older days societies were comprised of huge and extended families including blood relatives, servants, and kin through marital connections. They used to follow their own laws to sustain their patriarchal-familial structure and in this regard women were used as a tool to resolve political and communal disputes. In fact 'the women of the feudal lords served as commodities and as symbols of the power and honor of men' (Dobash and Dobash 1980: 45). It was a common practice to use women for mediation between two groups to solve a dispute between them. Sometimes they even fought for women and sometimes they resolved their conflicts by providing women to the other clan (Shah 1998: 33). Women were also used for economic and political purposes. Although an old trend, this particular practice is still carried out in many societies.

Though patriarchal rules are meant both for men and women, it is noteworthy that only women are forced to comply with them. For men they are made lenient and even remoulded whenever a need occurs. For example, Norwood Russell Hanson has observed that

‘the selection of marriage partner had such large consequences for the entire kin group, children, and especially daughters, had little or no say in the choice of their own marital partner and could be beaten if they refuse to marry. Marriages were arranged for the benefit of larger kin groups and in accordance with the wishes of the male heads of household.’ (cited from Dobash and Dobash 1980: 45). It is noteworthy that a daughter is treated as a commodity and is given no choice in the selection of her marriage partner. Her father can decide for her whenever he wants. In many cases she is treated like an animal; if an animal misbehaves, its *malik* (master or owner) has the right to beat it. According to the patriarchal system, allowing women to make their own choices is equal to identity loss as they might marry out of the community or *quom* (caste), which is unacceptable. Every *quom* has its own customs and values and women are the main source of transmitting them to the next generation. The idea is that if a woman of one community marries a person from another *quom*, she will be taking her values to a different community, which is against the imperatives of the patriarchal system. Amrit Wilson’s work in the Azad Kashmiri community in London and Luton suggests that ‘[P]eople have to marry within the *quom* [community/caste], otherwise the *quom* itself and its way of life will disappear’ (Wilson 2006: 11).

### 1.2.3 Cultural Patriarchy

Cultural patriarchy defines the position of women in their respective group settings. Cultural patriarchy’s main goal is to prepare a daughter of the household from her very young age to become a good wife. According to cultural norms, the prospective husband and in laws expect from the newlywed woman that she be good not only to the husband and his parents but also to the extended family. She has to prove her worth by extending her love and care to all members of the family she is married into. In the contemporary Pakistani-British community it is believed that this practice no longer exists but even to this day it is hard to believe that it has completely vanished. In fact, it is still alive in different forms in ethnic communities. In some cases if a husband is not happy with his wife he will blame his parents and would expect them to deal with her because he believes it is they who have brought her into his life, so it becomes his parents’ responsibility (especially the mother’s) to face the situation and to make the girl realise her responsibilities.

According to Dobash and Dobash, ‘[F]emales’ are ‘born’ to be wives. To be a ‘real’ woman requires becoming a wife and to be a complete wife means being a good mother.



Nothing less is really acceptable and little more is tolerated' (Dobash and Dobash 1980: 76). What Dobash and Dobash have said about Western culture can be applied to the South Asian communities. This specific ideology is also embedded in their lives. Therefore, they (especially Pakistanis) are stressed to make their children follow their rules. Some parents achieve this goal but some do not. The ones who prefer not to live in constant conflict with their children feel guilty and make their children feel guilty too.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that the life of a woman in a patriarchal society becomes secluded after marriage. Dobash and Dobash say, '[Women's] in their position as wives, become relatively separated from the world and isolated in the home where they are meant to be subordinated to their husbands and serve the needs of others. The situation is part of the patriarchal family' (Dobash and Dobash 1980: 76). They further observe that, 'she becomes circumscribed by her role as a wife, progressively isolated from outside contact, and increasingly subservient to her husband's expectations and demands. These changes give rise to the conditions under which marital violence emerges' (Dobash and Dobash 1980: 76)

From the very beginning a girl is told that marriage is a permanent life for her; therefore she has to compromise in all circumstances. On the other hand, there will be many people advising the groom on how to control his bride on the first night, a prerequisite in leading a comfortable marital life. Similarly, there will be some expert women of the household who will teach the bride how to control the groom through her charm and tactics. However, that is very rare and most of the time the brides are taught how to be submissive and let the groom do as he desires. If she is being stubborn on her wedding night her married life will be a failure forever. It clearly shows how patriarchal families legitimise male control by preparing a woman to provide sex to her husband and domestic labour for him and his extended family.

### **1.2.3 Feminism and Patriarchy**

Many feminists are criticizing, analysing and developing a debate about oppression of women against patriarchy. They have found it a crucial determinant in social relationships in many societies. Some feminist believe that there is no fixed definition of patriarchy but they also find that domestic labour, women's sexual abuse especially rape as a foundation of male oppression, and violence (Brownmiller 1976; Delphy 1984; Dworkin 1981; Firestone 1978) are elements of a patriarchal system. Further, they believe that patriarchal order works in

many other ways in ethnic communities to marginalize and ostracize women because of their race and different social classes in which one dominant group oppresses the other (cited from Walby 1989: 218). It is worthy that in such communities women's position becomes more critical and vulnerable because they have to undergo multiple levels of oppression by their families; mostly from husband and sometimes from father, brother and mature women of the family.

Feminists see women's oppression in the diaspora setting from different angles, not only from the point of view of the oppression women are facing politically, racially, or economically, but explore the nature of the oppression in relation to women's social and class setup. They believe that patriarchy works differently in different situations. For example, patriarchal settings for white communities are different from those of black races and Asians. Consequently, Western feminists are more conscious and careful while talking about the black community because they know that the issues of black communities are different, and therefore require different treatment.

Though feminism and patriarchy are two opposite poles, in recent history they have been working in parallel. Patriarchy oppresses and exploits women and feminism criticises and analyses such practice. Kalwant Bhopal argues that there are different ideas about patriarchy; some see it in domestic labour and sexuality, and others in violence. However, whatever ideology critics propose, all these ideas deal with the exploitation of women in some way or the other (Bhopal 1997: 50).

#### **1.2.4 Economic Imperatives of Patriarchy**

The patriarchal system exists along with feudalism and capitalism. Eisenstein, mentions that patriarchy provides a system of 'control and law and order while capitalism provides a system of economy, in the pursuit of profit' (cited from Walby 1989: 215 ). Feudal societies oppress women to gain power and prestige for their localities and capitalists oppress them for the matter of economic gain. In other words, capitalists are patriarchal.

Patriarchy works unconsciously for the economic benefit of the capitalist system as Walby mentions in her study on theorising patriarchy that the above definition is not ideological. Although patriarchy works for capitalism, it does so through the exploitation of women by men in terms of labour as Hartmann sees that both 'house work and wage labour are important sites of women's exploitation by men' (cited from Walby 1989: 219). As men

have full control over wage work so they get better jobs for themselves and leave the dirty and laborious work for the women or sometimes for the immigrants or working class individuals. This position provides background information on the women of South Asian societies and the way they are being discriminated against and marginalised by dominating, strong communities.

For example, social relations exist in all societies whether they are feudal, tribal, and capitalist or so called socialist. Subsequently patriarchy and capitalism work in partnership (Walby 1989: 215) in which the former creates rules and structure while the latter, by taking advantage of it, makes profit for economic development. Living in a patriarchal system women's position is vulnerable as they have to maintain their position in their household with or even without working outside the home. If they obtain jobs they get less important work than men. At the same time men keep better position jobs and less responsible household work. Women live under pressure to maintain marital responsibilities; therefore they have to fulfil their cultural and family obligations beside the work they are doing outside the home. As patriarchy exists alongside the capitalist system, capitalists also use women or immigrants or less privileged people in the same way that patriarchy does.

Silvia Walby observes that 'women marry because they think they will benefit' (Walby 1989: 222) or because they have been told by their parents that marriage has multiple benefits, but in most cases it works to the contrary. The sources of production and women's labour are mostly expropriated by her husband or his family within her marriage and household relationship.

### **1.2.5 Psychological Effects of Patriarchy**

Mitchell says that patriarchy works 'unconsciously' (cited from Walby 1989: 216). The concept has been borrowed from Freud's theory of psycho-analysis which discusses women's sexuality and desires in order to maintain the ideology of patriarchy. It may not provide an opportunity to pursue economic profit for capitalism but it can serve the purpose of controlling women's gender and sexuality in socialist or feudal societies.

There are many situations which work to control women 'unconsciously' by men. For example, if a woman works as a medical doctor, she is also expected to work as a housewife. It has been observed that working women in South Asian societies face more challenges and live under extensive family pressure. They are criticised and watched if they are not doing

well in domestic labour. In fact, once she has entered her husband's house, she has to take up most of the responsibilities; otherwise she will be regarded as an unwise and careless woman. She is not valued for her economically supportive work, rather she is asked to be grateful for being allowed to work. So, in this way many women face a number of psychological challenges to fulfil both social and family obligations. In most cases, they develop mental ailments, for which they cannot even seek cure because of social taboos.

### 1.2.6 South Asian Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of social relations. It concerns men's power and position in social settings. It is an incontrovertible fact that property is one of the crucial instruments in retaining that power. This is, in fact, a fluid phenomenon which requires transference from one person to the other. For that, it is essential that a person should have a legitimate son to whom he could transfer his wealth. In Islamic *shari'a* law (divine law), while the property is divided among all the children, the son gets double the share of what is given to a daughter. Moreover, the property will only be shifted to the legitimate son because an illegitimate son cannot have a legal right to inheritance.

Transference of personal property to the legitimate son needs a structured rule of law. So in many cases patriarchy provides a possible guarantee for a legitimate son through intensive and constant control on women's sexuality. For that, sometimes 'women's bodies are made available to certain men and at the same time are unavailable to others' (Wilson 2006: 9). Nadir speaks against the idea of women's sexual control and chastising. She argues that 'if the women were to have multiple husbands, the bearer of the seed in this case is indefinite. This justification may have worked in pre-modern times, but today a simple DNA test will prove who the father is, therefore rendering polygamy's justification a moot point' (Nadar 2000: 6).

Though Nadir has raised a valuable point, the question arises, is it possible for all societies to have a DNA test? Do they have awareness about the DNA technique even if they know it is possible for them to verify? Besides, in many places/countries, for instance in some areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, women are not even allowed to go to the doctor for their medical check-ups. In fact, many women suffer due to precarious health conditions or die of gynaecological problems not because they do not have medical facilities but because their family/men do not believe that they can go out of the house for such a reason. In South

Asian communities in Britain the lives of women have become even more complicated due to the patriarchal rule. Wilson has described three most crucial patriarchal elements in relation to a woman: firstly domestic labour, e.g. cooking, cleaning, caring for her children and extended families especially elderly parents of husband; secondly bearing a male heir and thirdly socializing children (mainly daughters) according to the patriarchal norms or the honour norms (Wilson 2006: 27). The family's honour, in particular, plays a very crucial role in determining the dynamics of violence in a woman's life (Gill 2004; Latif 2011). A woman spends all her life in perpetuating these norms and fulfilling domestic responsibilities and family obligations in every possible manner. The role of a daughter-in-law becomes extremely important in such contexts; she has to fulfil the obligations of the family according to the patriarchal settings. It does not mean that daughters do not perform their role while they live with their parents but it is the nature of the patriarchal system that makes a daughter-in-law bear more burdens and responsibilities in her marital life. This social setting can be applied to any group of women irrespective of class or caste. They perform their role even if they are students or working whether part time or full time. In particular, as Amrit Wilson has mentioned in her research in London, in Gujarati Hindu families full time working women are responsible for the house labour to fulfil the expectations of their husbands and in laws including their extended families (Wilson 2006).

### **1.2.7 Alternative Forms of Patriarchy**

In the context of patriarchy, power relationships are always complex and contested especially in household settings. Men's power over women is a universal notion but it becomes more problematic when a woman gets power over another woman, e.g. a mother or sister-in-law. In most South Asian families power over the daughter-in-law generates a constant conflict. Sometimes male (husband or brother in law) tease both of them (sister and wife) for the sake of fun and sometimes they do this to judge through their reaction who is right in case of conflict or a quarrel. It has been noticed that in-laws hardly share domestic responsibilities with their daughter-in-law. Therefore, they only put an extra domestic load on one person who is usually a daughter-in-law.

In patriarchal settings three factors are very crucial: domestic labour (maintains male domination by providing a woman with shelter), sexuality (maintains purity and modesty by showing *sharam*, modesty) and violence (if a woman deviates from the first two duties, she is

abused by the family). The head of the household maintains a system based on these factors with the collaboration of elderly/mature women who run a system of controlling young women in terms of domestic labour and sexuality. If young women fail in any way, they have to face the consequences of undergoing violence. In order to avoid such a situation, a young woman is being prepared for her role as a future wife in her parents' home. She is taught how to follow the family and community rules because 'women were and often still are seen essentially as the property of the family and the community' (Wilson 2006: 6). In most cases they are not allowed to do what they want to; this is achieved by limiting their access to the outside world. They 'must not have any contact, not even eye-contact, with unrelated men' (Wilson 2006: 10).

Amrit Wilson's work on Sikh and Muslim women highlights this aspect by giving an example of Sikh and Muslim women who are forbidden from being seen in public with their hair uncovered, especially a newly married woman, because hair is considered a symbol of women's sexuality (Wilson 2006: 11). Men believe that women uncover their hair to invite or attract men or to sexually allure them. Therefore, it is believed that a woman can only adorn herself in the company of her husband or when he comes back from his work. It has been observed that if women look after their looks, men get suspicious, even if they remain within the four walls of their homes.

Man lives his whole life in his house to continue his patriarchal line. If he wants to move from his parents' house he can by his choice but a woman is denied this option. She is sent to another place which is her in-laws'. Her parents give her assurance that her husband's parent's home is her permanent home till the day she dies. In her new home she lives under double control, of both her husband and his mother. They have the authority to guard and control her chastity.

Many scholars agree that marriage provides social and economic bonds between families. While women provide domestic labour and sexuality, in return they get maintenance and shelter from their in-laws. In some cases women do not get reasonably good care from their marital families even if they work hard to please them by following various customary/family rules. When a woman fulfils her role and her children get older to start their lives, people say that now it is her time to get the fruit of her hardship. But from the feminist point of view it could be a hard time for her to make a choice. Often women take on a traditional/patriarchal role by controlling and criticizing their newlywed daughters-in-law or granddaughters. This role gives her the chance to get her power back. It has been noticed that

a man who spends much of his time out, mostly relies on his elderly mother to guard and control the young female members of the house. The elderly mother tries to seek her son's attention and support by taking an interest in a variety of customary matters which need to be controlled or watched according to the system. Ironically, she is the same woman who used to live under the control of her mother-in-law at an earlier stage in her life. In many situations she becomes stricter if her son takes a lenient approach towards his wife. It shows that it is not only man who controls or possesses power; in fact patriarchy provides a solid structure for women to control other women. In short, the things a woman is unable to negotiate at her young age, she bargains at her later age by collaborating with the patriarchal norms<sup>5</sup>.

### 1.3 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is the most common crime, yet a global phenomenon. Its roots can be traced far back in the history of patriarchal societies. It is not a simple and straightforward crime which merely occurs between two adults at the base of sexuality, intimacy or gender difference but in the complex context of men's power and women's resistance (Kelly 1988). Schuler has stated that 'it is embedded in the context of cultural, socio-economic and political power relations...which reduce women to economic and emotional dependency, the property of some male protector. [Moreover] societies organized around gendered, hierarchical power relations give legitimacy to violence against women' (cited from Marcus 1993).

It has many secret faces to commit the crime and hidden tactics to protect the perpetrator. Most of the time it happens behind the doors, in the streets and in the neighbourhood. It occurs in all communities regardless of wealth, ethnicity, caste or social classes; it has always been there back in human history (Hague and Malos 2005). There were protests against 'violence against women' in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth and early twentieth century's; however, in the last 15 years domestic violence has been made more public (Hague and Malos 2005). Since 1970 many laws have been passed to reduce the level of crime. Feminists and women activists have raised certain questions regarding the reasons behind such brutal activities by men. They also questioned why most victims remain silent and passive? The answers to the questions again lie in the patriarchal structure. Women in Muslim communities depend on men because men are responsible for their maintenance.

---

<sup>5</sup> for further details see, Al-Khayyat, 1992

Therefore, it is easy for a man to exploit a woman and children if they do not obey his rules. Men harass and control them within the boundaries of their homes.

Due to women's constant struggle, public consciousness has increased and it is now believed that violence in the home is a crime (Hague and Malos 2005). Domestic violence happens where there is imbalance of power relationships between two people, which is 90 percent in heterosexual relationships. In the Western context, it is not necessary that men and women live together. It can happen between two people even if they live separately. In the British context an ex-husband or ex-partner can also abuse women. This is termed as 'violence against women by known men' (Hague and Malos 2005: 4) Gill Hague and Ellen Malos state that the popular media blame women for killing their men but the fact is that 'the vast majority of domestic murders are by men killing women' (Hague and Malos 2005: 6).

Further, they state in their book that, '[B]etween one and two women in the United Kingdom are murdered by their male partners every week' (Hague and Malos 2005: 6). Women who do not want to live under male control; sexually, economically or emotionally, make men feel that their power has been challenged. It is believed that domestic violence is no longer a secret crime, yet it is still an underreported crime in the USA and the UK (Hague and Malos 2005: 3). Therefore, it is highly difficult to estimate the real statistics of violence because it has always been a matter of 'fear of shame' for women or families to declare it publically (Hague and Malos 2005). Moreover in order to maintain the myth of happy nuclear families, they hide facts from the public. A recent work of Betsy Stanko, shows that women of the United Kingdom feel that they are less important and less valued than the men which clearly shows power inequality between men and women in the social and economic setup of British society (cited from Hague and Malos 2005: 11). Therefore, women try to hide and minimise male violence. It is currently estimated that the United Kingdom police receive a domestic violence-related call every one minute (Hague and Malos 2005).

Women who do not obey men's orders and live under their control can be killed or harmed and there are some other women who live in silence it increase psychological stress in order to hide male violence. In the American context, Viviane Lerner claims that every day four women die at the hands of their spouse, boyfriend, or lover. According to the National Victim Centre in the USA, 'every year, domestic violence causes approximately 100,000 day hospitalizations, 28,700 emergency department visits and 39,000 physician visits.



The violence costs the national health sector between \$ 5 to 10 billion per year'(Lerner 2000 :72).

After the CEDAW<sup>7</sup> declaration; women's violence is no more a secret issue. It is an open reality and very much in the public agenda of the present times; it occurs in all human races and it cuts across all geographical boundaries. Many countries have taken it seriously to engage in positive policing to support abused women but still there is a long way to go to deal with unreported crime.

Sana Al-Kayyat gives an instance of the Moroccan community, in which living independently or seeking divorce is a dishonourable act, while marrying with parents' consent is honourable where spousal abuse is a family matter (Al-Khayyat 1990). A Woman gets abused if she takes control of her life. She may also face a sense of isolation from her family and community. Her life becomes hard because social, communal and state institutions work against her interests. This situation is similar to the conditions in many other Muslim countries, e.g. Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Jordan and Senegal, but extremely serious and shocking in the context of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh as reported by Rachel Marcus and Amnesty International (Amnesty 1999; Marcus 1993).

### 1.3.1 Domestic Abuse in South Asian Communities

A Human Rights Watch on Pakistan declared that eight women are raped every day in Pakistan and 70 percent to 95 percent of women experience spousal abuse, which has been described as 'the most pervasive violation of human rights'. In particular, in only one city, namely *Lahore*, 215 women were being suspiciously burnt to death in their homes in 1997 (Watch 1999: 1).

The State and the police services of Pakistan viewed such acts of violence merely as private matters that are out of the remit of the court, the police or the state. The report did not identify any domestic violation victim whose criminal complaint had been registered by the police. It says that 'Pakistani law fails to criminalize a common and serious form of domestic violence', for example marital rape, where officials believe that 'rape did not exist in Pakistani society' (Watch 1999: 3), though women get raped everywhere for all reasons: political, cultural, tribal, etc... *Simorgh Collective* states that, 'rape within marriage is

---

<sup>7</sup> 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women states that domestic violence is a violation of human rights and results from the historically unequal power relationships between men and women.

absolutely not recognized in our society or our legal system. In theory, it is possible for a woman to file a complaint against her husband for violence. She cannot, however, file a complaint of rape against him because the marriage contract is interpreted as having given the husband an absolute unqualified right over his wife's body as far as sexual intercourse is concerned' (Collective and Hussein 1990: 44). It suggests that men possess more power in society because they are the ones who control the system and run the institutions; therefore no one goes against them. Men are even more powerful than the institutions, whose main purpose is to serve men's interest in society.

In Pakistan it is a common practice that if a man does not like his wife and wants to get rid of her, he starts abusing and harassing her, even going to the extent of accusing her of *zina* (an illicit sexual relationship with another man). Amnesty International has stated that eighty percent of women were arrested and punished in *zina* cases<sup>9</sup>. They had been imprisoned where they were regularly raped by police and jail authorities. Often women do not complain because of a sense of shame, injustice and the complicated system to prove it (Amnesty 1999).

Innocent women are also killed, harassed and disfigured when their relatives take revenge. In recent history many women in Pakistan have been gang raped and have been paraded naked in public. Asian women have been subjected to emotional and physical abuse more than to other forms of domestic violence because of the Asian women's socio-cultural structure. Man is superior in Asian families and his position as a husband stands after that of God a *majazi Khuda*. Women are made to believe, misguidedly, that their husband is their temporary God on earth whom they have to obey, even if his command is extremely outrageous. Family or community does not consider this as something wrong. Some families judge women's tolerance levels and expect them to keep silent whatever their elders say to them. A woman, in fact, lives under male dominance all her life; first that of her father then that of her husband and at the last stage of her life, that of her son.

Izzidien in her NSPCC<sup>10</sup> report researched over 360 BME<sup>11</sup> organizations throughout the UK to find out about women and child abuse in Asian, especially in South Asian, communities. The report mentions various levels of domestic violence on women by their

<sup>9</sup> Cited; Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women, 1997:23

<sup>10</sup> The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children- the online child protection resource which has a vision a society where all children are loved, valued and able to fulfil their potential.  
www.nspcc.org.uk/inform, Accessed August 2011

<sup>11</sup> Black Ethnic Minority

husbands, extended families (sister, brother and parents in law) including their own parents. The report has mentioned many recorded phone calls from children regarding domestic abuse on their mothers. A woman bears with 24 hour torture in the house, because when her husband is at work his family members continue abusing her. Izzidien states that 'perpetrators use whatever means they can to control the victim or survivor, even their own children, to continue the abuse' (Izzidien 2008: 9).

They use force and power to take away young children from their mothers to preserve their 'honour' and to show the community that the woman in question has a bad character. She is labelled as irresponsible and a bad influence on her child. If a family or her husband does not like a woman, they do not allow her to breastfeed her child. Such families believe that the mother's milk is not good for the child because of her bad character. With the intention of giving her a hard time, the abuser's family takes every possible measure to worsen the victim's lot.

It is common practice among the South Asians that the abusive father brain washes his children against their mother through 'bribing, enticing them with gifts and portraying the mother as the guilty party after separation' (Izzidien 2008: 10). The father tells them that their mother (his wife) does not love or care for them and that she only cares for herself or her parents' family. In this way children become confused regarding their mother's position in the house and doubtful about her emotional love for her children.

Manipulating Children against their mother is a constant torture for a woman victim. The negative remarks on her character gradually spawn bad impressions in the children's minds so that they also start blaming and abusing their mother, which is emotionally and psychologically catastrophic to her as the woman finds herself completely isolated. Izzidien's report (Izzidien 2008) illustrates a father's (abuser) comments to his children and their mother: 'you and your mother have shamed me', 'never want to see her again', 'if I could I would kill her'. Such comments make the children more sensitive and emotional about their mother. They also get shocking comments about their mother from the rest of the extended family. Gradually, children believe that their father is right. Further the report investigates that the father will try to entertain his children to take them for a meal or the cinema to seek their attention and show them how much he cares for them. He also tries to undermine his wife's confidence in front of her children. Eventually children start hating and disowning their mother.

It is believed that if once a woman enters into a marital relationship she has to devote herself to her husband's family. She is told that by achieving the title of motherhood, she will be stronger and more grounded. If she bears a male child, it will change her *kismet* (destiny). She will be considered more valuable and an important person. However all will go against her if she has an abusive family or husband. A woman gets a little space for herself in society through her children; however, if they turn against her it will be a psychological death for her.

For a South Asian woman, children, culture and religion are very sensitive issues. She can never think of leaving her abusive family owing to the communal and religious taboos. A respected and modest woman is never expected to leave her home or complain about her family. She is also threatened that if she disobeys her family, God will punish her and will send her to hell (Latif 2011: 32). The 2008 NSPCC report suggests that the abduction of children is a common means to control Asian women. As without her children a woman feels incomplete, she compromises everything for them—her ego, her self-respect, her desires and identity as a human being.

Domestic violence also develops mental issues in children. When they see their mothers undergoing violence, they get involved in it directly or indirectly. Either they become silent or extremely aggressive; this is manifested through their attitude in their schools and towards their friends and relatives. Most of the time, they fail in coping with new situations and in forming new relationships. They make excuses, complain about everything, and blame others for their failure. It has been noticed that children have various ideas to face new situations when they get married. However, the young women who have seen abusive parents decide to marry early, which is not a proper solution. The research into the matter shows that in some cases girls plan to fight back in case they are married to abusive husbands. Aisha Gill's research on South Asian women reveals that dowry is another cause of domestic violence other than emotional or physical reasons. Dowry is a very serious issue in India, Bangladesh and some parts of Pakistan. If women bring sufficient dowry in the form of goods and cash they get less aggression than the ones who bring a small dowry. In the former case families believe that dowry is a matter of family honour, which shows that they have married their son to a wealthy family. Dowry is a serious social issue leading to domestic violence or 'dowry death'<sup>12</sup> (Gill 2004).

---

<sup>12</sup> Death of a married woman whose family is unable to pay the dowry demanded by the husband and his family

Husbands persecute their wives in collaboration with their families, which causes feelings of shame, guilt, confusion and anxiety in them, affecting their confidence and self-esteem and eventuating in mental health issues. It affects a woman's ability to perform her duties properly. Besides, she cannot even seek cure for her problem as it is a social stigma to talk about mental issues with the doctor. Diekstra and Gulbinat have mentioned that the 'incidence of suicide around the world is approximately three times higher for men than for women' (cited from Gill 2004: 1) but in the Indian sub-continent suicide rates for women are higher than those for men. South Asian immigrant women in Britain have a three times higher suicide rate than white women (Afzal 2011). NAWP<sup>13</sup> found that Asian women attempt suicide because for them breaking out of violent marriage is considered a dishonourable act in their community and family. Hence, most of the Asian women live in silence rather than complaining about the crimes against them.

### 1.3.2 Honour based Violence

Honour based violence (HBV) is a particular kind of violence which happens mainly with the collaboration of close family members to save the family's face/reputation in the community. Many researchers believe that HBV is a form of domestic and communal violence (Gill 2003; Siddique and Patel 2010). In this crime, communal and cultural values play an equal role with the perpetrator of the crime. It becomes more sensitive if the victim is an inhabitant of a Western society as it becomes extremely difficult for a woman to create a balance between two cultures; the one she sees at home and the other she experiences outside the home.

In further family and community honour is defined as an entire social behavioural code imposed on women for the purpose of enforcing women's inferiority and their positionality in the family and society to preserve male supremacy. The family, extended family and in general the community play the main role in harming woman if she disobeys the family norms.

Both the terms 'honour crime' and 'honour killing' and their definitions are problematic. Some authors have identified a racial or Islamophobic bias in the use of the term 'honour killing', or honour crimes noting that such terms are only applied where a perpetrator is from an ethnic or religious minority background (Knudsen 2004) despite the observation Bravo and Pelaja have identified honour crimes in Europe and in Greek societies (Siddique and

---

<sup>13</sup> Newham Asian Women's Project, researched in (1998)

Patel 2010) (cited from Siddiqi 2005: 264). The term honour crime is sometimes considered to include actions such as imprisonment, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Siddiqi 2005; Welchman and Hossain 2005) raising theoretical problems by including such a diversity of actions.

#### 1.4 The Culture of Honour

Every community forms its own culture according to its social, religious and political requirements. However, the culture of honour is one such formulation, which cuts across geographical boundaries. Under the influence of honour culture people have been killing their family members, women, relatives, and friends - sometimes for very minor reasons and at times due to major disputes over land or property rights. These reasons are extensive and vary from culture to culture.

The culture of honour in the South of the United States of America is applied in the context of male authority over another male. A man will protect his social status and hierarchal position in terms of sexual jealousy: this occurs via male-on-male violence. Man kills in defence of his own pride, honour and social status (Cohen et al. 1998: 261). Thus, man exercises his hegemonic masculinity to get back his challenged power and position in society and for that he will be ready to take action even if he has to kill, abuse or harm. It is worth noting why manly or family honour is so important in people's lives. Cohen *et al* explain that in some societies because of the inadequate systems of justice people take charge and follow the rule of the jungle to exercise their own autonomy and power of law (Cohen et al. 1998: 263). Once they have been threatened they simply honour their reputation and self prestige (Cohen et al. 1998: 264).

\ . The notion of honour has been found to be very important in various patriarchal societies worldwide. John Iliffe has described, honour as social acceptance of worth according to prescribed cultural norms, but in this context honour also represents a more elusive and complex social institution (Iliffe 2005) based on social and patriarchy (Iliffe 2005). *Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical Term*, described that honour ethos 'dominated by a constant struggle to gain for someone and to take honor from a rival'<sup>14</sup> are considered to be honour cultures; however, this is not to say that all aspects of the culture are identical; it is just that social relations are configured with a strong reliance on honour.

---

<sup>14</sup> Terms, Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical. 2008. "Honour ".

Men's dominance in the society in general and control within the family in particular works through this honour ethos. Within this system women have no honour of their own, chiefly because they are not considered to be individual persons, thus their reputations are reflected only through their families, either increasing or damaging the family honour.

In honour culture a woman's main duties are the preservation of virginity before marriage, chastity within marriage, production of sons, socializing children to follow the rules of the society (strict patriarchal rules) and passive obedience to her superiors (Iliffe 2005; Wilson 2006) - all of which are crucial for the maintenance of the family's honour. Women's sexual behaviour is a central concern for the protection of honour of the men of her family in honour culture and women are considered to be unable to control their own sexual behaviour<sup>17</sup> (Mernissi 2003). As such early marriage is considered to be the best option to protect family honour.

#### 1.4.1 Honour Culture in the South Asian Context

It is essential to understand how honour culture works in the context of South Asian patriarchal societies (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh). Amrit Wilson has talked about the perception of women's sexuality inherent within the notion of *sharam* (shame, shyness and modesty). She says that promotion of the idea that a woman should feel *sharam* about her body and her sexuality serves to discourage women from crossing patriarchal boundaries. A woman is required 'to be watchful of all her actions – how she walks, how she responds to others because patriarchy demands that *sharam* is always present under the surface' (Wilson 2006: 12).

Taking this point, it has been discussed recently in ethnic communities in the United Kingdom that in the culture of honour woman-to-woman violence happens. Sometimes older women in the household become accomplices of male members and take an active part in killing their daughters (Abbas 2011: 17; Amnesty 1999: 7). It has been practised both in Pakistan and in the UK (see murder cases: Samia Server, Rukhsana Naz and Banaz Mahmud). I believe it is not a recent discovery that women take part in killing other women; Nafisa Shah (Shah 1998: 27) also points this out in her earlier work. Older women work for the interest of their family and for their own survival, and thus show their hatred and anger towards their daughters for dishonouring their mother and her family. It is a continual process

---

<sup>17</sup> See Fatima Mernissi (2003) for the fuller discussion

that women guard, threaten, intimidate and criticise their daughters at different levels. Hence, killing women under the title of honour is a collective decision, as many researchers mention. Therefore, it is crucial that even women take an active part with their men in killing their own gender to save family and community honour. Such mothers prove that they acknowledge the system which is more significant than their own daughter's life.

#### 1.4.4 Crimes of Honour

In most of the Western world honour killings have an unacceptable cultural expression. Here the term 'honour crime'<sup>19</sup> particularly the killing called 'honour killing' has been treated as a racist/racial crime as it is claimed that it exists in Islamic societies (Knudsen 2004). Nonetheless the honour culture exists in most societies, including British subcultures and in other Western societies, e.g. the Italian, the Spanish and the Greek (Siddiqi 2005: 264). Furthermore in Islamic countries like Indonesia, and in Muslim West Africa, honour crimes and honour killings are extremely rare<sup>20</sup>.

The events of 9/11 have also had an impact on the way people have started engaging with this problem. The post 9/11 climate has intensified the problematic nature of the clash of Islam and its women versus Western ideologies (Sen 2005: 43). It can be argued therefore that the study of honour crimes has been affected by wider debates about Islam in the West since 2001. Many authors are against the idea that honour crimes are only connected to religious practice. For example, Radhika Comaraswamy (Coomaraswamy 2005) has argued that honour culture is related to other aspects of human life rather than only religion.

It is impossible to understand crimes of honour without understanding the social, political and cultural contexts and conditions of the society where they are practised. Nukhet Sirman analyses crimes of honour in different ways in different societies. For example, in post-colonial societies where the protection of virginity is taken as gender value and relates to controlling women and their bodies, women have been punished for not obeying dictated codes of honour. These punishments can be categorized as a violation of women's human rights, including their right to their own bodies and finally their rights to life (Sirman 2004:39).

<sup>19</sup> Whilst the terms 'honour killing' and 'honour crimes' are problematic, SBS (Southall Black Sisters) have used them to engage in current UK debates. Subsequent to writing there has been a palpable shift in language towards the term 'honour-based' and 'honour-related' violence. (cit: Siddique, 2005:279)

<sup>20</sup> see <[www.encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Honor%20killing](http://www.encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Honor%20killing)> Accessed November, 2006



In the immigrant context in the West, Hultmen has noticed inequality between the two cultures; Western culture is considered to be enlightened and modern whereas immigrant culture is thought to be oppressive and traditional. He further states that, ‘...the problem lies in a clash between the chastity culture and gender-equal culture. With chastity culture [I mean that] the behaviour of girls and especially their virginity is linked to the family’s honour, a way of life that limits women’s and girls’ lives in large parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East’, (cited from Hellgren and Hobson 2006: 19) In Pakistan family honour, marriage settlement, women’s sexuality and male domination are the main crux of honour crimes. The honour oriented families are class and family conscious and much concerned to protect their class reputation, family honour and personal prestige in the eyes of their communities. These factors are generally seen as residing in the bodies of women particularly their sexual conduct and independent behaviour (Siddiqi 2005: 264).

Sometimes, family honour is used to show off and maintain family status; therefore some grooms’ families demand gifts, dowry<sup>21</sup> in the form of goods from the brides’ families to protect their class reputation. Some families believe that if the bride brings expensive gifts it will increase the reputation of the groom’s family in the community. Siddiqi says that, ‘honour crimes’ may be committed over general family reputation or status (such as feuds over land and property), and lead to male-on-male violence, most disputes centre on the control of women’ (Siddiqi 2005: 264).

Furthermore, men’s violence against women is one of the most ancient and oppressive structures in the world and honour crimes are only one aspect of it. Cryer states that, ‘honour crimes are an ancient practice sanctioned by culture rather than religion, rooted in a complex code that allows a man to kill or abuse a female relative or partner for suspected or actual betrayal’<sup>22</sup> (Cryer 2003). It suggests that, the ‘crime of honour’ is a crucial issue for many societies, including ‘honour killings’ and ‘forced marriages.’ The UK ‘Homicide Prevention Unit’<sup>23</sup> has provided a comprehensive list of the causes of ‘honour crimes’, including dowry, blood feuds, female genital mutilation, forced repatriation, domestic violence, acid attacks, bride price, female infanticide and so on. Many of these crimes are interlinked and overlap with each other. Sometimes, forced marriages can be a major cause of honour crime/killing

---

<sup>21</sup> ‘a dowry is a gift of money, goods or property given by the bride’s family to that of the groom to permit the marriage. In societies where the payment of dowry is prevalent, unmarried women can attract stigma and tarnish a family’s reputation.’ <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/dowry>> Accessed December 2010

<sup>22</sup> On line search no page number available

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.npia.police.uk/en/docs/Journal\\_1.1\\_2005.pdf](http://www.npia.police.uk/en/docs/Journal_1.1_2005.pdf)

because if a woman behaves improperly or rejects a family's decision about her life particularly about her marriage, she can be harmed or killed.

In honour societies these homicides are not seen as murders but are claimed to be punishments for immoral behaviours. These traditional societies believe that women must observe family norms. It is a form of domestic violence faced only by women for a variety of reasons because honour is enforced through the use of power of wealth, caste, class, gender and finally, through violence. Jane Connors states that, 'such violence is not random, but is associated with inequality between women and men and strategies to entrench and perpetuate that inequality' (Connors 2005: 29).

### 1.4.3 Honour Killings

'Honour killings' are defined as murders in which predominantly women are killed for their actual or perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour codes of a household or community, causing shame.'<sup>24</sup> 'Honour killing is a prehistoric tradition that encourages the murder of women who are considered to have dishonoured the family. It is a crime that effectively goes unpunished (Amnesty 1999). Much of the literature appears to deny a link between Islam and honour crimes. Western societies are also facing this type of crime and have started an open debate to find the root cause of the crime. Some say that honour killing is an Islamic tradition (Knudsen 2004: 6). Fadia Faqir on the other hand, has stated that 'honour killings are an extreme form of domestic violence.' (Faqir 2001: 77). Similarly, Walby argues that 'honour killings' are one of the many ways in which 'men use violence as a form of power over women.' (Walby 1989: 232).

Sherry Ortner finds in her study of *sharaf* (honour) killings, that family honour was obvious in Latin American and Mediterranean peasant societies, among nomadic people in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and in various Indian castes and Chinese elites. (Ortner 1978). These societies practised honour norms among their communities. Lang finds that honour killing cuts across class, ethnic, and religious lines, observing that Druze, Christians, and Sephardic Jews all commit honour killings (cited from Jafri 2003: 22).

In Pakistan in addition to these factors both patriarchal structure and human rights violations are largely responsible for honour killings as the state is not supposed to intervene in *Jirga* and *Shari'a* (tribal and Islamic) law. Consequently the major actors - landlords and

---

<sup>24</sup> Reference 03/HPHK, Metropolitan Police Authority 2005

fundamentalist *mullahs* - both value men over women, and place none or very little importance on women's testimony in legal cases. It is very uncommon for women to be able to make decisions concerning their lives and it is customary for men to consider women as their personal property. Some believe the roots of this custom are in the patriarchal culture. Mikael Kurkiala, a Swedish Cultural Anthropologist believes that the root of 'honour killing' is not in the culture, but it lies in a universal patriarchal structure which oppresses women worldwide' (Kurkiala 2003: 6). If we analyse his/her statement we can find many incidences of female killings in most places, even in 'civilized' countries where there is no pressure or impact of faith, tribes, or any ancient culture. Therefore, a universal patriarchal structure seems to be the main cause of such crimes.

According to Karen Williams that, 'one in four women in the UK is affected by domestic violence and two women a week are killed' (Williams 2005). Many women are being violated, killed and tortured even without any label like 'honour' or 'prestige' but the fact is that a murder is a murder; such killings are a 'social ill' (Kurkiala 2003: 6).

As many as 120 British women a year are killed by the men who are or were closest to them (Viner 2005). However, Pope argues that 'the line between crimes of passion and honour killings is very thin' (Nicole 2003: 104). Whereas Gurdrun articulates this situation as a 'jealousy-drama', he explains that it is not a question of honour or passion but of a hatred of women through the patriarchal structure which dominates all societies: it does not matter where it is happening whether in Swedish or Kurdish societies (cited from Hellgren and Hobson 2006: 17).

The phenomenon of male control of female sexuality is complicated as it happens mostly between close relatives. There are many women who have been killed by their previous or present partners, but to be killed by their fathers, brothers and sons or uncles is justified for the sake of 'family honour' is highly problematic. Most academic research and media coverage assumes that 'homicide is provoked by the perpetrators 'loss of honour' (Knudsen 2004; Siddiqi 2005; Warraich 2005) which is considered as shameful in general terms.

In honour-bound societies sexuality is a prominent feature to be controlled; and in honour killings if a woman deviates from unsanctioned sexual norms, actual or suspected, she can be condemned for 'immoral behaviour' and killed to save the family's or community's honour. In honour culture it is believed that women are bound to protect their 'family honour'

by their good conduct and if they fail to perform such roles and bring shame on their family they may be considered to be shameful women; therefore improper behaviour might be the final cause of the honour killings/crimes.

It is almost impossible to measure the international scale of honour killing; although 'the U.N Population Fund has estimated that there are 5,000 a year, many cases go unreported, the deaths unregistered' (Amnesty 1999). Recently, some shocking honour killing cases have been reported and investigated worldwide. For instance, Hina Saleem, a Pakistani-Italian woman, had her throat cut by her father in Brescia, Italy on 17 August 2006, because she refused an arranged marriage (with her cousin in Pakistan) and instead wanted to integrate into Italian society (*Asia News*, 17 August 2006). Fadime<sup>25</sup> Sahindal, a Kurdish/Swedish woman was shot dead in 2001 in Sweden by her father (Kurkiala 2003: 16) and Hatin Surucu was shot dead in 2005 by her brother. In Jordan Rana Hussein reported the death of a 16 year old girl when she was killed by her brother to cleanse the family name (Husseini 2011 ). Samia Sarwar<sup>26</sup> was summarily executed in her lawyer's office in Pakistan in 1999 because she wanted to get a divorce from her abusive husband (Amnesty 1999) and British/Pakistani Rukhsana Naz, 19 years old, was murdered in London by her mother and brother in 1999 in London (Siddiqi 2005), in 2002, Heshu<sup>27</sup> Yones's father slit his daughter's throat because she offended him with her Western ways and her father learnt about her affair with a Lebanese Christian (Begikhani 2005; Gill 2006 ).

It is believed that the cases of Heshu Yones and Rukhsana Naz and Bnaz Mohmod have shocked the investigators and police personnel into formulating strategies to stop this honour-based violence (HBV) and have encouraged the study of tribal, regional, cultural and faith-oriented communities. Similarly, Fadime Sahindal's<sup>28</sup> case has been reported widely in the Swedish media in the same context.

#### 1.4.4 Meanings and Concepts of Honour

The word 'honour', in classical Latin, is 'honus, honoris', and describes the qualities of bravery and courage, which are also implied by the words *mard*, *man*, and *mardangi*, manliness (Mojab 2005: 215). The words *izzat*, *namoos*, *ghairat*, and *luju* all mean respect,

<sup>25</sup> *Fadime's* parents were not Islamic but Catholic; she was buried in a Catholic cemetery. So this left little room for demonizing Islam. See Hellgren and Hobson (2006:13)

<sup>26</sup> She needed a divorce from her abusive husband.

<sup>27</sup> As Muslims feared the backlash of the September 11 terrorist, the murder of Heshu Yones invoked similar fear in the Muslim community across the UK. (Gill, 2006)

<sup>28</sup> Later on the case has been analysed as family oriented but not cultural or identity oriented (Hellgren and Hobson, 2006) case.

esteem and prestige in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Sindhi, referring to good character and appropriate moral behaviour in terms of honour codes. Sometimes, they are used for cultural practices such as hospitality, reputation and social status.<sup>29</sup> Every society has defined these terms in its own socio-cultural context. This notwithstanding, honour is universally regarded as a gender-neutral term, and it is in no case gender specific.

In South Asian and Muslim families girls are given birth names which manifest feminine qualities: *ismat* or *iffat*, *lajari*, *abiru*, *haya*, or *hijab* – words synonymous with chastity, shyness, dignity and reputation. The idea behind this practice is to remind them (daughters) of their duty towards keeping up the family values. Hence, language also plays a strong role in controlling the lives of women by according them honour labels. Erin Patrice Moore mentioned that ‘honor is defined by the men in terms of control: elders over juniors, men over women, and the groom’s family over the bride’s family’ (Moore 2005: 218).

Having a familial and communal face value, honour and shame rely on ‘the behaviour of others and that behaviour, [therefore], must be controlled’ (Baker et al. 1999 : 165). In honour culture, people believe in *izzat* and *ghairat*: *Izzat* means honour or respect and *ghairat* means personal and communal prestige. These notions are strong social aspects, disempowering women in many ways - physically, sexually, and psychologically - and creating several boundaries to control women’s behaviour. If women transgress such boundaries, then they can be punished or killed to protect personal and communal honour. For the survival of ‘reputation’ men should respond instantly and violently to a woman who has tarnished his honour. Upholding of status and social upward mobility are dependent on women’s sexual behaviour and are considered crucial in communal and familial kinship groups.

‘ Honour implies symbolic attachment which is deeper than kinship and marital bond. Honour schema is tied with a person long before his/her birth. It is a destiny of women’s social and sexual conduct, which is grounded in patriarchal structures, providing a guideline for modest behaviour, which manifests the individual’s fundamental identity (Jafri 2003: 28).

It is noticed that most families believe in their inherited norms and tend to transfer them to their offspring. In this respect, the concept of *izzat* remains in the blood for generations; this is what happens in collective societies like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq or

---

<sup>29</sup> (ibid:16)

even some Western countries<sup>30</sup>. Moreover Peristiany has argued that ‘honour and shame are social evaluations [...] the reflection of the social personality in the mirror of social ideals’ (Peristiany 1970: 9). People see that the norms of men’s and families personal prestige are already in practice in society, therefore they live according to them. Nevertheless, honour and shame are constructive terms in the society where male ego is the most dominant factor. If men’s personal prestige is threatened by women’s shameful behaviour then men feel entitled to take revenge to protect their honour.

Honour as a gender related concept serves to construct a person’s communal and personal identity to regulate his or her behaviour in social situations. However it depends on the standing of males and females in their communal groups as to how they are going to be regulated into their communal framework to support the honour values. Therefore, the man’s responsibility is to control his woman’s sexuality and a woman’s responsibility is to guard her sexual behaviour for the protection of her man’s honour. Nevertheless, Amir Jafri says that ‘honour, [thus] is not something achieved individually but is shared; it belongs to the collective and transcends time. Not only are the ‘honourable’ names of fathers and grandfathers in line with the conduct of the present generation but the lives of unborn members also depend on it’ (Jafri 2003: 27). Therefore honour is a complex term in many ways; by nature it continues to construct labels, norms and meanings and to apply them in reality. Such norms can be formed collectively by the family and community members. ‘[H]onour often centres on the family, male authority and community linkages. Both men and women construct notions of female honour’ (Mojab 2005: 216).

Jane Schneider sees it in a power game as ‘ the ideology of the (power) holding group which struggles to define, enlarge, and protect its patrimony in a competitive area’ (Schneider 1971: 12). The problem is that such principles provide imbalanced gender discriminated trends in the group. Because of this imbalance and closed dealing amongst the family members, it creates huge barriers and conflicts between them in all aspects of their lives and sometimes leads to permanently stressed conditions. Schneider further argued that, ‘honour arises when the definition of the group is problematic; when the social boundaries are difficult to maintain, and internal loyalties are questionable’ (Schneider 1971: 12). It is very difficult to analyse this situation, given the problematic position of the social norms among the community, which forcefully demands the maintenance of social boundaries.

---

<sup>30</sup> Often in minority communities

It is worth noting that 'women have both negative power (that is they can tarnish the family honour through their behaviour) and positive power (that is they can increase the reputation of the family by marrying into a prestigious class). Nevertheless, women's power in honour cultures exists within the context of largely patriarchal and collectivistic social arrangements' (Gill 2004: 475). Hence marriage hierarchies possess strong and deep rooted pressure in the lives of women to maintain women's modesty to support the honour ethos.

Aisha Gill states that honour cultural communities believe that women's modesty (virginity and chastity) is watched and controlled constantly by their family members for the sake of the family honour (Gill 2004) because '[W]omen in traditional societies do not [themselves] have a claim to honor as individuals, separate from their roles within family unity' (Baker et al. 1999 : 165). Therefore, women must conform properly. Otherwise women can be labelled as shameful and immodest because the family honour depends on the sexuality of the women and control of women's sexuality is a device of masculine domination. Therefore, men want to control women's behaviour as their personal property. Nawal El-Saadawi says that 'the man's honour is safe as long as the female members of his family keep their hymens intact'. (Saddawi 1980: 47) In Turkish and in other Middle-Eastern cultures women's premarital virginity is an asset not only for the individual woman but also for her family because it is an 'index' for masculine reputation.

Consequently in many honour based families virginity has a high value to offer for marriage. In contrast, men, unlike women (women often lose their hymen long before sex in some cases), have no physical evidence of the loss of virginity; even after losing it they can still claim to be pure. Dilek Cindoglu has highlighted that Turkish women utilize surgery to 'repair' their virginity, as a 'survival strategy for women who are living in patriarchal gender ideology with double standards' (Cindoglu 1997 : 260). In Netherlands the surgical reconstruction of the hymen is being debated at present.

It is still the case in some places in Pakistan that girls (near puberty) have been instructed by their male family elders to protect families' honour. The family honour which is an unspoken phenomenon refers to young women's virginity but most of the young women at a very young age do not understand the implication of such values. Therefore, many young women find it hard to live according to their family norms to protect their family and community honour. For example, Zubaida Metlo, has mentioned that, men in Sindhi society

say: '*aman, tuun assan je izzat...*'<sup>31</sup> ('O Mother'<sup>32</sup>, you are our 'izzat' and 'you' are the only one who can protect our honour in the community, because the whole family depends upon your modesty and chastity') (Metlo 1987: 14) Therefore you have to be careful. Don't transgress the family norms otherwise you will cut 'our' nose.<sup>33</sup> If a woman transgresses family honour, then her family would cut her nose practically and the family feel symbolically that she cut their nose. Traditionally 'nose' has a symbolic meaning of shame equivalent to personal and community prestige and reputation. Similarly, there are many other language expressions of 'nose' which represent honour ethos in South Asian communities. Therefore, if a woman disgraces the family norms, the members of the family will take revenge to mutilate the women's physical features<sup>34</sup>. It will show that she has brought shame on the family and has transgressed the family boundaries. This mutilation still exists in many places in Pakistan and is publicised in the media to create fear in the community.

Consequently, men's vulnerability regarding women's sexual reputation is a matter of their personal prestige. In many societies men boast about how 'honourable' their families are and try to preserve and increase their honour for the next generation. It has been noticed that the more conservative the family is, the more 'honourable' and pure it is regarded. For example, some south Asian families are discouraged from keeping a television at home for they believe that for women to watch television is against both custom and religion because women may find another way of life (Nicole 2003; Shah 1998b, November, 19). All cultures or societies need to construct their own cultural or national image. It is fundamental that people cannot live without their identities and imagined communities. For that purpose societies create boundaries to maintain people's moral and symbolic needs. Nevertheless, it is important to analyse the position of women in their cultural and national framework. Women's position, personal behaviour, bodies and emotions are the combination of such formations. Hence, it is impossible to ignore these factors. Kubena Mercer, says that women carry 'the burden of the representation' (cited from Yuval-Davis 1997: 45) of their nations and cultures, individually, collectively and symbolically. From these representatives (women)

<sup>31</sup> Metlo, (1987) a Story, quarterly *Magzine Nayoo Niyapoo*, p:12-15.

<sup>32</sup> Family male members often call their daughters 'mother' as a form of respect. Respect their modest behaviour.

<sup>33</sup> Nose is a very strong and symbolical expression of 'shame'. It expresses the honour ethos both personal and communal.

<sup>34</sup> See: [www.eruditiononline.com/01.04/zahida\\_story.htm](http://www.eruditiononline.com/01.04/zahida_story.htm)> Accessed April 2006



of the cultures (Gill 2006 : 3) society demands modest manners<sup>35</sup>. For example, in India Gandhi introduced the new patriarchy<sup>36</sup> for the construction of the national image. Gandhi believed that women should not be left out from the national struggle and should be involved in national identity construction. He did not differentiate between the role of women in the public and private sphere, as such women were detained in a passive, isolated and submissive situation through his national movement. Mahatma Gandhi said, 'protect their honour, if you have any manliness in you. It is for you to see that no one casts an evil eye on them' (cited from Derne 2000 : 244). Gandhi's concern showed that 'morality feared that women's honour would be unsafe outside the home' (Katrak 1992 : 403). Therefore, 'female sexuality was highly problematic for Gandhi himself' (Katrak 1992 : 396). However, in Pakistan there is a huge clash between cultural and Islamic hierarchies to construct and regulate the code of conduct for the construction of a national image. Therefore, women's sexuality is a problematic phenomenon in Pakistani communities.

