

Islands of Subjugation in the Land of Empowerment

**Role of Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women in the Empowerment Process of other
Norwegian Pakistani Women**



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Dedication

I dedicate this effort to my creative daughter Hamna, my patient son Meeran and my unpredictable son Minhaj.

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Preface

For the preface of a study on empowerment of women immigrants I find a passage on MiRA centre (a centre in Oslo, Norway which is working on the different challenges being faced by immigrant women) website reasonable to convey the idea about this study. According to this:

“We are the women of Norway. We are Swedish, Danish, Pakistani, Yugoslav, Bosnian, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese, Turkish-we are European, Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and more.

We come here for as many reasons as there are people: to seek refuge, to pursue an education, to create new opportunities. And yet, our voices as minority women have become just that-a minority. Why is that? We know that we can effect change-how can we make that evident?”

Acknowledgement

Writing this thesis was not easy for me, especially when, I was doing this as my first effort. Therefore my supervisor Professor Sveinung Horverak remained a source of inspiration and guidance for me from the beginning to the end of this project. His efforts enabled me to kept on struggling at different stages with ‘hope’.

My husband Arif whose increased willingness to assume more responsibilities at home as well as outside the home, spared the time I was in need to think, make field trip and write about this issue.

My friend Shovita, also remained an important contributor in this venture. Especially, her little motivation when I was struggling with my pregnancy period’s anxiety, her short motivational sentences like *“Rabia! Its impressive that you are doing your studies as well along with this responsibility.”*

And of course my respectable respondents contribution – their willingness to let me in their personality and explore their conception, perception and resultant attitude towards their own empowerment process and their motivation and experiences for the empowerment of subjugated class of the Pakistani females living in Norway.

Introduction

Our social world is defined with social problems, though according to Eitzen and Zinn (2000) this is unabated debated how to define a "social problem" because in both its objective and subjective notion there are problems. However, a working definition may be "social problems have been thought of as social situations that a large number of observers felt were inappropriate and needed remedying" (Eitzen and Zinn, 2000:02), whereas Best (2004:14-15) defined social problem as "all those phenomena such as crime, racism, poverty, and overpopulation, those pose problems for society."

Though such social situations which are labeled as social problems can be unique to certain locality, region, nation, but there are few which are quite global, like gender inequality. Reflection of authors like Eitzen and Zinn (2000); Wharton (2004) and Kennedy and Cohen (2000) (while referring few) reveal that denial of women's rights is universal and so the Asian women are not an exception.

Among these Asian women, the sufferings and the challenges of these women increased when they migrated to or become a part of a migrated family in alien lands. Literature on immigrants women reveal that their sufferings multiplied due to a variety of reasons like baggage of socio-cultural practices which became quite misfit in their new lands. Alien societies own demands like language, understanding of the new and probably different way of life came up as further challenges for them. Under such situation its not necessary that education is going to open up the different doors of opportunities for these women. In most of the cases these women need to have herculean efforts to overcome these challenges and to see themselves as empowered women. Their journey for the empowerment does not stop here, an empowered individual need to contribute towards the empowerment of others as well, that is what I planned to study in this project.

A majority of Pakistani women are used to have discrimination as a way of life. A working definition of discrimination as given by Howe (2009:145) according to the author "discrimination implies people being treated differently and unfairly on grounds that have no justifiable moral relevance". This discrimination left them socially, culturally, economically, politically and psychologically handicapped. One important implication of this discrimination is that they are the scapegoats in case of when economic questions pushed the parents to choose education opportunities for their male and female children. Therefore, most of the times these women are heavily dependent on their male member of the family to

deliver on different issues. When they arrived with this baggage on the lands like Norway which is “self served” society, their sufferings multiplied. Women from this background though excelled as well but those who could not excel also become the areas of social contribution for the women who excelled or was able to empower themselves. This is the brief context of the study, as I am going to study “How Norwegian - Pakistani empowered women in Norway are contributing towards the empowerment of the subjugated Norwegian - Pakistani women in their close social influence in Norway? Are they? If not Why?” What are the obstacles in its realization?

Education and industrial development has remarkably transformed the societies generally and especially the role of women. Along with these invention of machines to speed up the household work, enabled the women to increase their participation in the employment market, making them economically, socially and politically more empowered. However, despite this advancement in civilization, women generally and particularly in developing countries are subject to different economic, socio-cultural, and political discriminations. Even in developed part of the world, we can find the examples that women is being increasingly used to serve the wish and whims of the male dominated society either it is in the form of a (half-naked) celebrity in the advertisement of products ranging from women eye shades to men undergarments or being used as sex worker. It is despite the fact that this part of the world claim that we have empowered the women. However, we need to see what actually delivered by this empowerment to the women living in west. Social, political, and economic challenges may be somewhat similar with further addition when we look at the situation of women living in the developing countries.

Men in Asian societies play a dominant role in their respective families. Especially in rural areas (which unfortunately constitute a major part of these Asian societies) this phenomenon is very high. Women are expected to deliver not only outside of the house but also at home as well, the management of which is their exclusive responsibility. In rural areas, they are expected to cooperate with the male members of the family in agriculture and cottage industries related economic activities. At home, managing the house along with children is the exclusive responsibility of these women.

Situation in urban areas is though changing which is again not very much positive for the women. Increased and rapid industrialization in Asian economies creating the same

"expectations" of dual responsibilities for the women, whereas, there's less change in expectations associated with men to increased their role in home management.

Therefore, women in Asia are generally over burdened and under additional stress because of these dual responsibilities. However, its interesting to see that it may not be exception to Asia as UNO report on worlds women (2008/2009) concluded that despite claims and generous formal guarantees of equality for women, the progress in practical terms is too slow and specially for the poorest and most marginal women in this world.