#### 1.4.5 The Role of Marriage Settlement in Honour Culture

In 'hetero-patriarchal norms' (Mayer 2000: 14) marriage is an essential custom and the purpose of the whole life of a woman. Through this custom the values of honour are being exchanged to strengthen the group identity therefore, marriage is seen to bring families together and strengthen them as a similar group. Nevertheless, sometimes marriages lead to serious conflict and cohesion.

In Pakistani culture, it is considered that keeping a daughter at home after her puberty is a sign of disgrace and shame. So, daughters should get married immediately after this age. As a result, an early marriage is considered as an honourable act and is most common in honour culture. In tribal and rural communities when a girl has lost her milk teeth or is able to carry a pot of five litres of water, the family considers that she has reached a marriageable age. However, the fact is that sometimes girls are engaged before these signs and even before their birth (Metlo 2004; Shah 1998).

Such settlements represent collective honour, however, [M]arriageable daughter should go to their husband's places as soon as possible so that the family honour is not in

<sup>35</sup> Yuval-Davis (1997) compares the situation to that of Nazi Germany where men had a duty to live and die bravely for the nation whilst women did not need to act; they had only to be the embodiment of the nation. The model of a woman, often a mother, symbolises in many countries the spirit of collectivity, whether it is Mother Russia, Mother Ireland or Mother India.

<sup>36</sup> Gandhian's national movements: '*brahmacharya*' (self-control) and *Swadeshi* (self-reliance).

danger' (Rahat 1981: 53) because often girls' marriages matter to the community and are discussed more among the community members than the family members. It is believed that girls must be kept in proper places to protect the family/community honour. Therefore, a woman's proper place is her husband's house and only elders can identify where girls have to marry. However, many young girls are sold off by 'bride-price' because daughters are literally bought and sold' (Zeenat and Akber 1981: 36) by their own families into unwanted marriages. In many cases girls are 'exchanged in return for peace between two clans, or given in marriage to men much older than themselves for money or for another young girl' (Report 1997: 25).

In patriarchal societies, it is easy to choose women's fate in terms of where they have to go; custom works as a strong force to motivate people in this choice. However, early marriages, exchange marriages, problematic<sup>37</sup> marriages and bride price marriages are all the tradition of the societies where they have been practised for centuries. Furthermore, the report of the commission of inquiry for women has mentioned that 'these marriages serve to keep young people tied to the wishes of their parents, sometimes to the extent that young girls are bartered, sold, or exchanged in marriages by their own kith and kin for money or for the lust of an old male member of the family who wishes to marry a young girl (Report 1997: 25).

The standard marriage custom involves exchanged marriages and 'bride price'<sup>38</sup> marriages which show that both traditional and material values are practised. Nevertheless it is believed that early/exchange marriage can increase the family honour<sup>39</sup>. Families argue that their daughters are pure, thus by proving their daughter's physical value they exchange her for another woman or for money; whereas if a family marry off their daughter without having anything in return the community may suppose that it is because there might be something wrong with their daughter and that is why the girl has been married without anything in exchange.

Moreover, a 'bride price' also encourages the under aged marriage because a girl can get a good market value in terms of early marriage. Marriages are essentially contracted by practical arrangements to maintain a balance in honour and wealth (Shah 1998a). Families never think about the diverse effects of the traditions, because throughout generations people

---

<sup>37</sup> If a marital couple is unhappy with each other, even then their family will force them to continue their marriage otherwise it will be shameful for their family.

<sup>38</sup> Often these women, who come by exchange of money, do not get respect in their husband's family.

<sup>39</sup> Early and exchange marriages are an appropriate and acceptable norm in honour culture.

follow it ritualistically and claim that their elders have done the same. They carry on this custom as a natural and God given process.

A woman is considered a personal property, a commodity and has a great symbolic value which embodies her family's/*biraderi*'s honour. A modest girl is the asset of the family as she can increase the required honour of the family. The families control their inherited property and procreation etc. If a woman marries within her own clan or *zat* (caste) it means that the family property will remain undivided and through patrilineal link they will have pure and unsullied children (Mayer 2000; Metlo 2004).

In such settings girls are not encouraged to talk about their own or others' lives. Especially, *ghughdam*<sup>40</sup> and *nimani*<sup>41</sup> - innocent, shy and docile (Metlo 2004: 19) girls are more sound and reliable to protect the family honour because loud and talkative girls are considered immodest and potentially dishonouring of family values, and girls who sacrifice their lives and keep silent are considered as much caring for the family honour. Therefore, it is common that unmarried girls are not allowed or encouraged to talk among their elders.

It is complex and problematic to understand that with such consideration, families exchange their *izzat*<sup>42</sup> and wealth apparently through marriage settlements. People believe that through exchange marriages they also exchange their honour symbolically. Apart from that, the family does not want to divide its inheritance with its female members. That is why the family is reluctant to marry its daughters into another clan or families. Subsequently, the politics of honour generate huge injustices through the supremacy of male power by practising such norms.

Honour could be accessed within the family inheritance or property which is being shifted from one generation to the next by dictating marriage settlements. If at some point there is no chance of a daughter getting married in the same family (if no man is available in the extended family to marry her) then she will have to stay her whole life with her parents and 'marry the holy book, Qur'an'<sup>43</sup> (though it is not common) living all her life in celibacy even if it is not her choice. In this situation the family would support its actions by diverse

---

<sup>40</sup> Girls don't talk or ask questions. This is considered to be a good trait.

<sup>41</sup> gentle, shy and docile

<sup>42</sup> *izzat*, honour in the exchange marriage system and wealth in the 'bride prize' marriage system

<sup>43</sup> The marriage with Quran is called *haque bakhish*; means to withdraw from the right to marry, this tradition is in feudal families in Pakistan. If a woman does not get a chance to marry in the same clan, she cannot get married outside of the family because her families are more concerned to save their inherited property. However, the family will say that it is against their custom to marry her out of the family. She spends all her life silently to support the family honour.

explanations such as that their daughter is dear to them and that to marry her in another clan would be like putting her in hell<sup>44</sup>. Apart from that, parents would explain that, (their daughter) is also an extremely modest girl taking no interest in marriage matters. They claim that it is better for her to live in celibacy, because if she is married into another clan, she will remain unhappy as her parents will not be permitted to visit her. In this way her family would exercise pressures, fear, and charms on her to trap her in the family web. This practice has been seen in the south part of Pakistan in *Sayyad* families. *Sayyad* men could marry three or four women from different backgrounds and social classes; however, their women are strongly prohibited from doing so.

A family knows that a woman has a great monetary value apart from her inheritance. Women also possess sexual and procreative/fertility value and are a great source of unpaid household labour. From a celibate woman the family can get two advantages: undivided family inheritance and unpaid domestic labour. Therefore, the family would start indoctrinating her in many ways. Honour politics play a serious and complex role, creating an interplaying of parental brutality and so called affection between parents and daughters.

The other aspect is the existence of women's sexuality, which is considered the root cause of gender discrimination, as sexuality is seen as impure, a burden and a source of sin in patriarchal culture. In some cases, this burden becomes more noticeable, serious and brutal, if a woman wants to marry by her own choice. This is considered a shameful act as it means a woman is literally showing her sexual desire (showing her genitals). The family of such a woman would use strong and symbolical language to condemn her intention to choose. Thus, this behaviour is considered shameful for the family because honour related families are considered to be pure and sinless. It is an extremely critical behaviour to challenge the family's honour and purity in this way. In this situation a woman's sexuality will be used as a collective symbol of shame and impurity and it will be perceived that the woman is the cause of shame by showing *their* naked bodies (symbolically the whole family would be naked) and rolling *their* heads down in the dust of shame in front of the other clans. Such situations make the family take revenge on their own daughter because she has tarnished and damaged the family honour. It would be hard for the family to show their face to their community because people will provoke and condemn them that their daughter has taken control in marrying by herself.

---

<sup>44</sup> Mostly families project and propagate other clans like a hell.

The representation of woman's sexuality (by showing her interest in marriage) is extremely unwelcome and challenging for her family. If she claims this right it means she wants to bring shame on all her family. It is therefore; better to marry her off in her own community at a very early age. Otherwise it would be shameful if the woman is married by her own choice into the other community, which is equal to displaying her genitals for all (family and community). In this situation such female members would be cursed by saying that they should have been killed at birth because of the shame and disgrace they have caused their whole family/community.

Families consider a marriage merely as a source of wealth, perhaps an opportunity for immigration, honour and unpaid labour, although such marriages can be a great cause of unhappiness. Therefore, it is not wise to shift this property (the woman) without getting something in exchange from another family, e.g. another girl, or '*tukken tee vertal*' (sold a bride by coins) being paid for her<sup>45</sup>. The transfer of women without any exchange is almost and always against the honour norms. Therefore, 'women are literally 'sold' for a straight 'bride-price'<sup>46</sup> because daughters are sometimes literally bought and sold (Zeenat and Akber 1981: 35).

Nafisa Shah says the '*sangawatti*'<sup>47</sup> (marriage deal) is a peg in the honour code' (Shah 1998a: 246) giving and getting a girl for marriage means exchanging families' *izzat* - honour and wealth. Therefore, this exchange system leads to either conflict or cohesion. Sometimes parents may prefer to give their daughters in marriage to their brothers' sons. Therefore 'marriage is strongly endogamous and the preferred form is to the patrilateral parallel cousins' (Zeenat and Akber 1981: 35). Additionally, the family claims that marrying a daughter to another clan is dishonourable. In the same way in the Pakistani diaspora, (Werbner 1990: 84) has found that 'a high rate of first and second parallel and cross cousin exchange marriages' still exists. Consequently, most families agree to keep their daughters in the paternal families but even then endogamous marriages can become a cause of dispute. The exchanged marriage system is popular in Pakistan although it can be a great cause of conflict; if one couple is unhappy, this will affect the other couple. Mostly exchanged marriages create problems and become a cause of conflict between both families. The couples have to live with extended families after marriage and their elders are bound to interfere in

<sup>45</sup> People say '*tukken tee verti aahi*' means we buy this 'bride' by coin.

<sup>46</sup> Bride price is a norm among some communities in Pakistan.

<sup>47</sup> From the Sindhi root *sangawatti* comes from *sang*, another word for marriage but more specifically *sang* is a gendered term. *Sang wathan* would imply taking a woman in marriage and *sangh diyani* would mean giving a woman in marriage. For an extensive discussion of *sangawatti*, see Shah (1998).

their lives. Elders try to continue these marriages because families believe divorce may lead to dishonour and shame.

In honour culture in Pakistan men's verbal commitment, beards and turbans have strong symbolical meanings in their communities. The men sometimes make a verbal commitment to a girl they would marry in another clan, even though the man never bothers to consult or ask about the commitment from the girl's parents. This verbal commitment has been considered as a serious and a final promise by extended families. Consequently, they keep him bound to follow such promises. In the same way in the Pakistani community, Samad and Eade have found that even a male elder's single word (promise) about marriage settlement is considered as a word of honour and to dishonour the commitment is against family honour (Samad and Marriage' 2002: 40). Therefore it has been considered that if a girl has been given a name (engaged) of another family, she must live in her family as a *amanat*<sup>48</sup>. In such a case, she must be guarded carefully, because she is now the *izzat* of another person and *izzat* must not be dishonoured. As Nafisa Shah says 'marriage transactions are about honour and must not be violated' (Shah 1998: 27).

### 1.5 Honour and Shame in the Hegemonic Patriarchal System

Patriarchy is a universal concept; its main theme is to devalue certain people like women or people of different colours or foreign nations/cultures and immigrants and label them between 'us' and 'them' (Pope 2004: 101). The domination of one group creates distance between two extremes, the superiors and the inferiors. Consequently, one group diminishes the other through hierarchal concepts and looks at it in terms of sex, colour, nations and cultures. The ideology of 'oneself' constructs various complicated categories in patriarchal culture to rule and suppress the 'other' people. Therefore Kurkiala a Swedish Cultural Anthropologist believes that 'the root of 'honour killing' is not in the culture, but it lies in a universal patriarchal structure which oppresses women worldwide' (Kurkiala 2003: 6).

The concept of patriarchy is also divided into several patriarchal pockets - though patriarchy is universal, its practices are specific. Shahrzad Mojab argues that 'each regime of patriarchy is particular' (Mojab 2004: 34), for example, she says, Islamic patriarchy is different from Christian patriarchy and Kurdish patriarchy is different from Italian patriarchy. But the main structure and the aims of patriarchy are the same: devaluation and dispossession

---

<sup>48</sup>Means, somebody else's property which has to be returned when 'the right time' comes

of certain human beings or cultures. Therefore, patriarchal hierarchies construct various complicated categories (social, familial and cultural, sometimes individual as well) to diminish other groups through diverse social norms, justifications and political power.

It is important to mention here that 'paternalistic dominance' (Lerner 1986: 239) has two dominating factors structuralizing and symbolizing several concepts of honour and shame. They are built around 'familial patriarchy' and 'social patriarchy' (Michael Smith 1990). Familial and social patriarchies construct complex norms and taboos for people and especially for women, which become a cause of domestic violence and forced marriages, whereas the similar form cultural patriarchy constructs various boundaries and values as its communal base. Explicitly the concept of honour subjugates the position of women, therefore the honour systems believe that honour belongs to men and shame belongs to women (Shah 1998: 44). Through such boundaries (communal and familial) women are (theoretically and practically) bound to practise honour norms to maintain their position in the community. Consequently, these two main factors comprise the honour ethos and deny any free space to women. Therefore, women [as beings] are left only as sexual objects, objectified, embodied and commodified. Besides, women's bodies become the core idea of personal prestige and familial honour.

In honour culture women provide sexual service and domestic unpaid labour and in return they get protection and economic support (Lerner 1986; Walby 1989). In the process they are left with no individual identification of their own; their modest behaviour increases their males' honour but diminishes their self-respect. Concerning familial patriarchy Carol Delancy has mentioned that women's value in patriarchal societies depends only on fertility and the ability to guarantee the security of a man's seed (Carol 1987: 35) For this reason women's chastity and virginity matter a great deal in familial patriarchy.

In patriarchal culture familial values are the core of the culture. Its several layers and dimensions all work together to define the status and role of the women in support of family honour. Therefore, an honour culture based upon the ideology of kinship and the family extension is essentially constructed on the hierarchal structure of tribal and feudal ethos. This cultural structure works from generation to generation to transfer the familial and communal values and legitimize male domination over women.

Nicole Pope says, in 'Pakistan where religious fundamentalism is on the rise, religion is used as a tool to strengthen patriarchal control' (Pope 2004: 107). For instance *Hudood*

*Ordinance*<sup>49</sup>, which has been considered a black law, is a terrible example of misuse of Islam and against the ethics, the humanity and the Constitution of Pakistan (Ali 2001). It is a strong weapon of the honour hierarchies which is used to subjugate women.

In many places crimes related to ‘honour custom or jealousy’ are not being treated as ‘crimes against the individual’ but ‘crimes against public morality and the familial order’ (Sirman 2004: 42) which explicitly shows that the state and certain actors/institutions are sharing, promoting, reproducing and institutionalizing such norms through marriage settlements to strengthen more patriarchal and gender hierarchies.

In honour system the female is considered before marriage as the property of her father, uncle, brother, and after marriage of her father in-law, husband and son and many other close male relatives as well. Pope says that ‘in strict patriarchal societies where honour killings are still common, the sense of ownership is not limited to the immediate partner, but extends to the entire clan’ (Pope 2004: 105) and results in the reinforcement of men’s sense of ownership of the women. Therefore, in some places in Pakistan if the woman has been abducted the whole clan will react to take revenge, to rape their rival group’s women, and are ready to fight. This war will continue for many years and will be passed over to the next generation. It will not matter where in the world they might live (Shah 1998: 52).

Pope argues that ‘honour killing is *the* extreme form of patriarch[y]’ (Pope 2004: 102), whereas Mojab is of the view that ‘eliminating [honour killing] means denying patriarchy’ (Mojab 2004: 36). It seems that in honour culture male and female are not unified human beings but they are divided into two extreme opposite groups: the ‘men who have power, and the women who obey their power’ (Kidwai 2001: 86). Similarly, Hellgren and Hobson (Hellgren and Hobson 2006: 15) analyse the issue in the context of immigrants which draws the line between “us” and “them” and this phenomenon is endemic. Susan M Okin believes ‘[M]ost cultures are patriarchal’ (Moore 2005: 17). She argues in her book. *Is Multiculturalism bad for women?*, that ‘women could benefit if some cultures were allowed to disappear.’ We might agree with this idea but first we must have to agree that the killing of women is a universal phenomenon.

It is particularly important to examine the fact that when immigrants kill/harm their women it becomes a patriarchal or cultural problem but when ‘native-born’ kill their partners

---

<sup>49</sup> The *Hudood Ordinances*, 1979 Islamised the Pakistan Penal Code. (Pakistan’s then military dictator Gen Zia Ul Haq had promulgated it in the name of Islam to appease retrogressive forces and gain their support in return) The distinction between adultery and rape is vague. Rape requires four adult male witnesses and a woman’s own statement cannot be recorded as evidence. Hence many rape cases can be tried for adultery.



it will not necessarily be treated as a patriarchal problem. It is important to say that still every year hundreds of women are being killed in the world, for example in the United Kingdom (Pope 2004: 105) by their partners. However, it has been argued that a societal problem becomes a cultural problem when immigrant women are being killed. Therefore, 'if a woman is killed it means that society is under the influence of the patriarchal culture' (Pope 2004: 106), and if immigrant women are killed it is presumed that it is because of honour ethos.

## **1.6 Summary**

Patriarchy is a very old universal social system. It works differently in different situations and locations to suppress people in a structured way. Women from all backgrounds (colour, class, race and culture) are the main target of patriarchal systems to be suppressed through strict rules, divine commands, and cultural codes of conduct to control their lives in the private and public arena. Patriarchy has proved that it becomes problematic and abusive if one resists its power and control.

Domestic violence and the murder of women by their partners are universal phenomena and the most common crimes in a patriarchal system, whose extreme form is to harm women sexually, physically, emotionally, and even killing them to maintain power and control over them. It applies in honour culture; honour killing is one of the extreme forms of family violation practiced globally. In honour killings a woman is killed by her father, brother or even by her son for dishonouring the family norms. The family/community norms evolve into the ideology of honour and shame, which divides both of them (man and woman) into two different classes, whereby one is superior and the other is inferior. It has been noticed that global patriarchy is the main root cause of that structure and the enforcing factor to implement the honour culture in some societies to suppress women through modesty issues and marriage settlements.

## Chapter Two

### Honour in Pakistani Communities

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I aim to explore how patriarchal and honour values of Pakistani society affect women's lives in Pakistan. I shall also discuss the impact these phenomena have on both educated and empowered women and on those who spend all their lives as house wives serving their families in an honour bound Pakistani culture.

#### 2.2 Honour Culture in Pakistan

Pakistani society places great importance on the notion of honour. In relation to honour, it has its own unique systems, traditions and norms which support the centrality of the concept of patriarchy.

In Pakistan the idea of honour is best described by the terms *izzat* (honour) and *ghairat*<sup>50</sup>. The main crux of *izzat* and *ghairat* in people's lives is women's sexual reputation and its effects on the community in general and the family in particular. The community expects women to conform to its rules in order to enhance their family's *izzat*. Many commentators and researchers agree that a woman is the main source of 'honour' for her husband, her family and the rest of the community (Mustafa 2003). Likewise, in Arab culture honour is crucially linked with the sexual conduct of women and its repercussions on their family and their kinship group (Al-Khayyat 1990: 21).

Pakistan is a Muslim country<sup>51</sup> following the South Asian culture and the Islamic code of conduct. After General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime (1977-88) took hold of power, the condition of women has worsened, 'Zia was to erect his 'Islamisation' programme' (Shaheed 1998: 419). The military regime idealised women's role by implementing conservative Islamic laws and limiting their rightful space in the public sphere. Anita Weiss contends, 'the government of Zia-ul-Haq, in particular, had idealized the image of women as being faithful to '*chador aur char diwar*' –(wearing a veil and remaining within the confines of the four walls of their homes). The government had promoted this image while trying to

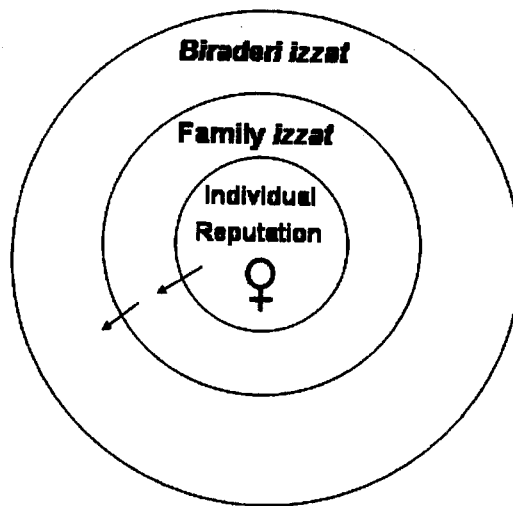
<sup>50</sup> *Ghairat*, meaning honour, courage, modesty and shame, is a complex concept which applies to both men and women, and stands opposed to *be-ghairat*, shamelessness, without a sense of honour. (Werbner, 2005)

<sup>51</sup> Muslims comprise 97 percent of the national population of Pakistan. <http://www.Islamicpopulation.com>  
Accessed December 2006

ignore the reality that women's lives were becoming increasingly integrated into the public realm' (Weiss 1998: 131).

As always, cultural traditions are deeply rooted in people's lives putting additional burden on women in particular. There are two central elements that work together in Pakistani society; women are the providers of *izzat* and men are its guardians/protectors. It shows the significance of *izzat* in the life of a Pakistani person whose whole existence revolves around it. The family and community are determined to preserve women's reputation, no matter how much the latter sacrifice for it. It may be best to describe this idea in a diagram reflecting women's reputation in terms of their conformity and modesty in all circumstances.

**Figure 1. Diagram reflecting the relationship between an individual woman's reputation and the *izzat* of her family and her *biraderi***



The patriarchal family achieves its *izzat* through the undeviating behaviour of their youngsters (children) but especially from women's sexual conduct. *Biraderi's izzat* is the accumulation of families' *izzat* which belongs to the same extended group through its combined efforts in practising social and cultural norms in their daily lives. A woman's modesty enhances her reputation along with her family's and her *biraderi's* honour.

Among Pakistanis, the terms *biraderi* and *zat* refer to patrilineal clans which are thought to have descended from a common male ancestor. The groups bear names of particular castes, which in turn have complicated systems of hierarchy within them. These groups are also

generally endogamous and sustain their individuality through cross-cousin marriages. The *biraderi* system covers many sub-systems including: *mel jhol*<sup>52</sup>, class, caste, '*lena dena*'<sup>53</sup>, *pardah*/veil, arranged marriages, parallel cousin marriages, cultural concepts of respect of elders and religion. Alison Shaw has observed that the custom of getting daughters married to relatives is supposed to maintain 'purity of the blood' (Shaw 2000) in the family *biraderi*. Therefore, 'marriage is strongly endogamous and the preferred form is to the patrilineal parallel cousins' (Zeenat and Akber 1981: 35) which can be linked to the male's desire to maintain the family's property within the same family. Additionally, the family claims that marrying a daughter to another clan is dishonourable.

This system ensures that each family is part of a community or group and is accountable towards community norms. Most of these norms reinforce the inferior position of women as the notion of *izzat* is stronger than woman's personal respect and self-identity. Men's claim to *izzat* is actually about controlling women. Amrit Wilson argues that 'it is women's lives and actions which affect [it] most. A woman can have *izzat* but it is not her own, it is her husband's or her father's. Her *izzat* is a reflection of the male pride of the family as a whole' (Wilson 1978: 5). Therefore, the women's role is crucial to the family's *izzat*. If a woman makes a mistake or deviates from family values or becomes a victim of someone's abuse even without her will, she is made responsible for corrupting her family's *izzat*.

### 2.3 Honour Killings in Pakistan

Pakistan is notoriously known for honour killings because a big number of cases are reported every year in comparison to other countries in the Muslim world. It is acknowledged that 'on average three women are killed every day in Pakistan for betraying male honour. Many more cases go unreported, 'almost all go unpunished' and 'quash all inquiries' (Amnesty 1999). Inquiries are usually avoided which reveals the supportive role of cultural hierarchies in encouraging the honour ethos and the so called male honour and facilitating the culprits to kill their women and still claim to be honourable men.

---

52 To allow families to visit other families belonging to the same *Biraderi* or ideology.

53 Literally 'taking-giving' gifts (Shaw, 1994). In Punjabi villages, women play a significant economic role through the complex 'gift exchange' system.

This situation makes it seem as if almost all victims (women) are adulterous and their behaviour is immodest and illicit; therefore, they must be killed by means of *Karo-kari*<sup>54</sup> (literally 'black man and black woman' but also used for honour killings). The great number of such crimes shows that *karo-kari* is regarded as a legitimate action. As Zubeida Mustafa states, 'the tragedy of this land is that the feudal and tribal culture continues to influence our national psyche and political approach'<sup>55</sup> (Mustafa 2003).

Therefore, it seems that Pakistani males possess full authority to control their women and young female family members. To guard a woman is a fundamental feature of honour culture; men acquire this behaviour at a very young age because most of the families make their sons responsible for guarding their sisters, even if they are their elders. According to Sohail Warraich, 'men have effectively been given authority to monitor women's movements and to kill them if they defied the social 'order' (Warraich 2005: 83). Because of this approach women are killed for their actual or perceived immoral behaviour. For example, Dawood has stated that 'a young girl expressed in her interview that her 'father was watching [them] all the time' (cited from Amnesty 1999: 8) to keep an eye on their behaviour. Men play the role of a detective to keep a strict eye on their women's social movements, especially women's bodies and their sexual behaviour.

Apart from woman's behaviour there are many other reasons which can lead men towards killing. It is believed that honour killing is not just a matter of sexuality (virginity and chastity); many other reasons such as suspicions, family feuds, political or familial revenge, compensation or greed for money can also lead to it. For example, a man killed his 70 year old mother blaming her as a '*kari*'<sup>56</sup> and obtained Rs. 20, 000 (about £ 138) from the man who was declared as *karo*<sup>57</sup>. Sometimes honour practices take away all the wealth from families (who have been accused by the victims' side) to allow a man to commit the crime. In some parts of Pakistan poverty is considered the main reason for the crime but the murderer claims to have done it in the name of so-called honour killings. Killing a three-year old girl or an eighty-five year old woman (Covasjee 2003) is not difficult because Pakistani society mainly supports men on the grounds of the honour ethos. Nevertheless, the situation is understandable concerning the nature of crime but similarly it is complex and traumatic

---

<sup>54</sup> The terms *karo* (black man) and *kari* (black woman) are used as both nouns and adjectives, and the phrase *karo kari* is now employed as a general term, or as a compound noun for 'honour killings'. The linguistic change is recent. 'Black' here suggests a lack of morality, not kin colour or other racial category. (Shah, 2011:1)

<sup>55</sup> Zubeida Mustafa ([www.dawn.com/2004/09/29/op.htm](http://www.dawn.com/2004/09/29/op.htm)). Accessed in November, 2008

<sup>56</sup> Betrayal by a woman

<sup>57</sup> Betrayal by a man

because the victims include both senior and minor females. Sometimes men are also killed for being a *karo* but almost always as young men, aged more than 16 years but not too old.

As mentioned earlier, Pakistan is under the powerful influence of patriarchal culture. Tribal and feudal practices follow their rigid norms ritualistically. Some clans have old disputes which run for ever with other clans and *biraderies*. To take revenge for an old dispute the clan mostly involves young male members. In fact, the elders teach the young men how to perform this task. Honour killing is an easy way to take personal or family revenge. In this situation, for example, if a person has killed someone, he would instantly kill his own woman (the woman of the murderer who can be sister, mother, daughter, wife or sister-in-law), who would be easily accessible to him. He would then report to the police that they (the murdered) were both adulterous. In this way the murderer's male family members will support him to save his life.

An honour culture can possess many 'cultures of honour' (Gill 2004: 475) through which a clan shows its status and power to other clans or *biradaries*. However honour can be acquired from a high status, and status always comes through power, wealth and women's sexual behaviour. Therefore, a woman is a property or a commodity in honour culture that is controlled in diverse ways. It cannot be ignored that the role of marriage settlements plays an essential part in the transaction of wealth and male power. Most of the marriages arranged by the families, particularly male members, are a means to increase family wealth by exchanging women with land or animals. Shah terms it as a 'market transaction' (Shah 1998). Women are exchanged for dowry, money, land, compensation and even blood money. Forced marriages are the worst form of that transaction. While it tends to be considered as a cultural practice rather than an offensive act, in reality it almost always turns out to be a tradition of crime. A woman can be killed if she refuses to get married to an old man. In many cases of honour killings monetary motivation can be one of the main causes of the crime. Through marriage settlements which work in patriarchal structured societies, parents/family members exchange their young girls for various reasons: sometimes to receive wealth (land, animal, gold or money) and most often to practise their authority to decide for them. Consequently, young girls facing the complications of forced marriages either run away, commit suicide or live their whole lives with the abusive family.

One major factor in the enforcement of honour is the fact that the state law is in the hands of tribal lords, who run their tribal councils and offer huge bribes to the police and the representatives of the justice system to favour the culprit. According to Jalbani (November,

2004) ‘police stations in Jacobabad (in Pakistan) for example, are considered to be gold mines in police circles, because of the high incidence of honour killings’<sup>58</sup>. For each killing officers take around £80-100 as bribe for not reporting the case’ (Ali 2001: 29). Therefore ‘honour killing is one of the serious issues discussed and planned inside this circle’ (Begikhani 2005: 219). Moreover, honour killings continue to be regarded more as custom rather than crime.

The concern of this research is to understand how patriarchal societies leave the men free to act according to their objectives and exercise their manly powers. Far from being incidental, the crime of honour killing is part of a patriarchal structure which in turn is part of a wide-ranging system in Pakistan. Uma Chakravarti has observed in her studies that ‘where the father, the family, the community, and even the state could use different degrees of violence against women’, no line could be drawn between the meanings of ‘law and morality’ (Chakravarti 2005: 311).

In the 1979 regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, some new patriarchal/Islamic laws were introduced and were imposed by some so-called preachers and fundamentalists. These laws led to the violation of human rights. Some laws were changed to make women’s lives more miserable and backward. For instance, they recommended reducing the minimum age of marriage for girls from 16 years to puberty; in another article they suggested compulsory use of the veil for women including limiting women’s participation in political and public life. The women who were the first to react and resist those Islamic laws were tortured and abused. (Khawar and Shahed 1997: 99).

Following the murder of Samia Sarwar<sup>59</sup> on 6th April 1999, which was described as being a deeply traumatic event, honour killing in Pakistan was publicized and received huge attention from both the national and international media for the first time ever.

Everywhere the media, academics and feminist activists highlighted this case because of its interesting features. Because of these pressure groups, for the first time in the Pakistani media a debate ensued to discuss *shari’a* law and the role of the traditional jury. Religious bodies and women’s organizations discussed the issue of honour killing and questioned it with reference to family honour and prestige.

---

<sup>58</sup> Jalbani is a local Sindhi Newsreproter of the *Ibrat* Sindhi newspaper, personal reading.

<sup>59</sup> She persisted to seek a divorce from her abusive husband but her parents felt their honour defiled by her disobedience.

## 2.4 The Lives of Women in Pakistan

The present research is based on British-Pakistani women living in Watford, United Kingdom. Therefore, it is important to highlight the life of women in their original country to understand the cultural barriers and honour beliefs that they brought with them to their diaspora setting. Although very little historical research is available on female children or womanhood in the context of Pakistan. This chapter will endeavour to investigate how Pakistani women are being domesticated, disciplined, confined, controlled or killed whenever they transgress the family boundaries.

South Asian Muslim norms have historically placed extensive restrictions on women's actions. The idealized woman stays at home, serves the men in her family, raises children, and leaves any and all involvement with outside men. She neither physically intrudes into that male domain, nor even symbolically intrudes by inquiring about non-family matters. This *purdah* - the practical as well as figurative curtain separating the everyday worlds of women and men - remains powerful symbolically. Various political figures periodically intimate the need for separate women's bank branches, separate seating areas in buses, and even separate universities. (Weiss 1998: 125)

Shahla Haeri states that 'Pakistan is a fragmented postcolonial nation-state in search of ideological legitimacy and national identity; its identity is superimposed on ancient and ethnically distinct cultures – Punjabi, Pathan, Baluch and Sindhi' (Haeri 2002: 3). Each province is different in Pakistan with geographical and cultural variations. Each possesses its own language and social and cultural values which apparently separate them from each other. Whereas Baluchistan and Pakhtunkhwa are tribal, the other two, Sindh and Punjab, are feudal. People share their customs frequently in several ways and migrate constantly within the borders of the provinces due to family/tribal disputes and for geographical and economic reasons.

Pakistan is an agricultural country where a massive population lives in the countryside depending on river and rain water; the majority of the rural populations live where they find water for irrigation to cultivate the land and survive. Most of the people live in isolated and hostile locales in different patriarchal pockets especially in tribal areas. The life of people is hard in general but especially for women. There is no question of women's individual standing; women live under male domination with a number of domestic responsibilities. They particularly face many customary burdens - physical, emotional and sexual - in the form



of cultural norms. Therefore, women live in constant fear regarding their responsibility to satisfy family and customary rules.

In particular in tribal areas women are almost invisible and strictly governed by a rigid code of honour consisting of tribal beliefs and patterns of behaviour (Mumtaz and Shahed 1987: 21), in which *zan*, *zar* and *zamin* (woman, gold and land) are closely linked to the perception of a man's honour (Amnesty 1999: 11). The report argues that such elements determine the standing position of men in the community where possession of women is equal to their wealth, which shows the sum total of men's honour value. Men consider women as personal property. This, in fact, is the root cause of all conflicts in that society which never get resolved, especially when men lose all their wealth and land in lifelong family and tribal disputes.

Various similarities can be seen in each province concerning ritual behaviours to constrict women's lives and sexuality through marriage settlements, a deep seated (unwritten) honour ethos and unfair use of religious ethics. According to Shahla Haeri, 'Islam has become so intertwined with national culture that people often fail to distinguish between what is merely social custom' (Haeri 2002). The majority of people do not understand the ambiguity of honour culture within the Islamic framework. Islamic fundamentalists' misinterpretations of the sources support patriarchal power. Men generally take advantage of religion to justify various customary practices such as the practice of early marriages, the veil and women's education.

The fundamentalist *mullas*<sup>60</sup> preach these three principles vocally to subjugate women in society. Generally, women's disempowerment starts from the practice of the veil which limits their interaction with the outside world in general and with men in particular. So 'traditionally, a girl was placed into seclusion before the onset of puberty' (Weiss 1998: 128). Men largely influenced by religious teaching argue that the practice of the veil is a religious custom; therefore, women must observe *pardah* (veil). As respectable families have to be different from the modern families, the practice of the veil separates them from the latter who are supposed to be progressive or educated families.

Most girls from the early age of eight or nine are made to follow the cultural practice of *pardah*. '[F]or the most part, this powerful ideology of seclusion begins to strictly define the parameters of girls' access to geographical spaces even before puberty' (Halvorson 2005:

---

<sup>60</sup> Islamic religious leaders

23). The girls find it very difficult to wear *burqa* as they can hardly manage the long cloak and its accompanying paraphernalia. Some of them avoid going outside the house because of the sense of shame which they feel in covering their bodies in a rather tedious way.

It is also a challenging task for a mother to prepare her daughter for her marriage, grabbing her from play mates to a bed mate. It is a very emotional process for her as in most cases her own age is only hardly between 20-25 years. However she learns such skills through her personal experience and general observation. Mothers are alerted when their daughters reach the age of 7-9 years. Girlhood to puberty is a very challenging period (physically, emotionally and ideologically) for both mothers and daughters. During this time, girls are expected to change their role abruptly from that of a child to that of an adult. In this regard girls are being forced emotionally and criticized verbally, for example 'stop going outside and playing childish games, you are a grown up now' and 'do what you are told' etc... It is a common practice that a girl at the age of 8-9 years is suddenly told by her father that she can no longer play out of her house with other girls. No wonder such girls 'only observe social life on the street from the roof of [their] home' (Weiss 1998:128).

Moreover, rigid restrictions are imposed by their mothers regarding their body, which confuses them. They do not understand why their mothers and elders are alerting them about their activities and physical movements. Such treatment demonstrates 'how girls' lives are defined by the specific contexts of livelihood, gender relations, and visions of girls' place in rural [mountain] society' (Halvorson 2005: 21). It has also been heard that some mothers try to give their daughter less food so that they may not grow fast. They even hide their chest with a *duppatta*<sup>61</sup> (scarf). In order to restrict their growth, some mothers advise their growing girls to rub their chests with a metal pot, which is extremely painful. They never understand why their mothers ask them to do such things. Mothers in rural areas reveal that it is painful for them to see their daughters growing fast because they know that living within the four walls is a painful experience. They actually want their daughters to see the outside world as much as they can. Sarah J Halvorson has described this in the following terms: '[T]ention surrounding the meaning and practice of *pardah* has intensified both within the household and the community scales, placing heightened social pressure on some women and girls to stay within the *char diwar* (four walls)' (Halvorson 2005: 38).

---

<sup>61</sup> Cloth about 7-9 feet large to cover the head and upper part of a woman's body.

Anita Weiss has noticed in her research on the urban area of Lahore a clear interlinking of patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal aspects of societal rules among people. She observes that women spend the bulk of their lives within their home, they rarely go out and hardly meet with strangers; they only interact with their close male members. Women are more engaged in cleaning their houses, cooking food, producing obedient children and maintaining their social relationships according to their customs, although they have full control to deal with daily household expenditures, including decision making of major purchases. Men are not supposed to meet their close friend's female members of the family (friend's wife or his sisters). According to the social and religious values, men make preferences about family matters, e.g. whether they should send their daughters to school or not. Some educate their daughters, some do not; similarly some make them wear the veil and some do not. Although cousin marriages are a preferred norm to follow, Weiss finds that men have 'absolute control over women's actions and mobility, because women are considered the repository of their family's respectability. Male elders overlook minor transgressions of social norms committed by boys; the same minor transgressions are absolutely forbidden for girls' (Weiss 1998: 126).

In terms of marriage settlement in the context of Lahore, she says that while men and women both rely on their families to settle their marriage, a man may suggest his choice to his family but it seems impossible for a girl to suggest a potential husband to her parents (Weiss 1998: 128). Hence, an inequitable dichotomy can be noticed in relation to the man/woman distribution of rights.

Additionally, Mumtaz and Shaheed have observed that 'the majority of Pakistani women belong to the silent and unmentioned peasantry in the rural areas and the working class in the industrial centres,' (Mumtaz and Shahed 1987: 23) because they are treated as slaves whose society only needs their cheap labour. Pakistani society is an unbalanced and collapsed society in terms of social and gender injustice. They have further noticed that 'most Pakistani women are severely anaemic, and it is very common [for women] to look twice the age of their husbands' (Mumtaz and Shahed 1987: 29).

#### **2.4.1 Women's Access to Education in Pakistani Society**

In Sindh and Punjab most of women's lives are influenced by the feudal system strictly controlled by familial, religious and patriarchal norms. The practice of the veil is the main

social obligation and consequently most of the women observe it. This practice discourages girls' education and encourages their early marriages. Many families discourage their girls from continuing their education and actively impose marriage customs on them. People argue that they do not support higher education for women because they believe that honourable families can take responsibility (for feeding and protecting) their women. Besides, they claim that higher education is not good for their women because if they are not allowed to work then there is no point in educating them. These communities explicitly show their concern that if women get higher education then they will demand to be free of observing *pardah*. *Purdah* become more important for the protection of the family's pride and honour. Thus women's education is less important than their family's honour.

The *mullah* factor dominates the country in imposing religious obligations in all sectors of society as the *mullahs* receive special treatment from the state. It can serve to oppress or liberate, to comfort or destroy. In Pakistan religion is an extremely powerful phenomenon in oppressing the people and creating tensions among them. Haeri notices in her research that, 'retrogressive *Mullahs* do not like to see women educated and progressive,' (Haeri 2002: 160) while their fundamental approach is to create obstruction in the daily lives of women. For example, a great number of women die due to lack of female health staff, midwives, etc. The problem is very complicated: on the one hand women are being discouraged from their education or their work in public sectors such as hospitals, and on the other due to the honour ethos they are dying because of insufficient female medical staff. Observing *pardah* is a great instrument in ignoring the females and discouraging them from education by their families and state. The state is a great supporter of the ideology of feudal and religious fundamentalists who actually run the country from behind the scene.

In the cities, women can be highly qualified and confident professionals but even then they are treated as being inferior to their male colleagues. They are usually undermined, harassed and ignored in many ways in their work place. This form of oppression has been noticed frequently. Only a few jobs have been left for them which are highly restricted and segregated. It is a myth or a fear about professional educational institutes that they basically work as 'marriage institutions'. Women who get higher studies often marry men of their choice, which poses a great challenge for their family especially if family intend to marry them into their extended families. Parents guard their daughters in different ways and threaten to discontinue their education and confine them in the home for wanting to marry a man of their choice (Amnesty 1999).

### 2.4.2 Marriage System in Pakistan

As people mostly have a customary way of life, they are unable to get the right solution for their problems. They constantly face economic and social crises. In this situation women are seen mainly as a liability and a social burden (Nadar 2000: 23) in society, they 'bear the multiple burden of being violated physically, shamed culturally, and dishonoured publicly' (Haeri 2002: 163) and being treated as second class citizens. Apart from the general concern of the family and the community, the attitude towards women as inferior beings is visible from the birth of a girl, which is greeted with guilt or despair on the part of the mother, and shame or anger on the part of the father. Therefore, discrimination against women starts right from birth. The young girl grows up with the feeling of being a 'visitor', guest or *amanat* in her parents' home and lives with fear and guilt, as her family believes that one day she will have to leave and that she may face even worse conditions at her in-laws' (Mumtaz and Shahed 1987: 23), so it is justified to rear her in hard conditions. Many girls in rural and tribal areas hardly spend their childhood with their parents because in many cases in such communities they have to get married at puberty and in some cases even before that age. They face huge ambiguities in sexual relationships beside other complications in their new households.

In Pakistan marital relationships are settled in diverse ways: almost all marriages are considered arranged marriages and arranged marriages are considered 'honour marriages' because of the involvement, arrangement and finally the decision of the family elders of both sides. Men claim at a marriage decision that they are offering their *izzat* in the form of their daughter to a son of another family. This indicates that she should be guarded at her in-laws at the same level. They literally shift the guardianship of honour from father to father-in-law.

It has been argued that arranged marriages work very well because such marriages are being continued with the constant support, interference and involvement of both families but in some cases they are continued through with force and fear of stigma. In arranged marriages most of the women accept the marriage decisions of their families and being good women they keep silent as they have been trained to act in this way. It has been noticed, however, that men hardly ever want to accept their family's decision about their (arranged) marriages but keep silent due to family obligations. After their marriages they instruct their families not to interfere in their lives. Therefore, 'a large number of men (in Pakistan) spend their lives outside on the streets, going home only to sleep' (Haeri 2002: 99). Further, Haeri states that

'they (men) are also forced to marry women they do not like, and so they go to prostitutes' (Haeri 2002: 99). In rural and tribal areas there is rarely any chance for prostitution so the men try to continue to find other ways to satisfy their sexual impulses, although it is hard for them to find a woman of their choice because of the closed communities. This shows a great failure of the arranged marriage system as the couples realise that it is not their choice but instead they are made to follow their parents' choice.

Mumtaz and Shaheed argue that in Pakistan a 'woman has no say in many aspects of her life including her own marriage and, once betrothed, belongs exclusively to her husband's family' (Mumtaz and Shahed 1987: 21) and her own parents start to treat her differently as if she does not belong to them. In rural areas, 'women are married off at an early age<sup>62</sup> and are often exchanged between families. However, in the tribal areas, 'women are literally 'sold' for a straight 'bride-price'<sup>63</sup> ranging from ten to twenty thousand rupees (£160-130) which the father normally keeps' (Zeenat and Akber 1981: 35); this is where, 'marriage is strongly endogamous and the preferred form is the patrilateral parallel cousins' (Zeenat and Akber 1981: 35). In almost all the regions in the country, marriage is not an individual choice but a collective affair, arranged and imposed by male members (Begikhani 2005: 219). Unfortunately most of the women do not know much about their rights. In collective communities due to lack of education they hardly get a chance to think, talk or even hear about their rights. They depend on what has been provided to them by their community. In this regard Hina Jilani the human right activist in Pakistan says that 'the right to life of women in Pakistan is conditional on their obeying social norms' (Amnesty 1999: 2).

### **2.4.3 Women's Empowerment and Honour Ethos**

In the last few decades social and economical changes have occurred in Pakistani society through women's empowerment. However, young women's lives may be different but are not better than their mothers. The discriminatory rules still exist which work in different forms to control women's lives even though they are economically independent.

---

<sup>62</sup> Child marriage is a practice in which the parents of small children (even infants) arrange future marriage for them. The children are betrothed or promised to each other. Often the two children never even meet each other until the wedding ceremony, when they are both of an acceptable marriageable age, which is determined according to custom. In some cultures, the age is at or even before the onset of puberty. (Wikipedia 2006)

<sup>63</sup> Bride price or bride wealth is an amount of money, goods or property paid to the parents of a woman by the family of a prospective groom for the right to marry her. Traditionally, the prospective husband is expected to give a certain amount before a marriage is agreed. (Wikipedia 2006)

Commentators believe that during Benazir Bhutto's regime<sup>64</sup> women of Pakistan found substantive changes in the system which enhanced their confidence to move forward. For example, one of Anita Weiss's (in her research on the urban area of Lahore) participants holds 'Benazir Bhutto as an important role model for women in Pakistan' (Weiss 1998: 127). Weiss has noticed an enormous rise of confidence in this young lady (a participant of her research) inspired by the way Bhutto's experience is reflected in her life in relation to her revolutionary ideas about her marriage, concept of family and professional life (Weiss 1998: 127).

Such change has happened during the last few decades because of the government's development programmes for the betterment of women's lives. Some technological changes<sup>65</sup> have also helped women in getting waged labour. Therefore, women are now able to support their families and save some money for their dowry. Due to their jobs they have developed an independent approach towards their lives, preferring to wear a loose chador rather than the fitted *burqa* (body veil) which their mothers used to wear.

Anita Weiss has noticed that women's life styles have changed because families now prefer to send their daughters to English schools so that they can get good marriage proposals for them (Weiss 1998: 127). Similarly, research in Gilgit shows that mothers support girls' education because of its importance in family life. Educated women get respect in their in-laws house and also contribute with their income through paid work (Halvorson 2005:35). Education also boosts a woman's psychological need to be valued through her public role. Nevertheless, Weiss and Halvorson believe that the young women are not in a *better* position than their mothers because their mothers did not contribute in terms of income to the family, nor did they work hard to save money for their dowry (Halvorson 2005; Weiss 1998).

Families are now more concerned about their daughters' activities outside the home. They make new rules for them which ensure protection for the family name and reputation. Therefore, such women have to fulfil their job requirements and at the same time they are bound to maintain the family values. Weiss's research explains that 'women today are forced to renegotiate traditional norms, values and power relationships' (Weiss 1998: 127) for the sake of social change.

---

<sup>64</sup> Twice in 1988 & 1992

<sup>65</sup> Such as running water from taps, gas connections for cooking, covered drains for more hygienic conditions and accessible low-cost transport.

Likewise Sarah J Halvorson's research on Gilgit (the Northern part of Pakistan) suggests that women's empowerment creates cultural issues in different ways. For example, women's income is a matter of conflict and concern within a local community as '[S]uch conflicts reflect fears that the loosening of control over girls' and women's bodies and spatial boundaries will result in a moral tarnishing of the family and the community' (Halvorson 2005: 35). Family's ascribed boundaries are created by man's pride and the desire to control women's bodies. However, the mothers in Gilgit prefer having daughters rather than sons because daughters are helpful both in carrying out traditionally ascribed tasks and in bringing in income through their jobs, although the mothers know that girls spend a 'triple day'<sup>66</sup> which is hard for them to live (Halvorson 2005).

## 2.5 Summary

Cultural and familial patriarchy possesses full authority to formulate rules for domination in societies. Pakistani society is a patriarchal and honour based one that possesses gender discriminatory values: honour for man and shame for woman. Women's chastity provides honour through the practice of the veil or *purdah* (body veil) which segregates them from public life. Due to the honour ethos men possess prestige and high position in the community. It is not only because of wealth or land but it comes mainly through women's conformity. Women's sexuality is considered as a commodity value which can be used materially and symbolically through the marriage system.

Most Pakistani women live a hard life due to customary pressure, religious obligations, and the state violation of their human rights which when combined they subjugate them in their social position. For example, rural women are seen as a liability and a social burden and spend most of their lives inside four walls. Some young women are involved in the workforce but are highly under family surveillance to maintain the honour ethos. Pakistani women are forced to negotiate cultural norms but there is still a long way to go.

---

<sup>66</sup> With school in the morning, farm and household labour in the afternoon and evening, and home work at some point during the evening (or not at all) Halvorson (2005:32).



## Chapter Three

### Pakistanis Living in Britain

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin by tracing the historical background of the migration and immigration of Pakistanis to Britain. It will explore the ways Pakistanis initially arrived, developed and reconstructed their cultural norms. Further, it will investigate the transplantation of immigrant socio-economic and religio-cultural dynamics (respect, modesty, class, caste, sects and *biraderi*) in ethnic communities. It will also discuss the practices of such dynamics and their impact on the British born Pakistanis, specifically, on women.

#### 3.2 The Migration Process

Many scholars suggest that diasporas are complicated (Cressey 2006: 1; Werbner 2002). They face considerable pressure both from inside and outside their communities to establish new identities. The process is always challenging and intimidating. The Pakistani immigration process I seek to explore started from early 1950s and 1960s. There were two main triggering factors for migration: i) The construction of the *Mangla* dam in Pakistan resulted in the displacement of thousands of inhabitants who had lost their homes; ii) World War II, which caused an acute shortage of labour in Great Britain. Pakistanis were encouraged to come as cheap labour through British employment agencies.

Pakistani migrants were mostly from the rural areas of the Punjab, the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Azad Kashmir regions (map, see appendix) which already had a distinctive tradition of migration (Anwar 1979; Modood et al. 1994; Shaw 1994). Most of the British Pakistani communities living in Britain came from two parts of Pakistan: Mirpur and Punjab. People of Punjabi (mixed urban and rural) and Mirpuri origins now call themselves *Kashmiri*<sup>67</sup> (mainly rural). Both groups originate from contrasting urban and rural backgrounds. The Kashmiri population is larger than the Punjabi population which is said to comprise 60 percent of the Pakistani population (Abbas 2011: 19). At present, they are based in the United Kingdom and are settled mostly in Birmingham, Bradford, Oldham, London and surrounding towns (Werbner 2002: 477). Their social, economic and cultural conditions vary within each group. *Punjabis* were originally cultivators, some of them having their own lands. The other group, *Kashmiris* were mostly peasants. Kashmiri they were socially and

---

<sup>67</sup> Mirpuri, later they were known Kashmiri (Werbner, 2002)

economically very unstable. They lived in acute poverty and were less educated and skilled than the Punjabis. Therefore, they suffered from many social and cultural issues, for example, illiteracy and class discrimination. However, they (mainly *Kashmiri*) migrated to Britain in huge numbers. At the very early stage, massive numbers of people emptied several villages<sup>68</sup> at once. Most of them were uneducated and unskilled. A few years later their families (wives and daughters) also joined them. However, Pakistanis brought the whole culture with them when their wives and children arrived (Shaw 1994).

### 3.2.1 Pioneer Pakistanis in Britain

The Pakistani migration process works like a life cycle. It covers all age groups. Kaveri Harris and Alison Shaw have described four phases of migration: Male labour migration, family reunion migration, marriage migration and migration for family care (Harriss and Shaw 2009: 107). The initial migrants from Pakistan were men who settled in industrial sectors: such as the Midlands, Yorkshire, and Birmingham, in order to work and send their earnings to their families and *biraderis*<sup>69</sup> back home (Pakistan). They were deeply steeped in familial and ritual taboos. Initially, they started to develop as a new settler working class with low incomes. Alison Shaw has mentioned that at the earliest stages of migration, they worked hard and most of them worked many hours in double shifts, and that living 'frugally in exceedingly cramped conditions enabled them to maximise their savings' (Shaw 1994: 41).

Verity Saifullah Khan has also described in her seminal work on British Pakistanis that, the very early stage of the migration process was not only concerned with saving and sharing of finances, but also involved uprooting and resettling themselves and other fellow countrymen in another part of the world. It was not easy and was achieved through a strong sense of kinship, male-bonding and the accommodating nature of the *biraderi* system (Khan 1977). Later studies found that Pakistanis were unfamiliar with their basic rights in Britain. Consequently, they have had a very difficult time surviving. They worked and lived in extremely poor conditions; but due to the strong element of assertiveness, determination, and deep faith in the community, which provided them with security, continuity, and stability (Anwar 1979), they managed to cope with many critical and challenging issues, and

---

<sup>68</sup> Small villages surrounding of *Mangla* dam

<sup>69</sup> *Biraderi* (patrilineage, brotherhood, fraternity) means, clan or kinship ties. A universal definition of the term is perhaps almost impossible (Chaudhary, 1999).

eventually settled down. The support of the community and the tolerance of its individuals reinforced this process.

Talking about the Pakistani demography, they (Pakistani) are located mainly in specific areas in Britain, for example: London, Oxford, Bradford, and Birmingham. They are concentrated in localities where the cost of living is low, enabling them to live very frugally in cheap housing, and thus making greater savings and send it back home to their families (Ballard 1994: 9). The reason they migrated in the first place was because they were from a poor background and also they had lost their homes and villages due to the construction of the *Mangla* dam. Therefore, they had settled in the United Kingdom as a compromise based (Azim 2006) on a voucher system.

Furthermore, Mohammad Anwar (Anwar 1979) has found the phenomenon of migration related to the great difference between the rural and urban areas of Pakistan. For example, in Lahore and Islamabad, which are cosmopolitan cities, people were more liberal towards their women, work, marriage and education. On the contrary, in the rural areas like Kotli, Mirpur and Azad Kashmir, people were stricter and less ambitious and preferred marriages into the extended family. Therefore, many people who desired freedom from this rigid system preferred to settle in Britain, where they are now almost into their third generation.

### **3.2.2 The Effects of Migration**

Migration is a social process, Muhammad Anwar points out the similarities between Southern Italian migrants in America and Pakistani migrants in the United Kingdom. Both nationalities show the same loyalty to traditions that link them to their native villages. According to him, the earlier Italians were a strong support for the later arrivals as they facilitated their process of settling down in the new environment. Similarly, early Pakistani migrants did the same for their kinsmen, assisting them in becoming comfortable in their new environment. (Anwar 1979: 214)

However, Pakistani migrants were marginalized to a great extent through institutional hostility and prejudice of the white workers. As the outside world seemed hostile to them they started to depend on kinship relations and their circle of friends. This also encouraged them to become self-employed in order to avoid humiliation. One of the strong 'reason[s] for not participating in British ways was that the Pakistani had learnt from childhood that the

Western ways were bad, to be despised and regarded as a sign of moral failure' (Anwar 1979: 216). They also did not know how long they would be staying in the foreign country. In this state of uncertainty they visited their homes whenever they could. Their main concern was to work, save money, and return to their homeland.

### 3.2.3 Arrival of Pakistani Women in the United Kingdom

Pakistani women and children started to arrive in the United Kingdom during the late 1960s. Why did this occur? Various reasons have been put forward. Azim states that women arrived because of the fear that immigration rules might get stricter and the British authorities might close the doors for further immigration, therefore husbands were pushed into bringing their wives and children (Azim 2006: 25) to join the male family members. Azim further criticised Pakistani *Mirpuri* families for their patriarchal behaviour as the men arrived alone and left their wives back home. She further stressed that if they had not been persuaded by 'the rumours of stricter immigration policy' (Azim 2006: 25). Azim has also analysed this situation by exploring the patriarchal traditions. However, the situation can also be related to the initial hardship men faced at the earlier stages of settlement. Most of the immigrants thought of settling down first (work and find a place to live) and then bring their families.

Alison Shaw's work on the Oxford British Pakistani community comes to different conclusions. She says that the idea behind bringing women and children over was to protect and detach their males from Western culture. The elders of the families became concerned about these men's commitments to their families and, thus, they encouraged the wives and children of the migrants to join them (Shaw 1994: 42).

In the earliest works describing the situation of Pakistani women in Britain women's new lives were found to be more restricted and lonely than they had been in Pakistan (Khan 1977) also Wilson's work on the Pakistani ethnic community demonstrated that women felt isolated and found it hard to cope (Wilson 1978). Saifullah Khan emphasised that in Britain, the women stayed alone inside their homes, which they found smaller, colder, and more cramped than those they had left behind in Pakistan. Furthermore, while in Pakistan, women had been accustomed to the constant companionship of their family members (mothers, sisters and cousins) and had greater freedom of movement in their villages, visiting relatives, collecting firewood or water, etc. (Khan 1977). In Britain the outside world was potentially threatening, especially, because of the presence of so many men who were not related to them

and, therefore, according to Pakistani social norms, were not safe to interact with. Because the women were uneducated and had no understanding of the English language they were also oppressed and controlled by their men. It is a belief that it is men who search for work while women stay at home which encourages the system of segregation. Saifullah Khan also discusses the importation of the custom of *purdah* to the United Kingdom with the arrival of women; she explains that *purdah* is a high status custom and is perceived as enhancing the honour of a household. The migrants' relatively higher income (as compared to their income in Pakistan) meant that the women did not need to work and were able to observe this custom (Khan 1977).

Mohammad Anwar's work also addresses the question of why all these traditions were imported from Pakistan and maintained within the British Pakistani communities: these migrants did not intend to stay and settle in Britain but intended to return to Pakistan. Hence, they thought there is no need to adapt to a new way of life. Indeed, to change would only have meant that it would be more difficult for their families to return to Pakistan. He further describes this intention to return to Pakistan as becoming a 'myth' over time as the migrants' intention was pushed further and further into the future (Anwar 1979).

Saifullah Khan (Khan 1977) also states that families in Britain began bringing brides from Pakistan to marry their sons. She says that the families living in Britain ensure that the brides coming into their homes<sup>70</sup> had been traditionally brought up, and would know the role of a daughter-in-law in the family, and would behave according to traditional cultural norms. Later changes to British immigration law allowed men to emigrate from Pakistan as grooms<sup>71</sup>.

The custom of living in joint families is also widely observed by British Pakistanis. Alison Shaw found in her study of Pakistani families in Oxford that it was widely considered to be shameful for a newly married couple to leave the groom's family home. It was seen as lack of respect and caring on the part of the man for his family, and reflected badly on their *izzat* (honour) (Shaw 2000: 101).

If a bride is from outside the family and the groom decides to leave his parents' home within a short period of his marriage, he may be censured for having fallen under the influence of his wife, which is not considered a good sign, because the groom's family prefers the daughter-in-law live in family home for a while to observe and judge whether she has been brought up according to family values. In the same way, Katharine Charsley has

<sup>70</sup> The custom in South Asia is that the bride moves into the home of the family of the groom.

<sup>71</sup> See for fuller discussion Charsley (2003)

emphasized in her work on the Pakistani community in Scotland that a high rate of first and second parallel and cross cousin exchange marriages still exists (Charsley 2003, 2007). Samad and Eade have found in their studies that ‘honour becomes a clear issue in arranged marriages, and is a subject of future agreement between the male members of the two families, both of which want to uphold cultural norms through the marital transaction’ (Samad and Marriage’ 2002: 36).

N A Azam ’s research on Mirpur Pakistani women pointed out that British Pakistani women underwent virginity testing under the Immigration Act of 1968 (Azim 2006). A harsh immigration Act (1988) and the Entry Clearance guidelines for immigrants in the case of inter-continental marriages made the process of immigration even harder. It has not been easy settling in Britain as Pakistani(s) have had a complex immigration experience, they have been discriminated against, ignored, and faced huge levels of racism (Anwar 1979; Ballard 1982). Despite this recent research on the Bradford British Pakistanis, the Mirpur community suggests that there have been a lot of changes happening within this community, especially, in girls’ education and their professional employment (Azim 2006).

### 3.3 The Dynamics of Migration

Pakistanis in Britain brought with them their values and customs which underwent modification in order to serve the interest of the immigrants adjusting to a new environment; they were unprepared for the changed cultural environment, and young people, especially women, have real problems trying to cope with the two cultures (Anwar 1979). Gill Cressey argues that Pakistani culture and British culture are poles apart in terms of the practice of individualism and collectivism. (Cressey 2006: 2-3)

Pakistani migrants arrived with their strict beliefs; some were culturally strict and some were stricter in their religious beliefs; (Werbner 2002) nevertheless they shared a collective interest in supporting and strengthening their extended families and the *biraderi*<sup>72</sup> system. However, the process of ‘chain migration’ (Anwar 1979) is the outcome of that ideology. Pakistanis appreciate the culture of ‘liv[ing] together’(Modood et al. 1994: 31), make collective decisions and pool their capital to enhance the *biraderi*’s power symbolically and materially. *Biraderi* (communal, familial and caste based system) is dependent on close

---

<sup>72</sup> Relatives, patrilineage

and extended families (relatives). They rely on each other in many ways: during times of hardship, at funerals, as well as on happy occasions such as marriages.

### **3.3.1 They Can Never Return Home**

The initial intention of Pakistanis was to earn money and then return home. But it never happened and became a ‘myth of return’ (Anwar 1979). The ‘myth of return’ is, in fact, the root cause of displacement for people who have never found themselves at home in Britain. Facts show that Pakistanis are behind in many sectors; educational and professional levels are below standard and in terms of social stability, they are not improving with time. This research raises some questions: why did Pakistani immigrants not go back after having saved some money? Was it only wealth they needed? Why did they not ‘attempt to understand who they are as moral human beings living outside their native land?’ (Werbner 2002: 7). Why did they not achieve educational, social, and professional success? Why was it impossible for them to return permanently? Although a few made attempts to move their families back permanently, they were mostly unsuccessful. My small sample suggests that some of them moved their families (British born children along with their uneducated and unemployed mothers) back home, while they (the male members) planned to work in England. This resulted in fragmented families with children left in the care of the mother in the homeland. It has been a difficult experience converting the ‘myth of return’ into reality.

A few years after they (the pioneer generation’s) settled with families and children, some parents attempted to send their British born children back home to undergo an Islamic upbringing. The families adopting such measures had mostly female children. It clearly shows that parents wanted to keep their daughters away from Western culture.

In fact, Pakistanis migrated to the United Kingdom for economic reasons. There was the financial attraction on the one hand and the cultural attraction on the other (Cressey 2006). It was difficult for them to manage two lives at the same time. Due to hectic workloads, they had very little time to spend with their children and often they did not know the English language well enough to interact with the community and their children. Only a few among the pioneer generation had the capabilities to work out new strategies and implement decisions required for the betterment of the coming generation. The development of a healthy community requires the ability to make necessary arrangements and devise strategies for adapting to social change. On the other hand, the British born children are caught between their parents’ culture and Western culture. It is a reality that migrants live side by side with

two cultures and while some of them adapt some struggle to adapt. The young British born Pakistanis are on the one hand struggling to adapt to new ways of life and on the other to please their parents.

### 3.2.2 What have they brought with them?

Beliefs and values revolving around people's lives can be both fixed and fluid. It is not easy to extract fixed cultural values from people's lives no matter where they may live. Changing geographical boundaries does not mean changing symbolic boundaries. Symbolic cultural values take more time and effort to re-locate and re-construct. Nevertheless, culture is a constant process: changeable, transferable and negotiable.

The components of the culture Pakistanis brought from home are very significant. They define many hidden and complex issues. Many people believe that the Pakistani culture comprises *shalwar kameez*, (Pakistani dress), *daal chawal* (rice and pulse curry), respect of elders, modesty, joint family setup and arranged marriages. It is the case that 'the term Pakistani is problematic' (Cressey 2006: 1). Pakistanis 'bear complex identities both as Muslims and South Asians' (Werbner 2002: 478). These multi-layered identities surface in their cultural values and their perception of conventions. What are these values? Are they merely defined by *shalwar kameez* and *daal chawal*? It is not easy to define them. Issues like women's modesty and respect of elders signify many complexities within religious and socio-cultural settings.

Why do Pakistanis appreciate collective constructions rather than self-construction? Scholarly works on Pakistani communities show that they have more concern about their extended families and *biraderi* rather than their own lives in and the lives of their children. Pakistanis worry about their children's lives in order to marriage settlements but their understanding of their children's life choices are influenced by sect, caste and the *biraderi* system which is ritualistic, barely allowing young British born Pakistanis, particularly, young women to construct their own individual lives. Nevertheless, most recent studies illustrate that the young generation especially, of women is ready to negotiate for social change. It views the caste and *biraderi* system as failing to provide it with space to develop personal choices.



### 3.2.3 Caste, Class, Sect and *Biraderi* System

Pnina Werbner points out in her seminal work on the Pakistani community in Manchester, that culture is transplanted into the United Kingdom mainly through a crucial transition of 'moral and cultural' settings through caste, *biraderi* and sect system. (Werbner 1990: 151). The practices of such systems are maintained through transnational marriage which is meant to strengthen extended families and communities. These marriages are expected to create original ties between two groups to strengthen them socially and economically.

Caste constitutes a class system (upper and lower): *Sayyads* (pure) who consider themselves descendants of the Prophet and are regarded as *Ashraf* (noble); then there is the *zamidar* (land cultivator) and servant class/*zat*. The caste system determines people's social and cultural positions in the community: for example some castes: *Mughal*, *Rajput*, *Qureshi*, *Pathan* (rulers/conquerors); *Sheikh* (traders); *Jut* (cultivators); *Gujer* (herders); *Arain* (vegetable growers); *Kashmiri* are indeterminate, and after that come the skilled artisans and the service caste. The *biraderi* system constitutes *zat*<sup>73</sup> hierarchies 'jati and biraderi' (Ballard 1994: 4) which consist with three major categories: faith-sect orientated (religious, moral and ethical) which are mostly symbolical, abstract and complicated and are practiced through spiritual power (God, Prophets, *pir*<sup>74</sup>); blood-line (seed) orientated, exercised by marital and familial institutions; and the caste-class orientated, constituting of issues such as religious belief, socio-cultural and economic strength, patriarchal power, gender and class discrimination.

Such strong and deep rooted issues are reinforced among the young British born generation with the collaboration and coalition of parental, familial and communal forces where 'culture is considered as being more restrictive than Islam' (Din 2006: 108). For example, when families visit and interact with each other they (the males of the pioneer generation) are inclined in some cases to be strict on segregating their women because it is believed that 'purdha is a system of expressing male and family status' (Werbner 1990: 127). According to this culture, female seclusion and veiling are the required norm within Islamic society. The earlier works of (Anwar 1979; Ballard 1994; Khan 1977) have elaborated upon such cultural practices.

---

<sup>73</sup> Translated throughout North India as 'Caste'

<sup>74</sup> Saint, spiritual guide

Caste hierarchy works under the umbrella of the *biraderi* system. People's loyalties (moral, material and spiritual) make a great contribution in enhancing *biraderi's* repute by including many other groups, even though they may not follow the same caste or sect. People support each other in different events, Islamic or cultural. Literally, each caste constituted its own *biraderi*. Therefore people have been divided into many groups. There is competition between the groups and each has its own rules and hierarchical order. Ikhlaq Din states that it is not only one *biraderi* which exclusively exists but underneath it 'there are many biraderis and sub-biraderis. Each biraderi and sub-biraderi has its own norms, values and tradition. The larger *biraderis* can comprise of five hundred families whereas other can be much smaller, say fifty families. There are also many sects, sub-sects castes and sub-caste that add to the overall complex picture' (Din 2006:110).

In the *biraderi* system the element of rivalry and desire to show off is common. In the event of a marriage or funeral, many people or groups are invited, and huge amounts of money are spent on the occasion to impress, or, sometimes challenge peers or other groups. The idea behind this is that other people will thus be able to judge the collective strength of the *biraderi* of a family and its level of honour. People sometimes share their sympathies in funeral gatherings and demonstrate their unity. They share their time, energy and wealth, and get moral and emotional support. Sometimes such occasions can be instrumental in forming new relations because most of the time people (senior ladies) go to such events with the intention of evaluating the status of other families in order to find a suitable marriage partner for their daughters or sons.

Members of the upper caste avoid marrying their children into the lower caste. There is a huge gap and a racist element between the two groups: for example, *Sunni* and *Shia* have some faith reservations, *Rajputs* would not like to marry their children into the *Aryan*; and *Chowdhry* will avoid marrying their daughters into the *Mughal* caste. Parents are very conscious about younger generation's marriage choices. They are deeply concerned if their children select their marriage partner from a different caste or sect. It is viewed as creating a great problem between two groups (parents and children), and therefore they negotiate. Sometimes parents force children to marry into their extended families. Endogamous marriages are more popular in the Pakistani communities because they believe such marriages are allowed in Islam though some contemporary studies show that this practice is declining in the United Kingdom.

Frequent visits are unavoidable within a *biraderi*. People come and go most of the time without prior notice. Senior ladies will walk daily to their children's homes and those of their relatives, to share their day-to-day experiences (United Kingdom and Pakistan). They are the main source of daily information about family matters and spend a lot of time talking about the young people's lives. This proves very hard, however, for the young British born children who experience the constant surveillance of their relatives and lack of privacy while their parents, seem to be very worried about the *biraderi* and the accusation that they are not able to control their children (Bhatti 1999; Din 2006).

### 3.3.4 Building Ties with Origins

Transnational migration is a complex, symbolic and sensitive process. It is an emotional journey in the course of which a new identity is developed and new challenges are encountered. Therefore, elders keep an eye on younger generations in order not to lose them. The process of developing new identities in a new context needs great understanding and negotiation between groups. It not only implies crossing geographical boundaries, but also cultural transitions, which means re-building and re-defining cultural values in the new setting; and this new undefined area creates great uncertainties and fears. Building ties with extended families back home is the bottom line of Pakistani communities. They build such ties through remittances, exchange of gifts and transnational marriages among extended families, which is the main cause of chain migration (Bolognani 2007: 61; Werbner 1990).

Pakistanis came to the United Kingdom to enhance their economical position. Likewise in France, thousands of *Maghrebi* migrants arrived as military soldiers or workers at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia for their self-development and worked for financial stability. Simultaneously, they maintained long-lasting ties with their original communities to maintain the family solidarity. Harammi and Mouna suggested in their research that 'these ties consists of remittances sent in the frame of familial solidarity'<sup>75</sup> (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 259). Similarly many scholars suggest (Anwar 1979; Ballard 1994; Shaw 2000) that Pakistani migrants manage their family ties through remittances.

It is considered that migration is a self-construction process which deals with many complex dynamics, negotiation, and re-appropriation. Pakistanis are disposed more towards

<sup>75</sup> *Maghreb* migrants are ranked fourth and Pakistanis are ranked first (Behind India) in the world in terms of financial transfer, according to the World Bank report in 2002 (Khachani 2004:181,cited in Harrami and Mouna , 2010:259 ).

collective construction through *biraderi* loyalties. It has been widely noticed that Pakistanis support the migration of their extended families to the United Kingdom, in order to maintain their original ties, and enhance their *biraderi* by accumulating man power. Pnina Werbner has mentioned that 800 Pakistani community members represent the same *biraderi* in Manchester (Werbner 1990). It shows how they have built the strength of their *biraderi* over time.

The support system<sup>76</sup> has been influenced by Islamic teaching and the *biraderi* system. According to Muslim philosophy, poor people should be supported by their more prosperous fellow members. The *biraderi* system follows the same rule, but with different techniques and interests. Most Pakistanis offer such support to their extended families for enhancement, in order to flourish, and to compete with other *biraderis* in the United Kingdom.

### 3.3.5 Preserving Culture as an Identity

It was extremely difficult for migrants to practise their cultural norms, for example: *pardah*, respect and the honour ethos in the new environment. There are fundamental differences between the two cultures: ‘the British culture is high on individualism, and the Pakistani culture is high on collectivism’ (Cressey 2006: 2-3). Pakistanis arrived with the idea of collectivism and believed in caring for their kinsmen, and in *pardha*, and in the honour ethos manifested through a collective ideology determined by sect, caste, and the *biraderi* system. Gill Cressey has noticed in her work on Pakistani Kashmiri communities in Birmingham that ‘there is a constant tension in their lives caused by the attraction of individualism promoted as a value in ‘the west’ and the attractions of the collectivism, promoted as a value in their extended family’ (Cressey 2006: 149). Therefore, a Pakistani man does not only have to worry about his close family (wife and children), but he has to think about his extended family. He is the main source of financial security for his immediate family and his extended family, which he has left behind. According to the cultural and Islamic philosophy, he is supposed to help his parents as well as close relatives, siblings, and the extended family members: aunts, uncles and cousins, poor village fellows, the disabled, and widows. Also, Islamic teachings and the *biraderi* system emphasise supporting of needy

---

<sup>76</sup> When Pakistanis settled in the UK, they realized that they were financially better able to support other poor relatives and *biraderi* members as such opportunities did not exist in Pakistan.

people in the community as essential not only financially, but also morally, emotionally and culturally. Doing so would enhance one's image in the community. '[T]he biradieri's collective efforts to manage the boundaries of their group with the wider Pakistani/Mirpuri community in their locality are about honour and ultimately about the acceptance of status of the biraderi in relation to other biraderi' (Cressey 2006: 151).

Cultural upbringing teaches a man from an early age that he will eventually become the head of the household, and will be called upon to be an honourable member of the community. Therefore, it is crucial to set his position as the *man* of the house and the *biraderi*. Status in the community does not only come through wealth and power, but through the modesty of his women: daughters, granddaughters and wife. Therefore, he has to guard his women and marry his daughters into the extended family to increase his power and wealth, and to enhance his status in the community. He constantly reminds his daughters to be careful outside the home and mind 'What people will say' (Cressey 2006: 145).

In further Gill Cressey also expressed, '[I]zzat is still a strong concern of young people's life stories. People put a lot of energy into defending their own honour, their family's honour, and the honour of their community. There is still a gender pattern evident in the defence of honour which is vested in the lifestyle and choices of young women. Young men guard their sisters' reputations, and protect them from unwelcome 'predators'; some they feel justified in being quite controlling of their sisters; others, who are more authoritarian and illiberal than their fathers often will keep their sisters under covert surveillance' (Cressey 2006: 155-56).

### **3.3.6 Cultural Calcification**

Migrants frequently talk about their relatives with their children which affects their social and communal lives. It is a constant reinforcement process of collective interest, intended particularly for their children for the sake of cultural transmission.

Pakistanis have become more rigid in the West. They do not want to lose their ethnic and cultural identity; therefore, they strictly prohibit their youngsters from engaging in Western practices. Tariq Modood and his co-authors have found that where there is a higher incidence of other ethnic groups, there is a greater chance of interaction with other ethnic communities (Modood et al. 1994:70). Consequently, Pakistani parents become more conscious about their children's interaction with other people. Similarly, Gazalla Bhatti

(Bhatti 1999) has found in her work that parents are stricter with their children's social activities, especially with young daughters. They are concerned about their ethnic identity because they do not want to lose their cultural identity by intermingling with other cultures. South Asians are more inclined to marry within the same caste. This is not only true for Pakistani ethnic group, but also in other religions and ethnicities. For example in the Sikh religion, the *jat* caste only marries into the same group (Modood et al. 1994: 73).

Similarly in Pakistan, *Shah* and *Rajput* marry into the same caste. In most cases family constraints come first. Pakistani communities are divided into different pockets (caste groups); one group treats the other differently. They have symbolic identities which they prove in their own way.

Parents play different roles in retaining the family traditions and passing them on to their children. Fathers are keener to preserve home values, while mothers are more concerned with day to day life issues, such as the modesty of their daughters, the cultural and Islamic values of the family. Parents generally tend to send girls to girls-only schools at secondary level. They also send girls to those schools where they are allowed to wear the *shalwar kameez*. In secondary schools, there are greater opportunities for friendships and parties for teenagers, which are perceived negatively among families. It is the same process which Harrami and Mouna have noticed among Maghrebi migrants. It is not only the socio-economic situation which is important, but the cultural imperative means keeping the communities alive in terms of both the 'here and there' (Harrami and Mouna 2010). It seems that every family aspires to be called a good and pious family in the community.

Maghreb families representations, women's behavior reveals the values and status of their group. That is why the common opinion is that girls in migrants families must be supervised. They must conform to specific behavioural norms typical of *bnat-s anns* ('girls from good families'). In addition to the absolute prohibition of sex outside of/before marriage, they must avoid any and all behavior that might possibly lead to a violation of this rule [-] or simply interpreted as such by people around them [-] such as smoking, drinking, going to nightclubs, hanging out with boys, etc. Any occurrence of behaviors considered to be symptoms of moral depravity tarnishes the girl and her family's social image. (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 267-68)

On the other hand, children find that their parents' code of conduct is implicit, imaginary, and symbolic and that life outside of this artificial world is more solid. In fact, both parents and children lead two parallel paths that determine their respective identities and values. Brouwer suggests, diasporic communities in the United Kingdom possess similar perceptions of values regarding sexuality, honour, virginity, respect, obedience and marriage as other Muslim communities in diaspora settings (cited from Cressey 2006). These values

have to be maintained, otherwise it is a clear indication from the parents to their children that 'you are either with us or against us' (Cressey 2006: 5). Therefore, to build a bridge, both parties need to negotiate and interact in order to understand the reality of daily life.

Caste systems also play an important role in Pakistani life which influences their culture. It divides people into different categories and pockets. Most Pakistanis believe in the caste system and are status conscious. Caste defines the parameters for occupational identity, ownership of property, and religious purification. Higher castes possess more respect, *izzat* and status than the lower castes in society. Caste can be judged by a person's occupation or other powerful resources, like inheritance, wealth, property or land, profession, family name or bloodline, (descendant of the Prophet ritually, 'powerfully pure'), a person's personal behaviour through language and etiquette, which establishes his or her social and familial identity in the group.

Pinna Werbner has demonstrated that the Pakistani caste system is made up of upper caste and lower caste, for example: *Shah, Rajput, Chowdhry* and *Qureshi* have higher status, respect and *izzat* in the community than the lower caste which is mainly a service class, for example: cultivator, washer, barber, tailor, sweeper etc. The Lower class is a non-privileged class. Usually, they do not have a caste, but are known by occupation. The earlier work of anthropologists shows that Pakistani immigrants in the United Kingdom have diverse identities, but most of them are from poor backgrounds: cultivators, vegetable growers, herders, skilled artisans (tailors, blacksmith and carpenters). Anthropological knowledge suggests that people or groups change their identities through constant economic and power struggle; it is a fact that some earlier immigrants enhanced their wealth and status through hard work. Werbner's work on Pakistani ethnicities in Manchester discovered few cases where under-privileged people, who achieved economic success and religious purification, with time changed their caste of origin (Werbner 1990: 93).

### **3.4 *Purdah* and Gender Segregation in Britain**

Research on the British Pakistani community has shown that it is believed that religion is an integral part of the cultural system, and the veil is used to maintain the religious obligation to segregate the women from other men and from the public. Because community members believe that observing '[P]arda is a key element in the protection of the family's

pride and honor' (Moghadam 1992: 433) for the protection of the family honour, and the symbol of their cultural identity.

Variations exist in the practice of *purdah* in the United Kingdom, as in Pakistan. Pathans have been noted by some researchers to observe this custom particularly strictly (Anwar 1979; Ballard 1994; Khan 1977). Shaw found Oxford Pakistani women careful in showing modest behaviour with unrelated male visitors in the home, adjusting their *dupattas*, not speaking to the guests, and retreating to the *baithuk*<sup>77</sup> or kitchen and not returning to the front room during their visits. Honourable and respectable female behaviour is linked with the observance of *purdah*. It indicates women's purity and submissiveness (Shaw 2000:82).

### 3.4.1 The Letting Go Process

Separation between parents and children is inevitable and natural in many communities. At some stage in life, children leave their parents' house. In Pakistani communities the 'letting go' process is slow, unnatural and complicated, even for a married couple. They stay with their parents until they get settled completely. Pakistanis believe that newly married couples should stay with the groom's family for a while, so that the family can get used to having a new member in the home, and also for the latter to become familiar with the family's values. It is a common belief that a new member of the household has to get to know all the members of the extended family and their norms.

When children are under sixteen years of age, they listen to their parents and do whatever they are told. After the age of sixteen, they start questioning and reasoning. Young adults want to share their experiences and argue if they think that their parents are naive or not right. Some of them seem unhappy with the Pakistani culture and patriarchal parenting. Consequently, elements of accusation, conflict, and fighting occur among them; generally, the young generation (British born) and their parents do not listen to each other (Anwar 1979: 59; Bhatti 1999; Din 2006). Instead of talking, parents dictate to their children, and eventually disputes can develop into bigger issues and cause a 'breakdown in communication' (Din 2006: 101). Some children even break their ties with the family and the community. Though they may live in the same house, there is usually a big communication gap between them and their parents.

---

<sup>77</sup> The women's area of the house, back room



Pakistani and the British ways of life are 'fixed and bounded categories' (Dwyer 2000: 475). One has to construct a new identity, and the other has to detach itself from the old. However, they both desire to live together without complication and identity crises. The young generation has a desire to construct its own path, and for that it needs freedom and independence in order to make its own choices. But many parents (from the similar population) do not acknowledge their children's aspirations and feelings, especially of young women. They are bound in class and gender relations, which are 'expected to replicate the parental culture. Most of the Asian families believe that a young woman is the guardian of religion, culture and family honour. Therefore, for them, formulating parallel identities becomes more demanding and challenging.

Ikhtlaq Din explains that the post- sixteen school age is the time when young individuals want to exercise some freedom and make decisions about their lives. However, this is a crucial time for parents and young people when both 'appear to be at the opposite ends of the spectrum and there is no middle ground for dialogue' (Din 2006: 101). Such a situation shows that some parents lack skills to deal with, and listen to, their children. For them the cultural shift is a painful process, as they fear to lose their group and class integrity. Apart from that, parents see their image and identity reflected in their children's lives.

Roger Ballard has identified some misleading popular terms which are used for the South Asians, for example: 'culture conflict', 'identity crisis' (Ballard 1994: 33), 'caught between two cultures' (Anwar 1979: 59) culture confusion, 'culture clash' (Siddiqi 2005: 278), 'between two cultures' (cited from Ballard 1994: 30) or trapped between two cultures, 'pole[s] apart' (Cressey 2006: 2), and 'opposite ends' (Din 2006: 101). These phrases and terms are commonly used to highlight community issues. Being the victims of such cultural vocabulary, South Asian parents and children are forced to form 'psycho-pathological' behaviour (Ballard 1994: 33). Besides, such terminology does not let them move forward.

Roger Ballard has discovered a coping mechanism to dilute the adopted sympathies of people towards parenting and children, which have been affecting diasporic colonies since the time of their arrival. Ballard explains that people living in cosmopolitan cities having a bi-lingual capability which they frequently use as a 'code switching' mechanism. This allows people to navigate, 'switch from one linguistic and conceptual code' to another which is an 'unusual and mysterious skill' (Ballard 1994). Consequently, Ballard drew an analogy 'between bilingualism and bi-and multi-culturalism' which are indeed a 'universal phenomenon'. He believes that '[C]ultures, like languages, are *codes*'. '[J]ust as an individual

can be bilingual, so they can also be multicultural, with the competence to behave appropriately in a number of different arenas, and to switch codes as appropriate' (Ballard 1994:31). In conclusion, Ballard suggests that by operating in sophisticated multicultural or skilled cultural codes, navigators can manoeuvre round the 'culture conflict' in ethnic communities<sup>78</sup>.

Although most of the young adults show respect to their elders and parents, they may not do so genuinely. In this regard Ikhlaq Din's research is worth noting he says, '[R]espect is a complex notion' (Din 2006: 103) practiced by Pakistani individuals. Children respect their elders because of religious obligations followed by 'patriarchal religion' (McLoughlin 1998: 99). Respecting parents is an Islamic duty, but the reality is that 'religion is used as a symbol of control by parents and the *biraderi*' (Din 2006: 103). In this regard, Din is witness to 'constant conflict and the reporting of feelings of alienation and estrangement' (Din 2006: 105) between children and parents, which eventually lead them mental stress, domestic violence and honour crimes.

It is not easy to blindly follow the dictates of parents without questioning. If youngsters ask questions, the parents have to prepare for the clash; 'they have [...] battles with parents, some of which they win while others are lost' (Din 2006: 107). Normally the father 'is forced into the position of authoritarianism by the expectations of the *biraderi*' (Din 2006: 108) and the mother is expected to keep up the tradition; both inculcate culture into the children's lives so that they will obey their rules. Anwar believes that 'if we teach them from the very beginning with good reasons, they will respect us and follow the cultural values without questioning. However, if we leave it till it is too late, they learn independence and other rude things at school and it becomes difficult to counter that influence at a later stage' (Anwar 1979: 59).

As girls get older, they argue with parents regarding their choices. Many girls want to wear the same clothes at home that they wear at school. However, most of the girls are told to wear traditional dresses as soon as they enter the home (Bhatti 1999; Din 2006). Girls want gender equality in terms of freedom of dress code and marriage decisions, as their brothers do and because of the restrictions, young individuals sometimes do the opposite of what they are told. Moreover, young women who are strictly told not to wear Western clothes 'get [them] changed outside' (Din 2006: 106), mostly in their schools thinking they are doing it secretly.

---

<sup>78</sup> See in detail, Roger Ballard, 1994:30-33.

While some rebels do not care about their parents, most of young women's actions are constantly being checked and controlled by the extended family and other community members;

[...] some young people have lost some respect for their parents and elders. It suggests a major cultural shift in attitudes from those taken for granted in the traditional community. Respect of parents and elders and wish to earn respect in their own turn but there is a peculiar barrier of hypocrisy in the Pakistani community. This is important since young people recognized that respecting parents and elders has religious significance (Din 2006: 110).

Another factor that contributes to rebellion is the different standards in family values, which parents devise for their daughters and sons. Sons should be successful and do something prestigious to earn a good and respectable status in the community, whereas daughters should maintain the sexual code of modesty to uphold family and community values. Girls live in two divergent worlds; the outside world which separates them from their home and the other separation exists in their home and constitutes 'exclusion within exclusion' (Din 2006: 138). One of the participants in Din's research has suggested a solution for the problem of segregation; saying that 'parents and *Mulvis* (religious leaders) need to change' (Din 2006: 114).

### **3.4.2 British Pakistani Females and Honour Crimes in the United Kingdom**

It has been reported that the female refugee places are 'cramped' with the British Pakistani women who are abused by their families. The main reason for this situation is forced marriages. Joan Payton has identified that 'more than half of the cases of 'honour-based-violence' (Payton 2011: 68) among the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom relate to forced marriages. For example, according to a police report there were 170 victims of forced marriages in Bradford in one year alone (see Appendix, the police report on 'Forced Marriage).

### **3.4.3 Control of Female Sexuality**

Sending money back to their relatives and families was the strongest reason for the Pakistani migrants to work hard. They wanted to strengthen their kinship ties/*biradari* on the top of supporting and establishing their own families and relatives, as they were deeply tied to

familial and ritual taboos because of their rural background. However, in order to maintain such norms the *biradari* system had to be kept strong enough to protect and solve communal affairs. So, its survival was guaranteed in Britain as well as in Pakistan.

Pakistani ethnicity in the United Kingdom is a 'kin-based society'<sup>79</sup> (Sirman 2004: 46). This anthropological term is very useful in understanding the composition and the structure of kinship relationships, which describe the construction of kinship groups. It has been observed that during the last three to four decades Pakistani communities have constructed and provided certain relationships to one another with the basic idea of formulating their kinship groups in the United Kingdom in order to identify personal and collective behaviours in their respective communities.

The *zat* hierarchies' kinship or communal hierarchies express their behaviour (imaginary, symbolical and practical) in respectable or subordinate ways. Roger Ballard says 'every [such] caste has a fixed and unchangeable rank, while its boundaries are maintained both by the hereditary ascription of occupational specialism and by a rule of endogamy which requires that all marriage must take place within the *jati* (caste)' (Ballard 1994: 25). It is noticeable that the *zat* factor is a vital phenomenon in feudal and tribal cultures. Furthermore, these kinship groups regulate their behaviour in certain ways. In these types of communities the reproduction of the groups depends completely on the sexual behaviour of their women. Nukhet Sirman says that, 'personal sexuality is placed under the control and regulation of the community as a whole' (Sirman 2004: 44). In the *biradari* system men always occupy the front room, not only symbolically but also practically, and make all decisions and monitor all family events and rituals (Shaw 2000: 46). Shaw further explains that, why British Pakistani families are still mostly men-led. The *biradari* system covers many sub-systems including: *mel jhol*<sup>80</sup>, class, cast '*lena dena*'<sup>81</sup>, *izzat*, *pardahl*' veil and religion (Shaw 1994).

Pakistanis developed their perception of familial relationships on the ideology of segregated cultures. They preferred to settle the joint and extended families in Britain and to stick together so that any member of the family would rely on the other (Anwar 1979: 101) and would be able to share traditional norms such as 'respect', personal prestige and *izzat* within their own '*biradari*'. These were crucial factors that initially worked well to protect the continuity of home traditions. The transformation and continuation of various values

<sup>79</sup> This term is used in anthropology to denote the use of relations of filiations or affinity as a model for forging forms of identity and constructing social relations. (Sirman, 2003)

<sup>80</sup> To allow families to visit other families belonging to the same *biradari*

<sup>81</sup> Literally 'taking-giving' gifts (Shaw, 1994)

included family traditions, obligations of the *biradari* systems, and the perception of religious rituals like the veil and the segregation of women.

#### 3.4.4 Forced Marriages

Forced marriage is one of the main crimes of 'honour' in the Pakistani community. It is a demeaning form of marriage settlement which is arranged by 'force' by the family members. It can end in self-harm, suicide or even murder by family members. This type of marriage is conducted without the consent of the person/s who is/are supposed to marry. In addition, it has been described as involving 'the lack of free and full consent on the part of at least one of the parties to a marriage' (Samad and Marriage' 2002: 37). Nevertheless, disagreement with, or disobeying the parents' decision about marriage is considered to be a highly intolerable behaviour in women, and daughters in particular.

According to Hannana Siddiqi '[F]orced marriage is a means of controlling female sexuality and women's autonomy'(Siddiqi 2005) including 'involves coercion, mental abuse and emotional blackmail, and intense social pressure. In the most extreme cases, it may also involve physical violence, abduction, false imprisonment, rape or sexual abuse, and murder'<sup>82</sup> (Report 1997). The Yorkshire police have reported 170 cases of forced marriages (see appendix) in one year, most of them from the Pakistani community. Moreover, at least 1000 cases each year involve a spouse from overseas (Coomaraswamy 2005: 534)

Notorious cases of honour crime and the killing of British Pakistani women have opened a debate about the reasons behind such crimes, and the position of women in their families in British Pakistani communities. For example, one widely reported incident in the press occurred in Manchester, and involved a devout 69-year old Muslim father of ten, who came home to find his 24-year old college student daughter, with her Pakistani boyfriend, a university student. The boy jumped from the window and the father stabbed his daughter at least twenty times with the kitchen knife. In justification, he told the police that 'this is our religion'(Werbner 2005: 28).

Honour crimes occur for many reasons, the most significant being marriage within the context of domestic violence and disagreements arising from the marriage arrangements. Another case which forced the issue into the public domain, occurred in 1999 when a 19-year-old woman from Derby was murdered by her mother and brother for 'shaming her

<sup>82</sup> Conference speech, cited: Sara Hossain & Suzanne Turner (2002) Accessed: 2008.

family' by demanding a divorce from her husband to live with the man by whom she was pregnant. The mother and brother were convicted of murder.

### 3.5 Summary

Pakistani men arrived in the United Kingdom in the late 1950s and their families arrived few years later. Most of them settled in industrial areas. Initially, they were intended to earn some money and return back to their homeland, but this never happened. Pakistani women felt alone and, at the beginning, most were uneducated and oppressed. However, they were hesitant to participate in the British ways of life because of their lack of English language skills and because Western values were different than theirs. The possessing of dissimilar values imposed by one's sect and the *biraderi* system required them to strengthen their extended families. Consequently, such cultural considerations were more restrictive and demanding. To maintain such considerations, Pakistanis inclined more towards their family values: dealing with complicated issues and supporting extended families to maintain the integrity of their ethnic identity. The intention was to transmit these ethnic values to their children. Transnational marriage plays a central role in such transmissions by settling and strengthening the extended family in the United Kingdom. The transnational marriage has also had a negative impact on lives, due to the pressurized marriages of British born Pakistani women. The majority of such marriages are unsuccessful, and often result in violence and honour crimes.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to deal with qualitative and ethnographic matters from various aspects: methods of enquiry, main research questions, and techniques and specifically the exploration of the reflexive role of researcher and participant, rapport, and inhabitants' activities. This research investigation aims to work simultaneously with mothers, mothers-in-law, daughters, and daughters-in-law (covering pioneer and younger generations) in order to learn how families and communities uphold honour and reputation through the new generation, particularly, young women.

#### **4.2 Study on Gender and Honour**

The research in gender and honour encouraged me to study the social, political, and economical set up of the South Asian women. As a result of the various feminist movements it witnessed, Western society values women's empowerment and their right to liberation. Nevertheless, the question remains whether all Western women are able to enjoy the rights envisaged by feminist ideology? Unfortunately, the answer is negative. Where people in the West are divided into different categories in terms of colour, culture, race and religion, women are even more discriminated against in such societies. Therefore, 'the study of gender can no longer be assumed to be based upon the experiences of white, middle class women, but must examine the influence of colour, culture and 'race', and the implications this has for women and their individual experience' (Bhopal 1997: 27). In this respect the situation of black and South Asian women is entirely different as compared to that of white women. Since patriarchy works in different strategic and structural forms to oppress women, recent feminist studies suggest that women of different colour and class have patriarchal setups that differ from those of their white counterparts.

Looking at the patriarchal system, the family, the household and the local community are the '*places*' where we can analyse the position of women and their lives in the West. In the South Asian culture, family units consist of 'three, four generations, patrilineal or patrilineal, matrilineal or matrilineal' (Bhopal 1997: 28). However, the South Asian immigrant women's life style is diverse. The norm is that a couple lives with the extended family for the first few years, and then moves to its own independent house. Yet, in recent times this pattern

has been changing: if a woman works or gets support from her parents she will be provided with a place to live. The place of young South Asian women in their parents' house, and after marriage, in their in-laws' house, is more crucial to their lives in terms of practicing family norms.

This research is about the concept of honour in the context of Watfordian Muslim British Pakistani women, and it will look on how women's lives are defined by specific contexts in relation to gender, ethnicity, and religio-cultural relations. It will also see how women are controlled to conform to family norms, especially the young 'women who face considerable restrictions on their mobility in public spaces' (Parameswaran 2006: 339). How do young women construct their identity in relation to their family beliefs? What social expectations and activities enhance honour values in the lives of the British Pakistani women? Finally, how do young women negotiate their marriage choices with their parents?

The connotation of honour creates immense challenges for women. It affects their actions, their judgments, how they live their lives, and have a central importance in the Pakistani ethnic culture. Young women live in complex conditions, having ambivalent and suffocated relationships in order to maintain the family norms and personal reputation. In some cases women risk their lives to fulfil their individual choices, or they accept their parents' choice, but live with uncertainty. Hence, this chapter aims to address the question why is honour still unspoken in the Pakistani community?

The notion of 'honour and shame defined as the need to guard female sexuality appears in extreme forms in some [Muslim] societies in which women are expected to veil before of wider range of men defined as strangers' (Werbner 2005: 27). Many people in Asian societies believe in *izzat*, which means modesty, honour or respect. It is a complex concept and includes personal, familial and communal prestige. *Izzat* can be seen in relation to male and female sexual behaviour; if a man and woman commit adultery or engage in pre-marital sex they can be punished or ostracised. It is, therefore, a highly contested concept. *Izzat* can simply be described as social acceptance of worth according to prescribed cultural norms, based on a woman's modesty and her being a pious and faithful daughter and wife. However, as the Pakistani community is constantly undergoing social transformations, ideas and practices concerning *izzat* are also changing.

The notion of *izzat* has been critiqued by post-colonial scholars and feminists. For example, Ahmad has criticized how white colonial officers, social scientists and feminists



have portrayed ‘publicly stigmatised and problematized’ (Ahmad 2003:278). South Asian and Muslim societies as being obsessed with a particular form of honour that is closely bound up with women’s bodies and sexuality. These representations of ‘honour’ have a long history, and serve to control and denigrate South Asian and Muslim societies. However, she described such communities as having a huge diversity in faith and cultural expression, capable of flexibility in adjusting their positions in order to negotiate their mutual interests (Ahmad 2003). Men and women practice, interpret, and negotiate honour in many different ways. This study will also look at ways in which parents and children (mostly daughters) adapt their lives in order to live in harmony.

#### **4.2.1 Modesty and Marriage**

In honour communities ‘women embody the honour’ (Amnesty 1999: 5); hence the modesty of women is highly priced because they are the upholders of *izzat*. Therefore, they have a responsibility to preserve honour and should be equally aware of the penalty of shame (Toor 2009 : 247). Should they fail, they may destroy the family’s honour.

The activities and behaviour of women can be judged in a public place. If they wear Western clothes, have a romantic or sexual relationship prior to marriage, socialise at forbidden places like discos or clubs, and smoke or take drugs, then their actions are observed critically by the community and become a source of shame to the family. Such women become a subject of gossip in the community which reflects negatively on the image of the family in question, because honour is dependent on what other people say. Gossip is a major consideration in young women’s lives, and is something they are always very conscious of. Most of the young participants in this research have mentioned in particular the role of the elder women, who spend substantial amounts of time engaging in gossip.

Academics agree that many Muslim cultures view marriage as an appropriate institution for the regulation and expression of sexuality for both sexes, particularly, for women (Ahmad 2003: 274). Pakistani culture also focuses on the issue of marriage for their daughters because of the importance attached to women’s modesty. A woman’s modesty can be judged through her behaviour, dress code, and her movements and even from the way she talks. The family expects her to observe set boundaries; otherwise she may pose a problem for her family and the community in general. There is sufficient literature to show that marriage is the fundamental focal point of a woman’s life, and she needs constant

safeguarding, in order to control women's lives. However, this research has highlighted many issues related to marriage on account of the resistance of young women to accepted societal norms, such as: reluctance to marry into their extended families, disregard for communal control through gossip, not wearing modest clothes and the veil, disrespect for caste and class issues.

#### 4.2.2 Why Research Honour?

Parameswaran's (Parameswaran 2006: 344) and Zahida Shah's (Shah 2001) personal accounts of their role in their research encouraged me to incorporate my own personal experiences into my work. Many feminist scholars believe that feminist researchers cannot separate themselves from the research they are carrying out as the researcher and the participants are the two faces of the same coin. Taking advantage of Parameswaran and Shah's personal experiences, which they shared in their research, I would like to recount my own.

I was brought up in rural Sindh on the border of a tribal area in the Southern part of Pakistan. My father was a local landlord having sufficient land to maintain a position of authority among his people. My mother was an urban girl, who was forced into marriage with my father at a very young age (a victim of 'child marriage'). My mother has narrated many stories regarding the patriarchal norms she had to cope with at a very young age. She consoled herself by thinking that this was the life of women at that time. However, it was a painful experience, and left many indelible marks on her life.

I was made to wear a *burqa*<sup>83</sup> during my pre-puberty years. It was very difficult to manage wearing such an unwieldy long black cloak. I remember falling into a *khady* (pits in uneven roads) several times while walking back home from school along the dark roads. When I raised the question in my teens about having to wear a *burqa* while my sister did not, my father said that she did not have to as she was studying medical science. I was never really convinced of the reason for this act of discrimination.

Having a daughter who is a qualified doctor was a matter of honour, and so was covering the body of another daughter; the complexity of that idea is very hard for me to accept to this day; nevertheless, I have neither consoled myself, like my mother, nor engaged in arguments with my parents on the subject of the 'systematic feminist critique of patriarchy'

---

<sup>83</sup> A Long cloak to cover the body and face

(Parameswaran 2006:345). The positive thing was that my parents were liberal minded and placed a high value on girls' education. I consequently obtained a good education, and for the rest of my life I lived and worked in the highly educated and influential urbanised city of Hyderabad in Sindh, (South Pakistan). However, when I questioned the 'subjective construction of my identity' (Parameswaran 2006), my intellectual and conscious mind raised the question of 'honour'. I had seen the concept of 'honour' applied everywhere and had grown up with the feeling that many women living around me were affected by it, no matter where they lived, whether in urban or in rural areas. During my research, I found myself compelled to examine this unspoken notion of *izzat* and to penetrate its deeper levels.

### 4.2.3 Selecting the Setting of the Investigation

In 2008 I mapped out some areas for my fieldwork in London. I had seen a few community centres in East and North London where Pakistani communities were based, but was uncertain about which area to focus on. Then, one day I received an invitation through my neighbour to attend the 'Chand Rat' event (Moon Night, a celebration of Night before Eid) at the Watford community centre. The very next day I made a second visit to the community centre to learn more about the community. I was fascinated by a group of about twenty women (aged between 50 and 70 years), most of whom were fully covered with a *jilbab* (a long cloak which conceals the body) or wore a *hijab*. Most of them were not in very good health, and appeared very different from me on account of their apparel.

After this encounter, I told myself that I had found the subject for my enquiry. With time I also found that no academic study on the Pakistani community had ever been carried out before in that area. The city was close to London; therefore, I assumed that the geographical impact on the community could be positive or negative. The data was collected by conducting fifty in-depth interviews with participants from different walks of life, belonging to different sects and *biraderi*.

The largest Pakistani ethnic communities have been living in Watford since the late 1950s. There are 12,000 ethnic Pakistanis in Watford, according to the 2001 census, making them the town's largest ethnic population. According to the Watford Council Report, 'Watford had a higher share of the population in many of the ethnic groups. Watford's largest ethnic minority groups were Pakistani (4.7%), White Other (3.9%), White Irish (2.9%) and

Indian (2.4%) ethnic groups' (2007:12)<sup>84</sup>. Many of the inhabitants commute to work in London. Many women work in a laundry and other factories in Watford. Some of them have their shops in the locality. Most of the women remain at home, busy with their children and extended families.

### 4.3 Epistemology

An epistemology is a set of assumptions about the social world and about who can be a knower and what can be known (Harding 1987 : 3). The researcher makes decisions rooted in these assumptions that influence what is studied (based on what can be studied) and how the study is conducted. A *methodology* is a theory of how research is done or should proceed/analyses, whereas feminist methodology is usually discussed through qualitative methods. Finally, a *method* is a 'technique for gathering evidence' (ibid: 2). Feminist epistemology usually distinguishes feminist from non-feminist research, which offers an understanding of why women, and other groups are oppressed and marginalized. Feminist epistemology provides much evidence about the discrimination of women in society. Feminist theorists pursue complex inquiries with several frameworks such as; male orientated, female orientated, black or white orientated, gay people orientated. They conduct research within a transformative approach, intended to avoid objectification of women, with the aim of establishing collaborative and non-exploitative relationships (O'Reilly 2006) and understanding other social processes of oppression e.g. racism and heteronormativity.

#### 4.3.1 Cultural Context

Research on British Pakistani women requires exploring many cultural variables, in addition to those being studied. Individuals create meaning in their lives and impart a social reality to their existence through the interpretative medium of their own culture, which is passed down, practiced, and then transmitted to the next generation. Although it may seem that accepting the same culture is an uncomplicated phenomenon for the younger generation, culture is not a set of free-floating ideas or beliefs. It is, in fact, a set of combined entities within a whole range of institutions in everyday life practices (Samad and Marriage' 2002: 12). In reality, each individual initiates the creation and contributing of something new into the existing

---

<sup>84</sup> Watford Minority Ethnic Residents' Community Mapping and Engagement Review, Final Report of Study Findings, December 2007, [www.ors.org.uk](http://www.ors.org.uk).

culture in his or her own particular manner though some communities take time to accept or adapt these changes into their daily lives. Such communities rely on and prefer to continue their set cultural practices within specific social groups, or transfer them to their children. However, there is a big debate on how people make culture, and how they already have one: 'an investigation of particular ways of using 'culture', of people inhabiting particular social contexts, and of people's ways of making culture'(Morris 1997: 43). Morris has posed the question of 'how and in what ways human beings make culture: why, and to what end. How culture and cultural shapes and social relations and, more broadly, how culture takes its place in instigating or resisting social change' (Morris 1997).