With respect to UNDP report on its progress with respect to gender equality and women empowerment in context of achievement of its Millennium Development Goals, though the report presents positive progress but if we look at there are still big differences between the two genders. Like differences in their participation in primary, secondary and territory education. Situation in Pakistan in not much different than other parts of Asian societies. Pakistani women have lower literacy rate as compare to their male members of this society. Their participation in non-agriculture sector is also minor one. Their participation in political process though increased sufficiently over the last 10 years but still far less than their proportion in total population of Pakistan.

Its not less than a surprise to see that despite their immigration to a society like Norway with fewer structural barriers, different indicators of women empowerment still reveal that they are less empowered as compare to their counterparts male. Like according to Statistics Norway (SSB, 2010) Pakistani women have a low labor force participation (28%), much lower than Pakistani men who have 60%. These statistics further reveal that Pakistani women are among the immigrant females who are at lower level of financial income, another parameter of low level of empowerment which reveal their engagement in poorly paid occupations. From this it seems that despite this socio-economic jump i.e., from Pakistan to Norway, situation of Pakistani women is less different than what they have in Pakistan. Interesting facts like these spur my interest to look into this matter. Therefore, it seems that despite the transformation of the role of women in contemporary societies due to education and industrial breakthroughs, the secondary data reveals that Pakistani women in modern societies like Norway are short on this transformation of the role of women. However, it's not religiously, but its cultural driven values which kept Pakistani women less empowered as compare to their counterparts in other religions and nationalities.

In general though there are many institutional efforts to address this agony, but there are some efforts from the empowered women as well who are trying to raise voice for their less empowered fellows. On one hand we are in need of research to present the challenges faced by less empowered women around the world and on the other hand we need to look at 'what works' either institutional, individual or both efforts to change this situation.

While acknowledging the fact that women's' movement for their rights remained a poorly explored area, Cohen and Kennedy (2000) documented that such efforts initiated in late Eighteenth century. However, Women in developing countries like Pakistan might have just started their journey towards this. Though, the rights like equality has already been granted to them more than fourteen hundred years ago under Islam - the religion of more than 90 of Pakistan's population, but they are still striving hard to have these practically.

While re-emphasizing the objectives of this study, I studied how Pakistani empowered women are trying to bring a change for their sisters, do they, if not why, if yes, what are the challenges they are facing? The study will contribute theoretically in our understanding how immigrants women are facing empowerment challenges. Practically, it will help different stakeholders like NGOs, governments and even empowered women to understand the situation well and to continue with or change their strategy. The study is based on case study research approach, within which primarily qualitative interviews from the Norwegian Pakistani empowered Women are used.

The selection of Pakistan is because it's my native country. I feel the problem of my country somewhere deep inside and as social worker my observation about the problems also pushed me to try to find out the solution for these problems. Selection of Pakistani community in Norway is based on multiple grounds like it's my present residential country therefore, movement and contacts with the sample will be easy. However, to a greater extent the primary reason is despite the movement of a substantial number of people from Pakistan who are living in Norway for quite a long time now, the empowerment challenges faced by their women is still a problem. Therefore, I find it interesting to study the area.

Identifying and contacting with the Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women (NPEW) was a challenge. Reference based sampling was used, under which one reference was used to locate and contact with the other. In this search I explored the invaluable contribution of the social media like facebook. Therefore, I believe in future social media is

going to play an important role as it has facilitated me a lot in search, identification and access to the relevant group of respondents.

After assuming appointments from the respondents field trip was planned and made to Oslo, Norway. It was because of the reason that Oslo has the highest level of Pakistani population in Norway. And according to Statistics Norway (2006) 46% of all female immigrants live in Oslo. The semi-structured interviews along with the observation with the Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women (NPEW) enabled me to understand their socio-economic-cultural background, how they strived in their own empowerment process, the challenges they faced, the support they had and the today's status they enjoyed. My sharing with them also enabled me to invite them to discuss how they feel about the subjugated class of Pakistani women who are still striving. And I also explored their motivation to work for the empowerment of this subjugated class.

It seems that most of these women despite the empowered status they have, they are facing their own identity crises. It may be a natural thing in multi-ethnic societies but I believe the level has been sensitized due to global political situation Muslims are facing. The study discussed this in detail along with the implications of this situation for these Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women (NPEW) and the class which can have different life if these women get out of this syndrome.

This document will first reflect on the literature on empowerment in general and then specifically about the women empowerment. Literature on state of Asian women and within this Pakistani women situation is discussed with special emphasis. These two parts of the literature helped me to develop the necessary background for the study. The next part will discuss the methodological choices and the justification for these. Findings will follow these and later on my reflection on these findings will be presented along with their implications.

Literature Review

Universal State of Women

Most of the world's politicians will claim that we are living in a world where the social, economic and political opportunities are not defined with respect to gender however, UNDP (2010) following claims under-shadowed the political slogans of the world leaders. According to this report:

1. Six out of ten of the world's poorest people are still women and girls,
2. Less than 16 percent of the world's parliamentarians are women,
3. Two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and,
4. Both in times of armed conflict and behind the closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence

These statistics reveal the global patriarch society we lived in where, it's the male who will make the decision, the decision ranging from the number of children the family may have to the decision of invading a sovereign country. The claim of western societies that they are the leader in human civilization process became under shadow when we look at the examples that even developed societies like United states does not have legalized equality between men and women (Hall, 1992). Kabeer (2005:21) quotes Goetz, 2003, according to his study "regardless of the political systems, the proportion of women in national parliaments in the world is extremely low, averaging 13.8% in 2000."