Most communities living in the World have very deep cultural and family values which are inter-linked and complex. It has been observed however, that the majority of such communities are even more complex and complicated in terms of their cultural values. Epistemological, practical, and ethical terms are needed to build relevant knowledge about South Asian communities, especially women from the developing countries. Most contemporary research and debates on such topics focus on a feminist standpoint. Therefore, I believe the feminist approach is the most appropriate and adequate parameter for the present research and for evaluating the responses of my participants.

#### **4.3.2 Feminist Epistemology**

The feminist research approach deals with everyday relationships, experiences and behaviours (Liz 1983: 47) of human beings. As is well known, many women globally suffer from poverty, ill health and domestic abuse. However, through the commitment and concern of feminist researchers and feminist activists, women have been given a voice and a choice in overcoming oppressive and unequal situations, thus enhancing their chances of a better future.

In order to conduct my field work, I have to be well equipped with research tools in order to find the right participants for acquiring genuine understanding by following the 'norm of 'objectivity' that assumes knowledge can be collected in a pure and uncontaminated way' (Letherby 2003: 73). I must value 'women's experiences as they understand it, interpreted in the light of feminist conceptions of gender' (ibid). This piece of research is about women for women, and has been conducted by a woman having an awareness of the practicality of 'indigenous' values. My position and situation in the field could be seen as quite unique and, at the same time, as awkward- because I was in 'the peculiar situation of being neither completely a cultural insider, nor a total outsider'(Abu-Lughod 1988: 141).

Nevertheless, it is still imperative for me to enter into this 'inclusive involvement' (O'Reilly 2006: 67) with warmth, receptivity, and acceptance (ibid) in order to identify and analyse the real actors. For this research, I have chosen a feminist approach because through the last few decades feminists have done remarkable work for women's rights. I also believe that 'most feminist views and perspectives are not simply ideas, or ideologies, but *rooted in the very real lives, struggles, and experiences of women*' (writers expression in italics) (O'Reilly 2006).

My research is concerned with women who belong to South Asian ethnic communities, and have been marginalized in many different ways by their family, community and the state. Families have their own agenda in controlling the young women; the community exhorts and acknowledges such control to maintain the familial and communal reputation, and the state overlooks the situation to maintain cultural boundaries. Therefore, taking a 'pragmatic' (Creswell 2007 : 23) view, I chose a feminist approach in my research which respects, but does not marginalize, the informants with regard to their individual differences.

Sandra Harding (Harding 1987 ) believes that 'feminist research should be *for* women', not *on* women'. Therefore, feminist researchers should write about men and women's experiences from their own perspectives. The history of patriarchal norms and their related oppression and injustice is deeply embedded in women's lives; thus I value their experiences and the way they understand and interpret those norms in the patriarchal system, which creates gender discrimination. I also believe that women should not live behind the curtains but must be heard. In feminist research the real contribution is from the real participants, men and women, who lead to real knowledge.

My initial efforts to engage women in my studies were thwarted when I shared my project with women of the locality. One of them spontaneously responded: 'look at you - you don't think that we have the same life as other women?' At a later stage, when she contributed to the research, I found the interview with her was full of new themes and ideas about her life and the community, which helped me to explore further avenues for my project. The women, who participated, gave a clear picture of the whole scenario. Thus, I believe, that given the chance to talk about their lives, women can help in producing knowledge about the women who live in almost the same conditions. Some participants made it clear that they were deeply connected with one another in terms of their problems, issues, and aspirations.

The researcher and the participants need to understand exactly what they are talking about. The approach should be straightforward and honest, so that both can understand their

lives and the historical facts pertaining to the position of women. Gill Cressey stated that 'each narrative has its own history' (Cressey 2006: 32). Sandra Harding is of the opinion that due to inappropriate manner of research in the past women do not have a history at all (Harding 1987 : 8). Smith believes that it is very important that research must begin with real and concerned people (cited from Letherby 2003: 74), through their real biographies.

It is not enough to describe the situation, but to change it, through research. Such researchers and participants could be instrumental in making a practical contribution to work in the chosen field. For instance a woman participant made it clear through her feedback that while she was talking; she understood and realized what she was saying. She stated that through talking she reached an awareness of her issues, which did not come from outside, as it was already there, within her. She further said that, 'such feeling never happened before, although we talk all the time about our discomforts in life'. She was not self-conscious; she was fully engaged with the conversation and poured out the realities of her life. It does not matter if the society is still 'man-made' as Klein stated; the point is women have to break their silence in order to provide their perspective on 'their' history (cited from Letherby 2003: 74).

#### **4.3.3 The Politics of Feminist Approach**

It was formerly a social truth that women had less ability (intellectual) to prove themselves as professionals. Many cultures, including the Pakistani culture, still believe that women have little wisdom or discretion. Such notions or myths were built on the basis of biological differences. That is why women were professionally discriminated against and confined to the home to carry out domestic and routine jobs (bearing children, cleaning, cooking and washing), and making their husbands happy when they came back home after work; in many cultures women also work hard to make their in-laws happy by doing personal tasks for them, and nursing elderly members of the family. Women's domestic labour was not recognized by their husbands or their family at the personal level, and was not even recognised by the social scientists. In addition to this, women were not supposed to report to the police, community, or women's centres if they had been abused. For example, they were guarded and policed by the local taxi driver from the same community, if they were seen hanging around the centres which deal with issues of domestic violence.

Feminists have recognized that the 'scientific reality of female inferiority' was the invention of a male dominated scientific community. In the 1960s and 1970s, many feminists had identified this social reality; that social scientific research methods were biased and patriarchal and had been conducted to oppress women. This idea has been expressed by feminists in their earlier works (Harding 1987 ; Millett 1969 ; Reinharz. 1992). They criticized the assumption of positivists (theory of knowledge in which it is presumed that a neutral, value free observer is able to conduct research and draw objective conclusions). They argue that all theories and sciences liberate society, while the feminists have found the opposite, claiming that 'science was oppressive' (Harding 1987 ) and untruthful, because it allowed some groups to dominate others. As Simoone de Beauvoir explored, men perceive women as 'the other', alien, and mysterious (cited from Parshly 1972 ). This approach restricts the ability of the social sciences to perceive the social reality in a transparent way.

The other group of feminists (Firestone 1978; Millett 1969 ) found in their works, that the patriarchal bias was visible in almost every method of academic discipline. For example, Shulamit Reinharz stated that medical practices and the language were designed to oppress women by making them invisible and put up with violence in silence (Reinharz. 1992). Consequently, feminist scholars began to acquire new research methods and theories, to reflect women's lives in scientific and factual forms for the betterment of their lives.

#### **4.3.4 Feminist Research Methodologies**

There are several feminist research methodologies for carrying out qualitative research, such as life histories, oral history, personal narratives, participatory observations, ethnography etc. Such methods provide tools for carrying out research in useful ways in order to empower women, giving them the confidence to speak about their experiences in a more open manner.

Feminist methodologies enable women to discover their inner life which is given expression through their emotions and actions, and contributes to a greater understanding of social and gender reality. Feminist ethnography is defined as the method whereby people's social reality is studied: how they construct their social reality; how they practice and make sure that they are living an acceptable, appropriate and satisfying life. Ethnographers spend time meeting and talking with people in their target communities, and they record those encounters systematically to give neglected voices a hearing in the public arena. Furthermore, feminist ethnography is an open and flexible method which aims at acquiring an in-depth understanding on how individuals, in different cultures and sub-cultures, make sense of their



lives (Hesse-Biber et al. 2006: 230). It is as diverse as feminist ethnographers themselves. Therefore, it is a flexible, responsive and iterative form of research answering various questions about the social and cultural lives of people. Staller describe its two significant parts as follows: first an ‘attempt to understand another life world’ by taking notes of their (people’s) everyday lives and activities; and second ‘using the self as much as possible’ (cited from Hesse-Biber et al. 2006). Ethnography provides a scientific description of these people, their culture and context through the researchers’ work. O’Reilly explains; ‘*ethnography* is the methodology; *participant observation* is a method’ (O’Reilly 2006). Cole and Phillips describe that a feminist ethnography as a project deals with the ‘documentation and presentation of the conflicting, contradictory, and heteronymous experiences of women cross-culturally’ (cited from Parameswaran 2006: 362), and Saeggs says, ‘with its emphasis on experiences and the words, voice and lives of the participants’ (cited from Bryman 2004: 430).

In her research on South Asian women’s lives in London, Kalwant Bhopal reveals personal and, emotional stories of women’s abuse. Had it (the research) been carried out by a male it may have been impossible for women to speak openly about the intimate details of their lives. She stated that, ‘women were able to open up, trust and confide in me, which allowed them to reveal very personal and intimate details of their lives’ (Bhopal 1997: 33). Feminist research needs to be addressed in women’s terms; Bhopal refers to Harding’s view of conducting research not *on* women but *for* women (Bhopal 1997). The research method should, therefore, afford women freedom in order to acquire potential data. She further explains that ‘feminist methodology involves putting the researcher into the process of production, the researchers can make explicit the reasoning procedures they utilise in carrying out the research and be self-reflexive about their own perceptions and biases which they bring to the research’ (Bhopal 1997). This brings us back to the issue of obtaining material from participants which takes into account their cultural values.

This process is about openness from both sides (researcher and participant). Therefore, the researcher has to involve himself, or herself honestly in their personal experiences and feelings in order to understand ‘someone’s world’. This can only be possible if the interview questions are not fixed or rigid. The concept can cover the researchers’ observations, inside ethnography and appearing ‘native’ (O’Reilly 2006: 67). Many anthropologists believe that learning native norms and rules and sharing culture can provide openness and insight into the

interview world in order to gain the real understanding. Yet it is a debatable issue among feminists.

Karen O'Reilly emphasises that feminists must be scrupulous in choosing the shared culture; for example, black women need to interview black women, a study of mothers should have a mother as an interviewer, only a Kosovan refugee can understand a Kosovan refugee, and so on (O'Reilly 2006: 67). O'Reilly also underlined that the researcher and the informants have to be from the same background because the most significant factors are not always on the surface (O'Reilly 2006: 68), but are entrenched. Kalwant Bhopal has supported O'Reilly's idea of working into the same community, stating that 'I was able to see reality through the eyes of other South Asian women and share a sense of belonging and empathy. If a South Asian woman is able to get another South Asian woman to speak about her life, they not only have a 'shared experience, and 'shared empathy, but also a 'shared identity' (Bhopal 1997: 36).

Ann Oakley has emphasised that through empathy and involvement the researcher can gain a better understanding of the issues and of behaviour. She has rejected objectivity in the research process because objectivity means detachment, and detachment is harmful in feminist research. If the researcher does not have empathy and attachment, then how can the researcher understand the actions and emotions of the informants? (Oakley 1981).

#### 4.4 Assessing both Genders

The participants were originally identified as British Pakistanis: 13 males (including one white police officer) and 36 females. The age of those recruited ranged from 16 to 70 years, thus covering all generations- though it is difficult to define a generation- and this can be controversial and problematic (Bolognani 2009a). All Muslims<sup>85</sup> from different walks of life, belonging to different sects and *biraderi* systems, were included, making the study multi-sect and multi-caste in nature; all were living in Watford. The participants were largely recruited with the help of local community contacts; community centres run by British Pakistani social workers or officers, mosques and *Imam-Barghah* and via the 'snowballing' (Andersson 2003) technique. Some previous works on the same community had also been conducted by recruiting participants through personal contacts and use of 'snowballing' (Bolognani 2009b). Researchers found it more useful and successful tool than some other alternatives such as

---

<sup>85</sup> Participants real names have not been mentioned.

media campaigns or advertisements, and sending personal letters. Although I used these methods (making announcements in the mosque, putting out flyers in both the mosque and the community centres, and sending people emails) they did not work.

Initially, my strategy was to recruit participants from the community centres. But it was difficult to talk to them directly. I found the head of the community centre to be uncooperative, and actively discouraged women from participating in my research. She maintained her position of authority by upholding cultural barriers in order to protect the women from being exposed to potential danger or bad influence from a person who was an outsider. It was not easy to obtain participants at the beginning; it took me a few months to hold three pilot interviews. The interviews were conducted in the participants' houses in most cases, but some were carried out at the mosque, in community centres and town hall, and at the Watford police station.

The role of the gatekeeper is very significant and relevant in research, especially when researching family life or personal life (Letherby 2003: 103). The gatekeeper plays a double role, both from the researcher's side and from the community's side. The gatekeeper makes sure that a researcher is a reliable and respectable person in accordance with the community's standards. He or she will then introduce a researcher into the community. For example, Lila Abu-Lughod (Abu-Lughod 1988: 142) received help from the *Haj*, head of the community in Cairo, who acted as a gatekeeper, and recruited her participants through his influence in the community. She was introduced to the *Haj* by her father, who was in good contact with the former. This demonstrates that a researcher always becomes involved with the community, or is introduced into it through an influential person, who dispels possible doubts and suspicions of those who are subjects of the research. I also made contact with a person who had a very good reputation in the community, through his community networks.

Potential participants had no appreciation of the value of this kind of research; the majority were unfamiliar with ethnographic interview techniques (Al-Khayyat 1990). One participant took a long time in deciding whether to participate. She wanted to contribute, but at the same time found ethnographic research techniques puzzling. She asked me several times to first tell her about my findings before giving an interview. I did not think that I needed to negotiate with her or pressurize her; it was entirely open to the individual to choose whether to participate or not. Some women thought I was a spy and would forward the data to agencies. One man and two women did not even complete the interview.

I found it very hard to gain access to young men. The gatekeepers advised me to study the close relatives of my informants. I tried that once but later found that my participants were unhappy about the idea. As Letherby has also discovered, researching women, who are related is impossible, because the women felt this might affect their relationship, as well as the project (Letherby 2003: 103). I also tried to contact male participants personally but found it very difficult as they never turned up at a meeting place. One man asked me to meet him in his flat where he lived alone. I, however, did not feel comfortable going there alone. Another man in his middle age asked me not to interview other young men who worked in his shop, as they did not know anything about British life (without knowing anything about my research). He said he had a lot of information but did not appear to be sincere; he only wanted to find out what I was really looking for.

#### 4.5 Initial Contact

Shafeeq (a well-known person in the local community) promised to introduce me to Mrs Shah (a community well known person). She was obliging and also a most appropriate person because of her work in the community, which was of paramount importance. Local people had a great deal of confidence in her. When I met her, she welcomed me warmly. Such behaviour indicated that she value the person who had arranged the introductions.

I briefly introduced myself and my research to Mrs Shah. I did not mention to her that I was hoping to access informants for my research, as I was not sure whether it would be appropriate at this stage. She enthusiastically introduced me to her staff and showed me around. Finally, she introduced me to a group of about twenty-two elderly and middle-aged women<sup>86</sup>. On the very first day she assigned me some tasks.<sup>87</sup> From the beginning, I had a clear indication that my role in the centre would be to help women, observe them, and form a good relationship with them. I felt that I should consider my actions, in order to help them to understand more, thus gaining their trust and building a rapport with them.

Although, like them, I am a Pakistani, and was originally from the Sindhi ethnic background, some women were a little reluctant because I was 'Sindhi', not 'Punjabi' or 'Mirpuri'. My Sindhi identity made me an outsider. Most of them wore a long *abaya* and

<sup>86</sup> They called members of the 'luncheon club' which provides lunch and do some activities for their entertainment. The women visit a centre twice a week; it is funded by the city council under her supervision.

<sup>87</sup> If the staff was not around then I could look after the office and receive the phone calls. But the very next meeting I got the instructions that I am not supposed to do that because of the confidentiality of the official record.

almost all had a scarf on their heads including a *duppatta* around their necks. It was interesting for me to learn about their dress code, because I had not seen such things in Pakistan myself, not even in the United Kingdom. Interaction is a useful way of growing to understand one another; therefore I let them ask me questions about myself, because it helped to smooth the research process. In the event, any input from participants would be valuable to my research. I followed Ann Oakley's (1981) idea in this respect.

#### 4.6 Exposure to the Daily Life of the Community

For the first few months I participated in the daily life of the community. I looked round many places: the laundry (women still work there), mosques, schools, homes, shops (owned by women), 'persuading people' (O'Reilly 2006) by exploring the city, and buying goods for my own house and carrying them back home. I did this to enable the local people to come to know me and to build trust, so that they would come to accept me as a researcher.

It took me one year and six months to carry out the fieldwork. My initial strategy was to start from certain community centres, so I visited a few women's groups. Most of them belonged to Indian and other ethnic communities, where one would hardly ever see a British Pakistani woman. It was strange for me at first, but at some point in time I began to understand that there were some barriers and reservations<sup>88</sup> which prevented them from mixing, for example, the Indians wanted to serve vegetarian food and the Pakistanis wanted to have *halal* meat. Indians had mixed sex group interaction, many of them played cards and other mental games to boost their memory skills, did exercises, sang songs together, walked and talked to one another in a free and relaxed manner. Pakistanis, however, are a sex-segregated society, with men and women hardly mixing in the community centre. In cases when these two groups did get together, the atmosphere would be tense and unfriendly. Both sexes preferred to keep their distance; the men would avoid talking to someone else's wife and women would be modest and shy in talking to the men. I attended a couple of events in the Watford community centre in order to observe these restrictive interactions.

The activities in the Muslim women's community centre<sup>89</sup> were: Islamic education, teaching and preaching religion and reciting the Qur'an and *nat* (holy songs). Most of the

---

<sup>88</sup> I didn't see such thing in Pakistan in my life.

<sup>89</sup> It was called Muslim women community centre but I have never seen a single Muslim woman from any other ethnicity. All were Pakistani women.

women were seen sitting uncomfortably and self-consciously, assiduously covering their bodies. Most of them were treated like school children. They were hardly ever allowed to talk about their personal lives or discuss family issues. There was an exercise class available, but the instructor was more intent on preserving her modesty and maintaining her respectability than focusing on the exercises. Although she played fast disco music at high volume, she did not motivate her respectable ‘auntie’ followers with her skills, whereas the very opposite was the case with the Indian exercise instructors.

The woman in charge of the group would monitor them with authoritative gestures. She often announce aloud to the group to ‘come with peace and go with peace’ by way of a gentle reminder to avoid gossiping or passing denigrating comments. Her concern was to avoid possible confrontation or hostility from within the group. Because there was a racist element involved in these interactions: the *Lahori* women (from Lahore) were more dominant in displaying confidence and in interacting with one another, than the *Mirpuri* women (from Mirpur). The Punjabi women believe that the *Mirpuri* women are backward and conservative in comparison with themselves. Some of the women would have to sit in silence throughout their entire stay, passively watching the others. Although I had heard that the centre receives funding for entertainments and activities for the mental and physical well-being of this group, as did the Indian community centres, I did not see any practical application of this resource.

I used to attend prospective events (social, communal, religious) of the community. Once, I was asked how I knew about these different events and in a faith community centre, I was asked how I had gained entry and who brought me. When I mentioned the name of the person concerned, they would then explain to me that because of 9/11 they had become more circumspect about strangers getting entry without formal permission.

#### **4.7 An Intrusive Task**

Ethnographers go to great lengths to win the authority to carry out the intrusive task of observing, carrying out analysis in order to gain insight into people’s lives, their level of power and social position. Murphy calls it ‘productive discomfort’ (cited from Parameswaran 2006: 339). I applied this concept to my own position at the start of my fieldwork in order to form some idea of how to deal with my own experience when I joined a group of elderly women at the community centre. How had the group welcomed and reacted to me? It was an exciting, and at the same time an uneasy process: some had accepted me by taking me for granted and doing *lihaz* (showing consideration) because it is embedded in the culture that in

doing *lihaz*, you have to bear with the person in silence, whether one liked it or not. I 'discomforted' both myself and these women in order to achieve my goal. Slowly, I built my confidence, while taking advantage of Murphy and Parameswaran's work on how they had audaciously faced discomforting situations with their informants and incorporated this concept into their research (cited from Parameswaran 2006: 339).

They included me in their moral community, a position that imposed a set of imperatives and constraints on me. I wanted to be accepted, and I also felt that I *was* a moral person-it was just that I did not define morality by some of the terms they used, particularly for women. Gradually my sense of inauthenticity subsided. As I participated more fully in the community, loosened my ties to my other life, and as we came to share a common history and set of experiences on which we could build our relationships, I *became* the person that I was with them. Although there always remained an asymmetry in the fact that I was writing about them, and observing perhaps a bit more closely than they were, for the most part I felt that our interactions were genuine.(Abu-Lughod 1988: 149)

Whenever people meet someone new, they have a set questions to ask. At the beginning, women asked about my caste, and 'I was confident of my sensitivity to cultural expectations, because of my background' (Abu-Lughod 1988: 142). In Pakistan, generally, people get introduced by caste, because they believe that caste is the key to judging a person's status and position in the locality. My caste is '*Metlo*' I replied. Some became puzzled, wondering 'what caste is this?' They had never heard of it before, and, then, a woman (one of those sitting with the group) commented; 'she is a *Sindhi*', (from Sindh, Pakistan), and explained that the Sindhi people have a different caste system. She almost declared to them that I was an outsider. They showed 'little interest in a professional life, caring to know only whether a woman is married and has children' (Abu-Lughod 1988: 140). So they asked only about my husband and my children. They did not bother asking about my friends, my work, and my university, which are what I value the most as my identity (Abu-Lughod 1988: 148). At the first meeting with the women at the community centre, I had registered my personal profile with them on a form which had no box or column for information about a woman's professional life.

It is believed that researchers and ethnographers are always insiders and outsiders because all of us have multiple identities. However, premise of insiders or outsiders is a false dichotomy. It is a common phenomenon that people emphasize the commonalities between themselves, when they are from different parts of the world (Peristiany 1970), they share their identities to build mutual trust.

#### 4.8 Productive Discomfort

When I carried out my research I was in my mid-fifties, so my age was also something of a key influence in several ways. Firstly, I could definitely fit in the group; no one would object my presence in the centre, though one woman judged me as Indian, because of my appearance in wearing English clothes at that time. Secondly, I started wearing Pakistani dress, the *shalwar kameez* to make myself like one of them. I tried to disassociate myself (Abu-Lughod, 1988:149) as much as possible from my own ethnic identity. Perhaps, I instinctively tried to look like them, but I would not wear the *hijab* or the *jalbab*, not even covering my head with the *duppatta* (headscarf). I was not even keen to wear gold, though I noticed that two women among them wore a lot of gold.

On the next visit to the centre, Mrs Shah asked me frankly, *namaz nheen parhnee?* ‘Will you not offer prayers?’ I was puzzled. She asked me again ‘will you not offer prayers’ and again, *challoo uthoo namaz purho*, ‘Let’s go to offer prayers’. I did not know what to say or what to do. I started praying *namaz* with her and looked like a naughty little girl, praying under her supervision. She did not allow me the freedom of exercising a personal choice in this matter. I was required and expected to be obedient to her because of my commitment to my project. I did not wish to annoy her as I needed her to trust me. However, it was awkward for me to present myself as a pious Muslim woman through praying *prayers* because, although ‘[M]y Muslim credentials were shaky, I shared with them a fundamental identity as a Muslim’ (Abu-Lughod 1988: 148). I had to build up a relationship with them but it was too early for me to become accustomed to the environment which I had chosen for my project.

The first few visits were crucial for me, because I was expected to be judged on different levels, according to their assumptions and understanding. I had left my husband and had given preference to my studies, which was considered a violation of social norms according to Pakistani standards. That I was a single mother in the Western world seemed comparatively difficult and strange for them. There was a time I wondered why I had told them that my husband was not with me, but they were ‘asking me questions about my life’ (Abu-Lughod 1988: 140). They carried on asking a series of questions which I found difficult to cope with. I was concerned that they might label me in an inauthentic way. I was conscious that they knew nothing about my life in Pakistan, so ‘I felt compelled to lie to them about some aspects of this life, simply because they would not have been able to help judging it and me on their own terms’ (Abu-Lughod 1988: 148). Some were concerned (male and female)



about my children's life in terms of their identity. They never bothered to ask how I wanted my children to grow up and what identity they would like to construct for themselves. They asked me about the religious sect to which I belonged, how I taught my children to have a Muslim identity while I was in the United Kingdom, as if the issue of identity was a task for the head of the house who must implant it into the children's lives; as if the father is a sole authority who can decide and determine their path for them; as if without the father they might fail to construct their identity or develop into men. They never considered the way I wanted my children to grow up and explore their destiny. Some were doubtful about my Islamic identity because I did not wear a head scarf<sup>90</sup>. For them it was very important to have a Muslim identity while living in the United Kingdom; therefore, I was expected to follow the 'Islamic'<sup>91</sup> rules, which were being practiced in the United Kingdom. More essentially, a woman as an individual is supposed to display her identity to the satisfaction of the community by practicing Islamic and cultural rules. Some individuals believe that in Pakistan there are no problems in living the true spirit of Islam, because Pakistan provides an authentic Islamic way of life for all. They believe that in the United Kingdom it is of great concern for the British Pakistanis to practice and propagate the Islamic rules and way of life. Most of the families are keen to give their children an Islamic education with private resources. Also, many groups of women run an Islamic teaching circle in their homes offering a chance for other women to socialize as such activities provide them with a form of social and economic independence.

I am a Muslim Pakistani middle aged woman, and came to the United Kingdom to study, while speaking and understanding a few Pakistani languages,<sup>92</sup> and wearing Pakistani clothes (though not always). In some ways this made me slightly different from them because I was not from the same community, and they could judge this from my accent. A couple of women asked me what I would gain after doing research on them, as every woman was leading the same life. Why was I taking the trouble to collect their stories, when they were all the same? Such comments were mostly from the Middle aged group of women who were comfortable with me because I was of a similar age. It was unbelievable to a few of the women that I should still be engaged in studying. Being a Pakistani woman I should look after my children, stay at home, read the Qur'an and other Islamic books and think about life

---

<sup>90</sup> I wore *hijab* for a few days and prayed with the head of centre to fit into her box to get her trust but I did not feel easy in continuing this behaviour.

<sup>91</sup> For them the role of Islam is different in the United Kingdom.

<sup>92</sup> Pakistani languages Urdu and Punjabi, People in Watford mainly speak in Punjabi and Mirpuri languages. Youngsters value Urdu language.

after death. It is better to engage in holy activities which may support me on the Day of Judgment. Moreover, they asked me why my research was on Pakistani women. They were suspicious about my life, which was unnatural for them; 'O you came a long way from Pakistan to study' as if this were not a nice thing to do.

A few of them were keen to talk about Sindhi landlords. They think that Sindhi men are brutal, immoral, backward and unfair to women. For example, one woman illustrated this saying, 'Sindhis marry women with the Qur'an; they kill women in the name of honour. Sindhi women are oppressed and they don't get any education'<sup>93</sup>. When I asked them from which source they obtained this information, they said that it was obvious; 'we know when we watch Pakistani dramas'. They criticized, probed, and provoked me by asking questions such as, why were my children living alone without their father? Their father is supposed to feed them according to the Islamic law. Why were my studies so important that I needed to live without my husband? The middle-aged women were doubtful about my relationship with my husband. They wanted me to answer their questions promptly, in order to find out more about my personal life, my decision to leave the country and my husband. They were surprised that I should be living a hard life with my children, when I could have lived in Pakistan with many servants. They tried to discourage me from doing research at that stage.

My behaviour and character were being judged according to the British Pakistani standards. I understood this, when I began to travel from London to Watford with a non-relative Pakistani man (who was working in Watford<sup>94</sup>) for the initial few visits. One woman would intentionally ask me on every visit to the centre who I came with? And how would I go back to London?. She then made a comment 'oh that's nice of him- he is being good to you. At least you could come by car'. She tried to find out more about me and then forwarded this information to the rest of the women at the centre.

As I was a middle-aged women, who spoke Urdu and a bit of Punjabi with a Sindhi accent, she made me feel like an outsider; but things were fine with the British born generation of women. They did not think about my origins or about my faith, my personal life or my age. They were less concerned about my marital status, and my being a single mother living in England, and about doing research and not wearing Pakistani dress. They were less judgmental. They did not bother to ask me a single personal question. Therefore, I felt more

---

<sup>93</sup> According to them what they watch on Pakistani Television channels about Sindhi people and culture is the whole truth. They must know that women have been paraded naked in the recent history of Punjab.

<sup>94</sup> I got this facility to go to Watford with him to save time and money. He gave me a lift.

comfortable with them. Speaking Urdu for some of them was something impressive; a few of them congratulated me on obtaining a higher degree at this stage. They gave me a warm welcome and invited me for more visits. Middle aged male and younger (male and female) participants were also, less concerned about my personal background, although a few of the males did ask me about my faith and the identity of my children. I realized how complicated and frustrating this was.

#### **4.9 Research Ethics**

Feminist research is more aware of sensitive issues and uses different strategies and methods in different situations to protect the rights of women. As a researcher, I was concerned about several ethical considerations and issues. Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the University of Leeds. I was also aware that overt access (in some ways restricted) and covert research (conducted without the participants' knowledge) are considered ethically questionable for the ethnographer (O'Reilly 2006: 58-59). Participants have the right to choose if they want to be a part of the study or not - if they want to allow 'our intrusion in their lives' (O'Reilly 2006: 58-59). It is their decision whether or not, and at what level they wish to participate or withdraw from the research. Then we can have freedom to talk or ask about their deep feelings, emotions and 'spend hours romanticising about life 'back home' (Shah 2001: 58). For example, a few women talked a lot about religion; it was acceptable to let them talk of what they were passionate about. In this way the researcher can also obtain information about the various aspects of women's lives in the community. For this process, feminist methodology has a solution in order to maintain the position of the researcher through shared culture (aural, verbal and negotiating) to maintain common interest and build a relationship with the participants.

#### **4.10 Protection and Confidentiality**

Some women in my research talked about the irrelevance of my questions. Some older participants seemed suspicious about what other community members might have said about their lives. Some of them asked me what others had talked about in their interviews. They also asked if their interview was better than theirs. I already understood that some communities can be extremely suspicious of this kind of research and explained that everything related to the study will be confidential. Open communication should be maintained because people want to know what is going on among them, otherwise suspicion

and rumours could be circulated which might affect the research (Denzin 1978 ). Ethnographers and interviewers are always aware of the boundaries and the nature of their relationship with the participants/interviewees. Therefore, they are careful about their role, in particular, their personal and research standpoint in terms of their power and authority to dictate the interview situation (Hesse-Biber et al. 2006).

Protection, control, and confidentiality work together, especially, when researching such communities 'because an unmarried woman could not possibly live alone in their society' (Abu-Lughod, 1988:48), their '*izzat* needed to be safeguarded' (Shah 2001: 54). It is interesting to mention that being an unmarried researcher Shah's *izzat* was safeguarded by a 'chaperone'<sup>95</sup> (Shah 2001: 54) in the absence of her family members, because she used to be accompanied by her family male members, whenever she conducted her field work. Likewise the 'Haj' protected Abu-Lughod (1988) in Egypt as a 'daughter' (Abu-Lughod 1988). Similarly Parminder Bhachu researching on the Sikh community in East London, was treated as a 'family daughter' (cited from Shah 2001: 45). I was asked many times by my gatekeeper if everything was alright with me in the community.

Confidentiality is very important in social research. Some participants found it distressing to talk about and recall their personal, private, and intimate issues. I assured them that confidentiality would be maintained, and that I would not disclose their life experiences, names and identities. I promised that their personal information would be destroyed upon completion of my degree.

#### **4.11 Obtaining informed Consent**

Initially, I prepared the consent sheet along with my research information in English and Urdu for the informants (see appendix). The participants had been given a chance to ask questions about the research and also told to feel free to decline if they were not happy to answer my questions. One male participant stopped at the middle of the conversation and two participants stopped (talking about family's behaviour/treatment) because it was upsetting for them to continue relating how and why they had been abused and treated by males in their lifetime.

Most of the middle aged participants were not interested in taking the information sheets; rather they preferred that I explained it to them. A few of the young participants did ask about

---

<sup>95</sup> For full discussion see Shah 2001:55

the research. They said that they had been told by my gatekeeper that it was fine to give me interviews. They allowed me to ask whatever I needed to. However, they put me in a difficult position by not taking the information sheets, although I explained in the beginning of each interview, that they could opt out from the interview at any time if they felt uneasy over my questions. I was a bit concerned about how to follow procedure and make them become involved in the research enquiry. I did not want to take any risks. Some of my participants, after having given me the interviews, had become my key informants, and arranged other informants for me. They also told other participants about their experience of the interview which they had given to me. Interviews were recorded and the participants were asked for their consent. Only two participants were unhappy with the voice recording, so I took notes.

#### **4.12 Rapport: A Delicate Balancing Act**

Rapport is an 'accepted and warm relationship between informants and researchers, it was thus something I should not take for granted despite being an insider; all I could claim was an 'imperfect rapport' (Parameswaran 2006: 358).

Parameswaran believes that it is possible for the researcher not to develop a warm and acceptable relationship with the senior informants in her fieldwork. Her position might be that of an insider, but she emphasised that it is not necessary for a researcher to achieve an ideal position while dealing with the participants. The opposite could also be the case: one should be prepared to accept failures, dilemmas, and successes during the research process. It is not always an ideal situation to get accepted into the new situation.

Turnbull says during the fieldwork 'you reach inside' (cited from Bernard 2002: 346). You also get observed and give up the 'old, narrow, limited self, discovering the new self that is right and proper in the new context' (cited from Bernard 2002: 346) which works for both sides. Achieving rapport between interviewer and respondent is a 'delicate balancing act' (Bryman 2004: 19) which Turnbull believe cannot be perfect as it reaches into 'ourselves more deeply; the conscious subjectivity' level (cited from Bernard 2002: 7). We sometimes face unexpected situations during our observation or enquiry process. Therefore, Alan Bryman pointed out that 'once people trust you not to betray their confidence, then you will get all information from them' (Bryman 2004: 346).

Zahida Shah's study in Luton<sup>96</sup> shows that her participants were 'keen to know her father's origin'; they asked about her father's details because they might have wanted to trace her background. In her position, it was very important because she was unmarried (Shah 2001: 58).

This is equally difficult for a woman, who does not live with her husband, as people get judged more about their lives. I introduced myself to my participants as a PhD student and also talked about my research topic<sup>97</sup> to the head of the centre. I asked if I could work in her centre as a volunteer. I intended to help women by assisting them with computer<sup>98</sup> skills and she happily agreed. Apart from the middle aged group, a few young women and two men knew that there was an arrangement for computer access and support in the centre. Later on, I found two young women who had recently arrived from Pakistan for their marriages to be settled, and were desperately looking for support to cope with the new environment. Their main problem was the need to discuss their miserable situation but did not want to do so with a person from the same locality or community. Both women were suffering from culture shock and facing cold responses from their new family and in-laws. They asked for my help to provide them with information about some centres so that they could learn some social skills. Sometimes, I took them to do their personal shopping.

For the first few months, I was busy and things went well. The women were very excited; every week they started from the beginning and then by the next week they had completely forgotten everything. They started again and felt no hesitation in asking me many times. They were happy, eager and enthusiastic to learn about the internet and word processing. They have had fun when they could send emails and photos through the internet to their close relatives, sisters, daughters and grandchildren. It was a wonderful opportunity to be with the women in order to build rapport with them. Also, it indicated how much they really wanted to engage in different activities as they were fed up with the same routine. A woman used to get computer help from me to compile letters and information in Urdu. She was keen to learn to manage documents in the Urdu language which she used in running her centre and in teaching the Qur'an to local children and adults (women). In return, she used to give me tips (without asking) from Qur'anic verses (*Wazifa*), with full explanations about

---

<sup>96</sup> Very near to Watford usually people share their life issues, visit each other and women prefer to go there for their personal shopping and outings.

<sup>97</sup> My research is mainly about British Pakistani women's lives. I want to know about their perception of family honour.

<sup>98</sup> Well-equipped computer room in the centre with all facilities, well furnished, printer, scanner, internet, phone and software in Urdu version.

which *wazifa* would be helpful to protect children from bad Western influences, and which one would make them obedient towards their community, elders and parents, and which *wazifa* is good for *rizk and rozi*, (economic prosperity and better jobs). She also invited me to attend her Islamic study circle in her home and to join the women's Islamic conference in London and Luton, which I attended. She also expected me to support her in getting funding from local authorities to run her Islamic school, and to explore whether another group could get funding too, on account of its clever approach because it was closer to the authorities and not because it was better than hers.

When I became familiar with them, I asked them to participate in my research and share their life experiences. I spent six months at the community centre, where I used to go into the kitchen to help out making cups of tea etc. doing exercises with them, eating lunch with them, and listening to the Qur'anic verses and *Tafseer* (interpretation) and chatting with them. At a certain point, the computer room would become a confidential room for taking my research interviews where I took almost 20 interviews. When I left the centre a few women were very upset and asked me to visit them again, as they still wanted to learn computer skills. They have had fun and enjoyed their time with me<sup>99</sup>. They used to introduce me as 'our computer teacher'.

Once, when I asked Mrs Shah to introduce my research to the group, she announced to the other women in a funny manner; '*dekho ye honour par interview leena chah rahi hai*', 'look she wants to interview you on honour'. She announced to them that even good English people trained their daughters' on honour values. What is wrong with practicing honour norms in our families and teaching our girls to behave accordingly? She criticized and undermined me in a strange way. In this regard, Parameswaran relates her account of the failure in the field. It was important for her to take an interview from the booksellers in India to know about the impact of Western romantic novels on young female readers. The bookseller gave her a warm welcome because she was a foreign returnee and from a noble family, but he did not approve of the research she was doing. For the bookseller her work was highly unrespectable. Therefore, in the end he did not give her an interview and tried to make her realise that she was wasting her time in an inappropriate area (Parameswaran 2006). Likewise, Mrs Shah did not approve of my work and did not contribute to it.

---

<sup>99</sup> They enjoyed the change, which was different and an empowering experience.

Visweswaran suggested that a 'feminist should write about failures in ethnography not just add to the feminist manual on methodology because 'failures' are as much part of the process of knowledge as are our oft-heralded ' successes' (cited from Parameswaran 2006: 366). Similarly, Parameswaran says that 'it is important that we begin to reflect on dilemmas, silences, failures, and successes in doing qualitative research'(Parameswaran 2006: 366).

Researchers have to accept and be prepared for them. I would call it my 'success' that I got warmth from many informants, young and old. I would also admit that it was my 'failure' and 'dilemma' that I did not gain the trust of Mrs Shah. She was protective like the '*Haj*' who wanted to protect Lila Abu-Lughod. The '*Haj*' had the authority to decide on her behalf because she used to live with him and he was supposed to protect her according to the cultural norms (Abu-Lughod 1988). In my case, I was not under Mrs Shah's protection or living with her; however, she was only a resource provided by someone from the community her check on me was that whether I was a good Muslim having appropriate and modest behaviour to or nor. Once Mrs Shah asked me seriously why I went to different people's houses and to the laundry factory; why I had announced the information about my project at *Juma* (Friday) prayers in the Mosque to get access to the males and process their interviews in the centre; how would they know what kind of a woman I was? She never gave me a chance to reply, therefore, it was highly confusing. It was a 'problem raised by the sense of unauthenticity or hypocrisy I sometimes experienced, because I was only partially what and who I said I was' (Abu-Lughod 1988: 148). I realised how serious my dilemma was as 'I was in the peculiar situation of being neither completely a cultural insider, nor a total outsider' (Abu-Lughod 1988: 141). I did not realise that I was under her protection, which worked in an illogical way.

#### **4.13 Locating Instances and Generating Material**

Ann Gray, believes that the feminist ethnographic method includes 'evidence', 'information' and 'proof' which expands by consulting research field notes, participatory observation, diaries, autobiographies, including visual textual analysis etc... (Gray 2005: 79). Most significantly, applying useful and relevant sets of questions followed by chosen research methods helped me to design the project. Such procedure facilitated gaining access for me, building a rapport and, finally, interpreting and analysing the reliably obtained data.



Participatory observation, interviews, and textual analysis are the key elements in ethnographic research. Therefore, I applied mixed methods: life history, un-structured and participatory observation, short conversations recorded in the field notes, data handled either by transcriptions of tapes or recorded interviews or notes of unrecorded interviews. Some individuals were visited and interviewed more than once. At the beginning of the interview process I was more structured, but slowly I gained the confidence necessary to allow participants to be at ease with whatever they wanted to talk about. I often gathered material support for the process to understand, interpret, decode, and analyse data till the completion of the process.

The observation of the participants is the central method of ethnography as Thornton suggests that 'what people *do* rather than what they say'? (cited from Gray 2005: 83). During the process of gathering my data I had started doing volunteer work in the community centre, where I was both a service provider and a service user. I regularly attended the women's private religious cum social gatherings. My participation as an observer helped me to observe them closely, to learn how they interacted with each other and what were their concerns, issues and problems. Paul Willis has used the term 'just being around' (cited from Gray 2005: 81), similarly, Hammersley and Atkinson state that 'the term ethnography and participant observation, are synonymous' (cited from Gray 2005: 82). Further, they explain that by using this method the researcher goes beyond talking to the actor. Such a method provides a 'descriptive context' which can enrich the researcher's interview techniques, providing useful information for more meaning and depth. For example, personal appearance: clothing, style, and demeanour; setting: at home or the work place; a person's standing in relation to authority, and so on (cited from Gray 2005: 83). Such information about the specific participant helps the researcher in interpretation and analysis. In expansion, the researcher must ask him or herself what his or her role would be in participating in such activities, and what role he or she would play in order to understand or become involved in the activities of potential participants (Gray 2005: 82).

#### **4.14 In-depth Interviews**

The in-depth interview is issue oriented; this method explores particular topics. Therefore, I used this method to seek insight into the issues by trying to obtain a subjective understanding of the participants 'live experiences', a set of evidences, contexts, and their deep concerns about the issues (Hesse-Biber et al. 2006). After a few pilot interviews, I had decided to

include cultural biographies because I found women were more comfortable with that method. According to Summerfield, 'the life stories were designed to examine the links between gender, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity and discourse, thus establishing a relationship between the sense of who we are, how we experience particular events and ways of life, and what available repertoires we have to construct our version of events' (cited from Gray 2005: 165).

Initially a list of interview questions, a line of inquiry was prepared to set the topics for the pilot interviews. The pilot stage was important for exploring the feasibility of participant observation. This was helpful to assess the validity of the questions. Later on, I used it as an aide-memoire to keep in my mind before starting the interview. The question list helped me as an interview question guide. Few questions were related to the practice of honour and treatment by the family in childhood. Most of the participants found it difficult to define. I knew that these were not easy questions to answer. Few of them felt uneasy in continuing the conversation during that phase. They stopped talking about the practice of honour value in their lives. I was aware of their concern that 'honour' is difficult to define; then, I changed the strategy asking them about their early life and their family values. I engaged them in conversation about their life experiences and their childhood, youth, marriage and community in terms of family and community values. This was like a life history and this method went well. I intentionally avoided the term 'honour' because most of the young women were using the term 'respect', 'reputation', few of them used the term '*izzat* and *beizti*' which means 'honour and shame'

It was amazing how, through the responses of the participants who gave me interviews in English, my questions evolved. I learnt how to use terms which were relevant to my research. In this way I picked up on the points and terms with which they felt comfortable. The main reason was that I was not familiar with English speakers, especially young people, and probably this was the same for them on account of my accent. Also it was the first time for me, and they were not very familiar with the words I was using in formulating my questions and in conversation.

Initially, my questions were more specific, based on specific terminology like *biraderi*, (caste) *badnami*, (bad reputation) and *quoom* (*zat* or tribe), which were complex for them to understand then I simplified them. I first asked about those issues were the participant felt easy and comfortable. Some interviews developed as a life story and unstructured methods succeeded more with elderly participants. The unstructured method meant that I had minimum control on the questions, but I led them by keeping my topic on the track

(Hesse-Biber et al. 2006: 115). For the young participants (female) I mostly used semi-structured methods focused on in-depth questions with a specific interview guide and a list of written questions. I used to leave the room, so they could talk freely on related topics. For example, they talked about, community gossips, as a form of social control, the *hijab* and marriage; these were the topics individuals felt strongly and passionately about. Through the semi-structured method we shared different aspects in relation to the asked questions. The problem which I faced was that most participants did not feel comfortable talking about honour. I knew that honour was a vast and abstract concept. Marriage, the body, modesty in dress and not wearing makeup were the main topics on which they all had something to say.

I took interviews from the males. Although it was not in my initial agenda to include men in my studies as women are more affected by the cultural practices, because of the context of my research, males were more conventional about the practice of honour and the issue of reputation in the community than the females, and they derive honour from women's life. I decided, therefore, to include them in order to learn what they had to say regarding their status and male prestige in the community. Why honour was an identity factor for them especially in the West? Mckee and O'Brien (cited from Letherby 2003: 75) and Letherby have found it difficult to recruit men for their study. Mckee and O'Brien report that 'it is often difficult to get men to talk, especially about family matters, and thus men generally have less to say' (cited from Letherby 2003: 75). It is also important to mention that the issues of power or safety within the research process are also relevant if women conduct research on men.

Interestingly, most of my male participants were very interested to talk about their early settlements in the United Kingdom. They were less concerned about children, and family or community values and norms. However, a couple of interviews were more focused on the subject of men's control to enhance their power in the community; they gave different interpretations and expressed shallow ideas about women and the community. One interview was included from a white male police officer with a long history of working with the Watford Pakistani community. Another interview was conducted with an Indian Muslim female teacher whose parents and young women had good interaction because of her profession. She also helped people to get good proposals for their children. Therefore, she socializes a great deal within the Pakistani community. The vast majority live in the same area: however, their communal activities, education and professional achievements and social life were diverse.

My Initial plan was to take some interviews from the victims of honour crimes, but I found, through practitioners (police and community centres, who deal with domestic violence) that it is not easy to obtain access to them because most of them (women) are in refuge centres based all over Britain. Therefore, I abandoned the idea of trying to access them. Still, I have contacted some women who had been abused by their family. Some lived alone and some were struggling to get divorced. They promised to participate in my research, but at one point they refused, saying that they were not happy to talk about upsetting matters. They were also apprehensive that confidentiality might be breached, because this had happened to them in the past. They did not want to get into trouble.

Whenever I take notes after an interview, meeting, or semi participatory visit, I ask myself why I am passionate about doing research on such a sensitive issue. After each visit I wrote how I felt and why I felt like that; were there any mutual goals which both participants and I were trying to achieve? My first intention was to do research on women in Pakistan. But then I felt I had no geographical contact with them. Probably I knew the women back home by face or name but is there any difference between them and the women I meet here? I feel both have the same feelings, emotions, and aspirations having had the same issues in their lives. Pakistani women in Pakistan are hospitable, modest and respectable; those in Britain are the same. The women I met here also wanted to take control of their lives by striving to break the taboos and to negotiate power and position in society. When I came across such ideas I could feel a deep connection with them, therefore, I 'knew what my respondents [wanted] me to write' (Letherby 2003: 117).

#### **4.15 Ethnographic Data**

##### **Life History, Semi-Structured and In-depth interviews**

###### **Box1.1**

###### **➤ Research Key Questions**

- What is British-Pakistani's (mainly women's) perception about the concept of honour?
- In what ways are the honour norms reproduced and reinforced in the new Diaspora (British born and brought up Pakistani children) in Watford?
- What are honour crimes? Do they exist among the British Pakistanis in Watford?

**Box 1.2****➤ In-depth Biographical Interview Questions**

- Talk about your childhood, school education and the role of your parents in your early life.
- Talk about your teenage years, employment and marriage in terms of family values.
- Talk about your role in the community and how do you see the community in terms of cultural/family values?

**Box 1.3****➤ In-depth issue-oriented interview Questions**

-Tell me about your life and what your life was when you were young (childhood and teenage time).

-Did you go to school- If no, do you know why not? Did anyone want you to go to school-If yes, for how long? Did you enjoy school? Why did you stop when you stopped?

-Are you married? Tell me the story of how you got married? Who was involved at the arrangements? Looking back, do you think it was the right time for marriage?

-Tell me about family's way of thinking about the idea of *izzat*. How important are family traditions to you right now? Have they always been that way?

-Who reminded you (mother/father) more often to follow family norms and to protect family honour and reputation?

-Are you concerned about the family reputation and *bara naam* high social status? How important do you think family reputation is?

-Did your family make you wear modest clothes and cover your body properly? Why/why not?

-What do you think of the practice of covering the head in front of male family members?

-If you happen to wear Western clothes, what will happen and how will your family react?

-Do you have any children? Do they do what they are told by their elders in terms of family traditions? In what ways?

-Are the opinions of the community equally important for everyone in your family? Who cares most? Who cares least?

-Who is most responsible to protect norms in a family? Who is most responsible (mother/father) for adherence to community norms?

-Do you feel comfortable speaking with your elders/parents about your decision in your life?

-Do you make choices for your life?

if yes, how did your parents understand them? if not how did you try to make them understand?

-Do you think that [among Pakistanis] family/community is given more importance than individuals? Why/why not?

#### 4.16 The Sampling and the Labelling of the Sub-group

It is not necessary to study a whole population to find out about the general issues of that population. We can get an in-depth understanding and meaning of issues by working even on a small sample of between eighteen and fifty participants. The imperative process is concerned with how participants behave and act in different settings, while they are participating in the research. Many researchers believe that small samples are sufficient for arriving at genuine findings. Therefore, for methods using the qualitative approaches, a smaller sample is more convenient to manage and sufficient for obtaining first hand information. Marta Bolognani states; ‘that demands a very high level of involvement from the researcher in order to obtain first hand information’ (Moore 2005: 45). Researchers need to be committed and to devote a great deal of time in setting up even a few in-depth interviews. In order to start the snowballing process, the sampling strategy took into account the representative data from different generations, and the dates when they settled in Watford. It took one year and six months (2008-2010) to complete the field work. The participants consisted of thirteen males and thirty-eight females of Pakistani origin, ranging in age between 16 and 70 years. All were Muslims from different walks of life, belonging to different sects or castes and *biraderi* systems. In this presentation, three sample groups were initially identified; young, middle-aged, and older females and males.

##### 4.16.1 Data Analysis

Data was collected through a mixture of different kinds of research tools. Interviews were completed on the whole without difficulties. While the main line of investigation is honour culture amongst the members of the Pakistani community in Watford, this research incorporated new themes as they emerged during the process. The new themes were discovered from the participants’ contributions. They helped in producing a new discourse, new concepts, and therefore shaped the thematic structure of the present research.

It is worth mentioning that on some occasions I noticed that some of my participants found it difficult to articulate their thoughts when talking about the notion of *izzat* in the abstract, which is a deep and very vast concept, which many people find difficult to define (it seemed to be a strange word for them). Although this is central to my research, for them it seemed rather daunting and problematic, as is the case with notions of political Islam, *hijab*, terrorism and Pakistani ethnicity etc. A well educated woman asked what my research was about, and when I said it was about the perception of honour and its practice in the family and

the community, I promptly understood her anxious gestures. She replied, ‘you mean honour-killing, but it is not here, it is in Pakistan’. Where does this kind of feeling come from? Why do Pakistani people see things in a negative light in the context of their country of origin? There is a strong post-colonial context for such feelings. A middle-aged woman told me that it happened in Sindh (she knew that I am a Sindhi) but not in Punjab<sup>100</sup>. Punjabi women told me (middle-aged) it happened in Kotli, and Mirpuri women said it happened in the North of England in Bradford, Dewsbury, and Scotland, but not in Luton or Watford. So the term ‘honour’ is directly linked to honour-killing which carries a bad image.

Throughout the data collection stage I was very concerned to convey to the participants the meaning of my research and what I was hoping to achieve with them. Most of them seemed to be more concerned and preoccupied with formulating their own identity by engaging in different kinds of activities, mainly revolving around performing Islam as a faith. They pretended that they knew nothing about *izzat* or family honour. It was quite hard to make them talk openly and clearly about it. I think they were right in one way. My scholarly knowledge suggests that ‘honour’ *per se* is an abstract notion and the concepts central to our lives may be hard to define.

#### 4.16.2 Participants’ Observation

In qualitative research, the observation of individuals/ participants is very important (Bernard 2002). It is not only about taking interviews from them but as a researcher I needed to understand the individuals’ way of life in relation to my research enquiry. Hence, my ongoing data collection was more beneficial when I included participants’ observations in it. Twice I went with them a full day trip to spend much time with them. It helped me to contextualize and develop my interest which is a necessary part of ethnography (Bryman, 2004).