Different authors highlighted the different social-economic-cultural and political challenges faced by women in this patriarch global society. Like Crenshaw (2007) admits that social problems like violence against women has become routine (against which the women has become organized over the last two decades). A routine is a practice which is accepted as such. Development of the unjust relations are routine, a social practice not only practiced at large but accepted to a larger extent. Crotty (1998:155) labels this situation as 'the culture of silence' which referred to an oppressed situation categorized as "the very situation of exploitation and oppression begets lack of awareness, apathy, fatalism, absence of self-respect - even a fear of freedom. Functionally, oppression is domesticating." Further to this, according to Fiske (2006) women are denied to basic human rights, which are promised by UN regardless of differences of culture, religion, gender, ability, nationality etc.

Beauvoir (2007) describes that the inequality between the two genders is universal. Further, the author also refers to the idea that despite the protection given by law, it is generally the customs which prevent the delivery of these rights to the women. The author refers to the inequality in education, occupation and political career between the two genders. While referring to the male dominance society the author stresses that it is men who compel her to assume the status of *Other*. The role of society in the 'making' of a woman emphasized by the author in the following words "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish as individual as an *Other*."

This inequality makes a group as empowered while the other as subjugated class. Sometime it seems that empowered group needs a subjugated class so that they can feel that they are empowered ones like in capitalist societies. Or the presence of a subjugated class and their functional differences from the empowered class enabled us to see the different world and felt the need to address these differences. Based on Hall (1992), how subjugated women are defined as compare to their empowered fellows. This comparison reflects why it is important to pave the way for the empowerment of the subjugated class of this world.

Table 1: Based on Hall (1992) the difference between subjugated and empowered women:

<i>Subjugated Women</i>	<i>1. Empowered Women</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subjugated women's values are essentially defined by men's values. 2. These values are complementary and adaptive to the male hierarchy. 3. Women's moral standards are based on the rationale of maintaining the status quo of dominant male values. 4. Their choices are essentially predetermined if they are to gain social approval for their behavior. 5. Their behavior is directed by their allegiance to these values. 6. The non-conformist women are sanctioned morally, emotionally, mentally and even physically. 7. They find it difficult to change this structure. 8. They live most of their lives in very restricted personal milieus, extending themselves very little beyond their traditional family domains. 9. Their visions are limited to the confines of their interpersonal networks, and their goals cannot 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Empowered women define their attitudes, values, and behavior in relation to their own real interest and by themselves. 3. They do not aim at being superior to men. They respond as equals and cooperate in order to work toward the common good. 4. They have survived the harshness of their subjugation. 5. They maintain their strength in the presence of pressures of family, religion, and work, and they contribute toward the empowerment of all women. 6. They know that their individual good and welfare can only be viewed and understood with reference to the well-being of all women. 7. They keep on delivering on their traditional responsibilities, but in a different way. 8. They strengthen themselves through other women's support and sustain their own moral visions. 9. Their actions are driven by their own distinctive ideals.

<p>go beyond maintaining family relationships and the wellbeing of their family members.</p> <p>10. Their work generally consists of doing unpaid domestic jobs or agricultural labor in the home settings.</p>	
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As already established, this women's subjugation is global as revealed by gender and development researchers like Nussbaum (2005). According to Nussbaum (2005) the case of women subjugation is not limited to the developing countries. Therefore, according to Malik and Courtney (2011), women's empowerment and gender equality are key objectives for the United Nations (UN) and other humanitarian organizations. The sensitivity of the issue and less differences in their situations across the globe makes gender equality as one of the two global priorities.

In these efforts, Malik and Courtney (2011) identifies Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UNO ,1996) and subsequently its inclusion in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as important milestones in fixation of the unfavorable situation for the women. The importance of achievement on this can further be gauged from the fact that according to Malik and Courtney (2011), United Nations Development Program 2005, 2008; World Bank, 2003, regarded women's empowerment as instrumental in achieving all other MDGs. However, other authors like Kabeer (2005) in order to further emphasize the importance of women's empowerment in a different context, considers it as a goal which have its own intrinsic value i.e., as an end in itself instead of looking at as an instrument for the achievement of other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as stipulated by the United Nations.

Empowerment and Women Empowerment

UNO, the organization which highlights the problems faced by majority of the world women irrespective of their geographical, political and socio-cultural boundaries, is one of the organizations which suggest solutions for these problems as well. One of these solutions is women empowerment. Based on Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988); Lord (1991); and Zimmerman (1990), Arai (1996:36) defines empowerment in its most simple terms is the “process involving change in the capacities of the individual”. According to the author these capacities may be in the psychological, social, or political dimensions. However, the author conclude that the extent to which individuals experience empowerment differs which depends on their participation level and their involvement in visioning process. Troutner and Smith (2004) have defined empowerment as the process of accumulating power. Other authors like Bystydzienski (1992) also define empowerment in context of power. Kabeer (2005) gives a working definition of the term, according to her empowerment mean *ability to make choices*. However, according to her this capacity to exercise strategic choices should not violate the capacity of the others to make free choices.

According to Araj (1996) empowerment is now being increasingly discussed in many disciplines and areas of studies. This development makes this concept defined differently in different disciplines. Based on Araj’s literature review, the author identifies empowerment fall into the following main areas:

1. Empowerment involves a change in the capacity or control or an increase in both power and the ability to utilize power
2. Empowerment is a multidimensional construct which has association with psychological, social, economic, and political disciplines.
3. Empowerment is a multilevel construct, in a way that these psychological, social, economic, and political changes, the individual may be experiencing an individual, group or community.
4. It is also important to understand empowerment in a holistic context
5. Empowerment can not be given to an individual, group or a community, nor does it develop solely from within the individual. In a way one can not empower another individual, nor can individuals achieve empowerment on their own, apart from the enabling support of professionals or changes in their environment.