As a participant observer, I established good contacts with my participants and visited their homes frequently, learning Qur’anic verses and *tajweed* from them and participating in cooking a new Brit-Pak curry with mixed *garam-masala* and English herbs and spices. One of the participants’ daughter told me that her ‘mum makes ‘yummy curry’; it has the school’s flavour and a home taste’. During my field work I attended almost all seasonal holy celebrations of both sects: *shia* and *sunni*, *Mujlis*<sup>101</sup> in *Imam Barghah* and

<sup>100</sup> She described it as if Pakistan only means Punjab

<sup>101</sup> Mujlis is a Shiea’ holy celebration, which revives the history of Imam Husain and Ali.

*Millad-u-Nabi*<sup>102</sup> mostly in the participants' houses. I became familiar with them through such activities (mainly of middle aged women) and gained their confidence and trust.

I made a systematic record of day-to-day interactions, observations and informal conversations. I kept field notes (written and recorded) as part of an iterative process (Bryman 2004), which helped me to carry on with my research and further to analyse and discuss it in-depth. The attitude of the participants before, during and after the interview, expressed something new each time. For example, while I was taking an interview from one of my participants, who was 23 years old, she seemed to behave very awkwardly. She was wearing a big shawl, which covered her whole body; I could only see her hands and face; even her feet were not visible. She was sat in a strange, docile and humble way. When her father arrived, she suddenly stopped talking for few minutes then continued in a whispering tone. She seemed more self-conscious and careful in the presence of her father. However, even when he was not present in the room where we were sitting, she seemed uncomfortable.

I did not want to become a stranger to the participants after the completion of my field work. My long term role as participant-observer had afforded me a chance to be part of their community. Some of them became my friends (although they did not participate in my research, they provided me with good contacts and occasional information). A couple of male participants maintained good contact with me, as well as the person who worked for the community, as a result of whose intervention I was given attention and importance by people who held him in high regard. The fact that they acknowledge my research, and that I should have become part of their community, gives me a sense of fulfilment. Whenever I write or think about their participation in my field research I feel they are still sitting around me.

#### **4.17 Summary**

British Pakistani women are a neglected area of research in Britain. My investigation showed that the Watford British Pakistani community has not been researched before on this subject. This project is, therefore, a pioneer work to which the opportunity to research both males and females, has imparted a double impact, though this research mainly focuses on women.

After 9/11, Muslim communities have been judged in a critical way in the West. Issues relating to honour and honour crimes are considered crucial among Muslim migrants. Therefore, my exploration into the concept of honour has developed its own pathway to

---

<sup>102</sup> Sunni's celebrate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.



discovering many variables: gender, identity, religion, discrimination, education, and social standing of the women in their localities/*biraderi*. However, marriage and modesty were the core themes which have been highlighted for the understanding of honour issues in daily life.

Applying a qualitative research method in conjunction with a feminist approach to recruit people for the project was a challenging task. Initially, the participants were concerned about the research, but in time they felt comfortable with contributing while talking about their daily lives, issues, and activities. The involvement of both genders across all age groups was a valuable contribution to this research.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The Watfordian Pakistanis**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to analyse the activities, issues and concerns of Watfordian Pakistanis. The pioneer generation lives a sad and uncertain life, while the life of the British born generation vacillates between the extreme ends of two cultures: the Western and the Pakistani. The latter is influenced by various values: cultural values, Muslim values, and Western values. Most of the young adults show a dislike for Pakistani culture, though they do not show any particular preference for Western culture either, which indicates that they are more inclined to manifest their own identity. For that they need the understanding of family, but most parents are still uncertain. Youngsters are beset with the difficult task of challenging and negotiating old customs.

#### **5.2 Three Generations of Watfordian Pakistanis**

This research will focus on three generations of Watfordian Pakistanis: the first generation (pioneer); the second generation, who were born in Pakistan and brought up in the United Kingdom; and the third generation, which is believed to be the first generation of British Pakistanis, who were born in the United Kingdom from the mid-1960s onwards.

Most of the pioneer members are now somewhere between their late sixties and early nineties. They believe that they are divided: ‘spiritually we are there and physically we are a part of this environment’ (participant). The pioneer Watfordian Pakistanis have a strong desire to go back; however, the reality is that it is very difficult to make such a decision at this stage. They believe that they have done a lot for their children and extended families, and now their only interest is to see them (children) prospering and being properly looked after by their children. They believe that it is now time to enjoy the fruit of their efforts because ‘when they (children) needed us we were there for them now it is our turn, they have to look after us’ (participant). This desire is not based on a simple notion of reciprocity; the latent idea is to observe how family values are being maintained and transferred to the next generation. There is a discrepancy between what the new generation gets and what youngsters are expecting to get from their elders.

Initially, we were supposed to go back but things changed and we became trapped. After the birth of our children we thought about their education and then their future. Now in this old age we think it would have been good to take a step back in time. (Zahida)

They were not only trapped due their efforts to provide for their children's education and future but most of them were expected to settle down with their extended families. It is believed that 'it is the nature of immigrants; once people leave their country they will never go back to their original country. They can migrate to another country but will never return to their own country' (Participant).

The second generation lived under various pressures. Since the pioneer generation was scared that their children might lose family and cultural values, parents tried to control their children by giving them domestic duties. They had made up their minds that their daughters would be married back home or their husbands would come from Pakistan, so that the cultural values could be observed properly. The parents were concerned that once their children adopted Western life, it would be hard to guide them back to their own values. Because of this, the pioneer generation married their children into their extended families as 'Islam permits marriage with a wide range of close kin and alliances, and it seems that the majority of Pakistani marriages continue to take place within the *biradari*' (Werbner 2007: 169). Thus, in order to apply that strategy, conformity was demanded from the second generation and the pioneer generation was determined to implement it successfully.

The second generation related that they had been asked to perform in a certain manner inside and outside the home. A few of them said that their parents did not have time to talk to them about their lives. Therefore, they passed through a very lonely phase in which a huge communication gap existed between them and their parents. Most of the families still follow the same pattern of daily life. So, it was not easy for the researcher to ask questions or discuss personal issues with them. I would call the second generation a 'neglected generation', who struggled to survive between allegiances to their parents and to their cultural norms, in a process which compromised their real needs. They were more obedient and lived according to what they had been told. This was the foremost cause of social break down, because ultimately some of them could not maintain a balance between the inner and outer worlds.

The British-born generation, ranges between thirty five to sixteen years old. This generation is called by my participants 'a privileged generation'. They are seen as being in control of their lives to a great extent; however, there is still a long way to go to real freedom. They are confident and expressive and more aware of the issues that affect them. They are even more capable of negotiating and addressing their choices to their parents.

### 5.3 An Overview of the Watfordian Pakistanis

The situation in the Watford Pakistani community is very interesting, especially as their (relative) proximity to London provides them with various opportunities to explore themselves. Many young (school/college age) people go to London to have fun and enjoy their freedom because it is outside their immediate vicinity. London also provides a refuge for the rebels (youngsters) who disappear and involve themselves in drugs, crime and live in isolation. Similarly, many people have had the opportunity of higher education and studies in good universities in London. Interestingly, their experiences at university have made some of them very passionate about their religion. They mainly attach themselves to Islamic groups, which strengthens their Muslim self-identification in particular ways. Some others have established families after returning from university and have now become too busy to participate in Islamic groups' activities in Watford. However, women, young and old people attend *dars* or Islamic study circles to learn Arabic and *Tajweed* (recitation of the Quran), both in formally organized groups run by the *Idara-e-Marouf* in London, and also informally in private study circles. There are about six study-cum-social circles run by women privately at their homes, where only women who belong to *Sunni* sects participate. They call them *dars* (Islamic lesson) in which they sit together and listen to Islamic teachings from one of the experts or from tape recordings then discuss them. During more than half the time of their meeting, they talk about current affairs concerning their community, mainly marriage and modesty issues of young people. Some women participate in the *Juma Nimaz* (the Friday prayers) in the local mosques. Most of the *Shi'a* women regularly attend *Imam Bargah* (Shi'a Mosque to perform prayers), where young women participate as volunteers to develop the youth community. I have seen many young disturbed women visiting the local community centres seeking professional advice.

Most of the younger people in Watford do not respect the *imams* in the mosques. They claim that the imams are self-serving, blindly following the rituals without helping the community. They, therefore, prefer to organize their own faith circles and activities. The imams say that the young people are too radical and it is hard to accommodate them. *Imams* and some senior citizens who contribute to building mosques feel that the youngsters might ruin the whole setup, in which they have invested a lot of resources. It is, however, obvious that the mosques do not play an active role in the development of the community. The

mothers, on the other hand, appreciate that, saying; *hamare bachhion ne hamin alim banaya hay* ('it is from our children that we have acquired Islamic knowledge'). Young people's assertive articulations of Islam have challenged their parents to think about their Muslim identities in new ways. This sets the context for contestations around *izzat* in Watford. Young people are fiercely critical of Pakistani culture and customs and want to show this to their parents. They argue that certain restrictions are to do with 'Pakistani culture' and not with Islam and that there is nothing wrong with participating in education, employment, driving, etc. At the same time, they want to please their parents so they may go along with their wishes and expectations for the time being. They are also happy to maintain restrictions which are established by Islam e.g. not having boyfriends.

Zaheer, 23 years old, works as a volunteer for a Muslim youth programme. He believes that 70 per cent of British Muslims are from Azad Kashmir. Kashmiris brought a 'backward not forward culture when they came here'. They are a 'very close community — inward and docile'. They faced all sorts of racism but 'we tolerate, we don't report to the authorities'. Yousif, another participant, raised the same question:

Why don't we report? What is lacking in us? Is there any serious issue which makes us remain silent? We are overwhelmed with various issues, even then why do our communities not support each other? Other communities raise their voice even if they have minor issues. Are we divided already? We have neither leadership qualities, nor any skill to fight for our rights. We cannot develop our community only by having a few good people—*biraderi* is ruining the lives of our young adults. Youngsters are being badly treated and abused (emotionally, physically and spiritually) by their elders. It is sad. As a consequence, they are taking a risky path by getting involved in criminal activities; prostitution, drugs etc. They are hurt from inside. I think it is a *real* pain for them. Because of their vulnerability, other religions are taking advantage of them. So they are changing their '*deen*' faith. Why is it happening, because parents and community believe in power and position? For them money and status mean a lot.

Such people, as Yousif reiterates, get positions mainly through cultural beliefs, yet they do not even hesitate in getting their children involved in wrong activities in order to raise their status.

...even their daughters deal with drugs. They accept it. So *halal* and *haram* income become one. When *halal* and *haram* income become one, there are consequences, either short term or long term. It is very unfortunate. It upsets me the most. (Zaheer)

Zaheer raised the question of illegal income, which is an outcome of insatiable greed. It makes them seek more and more and compete with their fellow community members. As *izzat* is derived from social and monetary status, they employ every possible means to achieve it.

People believe that if their children marry in the same *biraderi*, they can retain their *izzat* along with their status in the community. However, imposing this attitude leads to social breakdown in the community. Issues such as lack of education, poverty, domestic abuse and social breakdown worry Zaheer. He says:

You can see the lot of *bladely*<sup>103</sup> (*biraderi*) system and values, which is fine but that's not in the Qur'an. As Muslims we should be able to let it go and should be able to get over with it now. This is not something that is in the Quran. That is manmade. You see a lot of females now in refuge and this is very unfortunate. In the absence of spiritual, emotional and physical support, they have turned into prostitutes, lap dancers, and they have got themselves involved in drugs, alcohol and smoking.

Zaheer mentions the qualities of a good Muslim, which for him are sadly absent in this community. Why are they like that? Yousif and Rafeeq believe that the problem with the Pakistani Kashmiri community is that of inherent insecurity and poverty. They have lived through ages in insecurity and unsustainable lives; they did not have a grounded community back home, nor even a good experience in Britain upon their arrival. They have been abused and used as a 'tool', they have been marginalized, and they faced racism and other inhumane treatment from the White community. Therefore, they have constantly lived in a transitory situation, which was compounded by the preoccupation with supporting extended families to settle them in the United Kingdom, and as a result they regressed more and more 'into their skin'. It is shocking, 'to see how they oppress women, but they do so because it makes them feel secure, which is very painful' (participant). However, one has to accept the 'psyche' of these people and explore the reasons behind their acts. Collecting wealth by improper means could be one of the reasons as it brings them power and status, but it can be a cause of moral and intellectual deprivation which makes them psychologically weaker and distressed. They want to show off their position and pass on their power, land and property to young adults who, in return, are compelled to keep their group identity intact by marrying into the same group. It is mostly grandparents who hatch the agenda and craft conspiracies,<sup>104</sup> for example, by saying that it was their dream to form a tie between two sons by getting their children married to each other. In this way older people's intentions are being served.

Zaheer mentioned that such behaviour ruin young adults' lives. Though the families suffer in the end they do not accept the reality. Zaheer differentiates between the vision of both generations by saying that 'one is living in denial, in illusion, in fantasy, for them it is an

<sup>103</sup> In Kashmiri language.

<sup>104</sup> Sometimes, even if grandparents are not alive, people use them by saying that it was their wish that such and such should marry with so and so. They say that it will give the deceased peace in heaven, if their wish would be fulfilled.

ideal world, but for the other it is not.’ He stressed the reality that irrational behaviour has to be dealt with in a logical manner.

### **5.3.1 Rules and Responsibilities**

Many issues were explored regarding rights and responsibilities: for example, conflicts and clashes between parents and children, husband and wife, between young adults and between community leaders in their daily lives. The main crux of such conflicts was identified to be differences in ideology, beliefs, lack of education and understanding, the irresponsible behaviour of parents, negation of human rights, class differences, and gender discrimination. Such issues are the main reasons for the failure of the community. Each participant has shown his/her diverse experiences with living in the same community. Some were keen to support the community in order to see it flourishing but certain failures and pitfalls were also highlighted. Community contribution, rules, and responsibilities are the means to develop a prosperous community, and in this respect, the concerns of young adults are equally significant. The generation gap between old and new is a natural phenomenon; however, the new community reflects upon the old one in an innovative way. The gap that exists between the new and old generations of the Pakistani community is a ‘cultural gap’, which can prove to be very dangerous if not addressed properly.

To reinforce honour values, British-born young women ‘must be supervised’ (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 267), an action which both mothers and fathers were committed to doing. They both had defined roles: ‘mum keeps girls intact’ and ‘dad guides us saying they (the English) are different from us’ (participant). Mothers were bound to define that which was the difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’. It was the mothers’ role not only to teach their daughters domestic chores but also to maintain a distance from Western values. Most mothers were found to be clever, concerned, and committed to keeping a distance between Western influence and their daughters. The same situation has been noticed in the mothers of Maghrebi migrants who constantly convince their daughters not to dishonour their father saying; ‘your father trusts you, do not bring him dishonour! Or ‘you are privileged compared to other girls, your father trusts you, you must not disappoint us, you must prove that we were right to trust you and this confidence is well deserved’ (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 269). Most of the young women follow their parents’ rules and were careful not to shake their confidence by dishonouring them.

### 5.3.2 Community Concerns

According to some participants, the problems and issues in the communities are similar all over the United Kingdom, and wherever Pakistanis live in the West. Shafeeq's contribution in this regard is valuable and worth mentioning. He has indicated many shocking issues that exist between parents and young adults with deep concern. He does not seem happy about the parental role in the community. In his view 'communities can't be built in this way'; in order for a community to develop, one has to make changes in one's life, one needs to work with dedication and honesty, get education and other skills, and should get involved with and adjust into the new community. What does he mean by a new community? He suggests that there should be a connection between the two generations: the young adults and the elders so that they can live a harmonious life. However, this is not the reality at the moment; hence shocking incidents occur and we cannot just ignore them.

Shafeeq says; 'women are treated brutally and in an inhumane way here and back there and these are *our* issues and we are responsible for them as a community'. For him education can force someone to behave responsibly. Education gives one the ability to judge the situation or to plan a strategy. In short, it gives one a vision. 'If parents are not thinking about their self-development, how would they think about the rights of their children? Children's rights and parents' responsibilities are interrelated phenomena, which need careful consideration but unfortunately it is lacking', he says.

When Pakistanis arrived, most of them did not have any education or skills; moreover, 'women were worse than men'. Most of them were and still are preoccupied with 'baggage'<sup>105</sup>, a baggage of 20-30 years of family conflicts. Their minds are still full of such 'baggage', preventing them from giving considered guidelines to their young adults. When their children reach adulthood, they face a 'generation gap', which needs to be addressed. It is sad that the parents have neither the capacity to understand their children's issues nor the skills to deal with them. The problem is that most of them have never dealt technically with the demands of the generation-gap.

It is extremely important to note that both parents and children have faced multiple gaps: the generation gap, the cultural gap, the gap that exists between the culture of Pakistan and the Western culture, living a gap within gap. It needs tolerance and full understanding to

---

<sup>105</sup> He refers to it as 'cultural crap'.



deal with this series of gaps but most of parents do not know how to guide their children, which restricts the process of natural growth in children. Their education and processes of self-development have been affected critically by the lack of understanding on the part of the parents and the huge involvement of cultural and religious obligations. Parents' strict and unapproachable attitude has increased the blind space between them and their children.

Participants raised concerns about the fact that children have different environments at home and at school. They have different life styles and learn a different language from that of their parents. How is it possible for both parties to communicate with and understand each other if they cannot speak and think alike? For children's up bringing 'one has to give something but if one doesn't have anything, than what will one give'. This was the question which Shafeeq raised.

Apart from that, most of the young adults confided that their parents do not have time to spend with them. Sapna stated, 'I think it is important that when you come home, she (mother) should ask me how my day was'. The behaviour of most fathers is also strict and unfriendly. With an unpleasant facial expression Sheeri indicated her frustration with being an eldest daughter: 'I had to fight all the battles'. Parental control and restrictive ideas are hard to bear at a tender age. 'Not to ask questions, not to laugh, not to do this, not to do that': daughters suffered in isolation, frightened, and suppressed. 'Muslim lifestyle is strict' said one participant. Most of the children were left by themselves. Najma says, 'we never enjoyed our childhood, it was blank'. Some families had to live with their relatives which was the hardest part of their lives.

My mum had a lot of trouble with my grandmother. She was not nice to my mum. She used to get beaten up. My mum always worked and my grandparents used to take her salary. Sometimes we didn't eat; we used to go to bed without eating. When my dad started driving a taxi we moved away from them. Then our life got better. (Najma)

The reality was that most of the parents were unable to make a balance between them and their children. Consequently, 'the real problems occurred' and the children took their own directions with some of them getting involved in drugs and some others in crime. Parents keep an eye on their nieces and nephews. They try to support them by engaging them forcefully with their own children. They explain that in this way they can rescue their children from Western influence.

You think of supporting your niece and nephew and for this you even sacrifice your own children. Parents say that we have given birth to you and have brought you up; it is our right to decide about your life partner. (Shafeeq)

Shafeeq believes that Pakistanis who 'care for relatives and want them to grow' settle them in the Britain. They have tried to prove this all their lives but time has proven the opposite; it is unfair to help others at the cost of your own children. It is not only children who suffer the most but parents as well. Zebo states that most parents are suffering from mental and physical illnesses and emotional traumas because children do not listen to them and disregard their wishes: 'Now girls say to their parents, they do not want to marry in Pakistan' which is heartbreaking for 'us'. 'We came here to earn our living but we jeopardised everything we had,' said Sarah sadly.

Time is getting harder for parents; they are sick, weak, getting depressed, having various mental diseases because of tensions. We believe we are supporting them (children, especially daughters) but they choose what they want. That's why we are in tension. Our children do not respect us and our wishes. (Zebo)

Parents use the word 'respect' frequently but never acknowledge that children might have their own 'rights' as well. Zebo says: 'Children want to live at equal level but we try to convince them which they do understand'. But still, parents try to overlook their rights.

Yousif is a professional with a Kashmiri background in his early forties, and has great confidence in himself and his professional siblings because he has been brought up in an educated family with a different ideology. He said, 'We were pushed into education', although his father was a labourer and faced a tough time living in a racist environment in Britain. He was well versed in the philosophy of Islam, so he never believed in caste, class and the *biraderi* system. He just taught his children to carry on with life, advising, 'Do not give up, and just work hard'.

Yousif believes that the *biraderi* system still exists in the United Kingdom, which 'doesn't make you open up to acceptance easily'. He tried to work in the community but 'It is a difficult community because of the *biraderi* system, if someone tries to open the channels of communication; they get suspicious' he says. They think that 'I have some personal interest or greed involved in it'. Yousif says that *biraderi* has its own criteria to judge you: 'First, they look at your position and status; for example, their first question would be, "What is your caste"? Secondly, they will not acknowledge the contribution you have made for the betterment of the community.' The caste factor is very crucial in the community. Yousif also says that, 'The caste system belongs to India but the sad thing is that India has moved on, leaving these ideas behind, but we are still there'. He also observed that if a marriage is arranged within the boundaries of the caste system, the whole *biraderi* will be invited;

however, 'mixed marriages are a failure for the *biraderi* system' participant. Yousif does not fit into the *biraderi*'s criteria because he does not believe in the class system and also because his wife is not originally from Pakistan. Therefore, the community gets more suspicious about why someone with such ideas is taking an interest in community-related issues. It would be great if people could understand the importance of human values. The caste system has restricted their mental development and their ability to grow intellectually and logically, so they live in an illusion;

I don't know what is my caste? As I said we completely don't believe in caste. It is not important to us. What importance you can associate with caste? If you are a land owner in Pakistan or India and you are cleaning the streets of London, then what's the point? To me it makes no difference. I don't judge a person by his/her caste. I judge a person by seeing what kind of human being he is. Whether somebody is black, yellow, Chinese, Jewish, English, Christian, whoever, I would judge the person according to his/her own merit. If someone is a decent person, a good person, he is respectable to me. (Yousif)

People live in a delusion; if they understand the importance of human values then caste means nothing:

There is a widow. She's 36. She asked why she's not allowed to remarry in culture but in an Islamic way. She should be allowed. We have to respect that. But *biraderi* doesn't allow you to do certain things. (Nimra)

It was hard for Nasreen to marry a much older man. He was already married with five children and had lived all his life in England. She had never met him before her marriage. She trusted her family when they said that 'he is *ashraf* (honourable) and will respect you'. Being 'naive,' she was impressed by that notion and agreed to marry him. She believed that everybody needed respect; however, she did not realize the definition of *ashraf*, which works differently in different situations. After her marriage, it took her five years to adjust and understand him. She remained extremely disillusioned and felt lonely, saying, 'Back home we have people all around, here there are no friends, and everybody is busy'. She believed that, 'A wife should always look good in her husband's company,' but he never took her out to socialise, even in the same community. She noted, 'It was strange for him to take me for an outing; he would say, 'What will people say if I take you out. We are *Sadaat* (*Sayyed*)'. They think that if they take their wives for an outing, they will lose respect in the community. The community would say that he is weak and his wife is controlling him. The women who stay at home are considered more respectable, dutiful, and faithful. It means family is *sharif* (respectable).

To keep his values intact, Nasreen's husband forgot the rights of the person who was dependent on him. Living in the West for many decades did not change him in any way nor

did it make any difference to him. She says ‘if you stretch a rubber from any side, it will return to its actual position’. Respect works in this way. Her husband’s behaviour with his English ex-wife who was not a *Sadaat* was normal because she was not supposed to live like *Sadaat* women do. Nasreen believes that it is her right to be looked after by her husband as ‘it was a proper marriage, not a joke’. However, she now feels that it has turned out to be a ‘punishment’.

Zebo declared proudly that, ‘We are Pakistani Muslims; we don’t allow our daughters to live in London by themselves’, (this is considered a taboo). They associate their respectability with the idea of their daughters not living an independent life. Therefore, Zebo’s daughter comes home every day from university. Her daughter has agreed that when her parents make a suitable proposal, she will marry at once. She knows that they will not take into consideration the completion of her degree. However, to her parents’ distress her marriage proposal has not come yet. Zebo is stressed because her husband pressurized her: ‘Let us free ourselves from her responsibility’. Usually women are considered to have a huge responsibility for their daughters’ marriage, but Zebo does not have the confidence to ask for her daughter’s proposal so she lives in *tawakle* (patience) that one day she will get a good proposal for her daughter.

### 5.3.3 Human Rights Issues

Many young female participants have talked about human rights issues. They have experienced that men are more dominant and women are inferior to them and in consequence, they are not given enough respect. Sapna told me that her mother was a teacher back home but when she arrived in Britain she did not fit in because her father did not give her proper support. It is crucial to mention that women are kept silent by telling them that their men have to protect them because they do not know anything about the Western world.

Many young women carry many of questions within their minds, which they are never encouraged to ask; for example, Sheela never questioned her parents even though she had an inquisitive mind. She did not have the courage to ask questions because she was told not to. When her mother called her to Pakistan for holidays, she did not realise that she was planning to get her married without asking her. ‘Of course I wanted to continue with my education, but they never asked me and I never questioned them. I got married; it was like having a dream. I didn’t resist and as in a dream I said okay. I remember that I only said one thing, that I would wear red’. But they did not arrange a red *garara* (wedding dress) ‘in fact they arranged for a

*shalwar kameez* in pink' (Sheela). They excused this by saying that it was her husband's choice. She wanted a small pleasure out of her marriage by having a special wedding dress but she was denied even that. She says, 'It was our life' and 'It is our culture, it's hard isn't it'. Now she is in her middle age and regrets not asking her parents why they married her off without asking her. Why did she not resist and force them to let her complete her education. Now she also realises that there were so many questions which she should have asked her husband but she didn't:

It was like whispers going around. Obviously I didn't talk; whatever I wanted to say the old members of my family, our community would say *shuuuu* (hush expressed in whispers). They said 'what do you think you are, just a girl, you just shut up. You should be quiet as you don't know anything'. (Meera)

In such communities only elders have the right to speak and decide about women's destiny. According to the custom, young girls are expected to listen and obey what they are told. Parents only expect respect from their children.

They do not respect each other. Respecting other people's opinion and views and understanding one another doesn't exist in our culture. We are very judgmental towards others. (Meera)

Meera is concerned about the issue of mutual respect and understanding which she thinks can reduce the level of tension among family and community members. It can form good relationships, if we are open and talk about things without judging each other. For example Meera's father has realised that he 'needs to start talking with his children'. Hitherto he used to be less understanding because of lack of communication with his children. She says that if children are ready to talk, then parents should let them talk and be considerate towards them.

Watfordian Pakistani mothers are highly concerned about their children if they do not listen (means obey) to them. The children say that they know what their elders expect from them; that is, to listen to them and respect them. What about young people? Elders try to approach and convince them in an emotional way. Some girls understand and agree with them because most of the girls are naive and soft hearted but some of them are articulate and believe in equal rights. Their assertiveness is sometimes hard for elders to understand and accept.

Parents claim that they have been given parental rights through Islam. They also believe that children do not know much about marital life and community, so it is their responsibility to guide them. Sheela testifies:

I think Pakistani community and parents try to make their own rules. They won't think if we say it's about equal rights. Why do people run this kind of culture? Pakistani parents don't really care about human rights. In some cases where they marry them forcefully, they realise their mistake afterwards. (Sheela)

Parents realise when it is too late. Young adults talk about human rights and respect for each other but they are not happy with their parents, who make rules and force them to follow them. Some parents believe that they should train their children at a very young age. A young woman was referred to Shaheen to find a solution for a conflict between her and her parents. After having some sessions with the girl, Shaheen found out that her demand was to go 'jogging in the morning which was impossible to be considered for Asian families'. Shaheen argued that the young adults do not understand their parents and create problems for them. Furthermore, she says, 'the youngsters are so absorbed by Western culture that they do not understand their own culture and religion'.

A young woman left her parents' house because her parents used to have arguments over her marriage; her mother wanted to marry her to her family and her father to his relatives. She got fed up with their conflicts: 'They did not leave a choice for her' (field notes). Such a situation suggests that parents do not leave a space for their daughters to negotiate with them:

I say to my daughter, if you choose someone let him come to me then let them (the family) come to our house then I will talk to your dad. My husband said to my son if you like somebody bring her home. He wouldn't say this to my daughter because it is un-Islamic that a girl brings someone home. Bibi (lady) Fatima didn't marry herself. Imam Ali asked the prophet, he asked Bibi Fatima, she nodded her head as she wanted to get married. I think a woman is like a tender flower, if my daughter got married to someone of her choice, I'd be frightened. (Sheela)

The parents' attitude is contradictory: they have different policies for sons and daughters. The son is encouraged to bring a woman home and introduce her to his parents for approval but for a daughter it is not morally proper to bring a man (intend to marry) home, which is rather crucially ironic.

#### 5.4 Negotiation for Social Change

Women live in a contested arena, 'the family', where they constantly negotiate and renegotiate their choices, gender relations and cultural traditions (Shah, 2001:94). The second generation and those who are 5-6 years younger than them were rarely in a position to negotiate their choices. They had attempted this but were not assertive and confident enough to do so. Most of them did not even know, they should had to be asked about their marriage. They were more influenced by cultural values. Most of them did what they had been asked to do by their parents. The second generation was trying hard to fit into their parent's customs and the Western culture where they had been brought up. For them, the time was inappropriate for negotiation because most of them were passing through a hard time and there were many challenges were ahead to make. Consequently, they lost the capability of interaction and understanding each other, and they did not learn the sufficient skills to deal with the outer world.

Sheeri says, 'We are experiencing historical evolution, and we will be better one day', Sheeri seems optimistic and certain about experiencing the positive development of future generations. For the British-born young adults, the phenomenon of negotiation is quite crucial as it can reduce the level of conflict. Most of the young women have a clear idea about their rights and they proudly claim that they are British. Such reclamation provides them with a good reason to clear up the piled up traumas and tragedies of their mothers and older sisters. However, Mac and Ghail mentions how phenomenon of 'resistance within accommodation' (cited from Shah 2001: 97) works for the young women. So, this generation is both resisting and accommodating their and their parent's choices. This generation is aware of the 'ins and outs' of issues, so they are not even just ready to leave their parents. They want to make them happy in order to create the balance because most of them have a feeling that their parents' generation went through a difficult phase in trying to accommodate their cultural values and in being marginalised from the mainstream while living in the West. As the path is still 'stony' and there is a long way to go, building up new identities is tough. Most of them are still not grounded and are still vulnerable towards cultural norms;

I'll say, from now on, I'm not going to bring up my children according to Pakistani culture. I'm going to bring them up according to the teachings of Islam, that's it. If they want to get married to a Muslim, they can, he doesn't have to be a Pakistani. He doesn't have to be a *Raja* because I'm so annoyed with that. (Ramsha)

Ramsha's message is clear about her identity and choices. She has clearly made a demarcation between two entities: the Muslim and the Pakistani. She seems unhappy with the Pakistani identity which promotes the class and caste hierarchy system.

Some youngsters are confident to speak up and are ready to negotiate; however, not all succeed. At least they have the courage to talk to their parents and make them think about what their requirements are. Some parents try not to live in delusion; they realise that their children have been studying in mixed schools all their lives so they cannot 'blame them'. Zebo seems ready to accept this fact: 'If they had grown up in Pakistan then they might have been different'. Parents have to compromise and listen to them as well. A few young female participants tried to negotiate their choices with their parents by saying that, 'they do not like to marry in Pakistan' (Azim 2006: 117).

Meera and Shahnaila told their family that they will marry when they are ready. This shows that they are already confident enough to talk about their rights. Interestingly, only two days before her engagement, Farida told her father 'dad I can't marry him'. Her father gave her one month to rethink but she got back to him, saying, 'dad I can't because our intellectual levels are different'. Her father agreed and advised her to choose a suitable person but on condition that he should be a 'Pakistani Muslim'. She got the 'conditional support' (Azim 2006: 121) of her father and utilised that as well.

Laila was very comfortable with her father. But when she told him that 'He (the person who was chosen for her) looks like a funny guy, I will not marry him', her father did not take it seriously. Consequently, she and her parents spent six years in 'suffering' because eventually she had to get divorced. Her father used to say, 'We don't ever receive *talaq* (divorce) in our family.' If they had listened to her in the first instance, *talaq* would not have happened.

Zebo's daughter told her that, 'we girls (young women) have decided that we will not marry in Pakistan'. Nina, Zebo's daughter is working for a youth organization. She is not only supporting herself but also representing other girls' intentions and trying to pass a combined message to the community that they have a right over their lives. Now real issues have arisen which need to be addressed in a serious manner, negotiation is not an easy task which can be done in a straightforward way; it involves a lot of cultural reservations and



conflicts; as Nina says, 'this long time battle is an ongoing process' between young adults and parents. Tilat believes that it is time to trust each other and live peacefully;

We have to trust our children and negotiate. It is a matter of 50-50. If you want your children to live with you, then you have to be 50-50. They ask my permission to go for parties; if I won't let them go then they take permission from me in a nice and polite way. They love me and talk nicely to me.

Tilat is a lone parent in her middle age, working in a factory. Although she has little education, she is definite about her responsibilities and role and is well aware of the issues of the community. For Tilat, 'trust is the key to opening up dialogue between parents and children' she says. She works with her 'fifty-fifty' formula to make a balanced and good child-parent relationship. She has a son and a daughter who are both getting professional education in London. But why do they ask permission from their mother and why are they so polite with her? This is a thought-provoking instance for the parents who curse themselves and their children because they do not listen to them. It suggests that some clear boundaries and reasonable spaces are needed for both young adults and parents in order to live together.

Ambreen, a professional lawyer, had her own views about her dress code when living with her in-laws but her mother-in-law put unnecessary pressure on her by making her wear a *shalwar kameez* at home. Although she only wears them occasionally, she is asked to wear them every time she comes home in order to prove to the community that she is controlled by her in-laws. Initially Ambreen avoided confrontation and arguments with her traditional mother in law but a time came when 'I would have to stand my ground' she says. She made her mother-in-law realise through her assertiveness that wearing *shalwar kameez* at home does not make any sense to her, 'it is a hypocritical approach'. If she is already wearing modest clothes, then she does not see 'what is the point' in wearing what her mother in law wants. Islam requires modest clothes which 'I am already wearing'. Sometimes negotiations help to clear up the old 'baggage' and provide a chance to manifest new ideas/things.

Most parents do not negotiate about choices related to their 'honour' and their 'image' in the community. Sarah believes that 'there is no point to negotiate because an obvious deed [her sexual perversity] cannot be overlooked'. Sheela also had no idea about her father's reaction when he found out about her boyfriend. He reacted beyond her expectations. It did not matter how much he loved or supported her; there was no room for forgiveness for such a deed/ mistake. Her father atoned by arranging her marriage with one of his relatives in Pakistan, but marrying back home was unimaginable to her. Since her engagement, Sheela is

‘really upset about it’, and ‘a bit scared’<sup>106</sup> (Azim 2006: 121) and puzzled as well about how she will cope with a man she had never ‘wanted to marry’. She said, ‘I asked him [her father] to give me a chance to find somebody, a good *Sunni*, an equal’, but he did not listen to her and she ‘didn’t get a chance’ to find a British born Pakistani man as her life partner. Honour and community image make some people live in delusion. In the case of a breach of honour values, parents turn their backs on their children no matter how much they adore them. Such parents leave them all alone to carry the cultural conflicts on their shoulders;

He was shocked to hear he was a *Shia*. He asked me why I was doing this. ‘You know you can’t marry him. Neither would I ever allow you to. It should never happen again. If it happens again, I will not see you’. (Sheela)

A major conflict arises if the daughters refuse to marry parents’ relatives. Without asking their daughters, the parents promised their relatives the hand of their daughters. Such daughters are left with no choice except mutual compromise. Their freedom of life clashes with the promises of their parents. Farida and Zeena have mentioned that such parents are ‘scared from the *biraderi*’; if the community knows that someone’s daughter has refused to marry, it confirms that she has a boyfriend or has an interest in somebody else. Parents feel let down and cannot face the community. So the daughters agree to marry but get divorced after a year or so.

They force them into compromising marriage. Whenever you want me to say okay, I shall do so. If you want to sponsor your nephew, I’ll sponsor him. I’m married now whatever I want to do, I will do it because it is my life. (Sheeri)

Compromises made under pressure are a reality of this community; parents and young adults make an agreement for the so-called marriage. However, accommodation and resistance do work differently in different situation. Sheeri told me that their generation did not negotiate, so they were beaten, taken back to Pakistan, forced into marriages and made to live a terrible life but now the young ones are clever. They say ‘okay, fine, let’s get married’ but once they get married they say ‘okay, we’re finished with this whole business’.

The community is ‘very narrow minded’, Zeena believes; they treat their children strictly but some parents are more aware of their children’s needs. They know that their daughters want to look good and to fit into a wider society; for example, by using makeup or having a hair-cut. Meera believes that some parents do not ‘upset them’ by associating

---

<sup>106</sup> The same words have been used by the participant several times

everything with religion. So parents compromise with them, saying, 'If you are happy with it, we are also happy with it'.

You actually sit down and talk about it, you discuss it and you reach an agreement with others. So my sister does wear makeup but she is allowed to wear it within certain limits. Over the years my parents have changed in the sense that their perceptions are not narrow anymore, they are open to change. They understand that the community is changing. (Meera)

Most of the second generation children were not comfortable with talk openly with their parents. Recently, some parents have realised that there is a need to create a balance. This attitude is an outcome of a combination of factors: Some parents have seen the negative results of their wrong decisions about their children's marriage; some have now found time after their retirement to think about their children and some have seen that their relatives (mostly nephews) have just abused their daughters for the sake of British passports. Time has brought change as both parents and the young adults have learned through experience. Meera's participation in community welfare has given her hope for a better future for the coming generations;

My parents' attitude has changed. That is because they have seen the change in society after living in this country. They just can't keep us confined. When they confine their kids, the kids retaliate. You know we have complex arguments but it does not mean that we are leaving home. We don't agree with each other sometimes but then after a couple of days we start talking again. (Meera)

Meera told me that when they were young, her family never sat together and never had a good time with their parents but now things are changing. They all sit together at evening meals and talk and discuss issues and share their information and learn something new about each other. Interestingly, after so many years of living together, they feel that they are getting closer to one another: 'They know us and we know them' she said. Most of the time her parents share their early life experiences in the United Kingdom. As they 'ask them more about it', new doors open up for discussion. It is not necessary that 'we' (parents and children) agree on everything but 'after a long and complicated discussion, we understand each other better'. Meera's father has become more open now. He used to be very traditional, 'tense,' and less open because having several daughters has made his life more vulnerable living in a close culture. Initially, his idea was to settle them into marriages but now he has changed his strategy. He believes that his daughters need to be financially independent and successful in their lives. He does not want to put his daughters into a situation in which they may be controlled by others.

## 5.5 Identifying Honour Issues

Participants suggest some significant issues: women's modesty and sexual interaction with the opposite sex, their overall appearance in public, and respecting their boundaries. Shahnila believes that honour is related to women's chastity and their gender role. She explained it by referring to her personal experience based on what she had been told by her father about what *izzat* meant to him.

I remember when I went on holiday with my friends to Dubai. My father was concerned, saying you are on your own in a strange country and there are Arabs. He was very protective about my personal safety and the safety of my *izzat*. (Shahnila)

Saeeda Khanam says, '[T]he concept of *izzat* is central to Islamic culture' (Khanum 1992: 133), suggesting that a sense of culture could be in grave danger if women are travelling alone. Shahnila's father relates this danger with 'Arab men' who in his opinion can be a potential threat to his daughter's *izzat*. Her father's concern was to shield his and her *izzat* by not letting her go alone to a country where she could put herself in danger. Even though her father did not consider her to be alone, he thought that all girls could be in trouble travelling without a man. In the context of honour, women's safety and the safety of *izzat* are one and the same thing.

For Tilat, 'hanging around with boys' suggests an illicit sexual relationship which can be a cause of shame for the family. Tilat depicts honour dynamics by comparing 'honour' with 'nose', because South Asian people believe that the nose, being a significant part of a person's face, is symbolic of their honour (see chapter one). Fathers having daughters who do not have an illicit relationship (real or anticipated) with men possess a 'big nose' (participant) or 'unstained' face (Siddiqi 2005: 264). Honour has a face value and the community requires an honourable image of a person. So 'cutting off of a nose' has strong implications. People will say that he or she has 'cut our (family's) nose' by having an illicit relationship with someone.

Shafeeq condemns the concept of keeping 'the nose intact', or 'keeping it (nose) big one has to cut others noses, which is not right', he says. He believes furthermore, that if sons are given the right to marry by choice, daughters should also be free to do so. Saeeda Khanum says that, why should our '[M]ethods to controlling women be different [from] those that control men' (Khanum 1992: 133).

For Shafeeq, children are individuals, as elders are. He further explained that his children (son and daughters) have been married into different races and cultures, white, black and brown, which did not affect his self-image or social prestige. He did not care about keeping his 'big nose' in the community. The reason for this difference of opinion can be associated with the fact that Shafeeq does not live close to the Pakistani community, although he belongs to the Kashmiri background.

Even if a young woman is seen walking around with her boyfriend or socialising in a public place, it is considered as immoral behaviour. If any minor deviance remains unaware is tolerable. Harrami and Mouna has noticed among Moroccan families in the South-West of France that if young women have an undercover relationship, it is alright for parents but in public it would be dishonourable and problematic (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 268-9).

The participants have used the phrase 'hang around' frequently in their conversations. The same situation has been noticed in Saeeda Khanam's research on Asian communities. Parents request teachers to police their daughters and inform them if they are seen hanging around with boys. They ask the school (the private Muslim girls' school) teachers, '[T]ell me straight away if you see her hanging around with boys after school, won't you?' (Khanum 1992: 130).

Meera's perspective about honour is different; interestingly she excludes her family from such practices. She claims that she does not belong to such groups as *Kashmiris* and *Chowdhries*, who follow patriarchal norms. She separates herself from them claiming that she belongs to a 'liberated' group living in Sialkot, Pakistan, where Meera believes honour issues are relatively less but 'they do exist in communities which are 'restrictive' following a 'tribal or village [thing]' norms. ( Werbner 2007). Meera believes *izzat* exists in people who possess a '*Chowdhry* type of mentality', which means having an 'authoritative' or 'feudal attitude'<sup>107</sup>, (Haeri 2002: 38).

Meera adds that her original area, Sialkot, back home in Pakistan is more liberal, where women have the right to their freedom. She also informed me that for some Mirpuris living in the West, *izzat* is a significant feature. According to Meera, *Kashmiris* and *Chowdhrys* obtain *izzat* by controlling their children's lives and marrying them by force.

---

<sup>107</sup> A combination of arrogance and entitlement - feudal in the Pakistani context means a relatively small group of politically active and powerful landowners. (Haeri ,2001:38)

## 5.6 Summary

Participants from all generations have shared their experiences about their community. Various conflicts have been noticed: the accumulation of wealth and strength, sometimes even through illegal means, was not a shameful matter for some people but it upset young adults; chances to work for community development were less available because seniors did not have faith in young adults. They believed that young adults are too radical or complained that they were not from the same caste or *biraderi*. Some arguments have been mentioned which occur between husband and wife in order for the husband to maintain customary rules by undermining women's position. It does not matter whether a newlywed woman finds it difficult coping with living in the West. Honour issues were criticized and highlighted in *biraderi* and community control.

The elder women socialize regularly to share their religious and communal knowledge. Their main concern was their children's marriage and moral issues among young adults. Most young adults do not obey parents' marriage preferences within the same group, but rather they opt to follow Islam which gives women full rights to marry by their choice but yet provides room to negotiate. Most of the participants believe that Pakistanis follow their own rules and do not care about human rights. The next chapter will highlight modesty issues.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Modesty in Relation to Honour**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter the participants talked about women's modesty which has an equal value in both Islam and South Asian cultures. This chapter endeavours to describe the relationship between modesty and honour. It is crucial for both parents and young women living in the West to maintain a balance, obtaining and enforcing familial norms. Most of the youngsters are still unable to refuse patriarchal despotism and adapt to new ways of life as parents constantly advise them that some restrictions (religious or cultural) are crucial to observe such as eye contact with the opposite sex, hair cutting and dress codes. For example: wearing revealing clothes is problematic to judge women's behaviour. If women deviate slightly from certain norms this could create tension within the community. Gossip has been seen the strong tool to control women's behaviour in the community.

#### **6.2 Modesty: A Complex Notion**

The sexual morality of young women is socially constructed, and is complex and crucial. It is a required 'quality which all female children must possess' (Ramaseshan 2011 : 125). It is parents' responsibility to make sure that their young women are sexually pure. This means not having sexual relationships with the opposite sex before and outside marriage. Most parents do not allow their daughters to go out; not only because of the possible risk to their safety but because of the fear that children may take undue advantage of their leniency. However, even if parents let their daughters go out, they make a rule that they come back at a certain time. During my field work I came to know that a few young women socialize at friends' birthday parties. If they were late for any genuine reason they would inform their parents about the delay.

Most young women do not have the desire to go out late at night after watching the activities of night clubs on television. According to the participants such places are 'not nice'. However, some do like going out; for them the home represents a controlled space, whereas the outside world is a place where they can enjoy their freedom (Din 2006: 107). My ethnographic data suggests that sometimes young women go out secretly without the knowledge of their parents.

Fathers make sure their daughters are not involved in friendships with boys and mothers constantly guard their daughters' behaviour and intentions by keeping an eye on what they wear and where they intend to go. Parents believe that young women have an enormous potential to tarnish or preserve their family's reputation through their sexual activities. They can only defend family values by adopting a certain dress code and avoiding public appearances. Most of them start wearing *shalwar kameez* (Pakistani attire) from their pre-puberty years, though some of them do not want to wear them. Some of them wear the *hijab* to manifest religious and cultural purity and some wear it to protect themselves from men's potential ill intentions. The latter idea is an outcome of the general belief in the community of Pakistani women that women who wear Western clothes or do not wear the *hijab* are easily approachable by men belonging to their community.

In order to maintain family reputation, girls are told what to wear, where to go and whom to talk to. However, most parents provide their children with a specific family network to move around and socialize with. If a set of two families are fine with each other then parents would allow their children to interact, otherwise they often become suspicious and strict. One of the participants told me:

People would start talking about you. 'Oh your daughter wore this, your daughter wore that.' My dad does not live with us so we have to be extra careful because people already look down upon us because of that. We have to show them that we are not bad. On the other hand, she (her mother) wants to show my dad 'look how I am bringing them up. I have taken up the roles of a mother and a father.' It is something she wants to show to everyone. Ramsha

Ramsha's divorced mother Ruki lives with double pressure because she has to maintain her family's reputation through her daughters' sexual behaviour. She wants to show her ex-husband that even though she has been living a divorced life, she still wants to make him feel that his daughters are living with a good woman, who has trained them to observe proper family values. Ruki feels a compulsion to show her husband and the community that her modesty is reflected in her daughters. In this respect, Sana Al-Khayyat states that 'the daughter takes after her mother morally' (Al-Khayyat 1990: 22). It is the duty of a mother to make them pure because the 'purity of the daughter reflects that of her mother' (Al-Khayyat 1990). Apart from that it is the mothers' duty to make sure that their daughters are patient, dutiful, and sincere. Such qualities are highly required for a successful marital life and also for the protection of family standards before a daughter's marriage. Such standards become



even stronger if a family is wealthy because the father's wealth has to be passed on to his son. Thus, for this reason a daughter in law should be from an honourable family.

Laila has only one brother and her father is a prominent figure in the community with huge assets. Laila's father is concerned about his *jaedad* (property). His fear is if his son marries an English woman then all property will go to a white woman. Therefore, Laila's mother is very careful about finding a suitable girl for her son. It would be interesting to mention that such ideas work in structural ways in Pakistani society. The first option to holding a property in the family would be to marry a son or daughter into the extended family and the second would be in the *biraderi*. So, it is a communal practice that wealthy people encourage and involve religious leaders to preach such issues to convince young people. They often advise young men what measure they should take to find the right woman to marry and why such a woman would be suitable for the family. Laila's brother has cautioned his mother about how to select a suitable bride for him. Laila says.

When we attend a *mujlis*<sup>108</sup> where *molvi*<sup>109</sup> addresses young men about their marriage, we hear; 'if you want to marry somebody then you do not have to look at her but look at her mother'. From that day my brother kept this idea in his mind and repetitively says to my mum that when she pays a visit to a girl's house (to choose her as a daughter in law), she should first look at her mother.

Pakistani society is known for being oppressive to its women. Women's sexuality has socio-economic importance; if a woman is a virgin the family gets benefit from it. The family of such a girl would move around proudly in society, showing people that they are *shareef* (honourable) because their daughters are honourable and under their control. Not wearing revealing clothes and not hanging around with boys is considered a quality in a girl as 'having a boyfriend [infringes] heavily on the unforgivable moral code and [is] never taken lightly' (Bhatti 1999: 153).

Some participants argue that Pakistanis living in any part of the United Kingdom have the same attitudes and problems towards young women relating to family reputation. Nevertheless, they have formulated a structure of controlled familial, communal and neighbourhood networks including 'aunties' (elderly women) (Bradby 2007: 666) and intra-generational based people (cousins, brothers and elder sisters). Elder sisters are being involved in controlling ideology to keep an eye on their younger sisters. Similarly, daughters in law are being watched by their sisters in law or vice versa in case they transgress family

---

<sup>108</sup> Religious commutate

<sup>109</sup> Religious leader

values. Firstly, the elder sister is being trained strictly so her social and domestic activities affect the rest of the young women in the house.

It is clearly mentioned in Islam that women should wear modest clothes and keep away from male eye contact and illicit sexual relationships. The growing number of women being killed on the basis of family honour is a result of women's sexual reputation as a 'virgin' or a 'whore' (Elden 2004 : 93). The bad reputation of a girl lies in the 'whore' category and the good reputation confirms her to be a 'virgin'. Young women's virginity and chastity is a matter of pride for most of the families and the value of parents in their communities. The views of Kabir, a young man, about modesty are very significant in this regard:

I would not go against my religion but I can go against my culture. If I don't believe in something, I don't believe in it at all. I deeply believe in my religion. Islam is not too strict, despite the fact that it tells you to cover yourself up, which is annoying. But the reason why they say that is that other men should not look at you, it could be dangerous for you, they could rape you, and they could do anything. Obviously if you're looking good, it will attract men and if you don't give them what they want, they could still get it because at the end of the day women are not stronger than men. Everything that Islam asks for, there is a reason behind it; the reason behind covering our hair is because it is half the beauty of your whole body and again it attracts men. With Islam, the thing is that you can leave your hair down in front of your husband because obviously he is the one to attract.

Kabir is a British born young Muslim man who is against his culture but does not mention which elements of his culture he dislikes. Being a strong believer in women's modesty, he determines who is stronger and who is weaker in society. This issue is vital for the social order in contemporary communities because, like Kabir, most men believe that women should hide their beauty because 'women are destructive to the social order [for Imam Ghazali] because they are active' (Mernissi 2003: 44). For example, Sheela has been persuaded by her boyfriend<sup>110</sup> to wear the *hijab*. His fear is that without the *hijab* she might be approached by other men. However, his 'protectionist approach' (Ramaseshan 2011 : 115) became more problematic for him. Ironically, when Sheela wore the headscarf, her boyfriend told her: 'O you look more beautiful'. Fatima Mernissi states that 'a beautiful woman makes men lose their self-control' (Mernissi 2003:31). In order to prove her modesty Sheela did not need the support of the *hijab* but she did.

Protection and control are two sides of the same coin. Protection as a negative force works differently in different situations. Firstly, women are being taught 'to fear and mistrust the other sex' (Mernissi 2003: 141); secondly it directly controls women's lives and their

---

<sup>110</sup> Most young women take time to start sexual relationships but they still call each other boyfriend/girlfriend.

individuality; and thirdly it forces women to ignore their personal choices. Sheela did not want to wear the *hijab* but her boyfriend successfully achieved his goal by convincing her to wear it. Sheela became more attractive and approachable to him, raising his expectations before marriage. Protection provided him with grounds for ownership, for more control of her body as if it was his own. However, forcing women to wear the *hijab* does not solve any problem as some women would look more beautiful and much younger in the *hijab* and men would become more uncontrollable and vulnerable. I have noticed in Pakistan that if women wear a *burqa* they seek more attention of men. Some men would even try to approach them if only to see how they look and who are inside the *burqa*. Men are not happy if women are uncovered or covered. Men are still not sure how to control their sexual impulses. I asked Shafeeq why women wear the *hijab*, does it serve the purpose of modesty? 'No', 'it increases *fitna*'<sup>111</sup>. 'Actually men have to wear the *hijab* not women'; he replied, then he related to me the story of a *Majzoob* (saint);

There was a saint in a town. He used to wear a *choloo* (a long shirt from top to toe). One day he was passing through a street. All of sudden he saw a beautiful woman walking there. He pulled his *choloo* up to hide his eyes. Then another man passed by and got embarrassed by the sight, saying 'O *majzoob*, you are getting bare'. The saint replied, 'I am hiding from the thing I am supposed to hide'. The reality is, if a *majzoob* cannot control himself, how can a normal person. (Shafeeq)

Fatima Mernissi analysed this issue by raising a question. She asks, does Islam assume that women's sexual capacity is greater than men's? That men are the weaker sex, they are the ones who need protection. Why does Islam fear the power of female sexual attraction over men? Does Islam assume that the male cannot cope sexually with an uncontrolled female? (Mernissi 2003: 31). Such questions have never been identified or discussed in Pakistani Islamic-cultural forums but women's modesty and the mother's role as a dutiful wife are discussed a great deal in such places by *imams* (religious leaders). The belief that imams have divine authority could provide a ground for a family to train their daughters in being dutiful daughters.

In order to protect a woman's body, if the daughter of Talat (a lone parent) wears sleeveless shirts outside of the house it does not upset Talat as she believes children should be in the middle, not completely westernized or Asian. But she implements the Pakistani attitude on her daughter whenever she wears a sleeveless shirt. She warns her '*bhaee se sharam karo*' - at least be modest in front of your brother. Further she advised her, 'be careful:

<sup>111</sup> chaos provoked by sexual disorder and initiated by women. For a more detailed discussion see (Mernissi, 2003: 31)

your naked body is for your husband, he is the only *malik* (owner) of your body'. Her daughter laughs at her and replies, 'mum you are psycho'. Talat responds to her daughter saying, she is *pagel* (crazy) because she is young and does not know about the reality that a 'father is the owner of daughter's covered body and a husband is the owner of women's uncover body' she stressed. So the brother became a replacement of a father so her daughter has to cover her body in front of her younger brother.

Let us go back to Kabir's concern in projecting his belief about religion and that men's strong physical power and sexual desire get impulsive if they see a woman in revealing clothes and with loose hair. Is he saying that women are destructive because they are sexually appealing? Is Kabir saying that men become impulsive/ weak when they see women around? What rule should men follow in this situation: their manly power or the rules of morality?

Living in the Pakistani demographic area of Watford, Kabir knows well about communal social and cultural structural efforts at controlling women's sexuality. He has knowledge about issues young women face while living under the guise of men's protection.

Parents spy on their daughters due to fear of community gossip and put constant pressure on their daughters regarding their moral conduct (Al-Khayyat 1990), and social obligations. If parents or the whole community are there to guard women's behaviour then why do men rape women and dishonour them? Let us assume that Kabir is unhappy with parents who do not follow the social and communal code of conduct by guarding their daughters in a proper manner. Parents must kill them - otherwise a woman may face grim consequences by facing strangers who are sexually and physically stronger than she. Kabir expressed some serious concerns about young women's modesty to tackle seriously in the community.

I would suggest honour killing not suicide bombings. But you need to think. Now you are doing research on this project. For people what is the alternative? It is easy for an individual or a community to say what is wrong and *haram* (uttered sarcastically), but what are the alternatives for those families? Their daughters are everything for them. They are their honour and when they do something, what choice do they have? This is an open question? I categorically disagree with you on this. I am personally against it but my point is 'what is the alternative?' For example, if we take the most extreme example; a girl has an illicit relationship with a boy who is not a Muslim and becomes the mother of a child out of wedlock. This is all un-Islamic and uncultured. What action should be taken in this case?

In his first statement Kabir showed his belief in religion but not in culture. Later, he 'mix[ed] up religion and culture together' (cited from: Dwyer 2000: 481) because he came to the conclusion that there existed no solution to deal with the issue. The practice of 'honour

killing' is more of a cultural phenomenon because studies on the topic suggest that it is not an Islamic practice. However, Kabir seems to suggest that until the family gets the 'alternative', the daughter's killing is acceptable for the sake of honour. Kabir did not mention that taking someone's life is not allowed in Islam. Being a practising Muslim, living within the community and working for them in the health sector, could Kabir ignore the reality that in 'Watford honour is not a central issue but forced marriages are' (participant) which I have been told about? Does he understand what forced marriage means? Why are there several unmarried daughters having illicit relationships and abortions out of wedlock, living with their families? Why are, for such families, the killings of their daughters due to honour not the first option to them when Kabir thinks that there is no other 'alternative'? Does Kabir consider that the 'alternative' could be forced marriage which is alarmingly high in Watford? Does it suggest that families who cannot kill their daughters may push them into a forced marriage? It has been mentioned in contemporary studies that forced marriage is one of the crimes of honour. I wonder why he holds such an extreme stance on the issue. In his first statement he did not like the culture but in his second statement he justified the cultural practice to save the honour.

Protection and control are the issues which were highlighted by most of the young adult participants like Zaheer, a young British born Pakistani man who says:

When you are 14-15 years old you do anything to find love because there is something missing in your life. Maslow's hierarchy theory<sup>112</sup> talks about basic needs of human beings: love, food, water, shelters and care. If you don't get them they become issues, and then they become psychological issues. I know some Pakistani girls who have been very unfortunate, who have been raped and abused in the family. For example, a woman decided to leave home and left the country. She wanted to marry her boyfriend. For one reason or another, her boyfriend sent her back. She was sent to the refugee asylum. She drank alcohol and smoked. She talked all the time about what happened to her. We need to protect our sisters and daughters; protecting is one thing and controlling is another. No one is dealing with the issues in the right way because no one knows.

Zaheer mentions some significant missing substance in young adults' lives. If something is missing what measures will parents take to fill their lives? Zaheer's concern is that young adults should be provided with basic needs before their desires become stronger. It is clear that Pakistani culture is structurally designed against love before marriage.

Zaheer has been doing volunteering work for several years involving young Muslim adults' lives. He is concerned about their lives and observes cultural practices from their

---

<sup>112</sup> Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire to get them.

perspective. Why do young adults not listen to their parents? Why do young ‘women decide to leave home’? Because parents do not consider children’s basic needs/choices in life, and because ‘no one knows’ how to make a balance in young adults’ lives, and because most parents control their right to freedom in the name of so called protection and family honour. It is a paradoxical issue that on the one hand parents claim that they protect their daughters from the possible risks of the outside world and on the other they control their life choices. I have been told by a few participants that ‘Pakistani parents do not care about human rights; they just follow their rules’ (participant).

### **6.3 Western and Pakistani Attire**

Women’s clothes are one of the serious issues of Pakistani communities. Such communities have divided women’s modesty into many categories such as Western clothes, Islamic clothes, and Pakistani clothes. Most of the young women already wear modest clothes in which they feel comfortable. But some just wear them to look modest. However, there are also those who wear modest clothes because they are constantly judged and threatened by their mothers or mothers in law.

Sheeri, a middle aged participant, mentioned that as a teenager she wanted to look different through her fashionable outfit. Wearing *churidar* (skinny trousers) was something in vogue but her father did not allow her to wear it. Some parents object to their daughters wearing fashionable clothes because they believe that such clothes represent immodesty and they ask their daughters to use them when they get married (Bhatti 1999: 153). The same clothes become modest after marriage, a phenomenon which makes no sense to most of the young women. However, this desire does not materialise as once married they have mothers in law to control their modesty.

The Watfordian Pakistanis believe that the North of England is more traditional and backward than the South of England. Ambreen was brought up in the North and claimed that she used to wear English clothes at her parents’ house. After marriage, she settled in Watford where it is a trend that young women can wear English clothes outside the house but as soon as they enter the house they have to change into Pakistani clothes. Therefore, clear boundaries between Western and Pakistani clothes are being maintained. It is believed that English clothes show young women’s inclination towards active sexuality and rebelliousness which is a threat to ethnic/religious purity. It is interesting that the perception of English clothes is different among young women as compared to their mothers. Wearing trousers and

loose shirts covering the lower back of the body is considered to be modest attire for the young women. In Pakistan most of the young urban women wear trousers ‘*pyjama*’ and ‘*churidar pyjama*’ (skinny trousers) as a fashion, which is not very different from English skinny trousers. In Pakistan wearing such clothes is appropriate and acceptable for young women. Some families do not allow their daughters to wear them in the United Kingdom.

She (mother in law) was much concerned about my clothes. My mum and dad were never hypocritical. Whatever I wore outside the house, I was allowed to wear inside the house. Whereas in Watford most Asian families allow their daughters to wear Western clothes, short tops, jeans, trousers outside the house but when they come home they have to wear *shalwar kameez*. My mother in law has the same rule for my sister in law. She is allowed to wear jeans and short tops outside the house. But as soon as she gets back she is not even allowed to sit in the living room. She has to go straight to her room and change into *shalwar kameez*. I just don’t do that. I generally wear a long dress with my jeans so my father in law said to my husband that he was very happy about the way I dressed because I dressed modestly. My mother in law had a problem; she said you should wear *shalwar Kameez* at home. I said to her it is hypocrisy. (Ambreen)

Ambreen has challenged her mother in law by wearing English clothes. She has tried to make her realise that it is a hypocritical approach to wear Pakistani dress at home and Western dress outside. The word ‘hypocrisy’ is not a nice word in the Pakistani context, especially when used for elders. Zahida, a participant, is of the view that young people are more straightforward. That is why they use such words and feel comfortable to express themselves. Ambreen also spoke about her sister in law who wears ‘short tops outside the house’ and in front of strangers which is un-Islamic.

Most of the mothers make a rule without understanding the meaning of wearing *shalwar kameez*. This research has found a gap between the British born and pioneer generations in terms of what to wear and how to maintain women’s modesty according to Pakistani culture and Islam. Most of the mothers’ and mother in laws’ concern is to make young women wear Pakistani dress, which shows that they have daughters/daughters in law who are modest and cultural. The people perceive that Pakistani clothes alone are enough to satisfy cultural and religious needs. The youngsters have more understanding of modesty issues than their elders. Ambreen’s views are reflective of this understanding.

My field observations suggest this. For example, a young woman in her early twenties entered the house for her lunch break wearing English clothes while her body was fully covered. She sat with us but then her mother instantly told her to go and get changed. She immediately left us with an unpleasant gesture and did not come back to rejoin us. After one hour she appeared and said goodbye to us and left. The initial idea was that this woman would introduce me to her daughter (Rahilla) when the latter came home from her work for

her lunch break. But when her mother ordered her to fulfil an obligation, it ruined her mood and took away her enthusiasm to meet me. It shows that such authoritative and illogical behaviour by parents bothers young adults. Why did the mother ask her to get changed? Probably because she wanted to show me that her daughter was obedient and cultured. Pakistanis have a tendency to conflate differing ideas, which may not all work well in different situations. However, they carry on making the same mistakes and do not really try to learn from them.

Observing modesty is an Islamic idea and it should work in a logical way. Mothers want to display their daughters' modesty to their peer group through traditional attire. They also want to show that a young woman is not only a good Muslim but also a pure Pakistani. In this regard British born Ruhina says:

We cannot wear English clothes in front of our male family members because it is not part of our dress code. Therefore, girls are told to change when they arrive home. But it is shocking that we wear English clothes in front of non-*mehram* (not close male relatives) outside the house and are allowed to reveal our bodies. Women have been told to cover their chest and head in front of their fathers, brothers or uncles to show respect. Arab culture is different; they can show their naked legs and arms to their male relatives but when they go out they cover themselves properly, which is the right way to be modest.

Ruhina seems more defensive regarding English clothes, saying that such clothes are not part of Pakistani culture. That is why young women are being told not to wear them at home particularly in front of their male family members. The point is that women are being illogically controlled on different grounds which are unacceptable for some young women. Ruhina also questions the validity of the belief that showing the body to non-relatives but hiding the body from relatives is acceptable.

English clothes were a no go area. I used to wear English clothes at work, but was not allowed to wear them at home. After work I would just go upstairs and get changed. I wouldn't wear anything that is disrespectful. I know that my parents don't like it and I respect their wishes. (Ruhina)

Ruhina labels English clothes as 'disrespectable'. She only wore them for the sake of work and changed as soon as she entered her house to make her parents happy. English clothes are a big threat to the Pakistani honour ethos. It reflects how women negotiate their choices and create both an inner and outer space by reinforcing rather than challenging them. Ruhina wears clothes which fit well in the outer world; however, the same clothes imprison her in a narrow and hostile space. But when she returns home, she instantly changes them to create an



artificial comfort zone for herself and for her family. Parents' happiness and respectability is reinforced in the younger generation which keeps the culture and religious integrity alive.

#### 6.4 Cultural Interpretation of Pakistani Clothes

On-going research on Pakistani ethnic communities shows that most parents are mainly from rural backgrounds and were unhappy about young women's clothes, particularly about their school-going daughters and young working women. Parents are strict with their daughters in the observance of Pakistani clothes because they believe that English clothes are not appropriate for their women and girls according to Islam. English clothes are revealing and expose the female body and the Pakistani clothes are loose and can hide women's feminine parts. Claire Dwyer has mentioned in her works that young British Pakistani women are expected to show their 'appropriate femininities' (cited from: Dwyer 2000: 481). That is why their behaviour and attire are strictly monitored (ibid). Shaheen expressed how young women are trained to cover the feminine parts of their body:

My nana (maternal grandfather) was very strict. He used to sit in the corner but his eyes watched grown up girls all the time. If he found girls wearing in an improper manner, he would teach them how to wear *dupatta*<sup>113</sup>. There was respect for elders but the important thing behind it was to hide the feminine parts of the growing body. It looks nice if the growing up girl wears a proper *dupatta* in front of male family elders. My granddaughter doesn't cover her chest (growing feminine part of body) which I don't like.

Commenting on this quotation, an old man raised two issues about female modesty which are interlinked: covering growing parts of the chest and covering the head in order to avoid the male gaze on such parts of the female body. The function of the piece of cloth *dupatta* is to maintain symbolic boundaries between men and women. A young woman is being trained about gender segregation which is 'one of the main pillars of Islamic social control over sexuality' (Mernissi 2003: 107). When a woman covers her chest and head with a *dupatta*, it symbolises respect and modesty and a clear message of sexual segregation which a woman shows/offers to a man she interacts with. In return, he has to honour her action by offering her respect. A man puts his hand on a woman's head as a mark of respect for her being a woman by observing symbolic boundaries for the protection of her sexuality and individuality. Such practice is common in rural Pakistan. A male family member would usually close his eyes or pretend to keep his gaze down on the ground or at least pretend not

---

<sup>113</sup> The *dupatta* is a long piece of cloth. Women usually put it on their shoulders or sometimes around the neck. Most Pakistani women generally wear a light chiffon scarf called *dupatta*.

to notice her femininity. He would keep his hand on her head to assure that her respect (sexual and personal) will be safe with him. He will never breach cultural boundaries because he has put his hand on her head. This interaction between both of them would create a strong mutual cultural tie and provide confidence, especially for the woman that she is protected. In the past, the honour ethos used to be a matter of trust and respect because men knew how to maintain their manly honour by respecting their and other women of the community. Women have been raped and abused in the family, as participants mentioned, because many men do not care how the honour ethos should be observed to maintain the symbolic boundaries.

Why are young women made to wear Pakistani clothes at a very young age? Most of the respondents' (pioneer generation) replied that they want their children to know about Pakistani culture. But not a single British born woman mentioned the link between clothes and culture. Why is it then important for girls and not boys to follow the traditional Pakistani dress code?

When we were growing up we didn't know anything about clothes. 'This is your night-dress, this is your school uniform, and these are your clothes for after school' we were told. If you are going out on a weekend, wear it. We said okay to everything and never made our choices. We didn't know any better. My friends were doing exactly the same. (Meera)

It is clear from Meera's description that she did not have any idea about practising culture. It was just the rule which had to be followed in almost every family. The dress code works along with culture and religion. Women's bodies are the focal issue, which have to be covered modestly. Modesty demands covering of the 'sexual' parts of women's bodies. The *shalwar kameez*, which is obviously loose and long, is an appropriate device to hide women's feminine parts. The '*dupatta*' as an extra layer covers the rest of the parts: neck, shoulders, bosom, waist and bottom. It is believed that a woman has to behave in a modest way to create a distance between herself and others. She is the one who has to cover the feminine parts of her body for the sake of honour, reputation and the prestige of the family.

It has been said that the *dupatta*'s role is stronger than that of the *hijab*. Muslim women observe the wearing of the *hijab* as a mark of Islamic identity and modesty in front of strangers but not necessarily in front of their male family members. But in South Asian Muslim culture women have to cover their bosom and head in front of all male family members including their *mehram* (blood male relatives) as a mark of respect to maintain gender boundaries. This is because even blood male relatives can be sexually harmful and abusive to women as highlighted by two participants.

A few young women have changed their schools and quit their jobs because of the restriction of the dress code. Bhatti's research on the Pakistani community suggests that clothes are an issue for Asian girls, which means nothing for any other group of communities in other Muslim countries (Bhatti 1999: 154).

First I was in a grammar school but then I changed because we were not allowed to wear trousers in the grammar school. My dad fought for the girls that they should cover their legs at a certain age. But the school did not agree. So, I had to move to a state school. (Reshma)

Reshma's father, an academic who used to teach in a college, refused to send his daughter to a grammar school because of the school uniform. Similarly Rufia had to quit her previous job because the company had changed its uniform (from trousers to skirts). Her family was unhappy with this change; therefore, she was compelled to quit her job. Rufia started a shop selling the Muslim *hijab* and Pakistani clothes and is extremely upset because it is hard for her to run her business and pay her bills. Such evidence shows how young women are indoctrinated into adopting dress codes for the sake of family honour.

Some women from urban backgrounds when they arrived in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s used to wear trousers and *saris*<sup>114</sup>. For example, Zahida explained that she did not live in an area where most of the Pakistani population lived in Watford. Some women might wear the *shalwar kameez* but she used to wear trousers and *saris*. Similarly, Shaheen from Lahore visited Pakistan in the late 1970s. She saw people were wearing trousers there and brought some for herself. Before that she used to wear *saris* in Watford. She wore trousers and her husband never objected. However, her brother in law who used to live with them taunted her in a polite way when she wore a revealing blouse. He said to her: 'Your blouse is objectionable, what will people say?'

A participant from Mirpur brought a *sari* with her to wear in the United Kingdom but her husband did not allow her. She was disappointed to see that other women were wearing them while she could not. After 20 years, her husband permitted her to wear a *sari*. She wore it to make him happy but by that time she had lost her interest in it. He tried to make her happy in order to reduce his sense of guilt but 'is it possible that one can compensate emotions after such a long time?' she asked me. It clearly shows that women's bodies are being owned by their husbands and male family members.

---

<sup>114</sup>The sari is an Indian attire. Elite women wear it in Pakistan to pose as being modern. It has a short blouse which reveals part of the belly.

Eye contact with the opposite sex is prohibited in Islam. Sheeri relates how these phenomena work in cultural settings to protect honour:

When Veena (her daughter) goes out, she goes in the car with her father. My husband is very strict with her. He would ask her not to look out of the car and to sit with her book open. He tells her to keep her head down and think about his *izzat*. My father was the same. He also did not want to see his daughters look up or anybody to look at his daughters.

As in South Asia, young women live in a 'supervised space' (Wilson 2006: 19). Sheeri's seventeen year old daughter moves around under the supervision of her father. This is an experience of patriarchal despotism as she is considered to belong to her father as a patriarchal property which requires male protection. So her father protects her from the 'prying eyes of the community' (Wilson 2006: 19). However, sometimes, extra modest behaviour becomes more noticeable to others. For example, if a girl is walking with her 'head down', looking on the floor, it may look strange to others. In such a situation, if a woman is accompanying her male family member she would naturally feel oppressed and uneasy. The honour ethos makes both men and women uncomfortable in public places. Such men would be more conscious and alert about their surroundings because a single look from a stranger can snatch away their *izzat* and women would feel uneasy because of being constantly under the control of their male family members.

It is believed that first cousin marriages are 'genetically risky' (Sirman 2004: 51) as they could potentially transfer a disease. I propose that some customary attitudes are also risky as they can be transferred to the next generation. The role of a son in a family is also informed by social systems and requires him to learn how to protect his sister. So, if Sheeri's son has observed his father's attitude towards her sister, it is possible that he would also apply the same rule in the future towards his daughter. Although Sheeri's husband had lived almost all his conscious life in the United Kingdom, it is significant to notice how he had been following her father's rules.

Sheeri thinks that when a daughter is still very young it is no problem, but when she gets to puberty age her father gets anxious about her womanhood. The element of protection comes naturally at this age. Sheeri said that when her daughter was young, her husband used to say, 'oh my daughter will get the best education' in the world, but when the time came for admission to a university, he was not ready to send her to any distant place. He wanted her to go to Hertfordshire University (near Watford) and do teaching, so that he could get a chance

to guard his daughter's activities. It is worth noting that when daughters are young girls fathers think about their career and education but under cultural considerations they forget to fulfil their promises.

Sheeri mentioned that her husband still lives an encapsulated life and also wants his daughter to 'get into the same time capsule', she says. He constantly attempts to negotiate his honour agenda with his wife. He had left Pakistan more than 20 years ago. At that time Pakistani society was different and there was not much interaction between boys and girls. However, things have changed now. Sheeri's husband thinks that he can protect his daughter from such influence by confining her in a female university. Ignorant of other impracticalities, his only fear is that his daughter may lose her virginity before marriage. But Sheeri perceives things differently and broadly. For her, Pakistan is an unsafe place for a lone girl. She believes that her daughter can get 'a better education here than in Pakistan'. She would also be getting practical support from them if she lives in the United Kingdom. Compared to her husband's views Sheeri's approach is more realistic.

Daughters' higher education is a crucial time. Most of the Pakistani families living in Watford do not allow their daughters to stay in other cities for their studies. Most mothers express with pride that their girls get back every day. They are not allowed to live in London because the concern of the parents is that they might 'hang around with boys'.

My son goes to the university. I am not worried about him because a girl can't come and jump on him. The girls have something to lose. Of course it worries a lot no matter which culture you come from. I think it's the stigma that is attached to it. (Zulikha)

Parents live in constant stress (real or suspected) that their daughter might get raped or anything bad might happen because '[R]umours can tarnish the reputation of a girl' (Afzal 2011: 140). Young women are told that honour measures are meant for their protection as well. Zulikha believes that parents' protection is not only for the sake of parents' honour but also for protecting them from getting a bad name. Most of the young adults do not care about communities' concerns about 'getting a bad name'. They just want to get on with their lives. However, Zulikha believes that other cultures are not answerable for such honour transgressions, Asian cultures are because they are family oriented and they care about their community, people, and relatives.

## 6.5 The Significance of the *Hijab*

Dress trends are not superficial. They are culturally rooted with particular meanings serving identity issues especially among postcolonial migrants. The *hijab* is an integral part of women's attire in many parts of the Middle East and the Muslim world in general such as in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In South Asia, like in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, the *hijab* is not a part of women's dress but a piece of cloth called *dupatta* which serves the same purpose as that of the *hijab*. Women cover their head with the *dupatta* when they perform *nimaz* (prayers) or recite the Qur'an or when they meet strange men, male family members or elderly women, as a mark of modesty and respect.

In the Pakistani context even if a woman does not wear a *burqa*, the family expects her to cover her head if she goes outside the house. My ethnographic data revealed that some women (old generation) wore only the *dupatta* but they never wore the *chador* or the *burqa* while they lived in Pakistan. They have continued the same dress in the United Kingdom. Most British born daughters or daughters in law also do the same. This group represents the urban, educated and middle class category. The other category belongs to rural, uneducated or less educated working class families. Most of the pioneer members used to wear the *burqa* while in Pakistan as a mark of honour/gender identity. The British born women wear the *hijab* as a mark of Muslim identity and as a symbol of family honour. Some of them are forced to wear it (Azim 2006: 269) while some wear it by choice.

I started wearing the *hijab* when I was with my boyfriend. He was religious. He said that I looked nice in the *hijab* and my parents wanted me to wear it as well. But I don't really like wearing it. I just read Islamic books. They say a woman's beauty is in her eyes or the way she is covering herself. (Sheela)

I have been informed that some parents argue with their daughters to make them wear the *hijab* for religious purposes but not their control or cultural interpretation (Azim, 2006:277). Some young women take it seriously but some do not even listen to their parents. For example, Sheela's father, Ahmed, a British born man, dislikes it if his daughters wear English clothes, use makeup or straighten their hair. Ahmed is always concerned about what people will say. He likes a girl with the *hijab*: 'without it, it would be a problem' (participant) for him. But Ahmed's daughters do not like to wear it; he is trying to convince them but 'they don't listen to him because they are not ready yet'. Sheela has argued with him that there is 'no point in forcing us, we should wear it from the heart'. Ahmed wants his image to be good in the extended family and the rest of the community.

The *hijab* is a controversial and complex issue in the Western world. It creates enormous confusion in women's lives and for the public and state in general. In my fieldwork I have observed that families were inclined to make it a practice from the age of 5-9 years old. During Quranic classes it is obligatory to cover the head. It is seen that most of the parents encourage their daughters to wear it because parents believe that an early age is the right age to teach them to observe it. It also indicates 'personal satisfaction and enhances the family izzat'(Azim 2006: 269).

I have mentioned that some women are unhappy with Pakistani culture. So they like to construct their identity as British Muslims. Many young women wear the *hijab* by force, some by choice and some to make God happy. Laila got married with her cousin when she was sixteen but the couple were unhappy in their marriage. It was hard for the family to proceed with the divorce because it is seen as a shameful act for the family, but she eventually obtained it after several consultations with family and *biraderi*. Laila expressed that she has faced many problems even though she has not committed any sins. However, she has decided to wear the *hijab*, pray five times a day and ask God why she has had to go through this dilemma. She believes that being a practising Muslim wearing the *hijab* can reduce the level of unhappiness in life;

After 9/11, I discovered Islam a lot more. I read a lot more about it and started wearing the *hijab*. It made me so confused. Then I started going to talks and lectures. I got more confused. Then I began to realize why I was wearing it. I am wearing it only to please the people in my community. I did not feel comfortable in it any more. Then I took it off. It does not mean that I have lost my religion. I have still got my religion. I am still among the faithful. I follow my faith but I don't wear the *hijab*. (Meera)

In reaction to 9/11, Islam has affected the lives of Muslims all around the globe. So the change in Meera's attitude was acceptable because she was part of the Muslim *umma* (community of believers). She took a radical approach by wearing the *hijab* as many Muslim women did at that time to show their solidarity. It was a testing time for Meera to know herself religiously and she wanted to connect this feeling with the rest of the Muslim community as a symbol of Muslim identity. But at one point, after confronting many layers and meanings of the *hijab*, she sensed that the *hijab* was not necessary to display indicators of her faith. Faith is something more personal which was already there in her blood. The community perceived her from a different perspective being a pious woman but her agency showed what she was in her real life.

Rohina has also started wearing the hijab for the same reason - in order to show her reaction to the *umma*. By wearing the *hijab* she showed her solidarity with Muslims, although her mother was worried about her, saying, 'what has happened to her?' Similarly, her husband was unhappy with her changed identity. He used to say to her that '*purdah* is a matter of heart, not of appearance'. Rohina did not wear it for the sake of 'modesty' but as a 'political protest' (Barrett 1987 : 175). Neither her husband nor her mother realised her awakened consciousness for the Muslim *umma*.

Recently, Rohina has taken her *hijab* off due to her personal preference. But she is frightened as well, saying, 'I would be a great target being a young widow, people will judge me'. She expressed that when her personal situation got worse she lost her husband, son, and father and constantly lived in bereavement. She took it off because 'she was spiritually feeling very low'. She wanted to look back and re-evaluate her life. She, in fact, tried to gather her strength by changing her appearance, 'like when someone dresses up nicely it leaves an impact on one's personality'. She says it is like 'a circle of life';

...there is a sense of freedom. I can dress up now which makes me better. Like any other woman she wears make up. As a woman you feel down. But if you are dressed up you can go out and you feel better. (Rohina)

During my fieldwork I have seen Rohina many times smiling, walking confidently wearing charming outfits. One day while I was with a group of old ladies, she came to say hello to them. A woman who was sitting next to me commented on her saying; 'you will see she will cut her hair as well'. Then, she continued saying to me how she had advised her; 'do not do that, *betta* (means son, calling daughters lovingly), your mum is a very pious lady and you are her daughter, 'do not be cruel to her by taking it off', (field notes). Taking the *hijab* off was an act of cruelty against her mother because mothers are supposed to face the community's reactions regarding their daughters' immodest acts. In this respect, Azim has found in her research that people encourage young women to continue observing the *hijab* (Azim 2006: 277).

Shahnila knows that people believe the *hijab* is 'a symbol of piety' but she is not sure yet because she has never worn it but intends to do so after her marriage because she believes that the *hijab* is related to spirituality which women need to follow after marriage. One should settle first in life and can then start one's spiritual journey by wearing the *hijab*. She describes those women 'who are strict *hijabis* and pray five times a day but are very judgmental' as being in the wrong. She admires people who practise good morals instead of



such rituals. Shahnila believes that 'everyone has her/his own religion and way of life'. Her ideas are reflective of her free will and individual strength. Her belief system detaches her from many aspects of community beliefs and concerns.

The other example shows how a young woman creates her own space and negotiates her choices to reach a conscious decision. Wearing the *hijab* has different meanings and perceptions and each woman has her own justification for it. For example, Ambreen 'decided to keep Asian guys at bay;' therefore she started wearing the *hijab*, although she was not under pressure from her parents;

When I was in the university, there wasn't any Asians in my course. I had friends who were all English males. I stayed around with them, laughed, joked, had lunch and never had a problem. My parents knew about it. They did not have any problem either. A lot of my English friends had the idea that Muslim girls do not go out with anybody. They thought that Islam restricts that. They treated me like a friend, whereas Pakistani guys were more interested in flirting (she sighed). I just didn't understand that. It really makes you uncomfortable. So I started to wear the head scarf. (Ambreen)

Ambreen's English friends knew that in Islam women have certain rules to follow; therefore they respected her choice which provided her with a space to be comfortable. On the other hand, young Muslim British Pakistani men already know about Islam but do not respect women's choice. Ambreen used to work in the Pakistani community, an experience that made her know that Pakistani men think young Asian women who wear English clothes are more approachable. Therefore, she was compelled to wear the *hijab* to remind them of the boundaries which exist between them and her. Azim suggests that the *hijab* '[takes] away male attention' (Azim 2006: 277). However, Azim does not consider it a solution. She observes in her research that 'women [do] not feel comfortable when men are looking at them even though they [are] dressed in hijab' (Azim 2006: 277). The *hijab* works strategically to allow women 'to access and enter into male dominated territories' (Azim 2006: 270). The question is: Are women supposed to find a solution of avoiding offensive male attitudes by wearing the hijab?

Another participant, Reshma, testifies:

It was my choice, nobody told me to wear it. I started wearing it in the 1990s, when I was at university. I learnt and read more about Islam. I started praying five times a day, so I thought the scarf was a must. I was wearing long skirts and scarf; my daddy might have had fears that I might go more deep into religion or might end up wearing the full veil. I never did that. He did ask me as well. People teach other people different aspects of Islam. I pray at break time and so does everybody else. I think it was a different thing at the university. If you are wearing the head scarf, you are respected. I think that was respect. I remember, I and another girl were walking and there was a disco on weekend. A man in a modern dress came to us, said *salam* (hello) and gave us a leaflet. Well, he knew straight away that I wouldn't go there. Then again it was my choice, something I wouldn't indulge in.

Many Watfordian young people have been involved in religious practices while they study at universities, mostly in London. They try to manifest their Muslim identity by practising Islam. Rashma was one of them. Her father had no objection to her wearing the *hijab* but he had feared that she might go to the extreme and end up wearing the *jalbab* or *niqab* which made him anxious.

My mum wants me to wear the headscarf. I personally think that if you wear a headscarf then people, I wouldn't say Asian people but other people look at you from a different view. I know if I suddenly start wearing the headscarf, people would say that she wanted to cover up all the things she had been doing. She is pretending to be good but in reality she is not. I wouldn't want to wear a scarf to bring my reputation up. (Ramsha)

Covering the head with the *dupatta* is already a part of Pakistani women's dress. Young women do this, because it has multiple significance, religious and cultural. Wearing the *hijab* in the West enhances families' perceived status in the community because most Pakistanis believe it is 'a symbol of piety' which regulates cultural and religious obligations smoothly.

People have different reactions and judgements about the *hijab*. Sometimes it 'causes confusion for wearers and non-wearers' (Azim 2006: 273). Ruki is concerned about her daughter's reputation and wants her to wear the *hijab* to show the community that she is a good Muslim, in other words a pious woman. But Ramsha is less concerned about religiosity and piety to show people that she is from a respectable family or not. For Ramsha one can hide bad character by manifesting outward decency and piety by wearing the *hijab*. It suggests that a *hijabi* is not necessarily a good Muslim. The *hijab* provides a camouflage to women. Hence it is a complex notion which puzzles many people. It is not the *hijab* but people's perception about it: they judge it from their individual perspectives.

Suriya told me that when she went to Pakistan for her son's marriage, the mother of her newlywed daughter in law asked her whether she would like the latter to wear the *abaya* and the *hijab*. It made Suriya angry. She replied, 'who are we to decide for her? It is her choice. Let her do what she wants to do.' She told her that the *hijab* and *abaya* are new trends in Pakistan, specifically to impress young British Pakistani men who intend to bring their brides from Pakistan.

Young women are under both family and peer pressure. If they wear the *shalwar kameez* in school they get negative criticism from their white peer group which is hard for Asian girls to cope with (Bhatti 1999: 151). Parents want them to maintain the family reputation and respect through such practices. Almost all respondents mentioned that young

women have no choice in their lives. They play two roles to please both sides, their parents and peers.

Yes, locally here girls wear it and take it off in the school. I think girls are forced by their parents to wear it. They go to school, go to the toilet and take their *hijab* off. They do makeup and do their hair nicely. Because they don't know why are they are wearing the *hijab*. When you are forced to do something you do it to please someone. When you get an environment where no one really knows you, where there are no parents or your family to watch you, then you take it off, don't you. The reason why they wear it is because they do not have a choice. (Meera)

Most of the participants mentioned that young women who wear the *hijab* take it off at school. Most young women, particularly teenage girls are perplexed by the differences between the two cultures. They live under pressure and conflict between two contrasting worlds. They cannot forge a strong identity to satisfy and please both sides. They live in confusion and conflict; parents do not give them adequate reason or chance to express and negotiate their choices. A participant has said that, 'the minute they go away from their family and community they take the advantage and breach the boundaries' by taking off their Pakistani clothes and wearing the English clothes.

### **6.6 Gossip: A Powerful tool for Social Control**

The lack of freedom of young South Asian immigrant women is a 'social disaster' (Yuval-Davis 1992: 285). Their attire, intimacy and sexual modesty are strictly monitored (Dwyer 2000: 163; Werbner 2007) and have been institutionalized through community considerations, judgment, and gossip. Gossip is the most common and strongest 'form of social control' (Al-Khayyat 1990: 23; Bhatti 1999: 169) providing a structure of manipulation which Ermers says '[takes] place behind a veil of secrecy' (cited from Payton 2011: 37) and mainly regulated by elderly women - 'aunties' (Bradby 2007: 666). Fatima Mernissi argues that 'young girls are a particular target for gossip, and their behaviour is a daily object of concern to the other women, those who are related to them and those who are not. A girl's reputation has a direct impact on her family's honour and prestige' (Mernissi 2003: 123).

Pakistani parents fear the possible dangers of the outside world and care about the community's 'accusation of failing of control' (Din 2006: 109); therefore they control their daughters to reduce the possibility of community gossip. They are always afraid that 'gossip may damage their reputation' (Al-Khayyat 1990: 23). Most parents do not wish community members to talk about their authority by criticizing or blaming them for not being responsible

parents; however, parents' 'blind excessive authority' or 'laxness' can be dangerous (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 270).

Aunties regulate the sexual modesty issues of young adults by watching them with deep 'suspicion and supervision' (Harrami and Mouna 2010: 269) about their conduct; by saying, 'this girl has done this, this boy has done that' (participant) they keep transmitting such information until the family gets a bad name in the community. Parents are scared of such people who might say bad things about their daughters.

My parents fear that I might take the wrong path, that I don't get misled by other people or do something that puts them into shame. (Sheela)

Ikhlāq Din's research in the Pakistani community explains that 'labelling plays an important role within this community as well as the sanctions that are imposed on parents and young people. Like labelling, 'gossip' is frequently used as a deterrent within the community. Both relatives and parents act as higher authorities'(Din 2006: 109).

Women are seen to uphold the families' honour. For example, if the lady steps slightly out of the line they know the community will be quick to point it out. They pick up small points and then they blow them out of proportion. That's how women continue to gossip. (Nina)

I have observed in my fieldwork that gossip is mainly the domain of elderly women and aunts or 'aunti jee' (addressing older woman with respect). Aunties hold the authority to say 'anything' (Bradby 2007: 666) about young adults, mainly women. They just pick things from people's lives for 'malicious gossip' (Bradby 2007: 667). They talk about everything: how people behave, where they go. They even go deeper to know what intentions there are behind acts. Young informants believe that these people are uneducated, do not work, they have plenty of time, they live on benefits, and most of them are retired. They have nothing productive to do, they do not read newspapers and they do not even have Islamic knowledge (participant).

'You go straight', I used to laugh and say no mum. I am going in the opposite direction. I still say it, I never questioned because it is Pakistani culture. It is Pakistani mentality. (Nina)

Nina has been studying in London for a few years. When she goes to London her mother makes her conscious by saying, 'you go straight'. Mothers want to make sure that their daughters are not involved in an illicit relationship. The word 'straight' indicates following the family rules. I am also told that women pray for their daughters until they come back

safely from their universities. Mothers believe that they live in a close community. They have concerns about people because ‘they have to live with them’ so they are accountable to them.

Families’ reputation in the community is very crucial: ‘people judge a family by the behaviour of their daughters. If a girl has no shame, then the whole family is disgraced’ (Shaw 2000: 127). Families do not want to be judged disgracefully in the community due to their daughters’ shameful acts. Women who cannot control their sexual desires are a threat to *sharif* (respectable) families. Wearing revealing clothes for the purpose of showing femininity<sup>115</sup> (bodyline or showing neck or arms), loosening/cutting hair, eye contact and speaking in a romantic tone are all included in such acts. Such expressions are considered bodily expressions in the Pakistani context which could easily attract the other sex. Parents’ concern is that their girls might be misguided or spoilt by other people (even by other bad girls). They believe that women are vulnerable and such desires can lead them to take the wrong direction. Therefore, parents keep telling their daughters to be careful about their moral purity otherwise people are there to gossip to ruin their reputation. Gossip could travel and spread at any time even through their peer group.

I know how Asian people are, they hear one thing, they add another ten to it and they just start broadcasting it. Sheela

Parents have doubts about their daughters whenever they go out. Mothers usually do not show confidence in their daughters. They constantly frighten them about community concerns. As mothers are mainly responsible for their daughters’ conduct mothers can be judged if daughters slightly cross the line. Tahir Abbas has suggested that ‘the elder women in the household[...]see their own honour at stake because of their daughters’ behaviour’(Terms 2008: 17). Therefore, mothers keep reminding them about their moral obligations. They often advise their daughters, sometimes softly and at times strictly, by saying, “remember you should be careful of devils (having an ill intention) as they are everywhere. They (people) are not scared of God.” Westwood has mentioned ‘what people will think/say’ (cited from Cressey 2006: 38) and ‘don’t forget God can forgive you, the community will never’ (participant). Such statements are used by mothers in order to control young adults to maintain their moral conduct.

You have cousins living opposite to you. Pakistanis are across the road from you and Pakistani grocery shops around the corner. The moment you walk out people will be peeping from their windows. It’s sad but people do that. You have men in the corner sitting on the benches. You walk down the street;

<sup>115</sup> Sleeveless shirts/showing belly by wearing a *choli* (short blouse) when women wear *sari* or *ghagra* (traditional skirt, mainly worn by indigenous women)

everyone will be looking at you just to point out where you are going. I have that many times. I don't like this but this is the way it is. You just have to get on with this. (Nina)

People literally live close by and are seen 'out and about' (Bradby 2007: 666). They just watch, create and exaggerate stories about young women and then the 'word gets around easily' (participant). It does not matter whether such stories are true or not but their actual behaviour becomes far more controversial (Bradby 2007). Yet it is crucial for women to conduct themselves properly, dress up appropriately because people do look and talk and say whose daughter she is, what she is doing and where she is going (field notes). Daughters are being advised, 'you should look respectable, as you are a dad's honour;' whenever you walk down the street people should say, 'Oh this is Mr K's daughter' (participant). Why? Because 'dad's concern' (Elden 2004 : 92) matters. On the one hand they control women's moral reputation and on the other parents publicise their control on children's lives through projecting them.

If you leave home at 11.00 pm the old woman living close by will be watching you, sitting in her front room. Watching someone leaving, with what clothes, whether she has worn scarf or not. Bless her (aunty) then next day everybody knows that so and so has left her house at night. In this situation what can we do? She will not consider that that person might be going to hospital, may be her relative is seriously ill. But that old woman has this idea in her mind that the girl (young woman) has left to meet her boyfriend. (Laila)

People just keen to know to what degree youngsters hold families' respect and reputation, for this they 'highlight' some stuff 'behind your back'. Interestingly Nina has mentioned that it is not only 'aunties' who take interest in gossip but the 'new comers'<sup>116</sup> who arrive in the United Kingdom for marriage reasons. For them 'honour issues are more significant' to talk about.

If they are uneducated, they do not pursue a career. They do not go to university. They have got nothing to do. So they talk about young people's lives to keep honour on the track. (Nina)

The new comers believe they know culture more so they judge British Pakistanis from their perspective. They try to nurture honour norms from the back doors, criticize and advocate. They believe that cultural issues are more fragile and sensitive in British Pakistanis. The attitudes of the 'new-comers' serve as a strategy for survival and a fast track to adjust. Having shallow knowledge about Pakistanis living in the West, new comers try to preach

---

<sup>116</sup> Young woman a spousal migrants

their cultural attitude through mothers in law and ‘aunties’. For them the ideal people are ‘aunties’ who seem to them more welcoming, entertaining and who listen attentively to their stories about dutiful women back home. The reality is that if new comers have nothing productive to contribute to the social stream, they drag elderly British Pakistani women back a few more steps and make them suspicious of young British born women.

At the end of the day if my parents are fine with me and they know I haven’t done anything out of the line, then it’s fine. People will always talk, you can do nothing about it. We always listen to other people’s comments. You are not living for yourself. For example, the world doesn’t just revolve around me. It revolves around everybody. Why people talk about other people because culture plays a big role in their lives, for example every woman loves to gossip, that’s the bottom line. Women have got nothing better to do. For example, house wives; their children go to schools, husbands to work, they have nothing to do so they pick up the phone and start talking. (Nina)

Nina has confidence in herself. She understands the culture of her parents which she cannot change ‘which she would like to’ but she says she ‘never questions’ her mother. Nina already knows what Pakistani culture is so she does what she has been expected to do by her family. It is not easy for Asian girls to pursue higher studies. They have to fulfil several conditions to get higher education. For example, they are told that their parents can make them discontinue their studies anytime if they get a good marriage proposal, and would not care about the completion of their studies. When Nina started university she was put under similar conditions by her parents. She agreed with them on the condition that she will not marry back home.

During my field trips I attended some religious gatherings, called *dars* (Islamic lesson) in women’s houses, where ‘the risk of gossip damaging young women’s reputations was keenly felt’ (Bradby 2007: 565). The women used to talk proudly about their daughters and how they were prohibited from the outer world, maintaining the standards of family obligations. They speculate about young adults’ activities while they live far from home. It suggests that community speculation plays an important role in restricting women’s freedom to life. Also, it is hard for parents to decide for their daughters living on their own.

Girls go to London and live in rented flats. The government gives them money for education. We don’t know whether they study or not. They have a good excuse to leave their houses, what can poor parents do? We first tell our children that if they want to study more, they have to come back home daily otherwise no permission for the study can be granted, better to stay at home. (Field notes)

Families' reputation in the community is very crucial for the interaction and socialization of children, because parents do not want to ruin their children's marital prospects: 'gossip ruins marriage chances, people can say anything' (Bradby 2007: 666). Ramsha has expressed that:

Parents are doing that because they know people will start talking and ruin their reputation. That is the major thing in Asian families. If reputation comes down they say 'don't talk to this and that family, it's going to bring our reputation down too.

Young women are careful of elder women because they are being affected by them. Shahnila used to help women in the community with their paper work but aunties interfered in her life by making judgments about her. Not liking their attitude she decided to stop working for them. She said that it is unacceptable in Pakistani culture for people to involve themselves in others' lives and make judgments about them: 'how will culture flourish if people do not respect boundaries'?

Though the new generation might say it is nonsense, people talk. If something bad happens, we do talk about it. If something bad has happened to a certain person, it is talked about because you can't brush it under the carpet. (Nimara)

It is not just gossip which is the main activity of elderly women but Nimra, a British born young adult working for the community, suggests that gossip is the green light to know about young adults' lives and what they are up to. She appreciates the role of the community in watching young adults' behaviour saying that it is better to clean it before it spreads out.

Parents are mainly concerned about their children's marital prospects. If their daughter goes out and talks to a boy it can ruin the family's image. Saying 'anything' about the woman's character is the core of the problem and can ruin families' *izzat* and reputation in the community. Rohina said '*geebat* (gossip) is awful'; wearing the *hijab* or a miniskirt is equal to her but it bothers her is when *hijabis* gossip (*geebat*). She worked in a community centre and closely observed how women talk about young women's behaviour and how it could affect family reputation. How a young woman would feel about it is never considered.

Family reputation, referring to class and caste status and therefore public/community reputation (Barrett 1987 : 167), works in the politics of marriage. Ramsha has seen people having different levels of reputation; some have high, some low and some medium. Most of the families who have low repute try to reach and interact with the higher families because they intend to develop a network with high class and *sharef* reputed families for the sake of their children's better future (marriage prospects). Sometimes higher families may try to



avoid the lower families, as Ramsha says, 'they wouldn't wanna bring their reputation down by talking to people with a lower reputation'.

## 6.7 Summary

Modesty is highly required for young British born women to maintain the religious and cultural boundaries. For them living in the United Kingdom poses a challenge to strike a balance between Western and Pakistani culture. They have been told that certain practices, cultural, Islamic, and social, are prohibited to follow such as having boyfriends, going out late, wearing revealing clothes, smoking or drinking. They understand this but some cultural practices are more controlling. For example most young women are happy wearing modest clothes but it does not make sense to them to only wear Pakistani clothes, for them any clothes could be modest as long as they cover their body.

The dress code has multiple ways of judging young women's sexual behaviour because it has both a cultural and a symbolic meaning. For example, wearing Pakistani dress such as *duppatta* is a mark of respect when a woman meets a male family relative or an elderly woman as she is supposed to cover her head on such occasions. It also has another purpose which is to cover parts of the body which is considered as representative of her modest behaviour. The third meaning is if women cover their head and appear in front of a male family member he will consider her to be a respectful woman. Most mothers were concerned about their daughters wearing cultural dress while they are at home.

The fear of their daughters having boyfriends was noticed intensely in parents' controlling behaviour because it could damage their reputation and therefore they keep an eye on their social activities including their lifestyle.

Some young British born women already wore the *hijab* as they have been involved in Islamic groups while studying. They learn about Islam and their rights. Some of them manifest British Muslim identity rather than Pakistani ethnic identity. The practice of the *hijab* in young British born women has increased after 9/11 for showing their solidarity with the Muslim community. At that time wearing the *hijab* was frightening to some parents who thought their daughters might become religious extremists. With time the *hijab* became a tool of controlling young women's lives by forcing them to wear it to increase family reputation. Most of the young women are being told by their fathers to wear the *hijab* because they believe it shows women's piety and religiosity. Some women have taken the *hijab* off

realizing that it is nothing particular wearing it because women could still do something immoral while wearing it.

The Pakistani community intends to live in the same area and they have their own reasons for that. But it has been noticed that the behaviour of young women is being judged easily by community members if they move out into public places. So, young women have been advised to behave modestly while they are out of the home. Community gossip is a controlling tool which can ruin women's and families' image in the community.

## Chapter seven

### Dynamics of Marriage for Watfordian Pakistanis

#### 7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, modesty issues were highlighted in terms of how family/men control women's sexuality. Modest acts are considered equivalent to women's sexual purity and the purity of the blood. In turn, women's sexual purity is supposed to be necessary in order for a family to be called '*khandani*' (a respectable family). Das says it is an indicator of 'having distinction or having class' (cited from Shaw 2001: 322). *Khandani* women are always in demand in South Asian families as women's modesty and marriage settlements are key elements in achieving a higher position in the community.

This chapter will analyse women's position and problems in marital life. Though people do not explicitly use the word honour, through customary practices they underline the ideology of caste and sectarianism in order to follow honour ethos through the institution of marriage.

Protection of family *izzat* becomes a battle field in the continuation of marital relationships. It is mostly the case that women have to bear the burden of customs, regardless of whether the woman lives in her parents' or her husband's house. It is also an intriguing phenomenon that family's expectations change with time and situation.

#### 7.2 Conflicting Views on Marriage

Endogamous marriages are very common in Pakistani community. Such marriages are a deal between two families, which may either become a cause of conflict or cohesion. Much depends on what deal a certain family prefers to bring into a marriage settlement. The customary or traditional way of marriage is through family agreement, but if a woman takes an independent decision, the whole situation becomes a battlefield for all concerned parties, with both families trying to protect their honour and prestige. In this respect, Nafisa Shah rightly remarks that 'marriage is a 'peg' in honour codes' (Shah 1998). A customary marriage is an honour marriage. In such a marriage, women are privileged to have a place, position and dignity in society, which is otherwise not considered as their right.

Pakistani parents usually settle their daughters into their own groups. Razak (a participant) expressed that ‘every third person is connected with his *khandan*<sup>117</sup> (extended family)’. As most of the marriages happen within the same *khandan*, ‘cousin marriage is high in Mirpuris’ (Shaw 2001: 319). Parents and extended families take an active part in the continuation of such a system because Pakistanis believe that marriage into the same family is sustainable and has more advantages. This became all the more important, because almost all the members of the pioneer generation were married through their parents’ choice, for the particular purpose of retaining the customs. Participants’ responses showed that it was crucial for them to maintain this practice, because ‘[T]hey want to keep the ‘similarities in lifestyle’ (Modood et al. 1994: 71). Parents argue that marrying into the same group, or in the same family, is more successful and compatible, which can maintain the balance of power relationships between two families and among different groups. Alternately, the younger British born generation argues against this conviction. They see marriage from a different perspective. For them, women’s marriage into joint families is complicated and problematic. Moreover, they consider that there are greater chances of discrimination into the same group. For example, if a woman is related to her in-laws from the mother’s side, she will be treated by them in a manner different than if this relation were from the father’s side. This is because families tend to indulge in domestic and family politics.

Parents believe that they are offering their children the best options for a successful marital relationship. However, my data finds that 99 per cent of mothers (participants) are upset about their children’s marriage choices. They complain that children do not listen to them: ‘We are *mujboor* (helpless) because *rawaj* (tradition) is putting us in troubles. If we try to follow our *khandan* (extended family), children don’t allow us’ (participant). Therefore, parents cannot afford to be more traditional now. The matter is highly critical and complex. Parents have their own reasons to promote marriages in *khandan*, because they believe that the British born young men are not serious in marriage matters. They also blame some young men of being involved in sexual relationships, and avoiding family obligations. Parents also disapprove of their children marrying into another sect, religion, or culture. They believe that, in this way, they may lose their ethnic, cultural and religious identity. They equally believe that marriages with non-Muslims or different/lower caste families do not work well. To them,

---

<sup>117</sup> *khandan* implies hierarchy. Families are ‘high’ or ‘low’ in terms of respectability (*ashraf*), ‘even though Pakistanis usually phrase their concerns about status less contentiously by stressing instead the equality between kin’ (Shaw, 2001:322).

a marriage is a source, as well as an assertion, of one's cultural identity, and without it, women cannot have value in the society.

### 7.3 Conventional Marriage as a Silent Marriage

Conventional marriages are based on patriarchal values, such as: *purdha*, bloodline, piety, modesty, caste, sect/religion, consanguinity, family background, family honour, control, respect for elders, woman's silence, sacrifice, faithfulness, *sabar* and *taqwa*<sup>118</sup>. These values are believed to enhance family honour. In such marriages, women have to behave silently before and after the marriage, in order to make it a success. Silence is a symbol of honour, faithfulness, obedience, modesty, piety and sexual purity, all of which are important in maintaining honour values.