Arai (1996) while quoting Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) describes that this multidimensional construct is felt by the individuals in various aspects of psychological power such as self-conception, self-efficacy, and locus of control. Further based on Friedman (1992) the author describes that individuals experience gains in social power through increased access to information, knowledge, skills, participation in social organizations and financial resources.

Under the broader concept of empowerment, Hall (1992:83) defines women's empowerment as "includes both a personal strengthening and enhancement of life chances, and collective participation in efforts to achieve equality of opportunity and equity between different genders, ethnic groups, social classes, and age groups. It enhances human potential at individual and social levels of expressions. Empowerment is an essential starting point and a continuing process for realizing the ideals of human liberation and freedom for all." However, I believe, it's a more general definition of empowerment though we can find meaning of women empowerment not different from this. Other authors like Datta and Cornberg (2002) consider the term as multifaceted therefore, suggest to examine empowerment as a *process* and as an *outcome*.

Troutner and Smith (2004) trace the origin of idea of empowerment from 1970s and 1980s Third World Feminist Movement. Further, according to these authors empowerment has something to do with the imbalances in power relations being faced by women with reference to men in society. These authors add further that by affecting these imbalances the women will be able to maneuver their position to protect their rights. The concept of power in empowerment of women debate also highlighted by Elliott (2008) as well.

These variety of definitions pose the challenge before the researchers to how to precisely define the term. The problem of lack of precise definition of concept of empowerment and women empowerment is admitted by many authors including Hall (1992) and Malik and Courtney (2011). Malik and Courtney (2011) quote the definition given by United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN). According to this plat form

"women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally."

Strategies for Women Empowerment

While addressing the question how to increase the empowerment opportunities for the women, Elliott (2008) highlights three ways:

1. By developing individual capabilities; such as education, health and self-confidence and vision etc.
2. Provision of resources like institutional and cultural which facilitate or constrain in seizing opportunities
3. Agency or process through which choices are made

Troutner and Smith (2004) refer to two type of strategies “power within” and “power with” concept. The former strategy addresses the issue of collective action, the organization and mobilization of self-confident individuals for social change, whereas the later strategy focused on institutional changes. Datta and Cornberg (2002) consider the individual level, organization and policy level process or strategies of empowerment. Whereas Frank (2010) mentioned three strategies to empower the disadvantage ones; 1) empowerment through policy and planning in which the author suggests to change structures and institutions, 2) empowerment through social and political actions and 2) empowerment through education and conscious raising.

Within these strategies, literature on women and development or gender and development (GAD) is rich on enhancing the capabilities of women. Increasing education and provision of micro credit to women in case of Grameen Bank, is one such example of increasing women’s choices in Bangladesh. It can be referred as neoliberalism philosophy behind empowerment, according to which we need to focus on individual even if the barriers to empowerment are structural (Elliott, 2008). Hall (1992) also cites the case studies of three women who gained empowerment through individual capabilities. The author also reveals that how later on these women not only expanded their empowerment scope but also served as case examples for others and thus commission the process of change in their circle of influence towards more empowered women in their society.

While talking about the ‘process’ how to bring empowerment, Troutner and Smith (2004) refer this strategy as “power within” as compare to “power with” concept. Power within strategy addresses the issue of collective action, the organization and mobilization of

self-confident individuals for social change. Datta and Cornberg (2002) considered this level as individual level process as compare to organization and policy level process of empowerment.

Hall (1992) while referring to different empowerment authors describes that women's empowerment frequently takes place at a personal level through their friendship with other women. Further she reveals (based on her review of literature) "women's gain in other countries serve as inspiration to national and local groups of women, even if the international achievements cannot be duplicated on home territory. While quoting Bernard (1971), Hall (1992:84) describes "perhaps one of the clearest indicators of women's empowerment is an increase in women's capacities and willingness to support other women and to work diligently toward strengthening women in their efforts to survive, or to gain equality. In this collective efforts context Hall (1992:84) further quotes (based on Hindberg, 1988; and Holter, 1984) "women's collective action is necessary to deal effectively with such important issues as violence against women and the persistence of patriarchy in welfare states."

Based on her literature review, Hall (1992:84) emphasizes that "understanding the intricacies of personal relationships and everyday choices is a vital starting point for forging roles of and avenues to power in the wider society." Further to this Hall (1992) described that empowerment is not synonymous with social class mobility, betterment of economic positions leads to greater empowerment. However, increased economic independence and increased social contacts lead to being stronger and to having a stronger influence on others.

Hall (1992) observes the following trends in women's individual and collective empowerment:

- Women's are least empowered in most traditional patriarchal societies.
- It is a political process that must include individual decision making. It can not be achieved collectively as well unless this empowerment exercised in everyday interaction with the others.
- It threatens the status quo in patriarchal societies
- Women can gain empowerment through supporting each other mutually
- Discussion and collective problem solving is the short cut for women's empowerment. It will make these women resourceful and effective.

State of Women Empowerment in Asia

Asian societies are high in structural barriers generally and with respect to women development especially. Under this system women who became self empowered despite these structural bottlenecks served as source of inspiration and hope for others. However, it also depends how such empower women are facilitating other women to tear off this “Iron Curtin” and enabling them to become empower. As Hall (1992) stresses that “women’s mutual support is a necessary condition of women’s empowerment at individual and social levels”.

Among the strategic choices available to empower the women, through developing their capacity, education is considered as a vital factor to enhance this capacity. However, Jayaweera’s (1997) study reveals that it’s a half truth. According to her, there’s no positive linear relationship between education and the many facets of empowerment. However, Kabeer (2005) traces positives of education on women empowerment dimensions like: it leads to enhanced cognitive ability which enhances the women capacity to question, to reflect and to act on. She also describes that likelihood is higher for better well-being with higher education. She reports education as a source to change the power relationships within and outside the house. According to her education also decrease the chances of domestic violence against these women. It also increases their capacity to deal with the outside world including government officials and other service providers. She finds it along with many other positive social changes.

However, along with these positives she also report studies which substantiate the claim of the authors like Jayaweria and Malik. Like according to her education is seen in terms of equipping girls to be better wives and mothers, or increasing their chances of getting a suitable husband (another study also substantiate this). It also reflects from the perspective of parents empowerment strategy for girls may be for other purposes like getting a good life partner for their loved ones.

Reflection on Pakistani Society

According to Hofstede cultural study Pakistan is a collective society, and a collective society will be more driven by socio-cultural practices than an individual society. Laws in Pakistan generally do not discriminate against women but do not protect the women’s rights

either. The representation of women in legislative assemblies has been increased in recent years while considering the importance of protection of these rights. Accepted practices; the real issue is here, as despite the provision of women's rights in the constitution, culturally (not religiously) women's are denied from these rights. Right of marriage by her own choice, right of education, right of deciding her own career, and even rights in inherited property are also sometimes refused for the women because of strong cultural traditions. A centuries old traditional mindset make the women as such as well, either they are not aware or if aware do not claim these rights with the assumption that these will not be acknowledged and or delivered. According to Malik and Courtney (2011), Pakistan is among the countries which has the lowest literacy rate among the women, which according to 2005 survey is 40.1% as compare to 64.5% for males. Despite the political efforts to change the situation, it remained largely unchanged due to cultural attitude towards girls' education.

Empowerment Challenges faced by Women in Pakistan

Not much different glimpses of such situations as given by UNDP of women in Pakistan are presented by DAWN (2010) in its various reporting. Pakistan is among the developing countries which are striving hard to meet both the ends of its population. UNESCO recently presents a report about grim education situation in Pakistan generally and specially with respect to women. The grim situation of level of education among female, become further alarming when we move to rural areas of the country where discrimination against female is well accepted tradition. Female will always be expected to sacrifice for the male members of the family, whether this female is a 5 year girl or a 30 year grown up women. Young girls in rural areas are expected to help their mothers in household jobs. For this even if they have to sacrifice their both formal and informal education, its OK, because its the well accepted cultural tradition.

Like many other Asian societies, Pakistan got many inequitable power division structures as legacies from the British colonial era. However, unfortunately unlike other states like India, Pakistan could not fix these inequalities in structure to a considerable extent. Therefore, as a result they have more strong personalities than institutions; political world is driven by greed and personal interests which affect the women's empowerment strategy as well i.e., possible change through education to a considerable extent.

The ancestors of the Norwegian-Pakistani community belong to Pakistan. Therefore, the community has strong socio-cultural bearing from this background. In order to understand the empowerment challenges being faced by Norwegian-Pakistani women here in Norway, we need to look at how this socio-cultural milieu at their home has constituted or developed their life pattern which makes it different from the native Norwegians or any other immigrants in Norway.

According to UNICEF, 2006 as quoted by Malik and Courtney (2011) and revealed by UNDP (1994) report on Human Development as given in Jayaweera (1997), Pakistan is the country with the widest gender gap and discrimination against women which is continue to persists in all walks of life. If we look at root causes of this gender biasness then Haque (2002) sounds logical as according to him 'discrimination starts at home', a claim substantiated by Malik and Courtney (2011) as they quote UNICEF 2006 and United Nations 2006 in this context. According to Haque if the father is illiterate then the probability that girl will go to school will reduce by more than 50% as compare to boys. One of the strong reasons for sending their children to school is that they should contribute economically into the family. These expectations hold true for girls as well which is surprising. Parents' preferences also influence the selection of professional education and career as according to this survey teaching is the most preferred occupation for the girls. Based on this survey, parental expectations from the girls can be summarized as:

They expect them to contribute economically into the family after getting education – though I believe it is against the socio-cultural norm of the Pakistani society

1. The girls should go teaching as their professional career.
2. They should go for an early marriage, like according to the survey, based on the opinion of the parents, the ideal age for girls is 18 years.
3. They should not have the same degree of freedom for movement to visit friends, or to participate in social networks. According to the survey, it has something to do with the street harassment being faced by these girls.
4. Parents consider boys to have greater ability than girls to make decisions about their education, work and marriage.
5. And poverty affects girls more than the boys in limiting their options to avail the life opportunities.

Though few of these parental aspirations are in good faith for their daughters but certain others steps place important barriers on the education and opportunities for life skills for their daughters. This situation also described by Jayaweera (1997:417) according to her “by limiting their options in training and consequently in employment, education reproduces the traditional gender division in the labor market and functions as a barrier to economic empowerment”.

Apart from this a decade old survey, its surprise to see that most of these got confirmatory notes in a recent survey findings by Malik and Courtney (2011). Their findings describe how the deep-rooted social norms based on patriarchal traditions have been serving as powerful barriers to the introduction of change. According to them despite the provision of law to establish gender equality, these social-norms keep the implementation of these laws largely ineffective. These women are refrained by these norms to claim their lawful rights.