In South Asian cultures, most of the families do not even consult their daughters about their choice in marriage. In fact, it is considered a taboo that daughters can talk or think about their marriage. Therefore, families train their young daughters not to involve themselves in such issues. My fieldwork showed that it was most common in the pioneer generation that women were solely married through their families' decision and choices. Many immigrants brought that concept to the United Kingdom, so that when their children (especially daughters) would be of marriageable age, they would marry them off with so and so within the same family. Mothers instruct their daughters to focus on their studies and leave the rest (their marriage) to them. This idea keeps the parents busy in establishing contacts with extended families back home. In this respect, Shaw mentioned that 90 per cent of the first cousin marriages were transnational marriages within the *biraderi* (Shaw 2001: 325). Further, Charley terms them to be 'higher even in Pakistan or in the pioneer generation' (Charsley 2003: 263). It also shows that immigrants had no other choice than to marry their daughters in the UK at their early stages of settlement. Given that most of them were thinking of going back, cousin marriages were a convenient choice for them. Rohina states:

I had a lot of cousins and it was assumed that we would marry our cousins. The idea was there in my mother's mind. She thought that when we would be old enough for marriage, she would marry us with so and so. She never told us about this. She thought it was wrong to talk to young girls about marriage. She told us that our job was to go to school, get educated and when the time was right, she would tell us whom to marry. She just assumed we would accept.

---

<sup>118</sup> Belief is that whatever happens is from Go

Second generation immigrants were married off at a very young age. They even did not have any idea about the meaning of marriage; for them a ‘wedding was just getting dressed up’. They had no idea about its implications. Some had to wait for long until family requirements had been fulfilled or strategic considerations had been met. Most marriages were arranged through families’ verbal commitments, mutual understanding, and an arranged marriage system (Ballard 1982).

#### 7.4 Patience (*sabar*) in Marriage

Tahira (a member of the pioneer generation) from Mirpur married at the age of nineteen in an extended family. It was an exchange marriage<sup>119</sup>. She did not remember whether she was happy in her marriage or not. Her family decided to marry her off because her husband was a British passport holder. Her family thought that she would go to England and everything would be alright.

One day a person came from England. All family members, old and young were eager to meet him. I also very excited and wanted to know about my husband. We were on our way that my father in law sent me a message to come back. He did not let me meet him. I was frightened, so I came back. I was keen to know about life in England and how my husband’s life was there. I did not even get a chance to see the person. I was sad and cried a lot that day. (Tahira)

The risk was great as most of exchange marriages had a history of failure; ‘if something goes wrong with one of the marriages, the effect on the other marriage will be detrimental’ (Shaw 2001: 326). For a long time Tahira lived in constant fear that her marriage might not last. To keep a marriage going was imperative, and this made her even more careful, conscious and alert. In such a state of mind, many women tolerate many disturbing family issues in order to keep their marriages intact for the sake of their brothers. Such was the case of Tahira, who put up with everything while living with her in-laws, without her husband (who was in the UK), determined to be patient because she did not have any other choice.

My in laws were strict and authoritative. I worked like a slave. They thought that I would leave due to their harsh treatment, but I was determined not to let my parents down; otherwise people would point a finger at how they had brought me up. (Tahira)

---

<sup>119</sup> If a brother marries the sister of his sister’s husband, it is called an exchange marriage. Such marriages are usually very complicated; if one couple is unsuccessful it affects the other too. If one couple gets divorced, the family of the other also demands a divorce.

Domestic work was very demanding, especially at harvest time, as it meant she had to cook for many people. This is not to mention that her father-in-law was commanding; she was never given permission to go anywhere, which was very frustrating for her. She had to constantly live in fear of her father-in-law while simultaneously nursing her ill mother-in-law. She bore the burden of family's *izzat* by keeping silent. She had been specifically ordered by her husband to look after his mother, who was disabled and seriously ill. Tahira's mother also advised her to treat her well as if she is your real mother. She will be happy and in return she will pray for you. Tahira never shared the difficulties of her life with her parents, or even with her husband. She did not want to upset any of them. She wondered if the *duaa* (prayers) of her sick mother-in-law would change her life.

It sounds strange that, at *rukhsati*<sup>120</sup>, Tahira's mother had advised her to support her sick mother-in-law. She thought that looking after her in-laws would be rewarding for her daughter in future life. But years afterwards, Tahira's mother realised that Tahira's children need their father too, because, if her children did not do well, people would blame her daughter;

It is enough. You should not tolerate any more, my mother used to say to me. God will take your *dana pani* (food and water) from this place (in other words: may your resources be transferred to some other place). God's will is that now you go to your husband because your children need their father. Whatever training you may give to your children, if there is any deficiency people will accuse you of not being a good mother. (Tahira)

Eventually Tahira obtained a visa, but it took her eight years to join her husband, who used to visit her in Pakistan. During those difficult years with her in-laws, she maintained her marriage through silence and endurance. They sometimes had arguments and quarrels in the family to which she thought, 'one has to endure; I should not let other people know what is happening inside the house — telling people does not solve the problems, rather it aggravates the situation' said Tahira. Even though she had left her parents' house, she was constantly reminded by her parents that 'patience is rewarding' in the end; thus, she never received any moral support from her parents' side. What is more, when Tahira arrived in London, and despite of the support she had been giving all along, her husband was not pleased with her, as she had left his elderly mother back home.

---

<sup>120</sup> The time when a girl leaves her parents' house due to her marriage.

Tahira's narrative is reflective, therefore, of Roger Ballard's opinion that the vulnerable person in South Asian families is 'a newly married bride' (Ballard 1994: 184). Her tolerance to male-treatment was a real test for her, both physically and emotionally. She had been frequently told by her parents that 'you have to break yourself...they are not going to bow down before you; that is our culture'. In other words, in order to get a respectable position in her husband's family, she showed great persistence and tolerance what I term it a 'breaking phenomenon' which loose women's confidence in her life. On the one hand, there were strong and harsh cultural values; on the other, she did not have her parents' support. It is generally believed that women have to live and die in their husbands' house.

### 7.5 The Role of Caste in Marriage

Caste is a huge barrier in transnational marriages. A participant stated that 'mixed marriages are the failure of the *biraderi* system'. This statement indicates that the *biraderi* system is still a controlling factor in British Pakistani communities. Many families do not allow their women to mix up with other caste groups because they believe that if their daughters get acquainted with other castes, this may increase the chances of mixed marriages. This kind of interaction will give women the freedom to choose their own life partners, which can be a disaster for a family. Therefore, women are considered the main cause for the breakdown or strength of a particular caste's identity.

Each caste believes that it is better than the other. Like other castes and sects, *Araen* (a caste) does not marry their daughters into other castes. The reason that is mostly given is based on false logic. Elders explain; it has been like that for ages, so it is for their good. If asked to reason out this logic, young people usually keep quiet, while the elderly avoid to answering, on the grounds that it has deeper meanings and reasons, which cannot be explained easily. They argue that our elders were not foolish to have formed this system.

When Mazna (pioneer generation) started college, her friend's brother (who belonged to a different background) saw her and liked her, upon which he sent a marriage proposal to her family. Mazna's mother became extremely upset on how the man dared to like her, even thinking that something must be wrong in her daughter;

Why did this proposal come? I replied that I did not know. How could it be possible that you did not know about that? Other family girls are studying with boys. They are more beautiful than you. We do not get their proposals. Why did we get it for you? Sit at home. No need to go to college. We do not



want to take any risk because the election is very close. It will affect your father's position. So I was forced to abandon my studies because of this proposal. (Mazna)

Mazna was far younger than her siblings and a favourite of her father. Her parents did not even think of marrying her off before that proposal. According to cultural values, she had to wait until her elder siblings got married. Her mother was conscious and scared that she might take any stupid step. They were also getting threats from the man who was interested in Mazna. The threats were serious; e.g., 'we will make her elope' etc. Women's elopement is a serious issue; if it ever occurs, the reputation of a family is lost forever (Shaw 2000).

Mazna's family believed that she had brought a bad name on her male family members. Her mother rebuking told her that they had been taking decisions for other village girls, so how dare their own daughter thinks of taking such a decision on her own? How could it be possible that '*our* daughter dared to dishonour *us*', her mother said? The mother decided to hide Mazna's existence from the public for a while, because news of this spontaneous proposal from a man of another caste could affect her father's political career, and might be used against his constituency. This would be best achieved, she thought, by marrying her off as soon as possible. As Mazna was already engaged to her cousin, her mother sent to her would-be in laws, saying '*hum ko jaldi hai* (we are in a hurry)'. The plea she took was that they were getting several good proposals for Mazna, so if they wished to have her as a wife for their son, they had to quickly fix a date; otherwise they would marry her off somewhere else. That was a serious message for them, but the family was not ready. Hence, Mazna's mother arranged her marriage out of the country with an out-of-caste person, who was much older than her.

It is inappropriate and risky for a girl's family to send a marriage proposal, but this could be acceptable if the other family is very close, and knows that the reason is valid. If there is a lack of good understanding between the families, on the other hand, the male side have every reason to get suspicious. In such a situation, most families try to marry their daughters into lower caste families, and even to men far older than them. Mazna's case, in this sense, shows the drastic decisions a family may take to maintain their power, position and *izzat* in the community;

I think it was better for me; otherwise my life wouldn't be normal, because for six months I was in prison. I did not get my post. My contacts had been cut off with my friends. My mother lost trust in me. If I went to the toilet she used to ask me 'are you definitely there Mazna'. When I prayed *nimaz* she used to sit beside me. I even could not go to *chat* (terrace). I was literally unable to do anything. (Mazna)

Mazna used to plead with her mother to get her married as soon as possible. She told her; ‘even if you marry me with *loole lungree—mujhee bus nikal doo* (just turn me out with someone even if he is a deaf, dumb or an invalid person). I want my freedom’. It was hard for Mazna to live in suspicion and high surveillance. ‘I was fed up with that life...all the time they (family) kept an eye on me’, said Mazna.

Patriarchy is a collective term, and it works for a collective interest. If a person retaliates in a patriarchal order, it leaves him/her in isolation. Mazna’s case is an example of this, particularly in how her mother, as a strong follower of patriarchy, had reacted at her daughter’s slightest step. How caste preference formed a battlefield; when a family senses that its honour is under attack, they fire back to protect it. They put a woman under strict surveillance for the fear of any further trouble. They get rid of daughters who become a cause of damage to family reputation and honour. Women’s elopement is a big threat in honour cultures, tarnishing the reputation of a family. In such societies, castes avenge on each other by making a woman elope, in order to destroy the image of another family or clan. Mazna’s mother was aware of this potential danger, and the only way to avert the situation was to get her married as soon as possible.

On the contrary, as a mother, Mazna has now allowed her daughter to choose her life partner. Though it is conditional that her would-be husband should be a Muslim, she would not mind if he is from any other country. Mazna says;

When my daughter was 19 years old, I told her *bacha* (child) if you like somebody tell me. No matter if he belongs to any community, I will not force you but he should be a Muslim. (Mazna)

This shows a huge difference between Mazna’s situation and her daughter’s. The former was not allowed to marry someone of her own choice; it was a taboo and a prohibited act. Moreover, she was only a worthless part of a patriarchal machinery, for she had spent her youth at a time when women only possessed a collective value within their family or community, that is, when their position as individuals was non-existent.

The above narrative has indicated how a daughter’s moral behaviour may be used as a battlefield for *izzat*, and how *izzat*, in turn, is used for the attainment of family status. However, families can apply any means to get rid of those daughters who cause moral damage to their image in the community.

Patriarchy works in different forms in migrant communities in the West. British born daughters of some families can choose, but it is imperative that they must marry a Muslim, even better, if he is from the same sect. Mazna would not stop her daughter from a love marriage, but it is necessary that she falls in love with a Muslim man. 'If she falls in love with a non-Muslim, then what will happen?', I asked. She suddenly screamed 'No no! It has to be with a Muslim. Otherwise it should not happen. How can we give her hand to a non-Muslim... you tell me? Are you a Muslim?'. She asked me in a serious tone.

Alison Shaw explains that a daughter's marriage into an extended family of the same caste is a matter of family name, *izzat*, prestige, quom (zat/national) identity, including the continuation of one's bloodline. This, she adds, is because 'caste status is transferred in the male line' (Shaw 2000: 129). Reshma, a domestic violence activist, and a second-generation immigrant, explains: 'if a man goes to another family, it is not a serious matter, because children take after their father's name. Besides, marrying a daughter in the same caste is a matter of women's *izzat*'. Reshma is understandably worried about her daughter's *izzat*, in the case that she marries into another caste, because 'her grandchildren will get their father's name'. I asked if it is not her daughter's identity that is important. 'No, no, no! It is for her *izzat*', she replied forcefully. *Izzat* is clearly a more powerful element than identity. Identity can change with time, but *izzat* is life lasting, and unchangeable.

My daughter will lose contact with her family. For example, a *Rajput* gets married with a *Chowdhry*; her children will not be *Rajputs*. Her children would be *Chowdhry*. You have just lost your daughter basically. She has gone, her *izzat* has gone. (Reshma)

Most of British Pakistanis believe that marrying into the same caste, and the same family, is respectable both for their daughters and the family. Nonetheless, if a woman marries outside her family circle, it is usually acceptable (to some extent), whereas the same cannot be true if she chooses to marry into another caste. To elaborate, if the former were to occur, it would mostly bring unhappiness to her relatives, but the latter is much more difficult to accept, and would have more serious and distressing consequences. Shafeeq has confirmed, for example, that it still happens in Pakistani communities that a husband will not be welcome in his in-laws' house. He also tells of how he knows a family who went for a *rishta*, (proposal) to a family from a different caste, seeking their daughter's hand in marriage. What is your caste? asked the girl's parents. We are *Rajee*, the other replied. '*Bus baat udher hi khatum*' (the

matter ended there and then), states Shafeeq, as they did not care to listen any further. Speaking about the same issue, a young British-raised Pakistani woman states in Shaw's research: '[W]e don't marry outside the *khandan*, because other people are not of the same caste' (Cressey 2006) and 'we only count blood, we are Raja they are not'(Cressey 2006: 149).

It should be noted, though, that some people in the community are becoming more progressive, actually desiring to see certain changes, by breaking the chain of old customs and cultural habits. Shafeeq argues that only practical decisions and actions can develop a community, and in order for such decisions to take place, the community needs proper guidance and leadership. But even those desiring change, and who are many times of the younger generation, can be held back by family loyalties. One, for example, can still feel the control that *izzat* (and its conceptions) has in the story of Ramsha, a sixteen year old participant in my study. I had originally arranged to meet her mother, Fozia (42 years old), but when I arrived for the interview, the mother had changed her mind to respect her eldest daughter's wishes, who, she explained, gets unhappy when the mother shares her story with outsiders. This, of course, immediately indicated the kind of shame and distress that this family must have experienced. However, and out of courtesy, the mother offered that I speak with her younger daughter, Ramsha, which was convenient, because it gave me the chance to hear the opinions of a young adult.

Ramsha eventually spoke about her family's situation, how her mother was a victim of a forced arranged marriage, which ended in a divorce, and how she is now economically struggling to maintain Ramsha, her sister and their three siblings, as a single mother. But social considerations, including respectability, are more troubling for Fozia, and her narrative, as far as her daughters are concerned, is a clear example of how marriage, divorce and widowhood can become major obstacles in the actualization of a woman's identity within the existing patriarchal Pakistani system.

Ramsha explained the extent to which her parents' divorce had negatively affected the female members of the family, both the mother and her daughters. In such a patriarchal community, it is only natural that the woman would carry all the blame for the failure of a marriage. Most participants expressed that parents and extended family, including *biraderi*, believe that, wherever a woman goes, or in whatever condition she may find herself, she must accept her situation and do her best to sustain her marriage. Namely, she is supposed to keep silent and bear the pain and burden of family values. Fozia's divorce, therefore, signifies her

failure to fulfil her duty, and, by extension, the failure of her parents in correctly raising their daughter to maintain their *izzat*. It ultimately signifies the whole family's lack of *izzat*. Ramsha spoke of how this had led the community to undermine her and her siblings while they were growing up; they became the talk of the town, as everyone knew that her parents were separated, and this was to the point that children from the same community avoided mixing with them.

Ramsha's account particularly reflects how a child who is brought up in such a hostile environment may experience an identity crisis, desiring to dismiss the norms and conventions of an unwelcoming community, while also hoping to be accepted within it. On the one hand, she is aware of her mother's position as a single parent, struggling to restore her children's status in the community. She understands how Fozia's efforts to give her daughters a respectful life in society will become even more crucial when they reach their marriageable age, and are expected to act according to the norms of the community. These involve marrying into families of the same caste, the *Rajas*, which will be the strongest indication that their *izzat* (honour) is still intact, and that it has not been seriously harmed. On the other hand, Ramsha is also unhappy and distressed about the idea of marrying into the same caste, stating that it is 'ridiculous';

My mum will still have that in her head that she wanted me to marry a *Raja*, because at the end of the day she'd want it to carry on from the family tree. Obviously my great granddad is a *Raja*, she wouldn't want her generation, her children to break it, to break that tree. But the thing is, I can't really argue about it. My mum has done so much for us... If my dad was living with us, I wouldn't bother about it much but because it's just my mum, I'd want to keep her happy. I wouldn't want her to have that in her heart, that tiny little bit that she always wanted her children to marry a *Raja* because I know that it will stay in her heart. I would want to marry a *Raja* to keep her happy but then again it is my life. I'll try my best to find a *Raja*. (Ramsha)

In other words, Ramsha strongly hopes to bring *izzat* and respectability upon her family, solely for her mother's sake, but she would not want to attain this at the expense of a fulfilling life. She is an individual who values her own choice and self-actualization over caste preferences, but is unable to take complete control over her decisions due to family loyalties. Her case exemplifies the second-hand influence of honour values on a younger Pakistani generation that desires, and is ready for change, but is held back by family loyalties.

Change is inevitable, nevertheless, and this is evident in the account reported by Najma, a participant who belongs to a large extended family in Watford, originally from Mirpur. As in many Pakistani communities, the family are all connected to one another through marriage settlements, and no one is ever allowed to marry outside the extended

family. But Najma tells of how her two aunts have managed to take a lead in controlling their own lives, marrying outside their caste, despite the strong censure of their brother, Najma's father. In fact, Najma explains that her British born aunt, Ruki, committed a triple offence in her brother's opinion: she threatened his *izzat* by marrying outside the family; she married someone of her own choice; and she had not personally informed him of her intentions to marry. Ruki's courage, according to Najma, comes from her painful past and her disillusionment with her family, in particular (especially her brother), and the cultural marital values, in general. Ruki, I learned, had been previously married, and consequently divorced, due to the abuse, maltreatment and physical violence she had experienced on the hands of her ex-husband. Her brother had known about this all along, and did not feel *beizti* (dishonoured), nor did he do anything to stop the abuse, but rather expected Ruki to remain silent so as to keep his *izzat*, and that of the family, unharmed. This is not surprising, as it has been repeatedly noted that, in the extended family system, the family or community hardly takes any notice when husbands beat their wives, because they try to sustain their marriages by not interfering in them. Once a woman decides to break the silence, as in Ruki's case, the marriage would end up with drastic consequences: domestic violence, suicide, or divorce.

The interesting thing about Najma's account is how it reveals that, in England, some Pakistanis take family honour more seriously than in their home country, where people are expected to be more concerned about *izzat*. This is clear in how her father had reacted to Ruki's second marriage, as well as to the marriage of her younger aunt, Hina, to a Bangladeshi. He thought that he would lose his *izzat* and place in the community, and so he cut all relations with his sisters, and even refused to acknowledge his younger sister's gesture, when she came to inform him about her choice. Both of their marriages, in his view, were a clear challenge to his power, which, in effect, is a challenge to his *izzat*; and although he never supported Ruki, it is significant that he still claims his authority over her. But, contrary to his anxiety about his and his sister's *izzat*, Najma explained that their lives proceeded as normal with their extended family, even those back home;

Everybody listens to my father because he is the oldest. It was a matter of *izzat* for him. She is happy, everyone talks to her. Nothing has changed. My dad had thought that everything would change. He thought that his *izzat* was going to suffer. But he gets the same respect. My dad's younger sister married out of the family, he is a Bangladeshi. We did not go, it was her choice. She came to my dad and told him but my dad didn't want to know. He said to us that we were not allowed to go to the wedding. She is happy now. She worked hard in her life. She got straight A\*. She is very intelligent. I was at the bottom of the class she was at the top. She is around my age and has done well in her life. She studied hard, went to the university and obtained her degree. She was not going to marry someone who was not educated. What is the point of her working so hard and marrying somebody who is below her calibre and cannot stand on his own feet? She married somebody who used to work with her. She married someone who is educated and has got brains, someone who is going to look after her well. I am

so happy to hear that they always go for holidays. She has seen what her older sister had been through and she said no way I am going to suffer like her. She supported her sister, that's why she is by her side now. (Najma)

Najma's account shows that, although few, there are some women in the Pakistani community that are taking the lead in breaking the unquestioned cultural rules so as to effect social change. It indicates that it is a person's vision and inner strength that allows them to reach a balance between their self-worth and social values. Moreover, if a person is able to truly understand the false perceptions of his environment, s/he can make his life better. Hina proved her agency by taking control of her own life, and Najma (another voice in favour of change) applauds Hina's choice of living a decent and comfortable life.

### 7.6 The Role of Faith in Marriage

One of the important findings of this research is that the concept of *izzat* is deeply rooted in the Pakistani community, extending to one's faith, or sectarian identity, an identity that considerably overlaps with caste membership. Of the two dominant Muslim sects in Pakistan, the *sunni* and *shi'a*, this is particularly obvious in the latter, and it operates on opposite rules for men and women.

Participants believe that the *Shah (Sayyed)* is the highest *shia* sect, in terms of religious and social position, because it belongs to the prophet's *nasal*, or lineage. Sofi (a spousal immigrant) says, for example, that 'as all fingers are not made equal, God also created the lower and higher lineages', and the *Sayyeds* are the most superior, in her opinion. Participants further explain that it is not possible for anyone to convert into a *Shah (Sayyed)*. According to Nimra, you must be born as a *Sayyed* to be part of this group. *Shah, Sayyed* and *Shiat*, she indicates, is a combination of one system, which one cannot enter or convert into in the middle of someone's life. But what is surprising is that while you can never *become* a *Sayyed*, a *Sayyed* woman may lose her right to this lineage, and the *izzat* attached to it, if she marries outside the *Sayyed* family. The same, surprisingly enough, is not true for male *Sayyeds*, who are understood to preserve the *izzat* of their lineage, even if they marry from other castes. Nimra explains, therefore, that 'a *Sayyed* woman has to marry in *Sayyeds*', and that other options are 'not allowed. People do it, but it is not approved';

*Sayyeds* are from Prophet's lineage, if a girl is born into a *Sayyed* family, she is *naajaez* (prohibited) for other castes. A *Sayyed* man can marry in other castes but a *Sayyed* girl cannot. *Nasal* (lineage) will not continue through a woman it is always through a man. My children are my husband's *nasal* and I am the *nasal* of my father. (Sofi)

In this sense, *Shah* men are given the freedom and honour of spreading their *nasal*, while the identity of a *Shah* woman is fixed: if she stays in her caste/sect group she will be known as a *Shah*, but if she marries a person from another group, her children will be from her husband's *nasal*.

Some young women become helpless in the face of such discrimination, and although they aim not to marry outside their religious sect, in some cases, they succumb to their desires. A more troubling idea, in connection to this, is how it is not only considered dishonourable, but also sinful, for a *Sayyed* woman to marry a non-*Sayyed*, and that this amounts to incest;

If a *Sayyed* girl goes to another family, her *nasal* will be lost. A *Sayyed* girl even if she is one night old is supposed to be a sister/mother of other *quoms/clans* but cannot be a wife to them. It is a sin. Therefore, a *Sayyed* girl has to marry into a *Sayyed* family. *Sayyeds* have a status higher than other castes. (Sofi)

Sofi's sister-in-law, I am told, has married a non-*Sayyed*, and so Sofi believes 'it will be a sin for her to see an uncovered body of a non-*Sayyed* man'. According to Sofi, her sister in law should have kept in mind that she is like a sister to a non-*Sayyed* man, and that, through her marriage, she will be living with a brother, not a husband. Moreover, it becomes apparent from Sofi's account that even such women as Sofi's sister-in-law, who break their communal and religious norms admit to the dishonour and sinfulness of their actions;

Parents also disallowed her but children do not listen to their parents. You cannot force them. She visits her parents' house but her husband is not allowed to come in. She says 'it was my mistake but I liked him, he is so nice and caring'. She has committed a sin. It is not her parents' fault. The man is good she is right but on the other hand she is wrong. My sister in law is *Sayyed* but her kids are not *Sayyad* anymore, *tou bus nasal khatam* (this is the end of her blood line). (Sofi)

Sofi adds that 'everybody has her/his *aamaal* (record of deeds); her sister in law has spoiled her record, and she will be given her *hisaab* (be accountable to her deeds) on the day of judgement'. This shows how culture and sect/religion are closely interlinked in the Pakistani conception of marriage.

### **7.7 Woman's Choice in Marriage in Liberal Families**

This section will aim to demonstrate that to varying degrees, the cultural workings of *izzat* can still be felt in the more liberally-oriented South Asian families. In some families in Pakistan, parents would allow their daughter considerable freedom in attaining her education



and pursuing her career, but when it comes to marriage, they would still never consider consulting her opinion about a marriage partner. *Izzat* and caste preferences come first. This is the case of Shaheen, a teacher at a high school in the metro city. She described to me how her parents had allowed and encouraged her to pursue her education, even permitting her to study abroad, which is considered quite liberal in the Pakistani community. She had, therefore, expected that, unlike other families, her parents would value her choice, or at least discuss it with her, when it came to marriage 'I had been brought up in such an environment where nobody asked their daughters about marriage. But I was different'. Ironically, however, her education made no difference, and Shaheen ended up in an arranged marriage, in which she had completely no say.

This may be felt to a lesser degree in other cases, particularly in families where the mother is a working mother, who enjoys more freedom and exposure than a house-wife. Participants from this group have different ideas and attitudes about their daughters' marriage, often supporting and encouraging their daughters to make choices. They also try to open the door for communication with their daughters, and at least try to convince them to accept those cultural norms of honour which the younger generation finds hard to understand. These include marrying within the extended family, or the same caste or sect. Few mothers do not even bother about such issues, and are mostly concerned about religion, but this concern does not arise from a genuine religious perspective, and is rather associated with *izzat* conceptions. These mothers clearly instruct their daughters from the age of puberty to always remember that, whenever they choose a life partner, he must be a Muslim, and to always come to them for their marriage arrangements.

A good example of this comes from my interview with Tilat, a single mother who gave her daughter a different upbringing from other girls in her community, allowing her many freedoms, such as: having male friends, going to parties, and wearing sleeveless clothes. Tilat told me how she maintains a good relationship with her children, something uncommon in most Pakistani families. Moreover, from the interview, she seemed to be a very confident woman, a trait she has transferred to her daughter, who, I am told, is confidently comfortable in the company of males, and quite enjoys talking to them. However, despite being religiously liberal, Tilat insists that her son-in-law must be a Muslim, and confesses to becoming quite aggressive when her daughter attempts to argue with her on the matter. The only reason she is able to give to her daughter is 'it's in our culture', a stereotypical response, which has created a rift between mother and daughter. Tilat explains that she has even

threatened to cut all connections with her daughter (as most Pakistani parents would do in this case) if the daughter does not submit to her one condition. Judging from Tilat's very friendly and considerate personality, as well as the strong relationship that she enjoys with her daughter, it is most likely that she would be incapable of fulfilling her threats. For me, she represents the many Pakistani women who lack an understanding of their religious beliefs, and have only acquired them as cultural norms through their Pakistani communities in the West. *Izzat*, in such cases, becomes confused with religious identity, and parents hold on to this identity, not for genuine religious reasons, but as a matter of honour. Such parents need to seriously think and develop their understanding of their customs and religion, in order to better communicate with their British born children, who would refuse to be convinced with anything other than solid reasoning and logical understanding.

Another example of how notions of *izzat* could affect the life of a liberally-minded Pakistani woman is seen in the narrative of Sheela, a nineteen year old *sunni* college student, who made the mistake of having a *shia* boyfriend when she was sixteen. Her account similarly demonstrates how such notions of honour overlap with one's communal religious identity. Sheela described how she had long aspired to get a degree in health, and to marry someone from the United Kingdom, educated, independent and understandable. However, when her British born father found out about her interest with the *shia* boy, he was outraged. His fear was that anything may happen to lead (her) to the wrong path, and if that happens, how will he face his community, the community which regards him as both respectable and honorable. It should be noted that it would have been dishonorable enough for Sheela's father if she had had a relationship with a *sunni* boy, but a *shia* boyfriend is doubly dishonorable, and he would now have more reason to fear for his reputation within his extended family, and the broader community. As a result, Sheela must now forget about pursuing her career in the health sector, because she has been forced into an engagement with her cousin back home; this means that she must struggle to find any job to support her fiancée for spousal immigration. 'They (her family)', she states, 'don't really want me to be successful'. Moreover, instead of getting an educated and independent husband, her fiancée knows nothing about life in the United Kingdom, and she finds this very distressing: 'he is gonna be relying on me'. She, in fact, used the word 'scared' a few times during the interview. Shaw describes the worrying aspects of such transatlantic marriages, and the dangers that the Pakistani wife might face:

[...] unfamiliarity with English; unemployment and financial dependence on his wife, who may have had to provide evidence of her own employment to the Home Office to enable her husband's

immigration; and conflicts over the husband's remitting money to relatives in Pakistan. While there is the risk of deportation if a marriage fails, husbands in these situations do sometimes leave, and wives may be left with the responsibility for any children and the shame of a broken marriage. (Shaw, 2001:331)

Sheela pleaded with her father to give her another chance, to find 'someone good and equal', but she was not granted that. She dejectedly says, 'parents try to make their own rules, they don't bother about human rights. We run that kind of culture that when things go wrong then they realize'.

### 7.8 Community Concerns about Marriage

My interviews with various members of the community, both random individuals and those who hold positions in local community centers, indicate the role of the community in reinforcing honour or *izzat* in marital practices, while also revealing the existence of voices that challenge these norms. Among the examples that demonstrate the influence of the community in maintaining its cultural notions of honour is the story offered by Shaheen, who has no daughter of her own, but who says that, if she had, she would keep a close eye on her. Shaheen disapproves of pre-marital relationships among the young, and proudly informs how she had personally interfered with one of her friend's private matters, when she felt that her daughter's reputation might be at stake:

Once I was walking in a park. I saw a girl wearing a coat walking with a young man. I knew that girl. I did not like the way she was walking with him. I went to her house. She was wearing the same coat which I had seen her wearing in the park. I did not tell her directly but told her mother that I had seen a girl hanging around with a man wearing exactly the same coat. I told her not to wear that coat again otherwise people would say they saw her in the park with a man. Her mother instantaneously said 'no no it was not her'. I realised that her mother already knew about her affair with a man. I told her that today I had seen her, yesterday someone else would. I did not want the family to get *badnami* (a bad name). My intention was to give them a message to be careful otherwise they would lose their respect in the community. It was wise for her mother to get her married. It does not look decent that girls should hang around with men like that. (Shaheen)

Shaheen knew that the young girl's behaviour could destroy her chances of getting married into a reputable family, and so her concern, both as a senior citizen and a friend, was appreciable. She insists that families should marry their daughters as soon as they know about their relationships. In this, her major concern is the family's honour, but she does not stop to consider that that the situation is more complex than that, and that there are other pressing issues that should be kept in mind; such as, whether or not the couple is ready to get married; or if they are suitable for each other, or if the boy is even of marriage material.

Another example of the community's role in reinforcing *izzat* marital conceptions is evident in the story reported to me about a young woman, who went to a local community center to seek help. She had been engaged at sixteen, and she was against the arrangement, because she wanted to complete her education, and was simply not ready for marital life, its responsibilities and consequences. She could not speak to her father in fear of provoking his anger, so she went to a local center to ask for advice, stressing; '*kiya karoon* (what should she do?), *yahan tou parents tashadud tak jatey hain* (her parents can even go to an extent of violence)'. Strangely the advice she received from the local advisor was even more disheartening: 'go home, pray to God and *saber karo* (tolerate). Things would be better. What else can you do'? This shows how members of the community would normally turn a blind eye to the injustices committed against young woman in the name of family honour.

Other voices of the community, such as those of Shafeeq and Fraz, are strongly critical of such practices, namely, of how parents put their own self-interest before their children's, and how their loyalties to the caste or community always come first. Shafeeq criticises how parents normally approach their children's marriage, only from their own perspective, disregarding their children's point of view, and how the parents' perspective many times involves purely practical concerns. Of course, if the children meet these practical obligations it would be a matter of *izzat* for the family in their community, because it indicates the power fathers have over their daughters, and the respect these have for the norms of the community. 'They (parents)', Shafeeq states, 'have their own *mafadaat* (vested interests)'. These *mafadaat* could be, for example, the desire to obtain a British passport for a niece or a nephew; or to settle their daughters economically through marriage into the same *biraderi*, both of which are crucial issues for the parents of some women. Moreover, if a woman is earning money, some parents do not want an outsider to benefit from her money, so they marry her to a relative, preferring to keep her income inside the family. In this sense, we may say that some families not only control their women's sexuality, but also their incomes.

In response to those participants who try to justify such practices as due to parents' illiteracy and lack of education, Shafeeq states that this is not the case and that parents are simply irresponsible and have no respect to human rights, referring to some abusive practices used to pressurize daughters to submit to the community's wishes:

But why do they put 'their own daughters into fire' '*apni bachi ko iss aag mein k'yoo jhonkte hain*'? Why don't they ask about their choice? They have to facilitate them and advise them but they are not supposed to force them. They say you have to marry such and such a person otherwise they will disown them from their property or kick them out of the house. (Shafeeq)

He further said;

A 19 years old girl came from Pakistan for the marriage reason. The family abused her and set dogs on her in order to make her scared, consequently she tried to commit suicide. Unfortunately such cases belong to our community. You can find dozens of girls in Azad Kashmir who are left at the hands of *darindon* (beasts). People blame education, however I believe that if we have responsible parents and parents who accept the rights and dignity of their children then we will never have such problems. (Shafeeq)

Fraz, another voice critical of the marriage *izzat* codes of the community, regrets how parents usually feel more accountable towards their community than to their children. The intellectual compatibility of a couple, he disapprovingly explains, is many times sacrificed because parents are obliged to act upon some false sense of responsibility towards their caste. In Pakistan, therefore, most educated men (from a rural background) marry a woman of no or less education, in order to keep their women within the family; and the opposite is true in the United Kingdom. That is, young British born educated women marry men of no or less education for the same reason of obliging their parents' wishes to remain within the family;

Men come from Pakistan in order to get married. Some of them have no education at all. Tell me how are they going to adjust with their counterparts properly? It is a trend to marry them back home into their extended families but after two years they seek separation or divorce. (Fraz)

Fraz is concerned about failure of such marriages;

It is a time to take care of our own children; I think we have to tackle it as a serious problem. Children should have to marry in this country rather than India, Pakistan or Bangladesh. They have been born and brought up in this county that is why parents should marry them here. They should marry them according to their ability rather than on the basis of *biraderi* or caste. (Fraz)

Unlike Shafeeq, however, Fraz is less harsh in his judgements of the parents, arguing that they typically make such choices because they sincerely want to ensure the security of their children, which is especially true in the case of their daughters. This should not be surprising, for it is part of the Asian culture for parents to be very protective of their children, even believing that children are less capable of making choices that ensure their happiness. Justifying some of their practices, he explains that parents commonly believe that Pakistani men are better, and more reliable, than British born Pakistani men, and this is why they insist upon their daughters in the United Kingdom to marry from back home. This is not to mention, he adds, how parents fear that, if their daughters were to marry outside the caste, they will have more chances of getting a divorce. But Fraz, of course, acknowledges and

rejects the unjust pressure and control practiced against young women for these purposes, such as discouraging their education to prevent them from thinking independently in a way that opposes the interests of the family. Some families, he admits, do banish their daughters from visiting their homes if they marry outside their caste, or race, despite the fact that they are enjoying happy and peaceful lives. Fraz finally suggests that he strongly believes that marriage is a matter of personal choice; anyone should be able to marry anyone they are comfortable with, regardless of culture, race or religion; there should be no restrictions on it according to human rights, because, even in the United Kingdom, many people get married abroad.

### **7.9 Moulding and Grooming Phenomenon**

*Moulding or grooming* is the belief, common in many Pakistani communities, is the woman's or the family's ability to train men from Pakistan so as to become suitably compatible for their British born Pakistani wives. This practice or belief arises from an awareness of how difficult and stressful it is to find an appropriate match (in terms of education, status and caste) for British Pakistani women, which in itself is due to several factors. First, there is the fact that most of the men of the community marry from Pakistan, because they are still charmed by Pakistani women, whom they stereotypically believe would be more modest and dutiful than the British born women of their community. Moreover, the women themselves are many times wary of marrying a British born Pakistani because they have their own negative conceptions of the male members of the community. One participant, Shahnilla, for example, is in her mid thirties, and has not married yet because she thinks that, 'men at her age are very typically backward and have double standards. They would date girls, marry them, and then would dump them. Then they would go to Pakistan to marry the other who would cook and clean for them, and they would have a girlfriend here as well'. Shahnilla is naturally suggesting how hard it is for British born Pakistani women to live only as a dutiful wife, and toil for the family.

'Nothing left here to marry' is the reality of Watfordian young women, according to another participant, because she and many of her female acquaintances believe that the young men of the community are completely westernised: they go drinking, clubbing, and practice pre-marital sex as they wish, and without anyone's knowledge. Such 'men are not in real control or supervision they could marry "street girl" or a prostitute even non Muslim or non

caste fellow. It would not affect family image or honour' (Yuval-Davis 1997: 268) But, women can't. They don't have partners as men have' and this is why they prefer to go to Pakistan and find men with a similar education and stronger moral values. These women know very well that drinking and clubbing is almost absent in the Pakistani scene, and that men there live within their extended families, so 'you know which man is doing what and where'.

With all this in mind, one may understand why parents and women resort to the idea of *moulding* or *grooming* Pakistani born husbands. A participant states 'we bring them over here and train them', while the idea of a woman being able to train a man who has grown up in a patriarchal society still appears outrageous to some. I asked Sharee how the 'training' phenomenon works on transnational husbands, and her reply was: 'unfair things are happening a lot from both sides — men and women. Girls are sent to Pakistan and then pressurized or intimidated'. She referred to a story a neighbour had told her about Huma, a girl they both know;

Last year Huma came to me with exciting news saying 'I'm going to Pakistan to marry!'. I asked her: Are you sure you will get on with this marriage'? She replied; 'the guy might be okay, otherwise I will *mould* him'. I said to myself in my heart. 'I will see who will mould whom'. Then, I looked at her and said, 'how does anyone ever get moulded? You wouldn't be able to mould him. This is not a metal which could be melted with your heat. (Sharee)

After one year, Sharee says, Huma got divorced, and is absolutely lost, as her life became a real hell. Sometime Sharee would hear her crying and screaming. Some parents are 'idiotic', another participant suggested, referring to how they would call their nephews, spend huge money on grooming and training them to get used to British life (which includes providing for their higher education), so that they could finally marry their daughters. The ideology behind such practices is based on many factors; caste system, property, protection of status, which are used to exploit children.

### **7.10 Marriage of Compromise**

'Just do it' is a very strong emotional phrase. Some parents use it to force their children to do things for which they have no desire. Personal knowledge suggests that parents have been using such phrases in many situations in order to impose their wishes on their children in Pakistan, especially for their sons' marriage issues. Parents threaten them to marry the girl of

their choice; otherwise they will disown them from property and even from their love. I have been told that due to forced marriages in Pakistan women live their whole marital lives with their in-laws but not with their husbands. Although in some cases husbands live in the same house, they either refuse to have a conjugal relationship, or do it without any emotional commitment. This kind of pressure has been experienced by one of the female participants in this research who testified;

Some parents emotionally blackmail their children. They ask them to do something for their sake. That is how they trick them into doing things against their will. They make them go abroad and get married. (Farida)

Some young women do what they are told to make their parents happy. Some bargain with their parents. Some are threatened and blackmailed if they refuse to be obedient. Such children sometimes become rebellious if they are forced to make choices about their life. 'Pakistanis living in the West do not manage their life issues independently; logically and strategically they just expect that their children should do what they are told' (a participant). As a consequence, children lose communication with their parents. Shafeeq has seen many young adults who have lost their confidence in their parents. They get involved in drugs, crime and other unhealthy activities. Furthermore, as a repercussion of such rigid behaviour, relations between two families also suffer;

It has a long history; this has been happening for a long time. Now we are facing the consequences; it spreads like poison. Our generations are lost. Due to lack of communication with their parents, children have got involved in bad company. (Shafeeq)

A couple of participants mentioned that parents emotionally blackmail their children asking them to marry and leave the rest to them. It means that they (male/female) would be free after their marriage; it will be up to them to live as married couples or not. Such marriages happen to fulfill the promises between two families; sometimes for the sake of parents' happiness or at times to keep the property under family's control, especially in the case of the only son. Therefore, in such situations parents and children negotiate before the marriage. It is most likely that if a girl has a boyfriend before marriage and she is engaged in an extended family, she will compromise with her parents' choice but on a condition that she will be allowed to do whatever she wants after marriage. Some parents have a wrong idea that he/she will gradually get used to their marital life;

Parents were forcing her to marry him. They allowed her to leave him whenever she wanted afterwards. Parents did that because they were scared of the community. They thought that it would be their *beizzati* (dishonour) if their daughter did not marry her cousin. *Yeh braderi logh izzat ko bohat*



*dekhtey hain* (Biraderi people are very much concerned about honour). The girl said, 'Okay I marry him but after that I am going to leave him'. How can you expect such kind of couple living together? In Watford there are 5 per cent of girls who are married by force but after one year they get divorced. So called husbands, who live in their brides' house, cannot form a marital relationship. The wives do not let them touch their body. Such girls have already got boyfriends. They just marry to make their fathers happy. I personally know four young women who have done the same thing. Boys come from Pakistan, live with them for a while, the family supports them but they don't live as a couple. (Zeena)

Zeena has a vast experience in the community of helping young adults to exercise their right to make a choice for their life partner. She says that there are about five per cent cases (young women) who get married under their parent's pressure but they do not have sexual relationship with their husbands. Parents have to maintain their name and reputation in the community. Similarly young people maintain their relationships with their boyfriends or girlfriends; both sides compromise with each other. When they compromise, their so called honour works as decorum of the community. It does not matter what happens to the lives of young people who get affected with this compromise;

Family was forcing him to marry. He was already married with a gori (a white woman). He resisted but they were trying to convince him saying, 'do it after you can leave her'. They were forcing him because his family had promised to the family back home. So they insisted saying that if he did not marry then their *izzat* would be at stake. (Zeena)

During my fieldwork I met a newly arrived young man from Pakistan a couple of times. He looked simple and naive. I had an informal chat with him and during our conversation he seemed to me gloomy and disappointed. He told me that he was married to his British born cousin. He arrived a few months ago to live with her but his wife was not living with her parents in Watford. She is studying in Scotland and promises him to visit almost every week but never comes, which makes him angry. 'I don't know what is in her mind; I don't understand girls here'. He seemed puzzled and disorientated. He did not talk much about his feelings but he looked frustrated and suffers in triple jeopardy: he is involved in a transnational marriage, dealing with migration issues, coping with ethnic and extended relations. If for example, his wife and her parents have some agreement between them and he does not know about it, then waiting for her every weekend and expecting to see her must be maddening.

Zeena mentions that this is happening mostly in the Mirpuri community. She says, 'Mirpuri and Kotli people have destroyed their daughters' lives'. She is happy about the transnational marriage laws, which allows children when they are 21 years old the right to marriage. 'The children will learn what is right and what is wrong through experience'. Otherwise, they are *Mujboor* (bound) to keep their boyfriends along with their so called

husbands because their parents do not allow them to marry where they want. Living in the West, they should have the right to make a choice. However, Shafeeq has a different opinion about the law which restricts a girl to marry at a certain age.

Most of the parents intend to help their extended family back home by marrying them with their daughters. In exchange, they get a guaranteed husband for their daughters. Some parents intend to get a young man (daughter's husband) from back home to work for them as a *slave* in their business or shop. Parents also persuade their sons that Pakistani girls are obedient, modest and will not interfere in their lives. Such parents think that their daughter in laws would cook and work as a servant in the house. This research suggests that some of the Pakistani husbands have been able to maintain a good relationship but most of them did not develop a long lasting relationship as a husband or as a good family member. Similarly some British born husbands do not treat their wives decently;

Parents use their children as a tool; they do not treat them fairly. They marry to get permanent status and obtain the British passport. For a man it is not that difficult as it is for a woman. A man will go straight to Pakistan. But for a woman it is very challenging, even more so if he has left one or two children behind. That poor girl will spend her whole life alone. Until the child is 16 years old she has to take care of him/her. Her own life will be lost in that period. Where is the life of that individual? Where are her ambitions and aspirations? When he (her child) will be 16 years old he would be a cause of heart-attack for her, who proved to be a headache before. (Shafeeq)

Some parents do realize what they have done to their daughters. They learn the lesson but some are still making the same mistakes. 'If a person puts his finger in a pot with a snake, he will be stung and his finger will have to be amputated. However, the second person will come and do the same mistake, not thinking about the lesson the first person has had', Shafeeq states critically. He says that this is particularly a 'Pakistani behaviour'. Even though they see that the other person does not have a good experience, they will do the same. They do not consider the fact that everyone has different priorities in different circumstances. After great losses some parents have started realising that their Pakistani nephews do not marry out of liking but to get settled in the United Kingdom.

## 7.11 Summary

Customary marriage is the hub of honour culture which works under patriarchy. It requires young women to behave modestly – a prerequisite to become a faithful and dutiful wife. In

their roles as wives and mothers women are expected to protect family norms by shifting them to their children.

Endogamous marriages are common in Pakistani community which are comparatively easy to plan and can be continued from one group to the other. They support man's power, wealth and strengthen their integrity. Groups work through caste and class preference and collective interest to enhance their status and economic power in the community but this proves a cause of conflict and unrest among parents and young women.

Young British born women believe marriage within the extended family is a complicated issue as it involves domestic and family politics. They would prefer marrying by their choice, preferably practicing their Islamic rights. Most of the mothers are upset regarding their children's marriage matters. Parents prefer their children, especially daughters, to marry within the same group in order to keep their identity intact. Some parents appreciate their children's choices but they are helpless because their culture does not allow them to do what they want.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion

Honour and shame (*izzat and beizati*) are understood as affecting the lives of Watfordian Pakistanis and are negotiated in a number of different ways and for many different reasons. This research focused on three generations, and highlighted two components: the first is honour as a familial and communal value, and the second is the social standing of women in terms of acquired and incorporated honour values while living in the West; for example, the positionality of honour values in their lives and the gender-power relationships among their family and community.

The ethnographic differences between these generations have raised several questions/issues around concepts of honour and shame. The British-born women mainly shared their concerns about modesty and marriage as they relate to the values of honour, shame and reputation. In contrast, the pioneer women participants talked about their early settlement in Britain and their children's settlement in marriage. These two topics were crucial for them and they felt stressed about these issues.

Contemporary studies have shown that most of the cultural practices affect women's lives more than they affect men's lives. In consideration of these results, I focused more on women's lives but men's contributions are equally significant and their opinions have therefore been included. It is believed that honour norms have to be transferred into the next generation. Both the new and the old generations have participated in the project and contributed fully to it to witness how honour norms are transferred. In order to achieve this, I chose my research tools carefully so as to find the right participants for appropriate outcomes.

The feminist approach has been applied in conjunction with qualitative methods. The research questions were conceptualized and designed to investigate how women's bodies and sexuality are affected by the honour and shame ethos. However, female participants did not feel comfortable answering such questions about their body and sexuality in conjunction with 'patriarchal *izzat*' (McLoughlin 1998: 91) because it is a taboo subject of conversation amongst Pakistani communities. Consequently, the research questions centred on life history as it was easier for the participants to share news about their lives, living within the patriarchal circumstances.

Pakistanis arrived in Great Britain as economic immigrants. From the beginning they maintained a clear demarcation between male and female in that they sustain different roles:

men as the bread providers and women as housekeepers. Apart from these roles, there is a cultural belief that if women were to be involved in work (perhaps by force from both sides), it would be against the honour ethos. So, women were not encouraged to have a public life. To keep honour intact, the woman's place must be in the home as a good wife/mother. Most of the families brought this ideology with them, continuing the same family life style and social system. Men are supposed to hold the family's major decisions and control them and the women's position is unequal in this schema. Therefore, males remained stronger and more powerful than females; a reflection of their experiences in Pakistan. Most British Pakistani men are more established economically than most Pakistani men living in Pakistan, so they embrace the 'financial and cultural power' (Anderson 2003: 193). To some extent, this schema resembles that of Kurdish immigrants (living in Sweden) in terms of following honour norms. Because Kurdish men often do not work and depend on state benefits, their position as the head of the family is weaker. In contrast, this research found that Pakistani male immigrants in Britain have more power in gender relations because having their own income provides them with the ability to construct their own communal and political structure to benefit their own freedom, status and authority on both the personal and the public levels.

There is not 'one' Pakistani community; there are several communities living in the West, growing and spreading with different preferences and ideologies but the core ideology is the same; that a man has to maintain his identity socially powerful and culturally honourable. Among them are two groups: Punjabi and Mirpuri which are divided into sub-communities, mainly by language and their lifestyle. Most of the participants have shared different issues related to *biraderi* or the caste system, which divides them into several different groups and ideologies which make them work hard to keep their identity intact by competing with each other to keep their social status higher than the other. Young British-born adults are forced to oblige such requirements mainly through marriage deals which sometimes become a cause of conflict of interest among them.

This project addressed two different groups (as stated earlier, one was Punjabi and the other Kashmiri or Mirpuri). Both these communities have reservations about each other and they were not happy because of the differences in caste and status and a fear that their children might mingle with each other. I did not find a single Mirpuri who criticized Punjabis or judged them but most Punjabis were unhappy with Mirpuris; in addition, some blamed the actions and ways of life of the same community (Mirpuri), suggesting that because of these,

Pakistanis give a bad impression to the world. My ethnographic chapters address these issues about class, sect, and caste and *biraderi* system in great detail. Young adults want to develop their own networks but sometimes sect, caste and ethnic issues problematize developing a healthy space to grow together.

Most of the male participants believe that the caste, class and sect ideology are a hindrance to the community, preventing its members from confidently developing the skills needed to address and resolve their issues at a local or national level. Youngsters believe that the Watfordian Pakistanis form a fragmented and divided community, due to caste considerations, which problematically gave them little opportunity to grow in a healthy environment. Most of the female participants who belong to the Mirpuri community are influenced, in terms of their marriages or even marital status, by these caste (or extended family) considerations, which give them very little control over their lives. For example: a few young widow participants in this study have voiced their concerns about their inability to re-marry, because their *biraderi* does not allow them to do so where they want. Young British born male participants have also criticized and challenged the *biraderi* and caste systems, arguing that they are proscribed in Islamic ideology. The issues of illegal income were highlighted; being a Muslim was heart breaking for some of the young men and controlling young people's lives through customary power, authority and positionality was something frustrating as it did not give them a chance to contribute as young men for the betterment of their community. Similarly some radical women are starting to convince their mothers about women's rights in Islam. This research has discovered much potential among the third generation for radical change from these two forces in the community exemplified in its young male and female members who, if permitted, could solve the complicated issues related to caste and class differences.

Yet, it is a community which works in different ways according to varying concerns in people's lives. The reality is that the patriarchal ideology that is embedded in Pakistanis' ethnic roots does not allow room to separate domestic violence from patriarchy; similarly we cannot separate honour killings/crimes from honour norms; they both work in parallel ways. My ethnographical data has found similar features in these crimes. Confinement, wife abuse, rape in marriage, forced marriage and suicide were the issues which participants pointed out during their conversations.

Most of the pioneers continue their illogical (unspoken and unclear), and unresolved issues related to honour terminology. Sometimes they carry on disputes and try to ruin the

reputation of families for many years, often causing marital, caste and sect based hostilities within their extended families. Most of the time, they are overwhelmed with these familial, communal, and local issues.