It should be a point to ponder that based on Jayaweera (1997) which claim that there is no positive linear relationship between education and the many facets of empowerment, even after more than a decade, Malik and Courtney (2011) substantiate this claim. However, according to these authors attainment of economic independence emerge as the strong force that motivates the females in Pakistan to seek higher education. According to them it paves the way for their empowered status within their family and in the wider community.

Authors which focus on factors like social norms (stereotypes about women and men) as the biggest barrier in the attainment of women empowerment include Malik and Courtney (2011), and Jayaweera (1997). For the most part, their lives are governed by customs and traditions (Malik and Courtney, 2011: 34). According to Malik and Courtney (2011), a fundamental problem is the lack of awareness on the part of women even for their due rights granted by law. This is the vicious circle being faced by Pakistani women. According to Malik and Courtney (2011:35)

“It is the interrelatedness of different cultural and customary practices that affect women so pervasively and place them in a position of subordination and dependence. This makes it difficult for women to change one aspect of their lives without simultaneously and inevitable inviting repercussion in other spheres of life.”

It is surprising to see the role of socio-cultural problems as according to Malik and Courtney (2011: 35) educated women in Pakistan may be aware of their rights as defined by

the constitution, but cultural and societal pressures continue to substantially prevent them from seeking their rights. As their study reveal that educated women are socially discouraged to claim their due rights like divorce and inheritance rights. One case example of this social pressure is described by Ahmed (2001) that according to one of his respondents it was not the immediate family who was against her education rather her extended family like uncles influence was there on her parents to not to send her (Ahmed's respondent) for the sake of education.

Malik and Courtney (2011:38) further highlight the point rightly that "because women have generally been subject to restrictions throughout their upbringing, they lack both the skill and the confidence to promote themselves in a social context where they would have opportunity to do so."

However the change is coming, as revealed by Malik and Courtney (2011:38) as well. "women who are educated are more likely to be listened to, their views are increasingly respected, which means that they are able to make a contribution to society. This is like an upward spiral, resulting in greater opportunities for women's participation in all aspects of life."

Malik and Courtney (2011) also highlights towards the discriminatory educational institutional structure prevalent in Pakistan. Under this structure, boys are listened more attentively then girls, and educational curriculum depict more powerful men with subordinates women. Generations even educated but if gone through such gender biased education system will develop male and female prototypes which they will keep dearer throughout their life. It also creates expectations and acceptance of different roles.

However, while based on different authors, Hall (1992:93) highlights that "in spite of overwhelming evidence substantiating the facts of women's subordination, the social sciences are slow to incorporate gender concerns into the mainstream of their disciplines."

Empowerment Challenges faced by Norwegian Pakistani Women in Norway

According to statistics Norway (2011) 12.2% of the Norway's population is being represented by the immigrants. And according to the study there are as many immigrant men as the women are. While reflecting on the importance of Pakistani female immigrants

according to statistics Norway (2006) “female immigrants from Pakistan make up the largest non-western group of female immigrants, and 7 per cent of the Norwegian female immigrant population have Pakistani background. More than 7,400 women were born in Pakistan and immigrated to Norway, while almost 6,000 are descendants. The descendants with a Pakistani background make up the largest group of descendants, followed by the Vietnamese with only half as many. The descendants are very young, only 4 per cent are over the age of 30.” The figures represent the importance this group have not only in Norwegian Pakistani community but also in Norwegian society as well.

Pakistani Women are about equal in numbers with respect to their males but not in many other cases like education and their participation in labor market, the two important indicators which set the base for their empowerment. Economic independence enables an individual to make his or her choices in his or her own life which is also a defining parameter in empowerment definitions. According to Statistics Norway (SSB, 2006) employment rate or labor market participation rate for Pakistani females is less than 30% as compare to more than 60% for their male counterparts. Percentage of first generation Pakistani female participation at higher education in Norway is less than Pakistani male population (though the participation of their female descendant is higher than male descendants in higher education).

Further to this according to Statistics Norway (SSB, 2006) this is the group which is under work, as more number of Pakistani women have less than 30 hours work in a week than their male competitors. They also outnumbered the male population of the immigrants with respect to registered unemployed population of immigrants in Norway. Further to this, these are the female immigrants who are in majority employed in unskilled and low paid jobs (Statistics Norway, 2006).

Apart from their participation in education and employment opportunities, issues like forced marriages, racism, violence against them were also reported though not exclusively about women from Pakistan, but this group is part of the whole about which such concerns were raised to look into the situations for remedial purposes. Their number as well as their apathetic situation makes them an interesting context for me to study.

Role of Empowered women in society

Hall (1992) described how three women who find their way to an empowered status, strived to work for the empowerment of other women as well. And based on Hall (1992) working for the empowerment of others is a necessary condition to categorize an individual to be empower.

Problem Definition

Based on this literature review the problem can be defined as:

“How Norwegian - Pakistani empowered women in Norway are contributing towards the empowerment of the subjugated Norwegian - Pakistani women in their close social influence in Norway? Are they? If not Why?” What are the obstacles in its realization?

Tentative Propositions

- Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women are aware about their empowered status
- Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women are willing to look forward to help other Norwegian-Pakistani Women to become empowered
- Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women are facing less social obstacles in this process
- These women have the opportunities available to exhibit their self empowerment
- They actually express this empowerment as well as and when the need arises.
- Pakistani empowered women have the awareness about the poor level of this empowerment in their close social influence in Norway
- In past they made efforts to alleviate this situation
- They faced various obstacles in this process
- They are trying to keep this despite this resistance.

For the above mentioned problem and propositions I used case study method. In next part I will discuss the choices I made with respect to method.

Research Strategy

Punch (2005) has described general to specific research design definition. In most general term a research design means “all the issues in planning and executing a research project – from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results.” Most specific definition is “the way a research guards against, and tries to rule out, alternative explanations of results.” Between these two extremes: “the design as situating the researcher in the empirical world, and connecting research questions to data.” The forthcoming discussion on method issues is structured to decrease the probability of alternative explanations of the phenomenon going to be studied in this project. For this project, I intend to use qualitative research strategy.

Method

The choice of method within qualitative approach is not easy. Strauss and Corbin (1998) acknowledge the complexity of decision in selection of a method within qualitative research methodology, it is because of overlapping arguments those can be forwarded to substantiate the selection of one particular method out of different methods we find in qualitative research. For this project, case study method will be used. Before forwarding the arguments about its justification addressing why, it will be reasonable to have some reflection on the question of what it is and how it emerge on the horizon of knowledge sciences.

Case Study

David (2006) while reflecting on Robert Stake (1995) definition of case study as a bounded system, described that this bounded system can be an individual, event, process, organization, location or periods of time, however, all these are in relation to the context. Stake (2003), described that a great variety of things can be called as case study like a process or a product of this process. Another way to define (Eisenhardt, 1989) “a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings”. In contrast to this conceptual definition, Yin (2009) gave an operational and technical definition of case study. Yin described it as a two fold definition:

1. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident".
2. "The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and so one result lies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and an another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis." (p.18).

The definitions reflect that case study approach is preferred over other approaches/methods when we are facing the questions of how and why as specified in my research question.

The definition reflect that the case study approach helps to develop an in-depth picture of a particular person, situation, social setting, event or group to enable the researcher to develop understanding regarding the subjects and their interaction with the environment and its outcomes. The selection of the case study approach for problem in hand is based on the following justification:

1. The possibility of the triangulation of data (quantitative, qualitative or both) and data collection techniques. As the variety of sources like from archives, survey, qualitative interviews to observations suggested by Yin (1981).
2. Case study as a research method is the suggested method of research by developmental studies authors, who proposes a developmental, case-comparative approach to research the areas like developmental studies (as my chosen problem of women empowerment falls into this). Further, development concept like empowerment is the change (positive) as perceived by the respective society from its own standards. The phrase itself reflects a socially constructed reality that needs to be understood in its own social context and emphasizes the need of methods like case studies.
3. Developmental issues like women empowerment in Norway is a sparsely researched area, therefore, need for production of knowledge for description to testing and generation of the theories is quite substantial.
4. This empowerment study is a multidisciplinary study as it involves concepts and understanding from mature disciplines like developmental economics, politics,

sociology and psychology. Case study as a research approach is also suggested to research in a multidisciplinary area of study.

5. Yin (1981) defines and suggests the use of case study strategy when we need to study a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context and where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The selected issue of women's empowerment draws strong similarities with the suggested characteristics of the context and the phenomenon.
6. Case study is beyond quantitative and qualitative debate and therefore offers the best of these two methods. Silverman (2010) also emphasizes that quantitative research is not always appropriate to every type of research problem.

As the literature suggests case study is a quite comprehensive approach that can be employed by involving different techniques, which does not eliminate the need for alternative methods rather incorporate these alternative methods to the advantage of the research problem.

Case study is a quite comprehensive approach that can be employed by involving different techniques. Yin (2009) quotes six sources of evidence (can be referred as research techniques within a method) which include documentations, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. According to the author these are the 'most' commonly used in doing case studies however, the author extended the list (while quoting Marshall & Rossman, 1989) and include films, photographs, and videotapes; projective techniques and psychological testing; proxemics; kinesics; "street" ethnography; and life histories

All these techniques have inherent limitations however, one of purpose behind using an over-arching research approach like case study is to capitalize the strengths of these techniques while limiting their limitations which can affect my study in negative way.

Under this approach qualitative interviews of the selected empowered Norwegian - Pakistani women in Norway were carried out. Primarily interview technique was employed, along with collecting information from other sources like secondary sources like newspapers, magazines and academic literature were also considered in this study.

Nature of interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out during the study. The technique was selected with the following considerations:

1. Structured interviews like surveys will limit the depth of information I need to develop an insight about not only the empowerment efforts of the Norwegian-Pakistani women but their efforts for their fellow sisters.
2. Unstructured interviews may not be a good idea for the novice researchers like me. As I believe without a pre-planned interview guideline, the young researchers like me may be in the discussion storm, which may get us to somewhere but the probability is low that it will get us to the point where we want to reach through this interview.

Interviewing Technique

A non-directive technique was employed where after putting a question like 'how will you look at your own empowerment process which may invite the respondent to talk a lot, I let the respondent to speak. During her reflection, I kept on writing key words¹ for the question which I found interesting in her talk and which need further reflection. However, I tried to stick to my interview guideline as well, therefore, tried to keep a fine balance between the directive and non-directive techniques.

Interview Settings

Personal face to face interviews were carried out in natural settings at the homes or offices of these respondents. There was hardly any disturbance except the cell phone of the respondent, which I could not ask her to please turn it off. All these interviews were conducted on a single occasion.

Why personal interviews? My thesis is to reflect on Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women efforts to make their subjugated class better off. It's all about establishment of their own empowerment status, the process of their own empowerment and their efforts and

¹ Because after very first interview I realized that I can not write the whole question without losing my attention towards the respondent.

contribution for the empowerment of others. For this I have to have primary input from the respondents. I also could not find specific case studies of such women which can be used to conclude something about this empowerment issue. Therefore, I find it appropriate to select qualitative interviewing techniques (in major way) as my data collection technique.