Cultural restrictions suggest that a woman (mainly in the second generation) is a reliable person if she obeys honour norms. To obey these, women's silence, which is considered a symbol of modesty and a hallmark of a 'good woman', is necessary. She should be silent, shy, and reticent about her life and she should not interfere in elders' matters by asking questions about the decisions which they might take for her. Most of the young women are being taught to be submissive, obedient and dutiful in performing behaviours which often make them work hard to bear the burden of marital life. Sometimes it might be too much to bear unending requirements including domestic labour, family control, interference related to cultural issues, and sometimes sexual abuse.

Consequently, the practice of cultural norms generate huge injustices through upholding the supremacy of male power (father and husband) and female patriarchal authority (mother and mother in law) to exercise on young women to regulate the system. Therefore, most interviewed young women were taught not to talk about marriage issues because it is a taboo subject unsuitable for a good woman. However, a few participants have shared their experiences about their family making them silent from a young age teaching them not to talk or ask questions. If they break the code of silence it would be a shameful act; this discourages them from questioning the patriarchal order. Hence the notion of shame works as a norm but in practice it is an instrument of control.

The British-born generation which is now in their middle age has suffered parental authoritarian attitudes and, in extreme cases, some cultural behaviour which contravenes human rights. For example, it can be hard for a young person to deal with constant restriction at various stages of their life. As one of the participants confided, she was not permitted to wear fashionable clothes or cut her hair. For her, it was a matter of 'self-image' and looking good and fit in the society but for her family, it was a matter of 'shamefulness'. As a teenager, she wanted to be an artist but was not allowed. The most shocking situation in her case was when she was forced to marry. She wanted to wear a red wedding suit for her wedding night, in order to look a proper traditional bride which she always wanted but her family did not even provide her with that which left her with a deep scar for the rest of her life. Most shockingly, now in her middle age she still feels uncomfortable to ask questions to her husband. She believes that because women have less position in their families and a huge gap

in gender-relations which affects women's lives the most, such families expect more from women which is inappropriate and unfair according to the Islamic ideology/human rights which most of the young women echoed.

Some evidence was found that parents terrorize and disown young women if they ever try to make their own choices in marriage. In such situations, most parents use threatening language to intimidate their children; for example, a young participant did not want to marry a Pakistani man but was forced to do so. She tried to convince her father to realize that what she actually wanted for her life, but he did not take any notice which made her extremely frustrated. This research has detected that there is less logicity in honour schemas; if a young woman slightly crosses a family line she could be punished by forced marriage.

Divorce is considered a shameful act according to cultural norms. A divorced woman suffers all her life from community accusations. Their children are called bad names (like having a 'bad mother') and are greatly mistreated by the community. The community does not blame men, but always blames women who are the eternal cause of shame if they disclose the abusive husband to obtain a divorce.

The local community centres are an integral part of the society since they work as mediators and advise young people not to go to the police if they are harmed because such centres are mainly controlled by men. This research has found out that a young woman received advice in the form of: 'go home, pray to God, tolerate, things will be better, you cannot do anything apart from that', and such advice makes them more insecure. Consequently, women who rebel against their family, involve state support systems to help them. The police officer Nobbi Jutla (participant) and a couple of other participants have mentioned that refuges are crammed with such women and many more have disappeared.

Honour revolves around people's lives; a reality which is unspoken but strongly exists everywhere as I was told by young participants. Younger women have a different understanding of 'honour' to that of the older generation. For younger women honour is respect. For elders if a woman hangs around or does something out of line, it could be equal to 'cutting a nose' of parents in the society which is a symbolic expression of family or the community honour.

Honour became a taboo subject for the participants of the pioneer generation. Some tried to evade it or to connect it with two incidences: honour killings and the 9/11 bombings. They believe, honour killing is a crime but it does not happen in Watford, yet it happens in



other parts of the United Kingdom (in the North) or in Pakistan. Elders blame incidents on the 9/11 bombings because the Western world relates this practice (honour killing) with Muslims which is wrong because it is not in Islam to kill somebody but the cruel irony is that participants were frightened to disclose honour issues. Male participants have condemned the practice of forced marriage (which could be a cause of honour killings) as a confinement. As one male participant relates, honour killings occur because people feel there is no other alternative (if a daughter crosses the line) to restore the lost honour of a father. Similarly, another male participant mentioned that many young women are protected by their parents, though they have been involved in sexual relationships out of wedlock. It is, indeed, a controversial and complex issue to understand.

It is believed that British-born children are privileged as they know how to negotiate. They are articulate and argumentative because they have more freedom than their preceding generation. They are not only more eloquent, but are also well acquainted with British life and their own Islamic values. We see them now speaking about their Pakistani culture, both analysing and criticizing it. It is, indeed, interesting how this new generation obtained such confidence about their lives than the previous one.

9/11 was a great shift for British born young women, in the sense that it brought a positive change. These young British born women are navigating community boundaries and leading each other to struggle and explore their own rights under the guise of Islam. Early after the 9/11 tragedy, women started to show their solidarity in being Muslims, by observing the *hijab*, practicing their prayers, reading and researching about Islam, as well as becoming involved in Islamic awareness and advocacy forums. Yet, such young women brought their concerns (personal and family issues) to bear at an unconscious level. Eventually, they tried to arrive at some answers about women's rights regarding marriage and divorce in Islam, and about their freedom to be assertive and make their own life choices. The Islamic teachings that they were exploring were constantly contradicting what they have learned from their culture, and this, in turn, made them more excited and determined to delve more deeply into these questions, in the process, developing a strong Muslim Britishness as their identity rather than a Pakistani Muslim identity. Young Pakistanis' assertive articulations of Islam have challenged their parents to think about their Muslim identities in new ways too. Some mothers echoed this development, saying that 'it is from our children (mainly daughters) that we have acquired Islamic knowledge'. In other words, mothers confessed that Pakistani Islam

is problematic, patriarchal and illogical which upset a lot of Pakistanis in Britain and in Pakistan.

But, there was a different reaction too; women who have taken the initiative in observing the *hijab* and other Islamic practices have become, in the mind of the community, a symbol of devoutness and religiosity, and this gradually gave them a license to control their own sexuality. The community started to foster and encourage such change for a matrimonial gain to help them approach good and wealthy families for their daughters' marriage. Some parents appreciate it for a morality and modesty gain to make their daughters observe it to fit them into their ideals. They believe that such change would make their women/daughters more obedient, and 'good women', according to their cultural interpretation of 'Pakistani' Islam. However, some young women who turned up in a more Islamic way of life became an icon of the community. It became more convenient for some parents to convince their young daughters by mentioning such women's role to convince them to wear the *hijab*. Nevertheless, living in the West, the *hijab* and religiosity became a commanding position to keep culture on the track.

Consequently, some young women have the courage to notify their parents that they are not happy to marry where the parents want them to, which demonstrates a shift in power and decision making and take control of their lives. In fact, a number of young women have even started expressing their displeasure with *mulvies*, (clergy) demanding that they change the highly patriarchal discourse of their preaching, and they should stop polarizing the community by talking to young male adults about their marriage choices and teaching people to train their daughters to be dutiful wives. From where have they found such courage to challenge this longstanding patriarchal order in such a way? Obviously, the answer is: through their personal experience of injustice with their close relatives (their mother and elder sisters) they have seen the majority of women in abusive circumstances around them and also most particularly through their developing awareness in the teachings of Islamic ideology. Even though their mothers understand that their daughters are right, some mothers are concerned and worried about what might happen to their daughters if they continue to challenge the patriarchal order. Their concern is understandable because in the Pakistani culture it is hard for a young woman to rebel against the patriarchal order, , so making such a choice is not an easy option.

Change is a vital phenomenon; a number of the young male participants in this study were keen to criticise *biraderi's* role and responsibilities. They were highly frustrated and

unhappy about how *biraderi* people were discouraging young adults by constantly accusing them of being radicals, and a disruption to the existing system. Youngsters, on the other hand, argue that their elders think that they are living in an ideal world. The youngsters are ready to serve and develop the community to face the new challenges of the new world. But *biraderi* remains a powerful institution that does not give young adults any room to participate and raise some fundamental issues for justice and provide equal opportunities to people.

I will conclude my thesis where I have started, with the phenomenon of power and control. The young male adults of the community are a big threat for their elders, as they are challenging the patriarchal order, in speaking out against the *biraderi* and caste system. The young women, on the other hand, are also defying this system in influencing their mothers to take control over their lives, and particularly in communicating to them their rejection of pre-arranged forced marriages into the same caste or *biraderi*, on the grounds of them being morally wrong.

The ethnographic representation suggests going back to Gerda Lerner's (Lerner 1986) and Dobash and Dobash's (Dobash and Dobash 1980) ideas about the patriarchal system. They mentioned that it is an old human system which comprised of many people (blood relatives, servants' and extended families) called one family, where the head of the tribe or a family would dominate women and children to hold their power and authority (chapter one). Similarly, the *biraderi* system consists of hierarchal power and authority to obtain undue respect (sometimes) and importance from people. In this system the way the phenomenon of honour works is as old as human life on earth.

Consequently, honour practice becomes a cause of moral and intellectual poverty. Honour practitioners could increase material and symbolic strength while in reality they live in a fake kind of prestige in order to show other people that they are more honourable because their women and young adults are under their control. Honour is a competition drama, controlling young individuals among their groups. In this situation woman's social and personal conditions become harder because honour provides a very narrow space to live. Narrowing a female space through honour restrictions provides a chance to the family to abuse women. At that point, honour culture demands women's silence and endurance to bear their ill treatment which can ultimately drive them to self-harm or suicide.

It is not only female Pakistanis in the West who are overwhelmed by the system of honour and shame governed by *biraderi* and caste which does not allow young adults to mix

with people who have different ideologies. Also, it is not only women who are in difficult situations and want to change but men too are looking for a change by using their wisdom, analytical approach, strategy and confidence to construct a new society.

### **Research Recommendations:**

The honour and shame ethics are the creation of the patriarchal system, which are strongly and forcefully regulated by caste, *biraderi* and sect system in the honour culture. An intense academic cultural anthropological inquiry is required to work on such areas in the West, which provides a chance to men to weaken the gender power relations in their communities. Men get more power and position to exploit women's rights; further research would help to explain why caste and class hierarchy activates certain norms to undermine one group to the detriment of another? And why one group of people are given a higher positionality, allowing them to abuse the justice system? Why do some male young adults follow the route of their male elders by continuing the same system in the West, and how is this connected to the perpetuation of a cultural mentality rather than a rational mentality?

Investigations of women's Muslim identity after the 9/11 bombings as a reflection of their ethnic identity, could be a vital area to understand women's main concerns in being heavily involved in scholarly research into Islam as a reflection of their newly constructed Muslim Britishness and their concerns about cultural consideration. It is vital to explore how women are making a choice to balance between both of them. The post 9/11 image of Islam provides huge challenges for Muslims and for the Muslim world and, obviously, British-Pakistani Muslim women are part of that scenario. So, British born Pakistani women have naturally responded to that challenge; part of that response was an increase in wearing the *hijab*. Yet wearing the *hijab* was a notion which most of the Pakistanis (parents) welcomed cheerfully and most of them interpreted it from a Pakistani cultural perspective without realizing that the young women's reaction was strongly political and was based upon solidarity and integrity with global Muslims. When the young women realized their community and parents had different interpretations on wearing the *hijab* to their own, they made a challenge at a local level too, to explain to the community that wearing the *hijab* means something different to what the community perceived. This situation suggests a great shift for the construction and understanding of modesty issues as practiced through dress code. It is the *hijab* that opened many avenues for young women to address their interest with

their parents about women's rights, which are greatly highlighted as modesty and marriage in honour norms.

However, young British born Pakistani women took a radical step by analysing differences between Pakistani Islam and the other interpretation of Islam which talked about women's rights, mainly regarding marriage issues which few young women researched scholarly. In relation to this phenomenon, examining Pakistani Islam and British Muslim identity and investigating differences between Pakistani Islamic ideology and the *real* Islamic ideology could help to explain, in conjunction with the 9/11 culture, what factors have triggered young British born Pakistani women to inquire into Muslim women's rights. These inquiries provided them with courage to draw boundaries between Pakistani culture and Islam which were potentially hijacked under the system of Pakistani Islamic-culture which was imported through their family and other Pakistani people in the West.

Women's Muslim identity after the 9/11 bombings, and a reflection on their ethnic identity could be a vital area to help us understand women's main concerns in being heavily involved in researching Islam scholarly. Therefore, Post 9/11 provides huge challenges for Muslims and the Muslim world.

British born Pakistani Muslim women were part of that scenario and have responded to that challenge in a natural course. Yet, wearing the *hijab* was the particular notion which most Pakistanis welcomed cheerfully and most of them projected and interpreted it from a Pakistani cultural perspective without realizing that young women's reaction was strongly political and Muslim solidarity based. These women took a great challenge to analyse Pakistani Islam and fundamental Islam. However, researching deeply Pakistani Islam and British Muslim identity is also an interesting area to explore, mainly with focus on what made Pakistani Islam different to the fundamental Islamic ideology? What could be more interesting in conjunction with 9/11 is to investigate the factors that have triggered young British born Pakistani women to find answers about Muslim women's rights which provide them with courage to draw the boundaries between culture and Islam which were potentially hijacked under the system of Pakistani Islamic-culture in the West.

Many scholars believe that honour and shame are notorious terms; they are strongly symbolic notions highly influenced by cultural patriarchal terminology. We can find the answers as to why honour and shame ethics are being nurtured and reflected in Pakistani Islamic and cultural ideology more intensely than in other Muslim countries. Some facts

show that Pakistan is harshly patriarchal; therefore it is more male-dominated and dictatorial, as more incidents of honour killings are recorded in Pakistan than in any other country in the globe. As patriarchy serves the agenda of the honour and shame ethos to suppress women and other second class people under the rule of caste and class hierarchy, profound empirical research is required to understand patriarchy in Pakistan from the perspective of these suppressed people rather than from the view of Western media or agencies in order to assess Pakistan as a patriarchal country.

Pakistan is hugely influenced by the patriarchal system which should be explored deeply and intensively in order to understand the country's socio-economic and religio-cultural setups. Both patriarchal and honour culture ideologies construct and re-construct tragic series of issues in recent history which have a huge influence in people's lives in Pakistan. I also believe it is affecting British Pakistanis because Pakistani immigrants maintain a very deep connection with the Pakistani communities living in Pakistan.

Just as patriarchy is a system of abuse of power and authority, similarly honour is a system of abuse that hugely controls women's sexuality through its so called norms because women's sexuality has a social, cultural and economic value. The honour culture constructs women as a commodity objectification which undermines women's power and positionality and their rights in a number of ways. Research is required to understand men's behaviour in conjunction with domestic, sexual and cultural violence in order to address the issues of why men are most accountable for the abuse.

### Bibliography

- Abbas, Tahir. 2011. "Honour-related violence towards South Asian Muslim women in the UK: a crisis of masculinity and cultural relativism in the context of Islamophobia and the 'war on terror'." In *Honour, Violence, Women and Islam*, eds. Mohammad Mazher Idriss and Tahir Abbas. Oxon: Routledge, 16-28.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1988. "Fieldwork of a Dutiful Daughter." In *Arab Women in the Field, Studying your own Society*, eds. Soraya Altorki and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh: Syracuse University Press.
- Afzal, Nazir. 2011. "Speech about Honour Crimes in Hardfordshire ". Hardfordshire
- Ahmad, Fouzia. 2003. "Still 'In Progress?' -Methodological Dilemmas, Tensions and Contradictions in Theorizing South Asian Muslim Women " In *South Asian Women in the Diaspora* eds. Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram: Berg, Oxford, New York
- Al-Khayyat, Sanna. 1990. Honour and Shame women in Modern Iraq: Saqi Books.
- Ali, Rabia. 2001. "'The Dark Side of Honour'." Women Recourse Centre, Lahore.
- Amnesty, International. 1999. "Pakistan Violence against women in the name of honour ": Amnesty International.
- Andersson, Annika. 2003. "Honor Killings-the Survival of Patriarchy in Different Societies." In *Department of Sociology University of Lund*, 60.
- Anwar, Muhammad. 1979. *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain*. London: Heinemann
- Azim, A. N. 2006. "How British Mirpuri Pakistani Women Identify themselves and form their identities." In *School of Education and Professional Development: The University of Huddersfield*.
- Baker, N V, Gregware P R and Cassidy M A. 1999 "Family Killing fields: Honor rationals in the murder of women." *Vilence against women* 5(2):164-184
- Ballard, Roger. 1982. "South Asian Families " In *Families in Britain* ed. Wotson: Routlege
- Ballard, Roger. 1994. "The Emergence Of Desh Pardesh." In *Desh Pardesh the South Asian Presence in Britain* ed. Roger Ballard. London: Hurst & Company
- Barrett, M. 1987 "'The Concept of difference'." *Feminist Review*(26):29-41.
- Begikhani, Nazad. 2005. "Honour-based violence among the kurds: the case of Iraqi Kurdistan." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women*. London: Zed Books.
- Bernard, H. Ruddell. 2002. *Research Methodes in Anthropology, Qualittive and Quantitative Approach* New York: Altamira
- Bhatti, Gazala. 1999. *Asian Children at Home and at School*: Routledge
- Bhopal, Kalwant. 1997. *Gender, 'Race' and Patriarchy, A Study of South Asian Women*. Sydney: Ashgate
- Bolognani, Marta. 2007. "'the Bradford Pakistani community. Research Findings,." In *Centre for the Study of Racism and Ethnicity: University of Leeds*.

Bolognani, Marta. 2009a Crime and Muslim Britain: Culture and the Politics of Criminology among British Pakistanis. London: IB Taurus

Bolognani, Marta. 2009b. "These girls want to get married as well'. Normality, double deviance and reintegration amongst British Pakistani women." In *Pakistani Diasporas: Culture, Conflict and Change*, ed. Virinder. S. Karla. Karachi Oxford University Press

Bradby, Hannah. 2007. "Watch out for the Aunties! Young British Asian's accounts of identity and substance use " *sociology of Health & Illness* 29 (5):656-672.

Brownmiller, Susan. 1976. *Against our Will: Men, Women and Rape*: Harmondsworth: Penguin

Bryman, Alan. 2004. *Social Research Methods*: Oxford University Press.

Carol, D. . 1987. "'Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame'." In *Honor and shame and the unity of the Mediterranean*, , ed. David D Gilmore: American Anthropological Association

Chakraverti, Uma. 2005. "From father to hausbands: of love, death and marriage in North India." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women*. . London: Zed Books.

Charsley, Katharine. 2003. "'Rishta: transnational Pakistani mirriage'." University of Edinburgh

Charsley, Katharine. 2007. "'Risk, trust, gender and transnational cousin marriage among British Pakistanis'." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30:1117-1131.

Cindoglu, Dilek. 1997 "Virginity tests and artificial virginity in modern Turkish medicine." *Women's Studies International Forum* 20(2):253-261.

Cohen, Dov, Joseph Vandello and Andrian K Rantilla. 1998. "The Sacred and the Social Cultures of Honor and Violence, Shame interpersonal behavior " In *Psychopathology and Culture*, ed. Gilbert Paul: Oxford University Press.

Collective, Simorgh and S Hussein. 1990. "Rape in Pakistan." Lahore Simorgh Women's Resource and Publications Centre

Connors, Jane. 2005. "United Nations approaches to 'crimes of honour'." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women*. , eds. Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain. London Zed Books.

Coomaraswamy, Radhika. 2005. "Preface: Violence against Women and 'Crimes of Honour'." In *Honour: Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women*, eds. Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain: Zed Books, xi-xiv.

Cowasjee, Ardeshir. 2003. "A Blackened woman, blackened man." In *Dawn*. Karachi Dawn Group.

Cressey, Gill. 2006. *Diaspora Youth and Ancestral Homeland*. . Boston Brill Leiden. .

Creswell, J W. 2007 *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches*. : SEGE Publications. London

Cryer. 2003. "So-called 'honour crimes'."



- Delphy, Christine. 1984. *Close to home : a materialist analysis of women's oppression*: Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press.
- Denzin, Norman K. 1978 *Social Methods*: McGraw-Hill Book Company
- Derne, Steve. 2000 "Men's sexuality and women's subordination in Indian nationalisms." In *Gender Ironies of Nationalism* ed. Tamar Mayer: Routledge London
- Din, Ikhtlaq. 2006. "The New British. The Impact of Culture and Community on Young Pakistanis. The Impact of Culture and Community on Young Pakistanis ": Ashgate.
- Dobash, R Emerson and Russell Dobash. 1980. *Violence Against Wives, A Case Against the Patriarchy* London Open Books
- Dworkin, Andrea. 1981. *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. London: The Women's Press.
- Dwyer, Clair. 2000. "Negotiating Diaspora Identities: Young British South Asian Muslim Women." *Women's Studies International Forum* 23(4):475-486.
- Elden, Asa. 2004 " Life –and –Death Honour: Young Women's Violent Stories About Reputation, Virginity, and Honour in a Swedish Context." In *Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Challenges*. , eds. Shahrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo: Istanbul: Bilgi University Press.
- Faqir, Fadia. 2001. "Intrafamily femicide in defense of honour: The case of Jordan." *Third World Quarterly* 22(1):65-82.
- Firestone, Shulamith. 1978. *The dialectic of sex: the case for feminist revolution*: New York:Morrow.
- Gill, Aisha. 2003. " 'A question of honour'." In *Police Review* 19 Sep, 2003 edition.
- Gill, Aisha. 2004. "Voicing the Silent Fear: South Asian Women's Experiences of Domestic Violence. ." *The Howard Journal* 43 (5):465-483.
- Gill, Aisha. 2006 "Patriarchal Violence in the Name of 'Honour' " *Criminal Justice Sciences* Vol: 1 (January 2006).
- Gray, Ann. 2005. "Research Practice for Cultural Studies. Ethnographic Methods and lived Cultures.": SAGE Publications London.
- Haeri, Shahla. 2002. *No Shame for the Sun, Lives of Professional Pakistani Women*: Syracuse University Press
- Hague, Gill and Ellen Malos. 2005. *Domestic Violence: Action for Change*: New Clarion Press
- Halvorson, Sarah J. 2005. "Growing Up in Gilgit " In *Geographies of Muslim women, Gender Religion, and Space* eds. Ghazi-Walid Falah and Caroline Nagel: The Guilford Press London
- Harding, Sandra. 1987 " Introduction: Is there Feminist Methods? ." In *Feminism & Methodology.*, ed. Sandra Harding: Indiana University Press
- Harrami, Nouredine and Khalid Mouna. 2010. "Transmission in the Family and Intergenerational Dynamics in Relation to Transnational Migration." In *Transnationalisation and Institutional Transformations*, ed. Thomas Faist. 2010 edition.

Harriss, Kaveri and Alison Shaw. 2009. "Kinship Obligations, Gender and the Life Course: Re-Writing Migration from Pakistan to Britain." In *Pakistani Diaspora Culture, Conflict and Change* ed. Virinder Karla. Karachi University Oxford press

Hellgren, Zenia and Barbara Hobson. 2006. "Cultural Dialogues in the Good Society: the Case of Honor Killings in Sweden." In *Ethnicities* <http://etn.sagepub.com/>: Vrije University Amsterdam, June 8-9 (2006)

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy and Leavy Patricia. 2006. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. T: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Husseini, Rana. 2011 *Murder in the Name of Honor: The True Story of One Woman's Heroic Fight Against an Unbelievable Crime* Oneworld Publications

Iiffe, John. 2005. "Honour in African History. ." Cambridge University Press

Izzidien, Shayama. 2008. "'I can't tell people what is happening at home' Domestic abuse within South Asian communities: the specific needs of women, children and young people " In *NSPCC inform. The online child protection resource* The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Jafri, Amir H. 2003. "Karo Kari (Honor Killing) in Pakistan: A Hermeneutic Study of Various Discourses." In *Department of Communication* Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma.

Katrak, KH. 1992 "Indian Nationalism, Gandhian 'Satyagraha,' and Representations of Female Sexuality." In *Nationalisms and sexualities*, ed. Patricia Yaeger: Routledge London.

Kelly, Liz. 1988. *Surviving Sexual Violence* Polity Press.

Khan, Verity Saifullah. 1977. "The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at Home and in Bradford." In *Between Two Cultures* ed. James L. Watson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 57-89.

Khanum, Saeeda. 1992. "Education and the Muslim Girl " In *Refusing Holy Orders*. , eds. Gita Sahgal and Nira Yual-Davis: Virgo Press Limited

Khawar, Mumtaz and Farida Shahed. 1997. *Women of Pakistan, Two steps forward, one step back?* London: Zed Books Ltd.

Kidwai, Rubeena. 2001. "Domestic violence in Pakistan the role of Patriarchy gender roles, the culture of honor & Objectification/Commodification of women. ." Alliant International University.

Knudsen, Are. 2004. "License to Kill: Honour Killings in Pakistan." In *WP 2004:1*: Chr. Michelsen Institute

Kurkiala, Mikael. 2003. "'Interpreting honour killings'. The story of Fadime Sahindal (1975-2002) in the Swedish press." *Anthropology Today* 19(1 ):6-7.

Latif, Zahira. 2011. "The silencing of women from the Pakistani Muslim Mirpuri community in violent relationships. ." In *Honour, Violence, Women and Islam*. , eds. Mohammad Mazher Idriss and Tahir Abass: Routledge, 29-41.

Lerner, Gerda. 1986. *The Creation of Patriarchy*: Oxford University Press.

- Lerner, Viviane. 2000 "Cultural Customs Cause Violence against Women " In *Domestic Violence Opposing View Point* ed. Tamara L. Roleff: Green Haven Press.
- Letherby, Gayle. 2003. " Feminist Research in Theory and Practice. ." Open University Press, Buckingham
- Liz, Wise S. & Stanley. 1983. *Breaking out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research.* : Routledge & Kegan Paul. London.
- Marcus, Rachel. 1993. "Violence against women in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan, Senegal and Yemen." In *Bridge development -gender*: Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.
- Mayer, Tamar. 2000. "Introduction " In *Gender Ironies of Nationalism*, ed. Tamar Mayer Tamar: Routledge.
- McLoughlin, Saen. 1998. " 'An Underclass in Purdah: discrepant representations of identity and the experiences of Young-British-Asian-Muslim-Women', ." 89-106.
- Mernissi, Fatima. 2003. In *Beyond the veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a modern Muslim Society*,: Schenkman Pub. Co.
- Metlo, Zubaida. 1987. "You are our izzat." *Nayoo Niyapo* 3(11):12-15.
- Metlo, Zubaida. 2004. "Understanding the root causes of Honour Killings in Sindh." In *Centre of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies* University of Leeds
- Millett, Kate. 1969 *Sexual Politics*. London: Abacus.
- Modood, Tariq, Sharon Beishon and Satnam Virdee. 1994. *Changing ethnic identities*: Policy Studies Institute.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 1992. "Revolution, Islam and Women: Sexual Politics in Iran and Afghanistan." In *Nationalism & Sexuality* eds. Andrew Parker and et al. London: Routledge, 424-446.
- Mojab, Shahrzad. 2004. "The Particularity of 'Honour' and the University of 'Killing': from Early Warning Signs to Feminist Pedagogy." In *Violence in the Name of Honour*, eds. Shahrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University, 15-37.
- Mojab, Shahrzad. 2005. "Honor." In *Encyclopedia of women & Islamic Cultures* ed. Souad Joseph: Brill Leiden Boston 215-216.
- Moore, Erin Patrice. 2005. "South Asia." In *Encyclopedia of women & Islamic Cultures , Family, Law and Politics* ed. Souad Joseph: Brill Leiden Boston 217-218
- Morris, Meaghan. 1997. "'A question of cultural studies' " In *Back to Reality? Social Experience and Cultural Studies*, ed. Angela McRobbi: Manchester University Press
- Mumtaz, Khawar and Farida Shahed. 1987. *Women of Pakistan, Two steps forward, one step back?* London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Mustafa, Zubeida. 2003. "Honour killings " In *Dawn* Karachi: Dawn Publishers, -.
- Nadar, Lina. 2000. "Patriarchy, Sexuality and the Muslim Arab Diaspora " In *Google Search*, 1-12.
- Nicole, Pope. 2003. "Honour Killings: Instruments of Patriarchal Control." In *Violence in the name of honour: Theoretical and political challenges* ed. Nahla. Shahrzad and Abdo: Istanbul University Press.

- O'Reilly, Karen. 2006. In *Key Concepts in Ethnography*.: SAGE Publications. London.
- Okley, Ann. 1981. "'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms' " In *Doing Feminist Research*, ed. H Roberts. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1978. "The virgin and the state " *Feminist Studies* 4(3):19-35.
- Parameswaran, Radhika. 2006. "Feminist Media Ethnography in India " In *Emergent Methods in Social Research*, eds. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Lina Leavy: Sage Publications, Inc., 313-336.
- Parshly, H M. 1972 *The Second Sex* (translation)  
Australia Penguin Books.
- Payton, Joan. 2011. "Collective crimes, collective victims: a case study of the murder of Banaz Mahmud. ." In *Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Challenges.*, eds. Shahrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo: Istanbul: Bilgi University Press., 67-79.
- Peristiany, J G. 1970. "Introduction " In *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J G Peristiany. Chicago: The University of Chicago, Press 9-18.
- Pope, Nicole. 2004. "Honour Killings: Instruments of Patriarchy Control " In *Violence in the Name of Honour, Theoretical and Political Challenges.* , eds. Shahrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo. Istanbul: Bilgi University Press 101-109.
- Rahat, Naveed. 1981. "'The Role of Women in Reciprocal Relationships in a Punjab Village'." In *The Endless Day: Some Case Material on Asian Rural Women, Women in Development* eds. T S Epstein and R A Watts.
- Ramaseshan, Geeta. 2011 "The construction of 'honour' in Indian criminal law: an Indian lawyer's perspective." In *Honour, Violence, Women, and Islam.*, eds. Mohammad Mazher Idriss and Tahir Abbas: Routledge
- Reinharz., Shulamit. 1992. "The Principle of Feminist Research A Matter of Debate." In *The Knowledge Explosion. Generations of Feminist Scholarship*  
eds. Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender. New York: Teachers College Press, 423-436.
- Report, Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women. 1997. "Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women." Pakistan: -, -.
- Saddawi, Nawal El. 1980. *The Hidden Face of Eve. Women in the Arab World*: Zed Books Ltd.
- Samad, Yunas and John Eade *Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage*'. 2002. "'Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage' ": University of Bradford and university of Surrey Roehampton
- Schneider, Jane. 1971. "Of Vigilance and Virgins: Honor, Shame and Access to Resources in Mediterranean Societies " *Ethnology* 10(1):1-24.
- Sen, Purna. 2005. "'Crimes of honour' , rights and wrongs." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women.* . London: Zed Books.
- Shah, Nafisa. 1998. "A story in Black: Karo-Kari Killings in Upper Sindh." In *Reuters Foundation*. Oxford.

Shah, Nafisa. 1998a. "Faislo: The Informal Settlement System and Crimes Against Women in Sindh." In *Shaping Women's Lives. Laws, Practices & Strategies in Pakistan*, eds. Farida Shaheed, Sohail Akber Warraich, Cassandra Balchin and Aisha Gazdar. Shirkat Gah Lahore Women's Resource Centre 227-252.

Shah, Nafisa. 1998b, November, 19. "Honour Killing." In *Dawn*. Karachi Dawn Group

Shah, Zahida. 2001. "Contested Identities: British-Pakistani Women In Luton." University of Southampton.

Shaheed, Farida. 1998. "The Other Side of the Discourse: Women's Experiences of Identity, Religion and Activism in Pakistan " In *Shaping Women's Lives*, eds. Farida Shaheed, Sohail Akber Warraich, Cassandra Balchin and Aish Gazdar. Lahore: Women's Resource Centre, 415-447.

Shaw, Alison. 1994. "'The Pakistani Community in Oxford'." In *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian presence in Britain*, ed. Roger Ballard. London: Hurst and Company, 35-57.

Shaw, Alison. 2000. *Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain*: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Shaw, Alison. 2001. "Kinship, Cultural Preference and Immigration: Consanguineous Marriage among British Pakistanis " *Royal Anthropological Institute* 7:315-334.

Siddiqi, Hannana. 2005. "'There is no 'honour' in domestic violence, only shame!' Women's struggles against 'honour' crimes in the UK." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women.*, eds. Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain: Zed Books.

Siddique, Hannana and Meena Patel. 2010. "Asian and minority women, domestic violence and mental health The experience of Southall Black Sisters." In *Domestic And Sexual Violence And Abuse. Tackling The Health And Mental Health Effects* eds. Catherine Itzin, Ann Taket and Sarah Barter-Godfrey: Routledge

Sirman, Nukhet. 2004. "Kinship, Politics, and Love: Honour in Post-Colonial Context-The Case of Turkey." In *Violence in the Name of Honour, Theoretical and Political Challenges.*, eds. Shahrazad Mojab and Nahla Abdo. Istanbul: Bilgi University Press., 39-56.

Terms, Dictionary of Socio-Rhetorical. 2008. "Honour ".

Toor, Sunita. 2009 "British Asian Girls, Crime and Youth Justice " In *Article SAGE Publication*.

Viner, Katharine. 2005. " 'A Year of Killing' " In *The Guardian Weekend*.

Walby, Sylvia. 1989. "Theorising Patriarchy " *Sociology* 23(2):213-234.

Warraich, Sohail Akbar. 2005. "'Honour killings' and the law in Pakistan." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence against Women.*, eds. Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain. London: Zed Books.

Watch, Human Rights. 1999. "Crime or Custom? Violence Against Women in Pakistan." ed. Human Rights Watch.

Weiss, Anita M. 1998. "The Slow Yet Steady Path to Women's Empowerment in Pakistan " In *Islam, Gender & Social Change* eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L Esposito: Oxford University Press

- Welchman, Lynn and Sara Hossain. 2005. "Introduction 'Honour', rights and wrongs." In *'Honour' Crimes, Paradingms, and Violence against Women*, eds. Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain. London Zed Books, 1-22.
- Werbner, Pnina. 1990. *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings among British Pakistanis*: Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Werbner, Pnina. 2002. *Imagined Diaspora among Manchester Muslims*: Janes Curry Oxford.
- Werbner, Pnina. 2005. "Honour, shame and the politics of sexual embodiment among South Asian Muslims in Britain and beyond: An analysis of debates in the public sphere." *The Politics of Sexual Embodiment in Britain* 6(1 ):25-47.
- Werbner, Pnina. 2007. "Veiled Interventions in Pure Space Honour, Shame and Embodied Struggles among Muslim in Britain and France." *Theory, Culture & Society* 24(2):161-186.
- Williams, Karen Squibb. 2005. "'Challenging Notions of Domestic Violence in the Courts and Beyond' " In *Guardian newspaper Magazine*
- Wilson, Amrit. 1978. *Finding A Voice: Asian Women in Britain*,: London: Virago.
- Wilson, Amrit. 2006. *Dream, Questions, Struggles, South Asian Women in Britain* London Pluto Press.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1992. "Fundamentalism, Multiculturalism And Women In Britain " In *Race Culture and Diffrence* SAGE
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. *Gender & Nation*. SAGE Publication
- Zeenat, Ahmed and S Akber. 1981. "'Mor and Tor: Binary and Opposing Models of Pukhtun Womanhood'." In *The Endless Day Women in Development* eds. Epstein T S and Watts R A.

**Appendices**  
**TABLE. 1**  
**Participants D**  
**emographic-British Born Muslim Female**

No	Name	Sect	Age	Educational status	Language of Interview	Hijab status	Marital status
1	Meera	Sunni	24	Graduate	English	No (used to)	No
2	Rubina	Shia	24	Graduate	English	Yes	No
3	Sheela	Sunni	18	College	English	Yes	No
4	Supna	Sunni	26	Graduate	English	No	No
5	Lila	Shia	26	GCSE	English	Yes	Divorced
6	Ambreen	Sunni	27	PG**	English	Yes	Yes
7	Shahnila	Sunni	38	Graduate	English	No	No
8	Ruhina	Sunni	38	Graduate	English	No (used to)	Widow
9	Nimra	Shia	35	GCSE	English	Yes	Yes
10	Sheela	Shia	41	Graduate	English	Yes	Yes
11	Ramsha	Sunni	16	GCSE	English	No	No
12	Najma	Sunni	27	GCSE	English	No	Yes
13	Faheema	Shia	23	Graduate	English	Yes	No

\* Language of interview \*\* PG=post graduation.

**TABLE. 2**  
**Participants Demographics- Pakistani Born Muslim Female**

No	Participant	Sect	Age	Education	Language*	Hijab	Married
1	Noori	Shia	38	Graduated	Urdu	Yes	Yes
2	Zahida	Sunni	68	Graduated	Urdu	No	Widow
3	Kosar	Kadiyani	40	Graduated	Urdu	No	Yes
4	Mazna	Sunni	58	Matriculation	Urdu	Yes	Yes
5	Reshma	Sunni	40	Graduated	English	Yes	Widow
6	Zulikha	Shia	50	Un-educated	Urdu/Panjabi	Yes	Yes
7	Raheela	Shia	58	Matriculation	Urdu	Yes	Widow
8	Sofi	Shia	30	Matriculation	Urdu	No	Yes
9	Tahira	Kadiyani	64	Matriculation	Urdu	Dupatta	Widow
10	Sara	Sunni	60	Matriculation	Urdu	Dupatta	Yes
11	Shaheen	Sunni	70	Graduated	Urdu	Dupatta	Yes
12	Suriya	Sunni	65	Schooling	Urdu	No	Widow
13	Farida	Sunni	30	Graduated	English/Urdu	No	Yes
14	Tilat	Sunni	40	Matriculation**	Urdu	No	Separated
15	Nadia	Sunni	46	Graduated	English	No	Yes
16	Maryam	Sunni	48	Pakistan	Urdu/Panjabi	Yes	Widow
17	Zeena	Sunni	32	Pakistan	Urdu	No	Divorced
18	Naeema	Shia	33	P Graduate	Urdu/Panjabi	Yes	Yes
19	Raheema	Sunni	62	Un-educated	Urdu/Panjabi	Yes	Widow
20	Salma	Sunni	68	Matriculation	Urdu	Yes	Yes

\* language of interview- \*\* Matriculation equal to GCSE

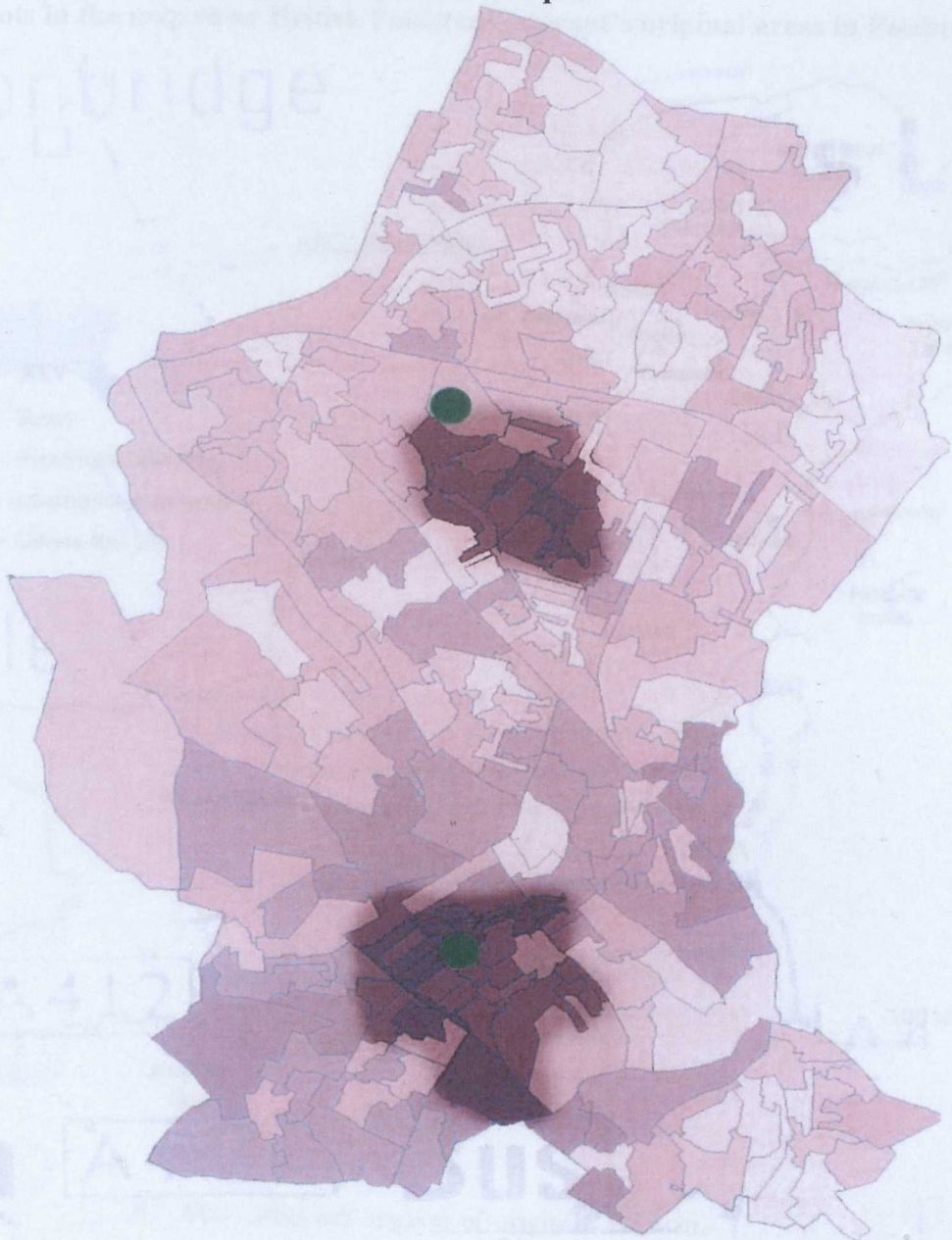


**TABLE. 3**  
**Participants Demographics- British & Pakistani Born Muslim (including one English) Male**

Number	Participant	Age	Country of Birth	Language*	Married	Sect	Education
1	Rafiq	Late 60s	Pakistan	Urdu/English	Yes	Sunni	PG
2	Razak	64	Pakistan	Urdu/English	Yes	Sunni	PG
3	Ilyas	70	Pakistan	English	Yes	Sunni	PG
4	Mamood	70	Pakistan	Urdu/Panjabi	Yes	Sunni	S.School
5	Tahir	Early 40s	Pakistan	English/Urdu	Yes	Sunni	Graduate
6	Nobby Jetla	Mid-40s	British	English	Not asked	Christian	Not asked
7	Hafeez	26	Pakistan	English	No	Sunni	PG
8	Rehan	Early 30s	Pakistan	English	No	Sunni	G
9	Kabir	36	British	English	Yes	Sunni	G
10	Zaheer	23	British	English	No	Sunni	S.School
11	Yousif	Early 40s	British	English	Yes	Sunni	PG
12	Shafeeq	65	Pakistan	Urdu	Yes	Sunni	PG
13	Fraz	Late 40	Pakistan	Urdu	Yes	Sunni	PG

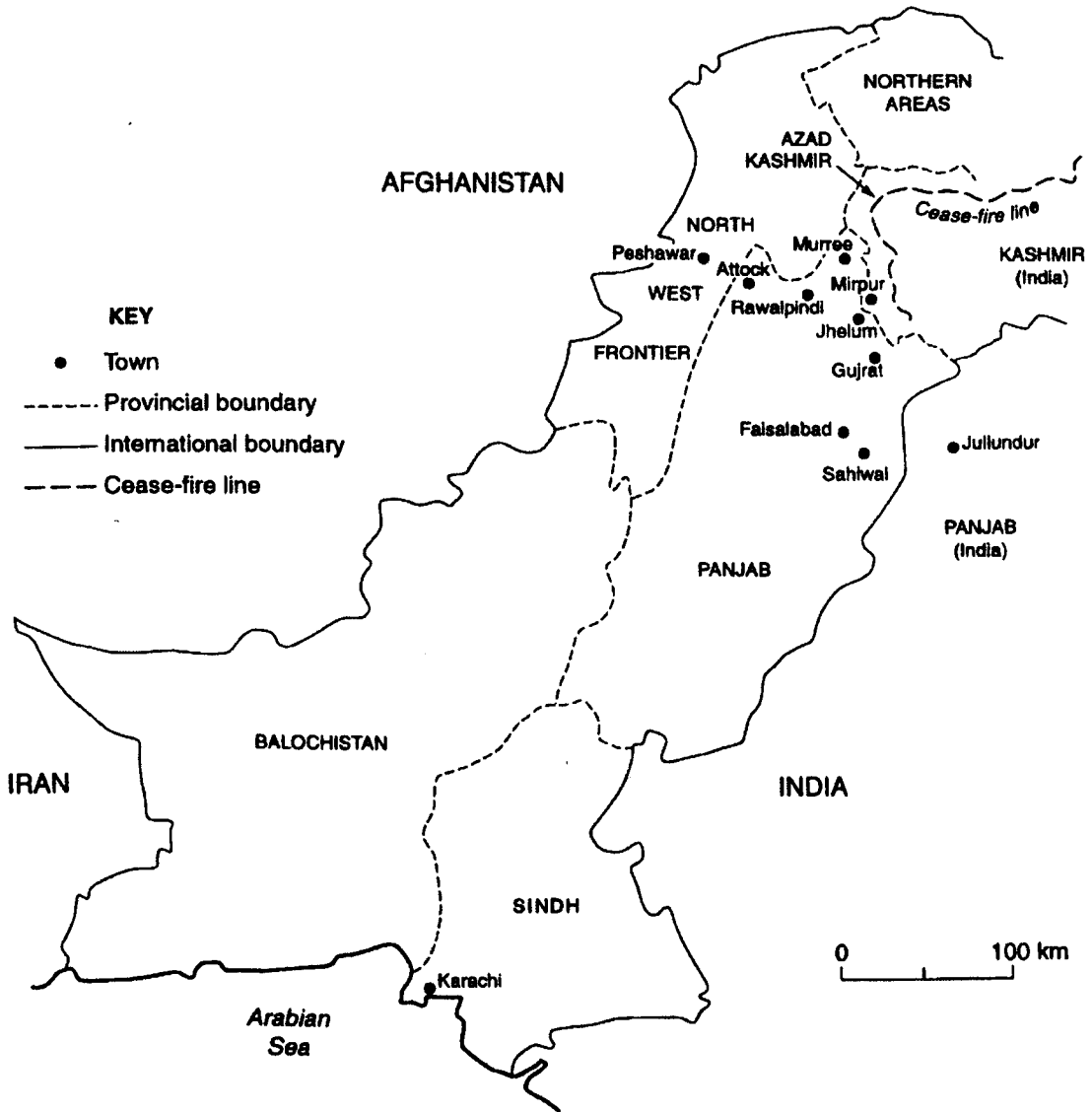
\*Language of interview, G=graduate, PG=post graduation, P & SE=primary school education

**Map of Watford, UK, the dark colour shows Pakistani migrants' settlements, green dots show mosques**



The Map of Pakistan<sup>121</sup>

The black dots in the map show British Pakistani migrant's original areas in Pakistan.



MAP. Migrants' regions of origin in Pakistan.

<sup>121</sup> the map is taken from Alison Shaw 2006

**Info: about the Research in Watford Pakistani Muslims**

Ms Zubaida Metlo is working as a researcher in Watford for her PhD degree. Her work is on the Pakistani community. She needs some participants to take part in her project. She will ask a few questions regarding participants' lives and family values. It will be greatly appreciated if anyone can spare some time (about 30-40 minutes) as a volunteer to participate in her project. The venue for the interview can either be at the Muslim Community Project or the Multi-Cultural Community Centre, Library, Mosque or at the convenience of the participants.

-----

**Zubaida Metlo**

PhD Researcher

Arabic & Middle Eastern Studies

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

University of Leeds, LEEDS, LS2 9JT

Mobile, 0794 717 0320, 0208 9068 614

Email: [zmetlo@yahoo.com](mailto:zmetlo@yahoo.com) & [zmetlo04@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:zmetlo04@leeds.ac.uk)

## **Information for participants**

**The title of this research is:** 'The Perception of Honour & Honour Based Violence in Pakistani Ethnic Communities in Watford, UK'.

**Introduction of this research:** I, Zubaida Metlo, a researcher at the University of Leeds invite you to participate in my research. The purpose of this research is to look at the family values and culture, through people's experiences in their daily lives.

**Why is this research important to me?** There are several misconceptions about the family norms of Pakistanis in the UK. I aim to find out what they are? This research will help to understand the culture and family norms and to find out how members of the old generation transfer their family values to the new generation and how is culture transmitted from one generation to another.

**What will happen during this research?** There will be about 10-15 questions to be asked to the participants. The questions are not fixed but they will be open ended types of questions which will focus on the person's early life, education, immigration, marriage, work, children/grand children, and family/community values. It will not take more than one hour, but I will not mind if a participant takes more time to share their experiences.

**How to save the participants' personal information?** Your name will not be mentioned in this research or any other report. I will save all the given information in the computer under a password/code. When I will complete my research all the information will be deleted.

**Your rights:** if you decide to participate in this research, it is not necessary that you answer all questions. You can choose to end the interview at any time.

## Information for the Participants in Urdu Language

### شہر کا محلے لیتے معلوماتی شیٹ

اس تحقیق کا نام : والٹنورڈ میں مٹیم برٹشش پاکستانیوں کا  
سکائرت اور عزت تہ نام پڑھونے والے مہر کی متعلقہ تصورات

— اس تحقیق کا تعارف :  
میں آپ کو ایس یو نیورسٹی آف حقق میں زبیرہ میٹلو

کی تحقیق میں دعوت دیتی ہوں۔ اس تحقیق کا بنیادی مقصد  
ہے کہ پاکستانی لوگوں کی زندگی میں ان کے کلچر کا کیا رول ہے  
جو کہ پاکستانیوں کی روایات سے متعلق بہت غلط  
مفروضات ہیں۔ اس تحقیق کی مدد سے پتا لگانا ہے کہ  
والدین اپنے بچوں میں کس طرح اپنے روایات منتقل کرتے  
ہیں اور کلچر ایک جگہ سے دوسری جگہ کس طرح پہنچتا ہے۔

### — اس تحقیق کے دوران کیا ہوگا۔

دس سے بیس سوالات پوچھے جائیں گے۔ جو کہ مقرر سوالات  
نہیں ہوں گے۔ اور وہ آپ کی زندگی سے متعلق، مائیکریشن، تعلیم اور آپ کے  
بچوں سے متعلق ہوں گے۔ زیادہ تر آپ سے ایک گھنٹے تک بات چیت ہوتی  
— اگر آپ اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینا چاہتی ہیں۔

آپ کی مہرانی برقی۔ اس سے تحقیق میں حصہ لینے کے لیے

تو مجھے فون پر رابطہ کر لیں 0794 717 0222۔ اگر مزید معلومات  
لینا چاہیں تو [zmetlo@yahoo.com](mailto:zmetlo@yahoo.com) پر ای میل کریں۔

### — اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے والوں کی جن زندگی کو کسی محفوظ رکھا جائے گا۔

میں آپ کی ذاتی زندگی سے متعلق معلومات کو محفوظ رکھنے کی پوری  
کوشش کروں گی۔ آپ کا نام اس تحقیق میں اور اس تحقیق سے متعلق  
کے کسی رپورٹ میں ظاہر نہیں کیا جائے گا۔ اس تحقیق میں آپ سے متعلق  
تمام معلومات کو ایک کوڑ لہیرہ کے تحت محفوظ کیا جائے گا۔

— آپ کے حقوق :  
آپ اس تحقیق میں حصہ لیتے ہیں تو ضروری نہیں کہ آپ  
سارے کے سارے سوالات کا جواب دینے کے لیے وقت انگریزوں کو ادا  
میں بھی حصہ کر سکتی ہیں۔  
— مہرانی

## Police Report



### FORCED MARRIAGE

All incidents 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006

#### VICTIM ETHNICITY

##### *Asian or Asian British*

<b>Bangladeshi</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Indian</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pakistani</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Not stated</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Mixed White and Asian</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>

#### VICTIM AGE

<b>&lt;16</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>16-18</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>19-24</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>25-34</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>35-44</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>45-54</b>	<b>1</b>

**Victim age is the age shown when the victim made contact with the police, not the age when married or to be forced into marriage.**

Philip Balmforth, July 2006.