Why face to face physical interviews ? In the era of Skype, to some people it seems a luxury or wastage of time and resources to go for physical face to face interviews. I decided (despite my financial limitations and in the expensive country like Norway) to go for this 'luxury' because I want to 'experience' and to give 'experience' to my respondents as well, which may not be possible in case of Skype. Though it was in my consideration that the respondents who could not spare time on the days I was visiting Oslo for this study could be reached via Skype, but my first priority was face to face.

Interview Guideline

The interview guideline was consists of 13 open ended questions which were based on the review of women empowerment literature. These questions were grouped into three major parts:

1. Establishing their identity and their background
2. Reflection on their personal empowerment process, challenges, and management of those challenges
3. Reflection on their motivation and capacity to influence on the empowerment process of others, so far efforts, achievements, challenges and future of these efforts

The interview guideline was discussed with the supervisor and major considerations in its preparations were time, focal points of discussion and convenience of the respondent. Though, initial idea of interview duration was 45 to 60 minutes but few of the interviews went beyond this limit.

Critical Issues in Method and how I addressed them

Sample and Access to the subject

My focus is on Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women, who are in general understanding will be accessible and willing to cooperate. It was my assumptions on the inception of the project which became one of my biggest false assumptions as it took one month to coordinate 5 face to face interviews with the respondents. I can see sample access in five stages:

Phase I: the process started when one of socially and politically Pakistani-Norwegian Empowered Women (PNEW) visited Nordland University in November, 2010. The visit was in connection with her book launch ceremony. My husband attended this ceremony and shared with me. I wrote to her, give my personal background, my research interest and ask for her help in identification of other empowered women. And she did. Though, I have been trying to establish contact with different PNEW for quite a long time by putting request to the Pakistani-Norwegian known to me, however, the efforts were not that much successful. My this search got momentum from this authors' lead.

Phase II: after getting input from her, a long series of conversation through mail was started to inform these women about my project along with the request for cooperation i.e., to spare time for the interview. Initially, this process was started with seven prospective respondents (including the lead). Out of these three excused as these were not available on the dates I was intending to visit Oslo for these interviews. I was left with four respondents which were too few for the study.

Phase III: I thought what to do to increase the number of respondents. I came up with an idea that an empowered women may have empowered friends in her close circle (though not necessarily). I went to these confirmed respondents facebook page, looked at her Norwegian Pakistani Female friends , googled them, and if i found any reference on any of their social contribution, I added this friend into my prospective respondents list. In this way I was able to identify three more Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women. Out of these, one was running a big platform for the immigrant women.

Phase IV: Mail was sent to these women with the request for cooperation.

However, I was able to secure appointment from five such women on the stipulated dates. For rest I planned to conduct interviews on skype or on the telephone.

Conceptual Understanding and Equality in this understanding with the Respondents

Getting understanding about the concept of empowerment and women empowerment may be a problem. While considering this fact, I am not assuming that my subject will know what I am trying to ask from her i.e., 'empowerment' and her role in 'empowerment of other women'. It may be because of the fact that many Pakistani empowered women may not realize that they are actually empower or they may not have awareness how to use their empowerment status for this social good. Further, this conceptual understanding may vary from one respondent to another therefore, my first job was to get them at relevant understanding where they could articulate their thoughts and reply to my questions.

Limitations of the Research Instrument

Interview guidelines are unlike the questionnaires, the validity and reliability check of which can be secured before the commencement of the study. It may be a limitation in the eyes of many who tilt towards quantitative studies in social sciences however; I tried to overcome this problem in two ways. First, I tried to ground this interview guideline into the literature, I mean I red substantial literature on empowerment, women empowerment before embarking on the development of this guide. Second, I seek guidance of my supervisor as well on this.

Sample Selection

Initially the objective was to target the second generation of these Norwegian-Pakistani Immigrants. It was because of the understanding that the economic was the basic motivation of the first generation which arrived in Norway. And at that time, empowerment movement was also not very strong among the immigrants because the basic question was economic well being.

However, later on it was realized that the process of this immigration has gone through in a long period which is in its continuity so far. Therefore, estimating the first or the second generation would be a problem. Further, while I started the process of targeting and approaching these women it was realized that these are not too many therefore, I had to open up my assumption of second generation. Moreover, this initial search also revealed that there are few of first generation Norwegian-Pakistani women who are quite active in their efforts to empower other women. Five semi-structured interviews were carried out in.

Sharing the socio-cultural background

I am not sure how from being the same culture help me or limit my ability to reflect on the data from the perspective of a researcher who does not belong to Pakistani culture. However, I think that from being the same culture, it may leads to some unquestioned assumptions which might have been changed, but I may be taking these as for granted, but I am not sure about my this tendency. However, I think the transcribe interviews I have can serve as guard against any such disposition.

Data Analysis

The interviews from the respondents will be audio recorded. Later on these audio files will be used to transcribe these interviews. For the analysis of the data, I preferred to listen to the set of advices given by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2007:267) according to them “when analyzing qualitative data, it is useful to look for certain regularities or patterns that emerge from the numerous observations made during the fieldwork stage. A researcher can perform this task by posing a number of questions like; what type of behavior is it? What is its structure, what are its causes, what are its consequences, and according to my study context, how it affects others.

While based on this I tried to classify interviewed Pakistani Norwegian women as empowered women based on their existing behavior. I looked at how their background has contributed or brought in certain challenged in this empowerment process. Then I looked at how their empowered status is affecting the lives of subjugated women. Further, I looked at do they have any contribution in their empowerment process of other women, is this a part of

their job or its something which they are doing voluntary? These issues remained the basic guidelines in the analysis of these 274 minutes and 11295 words of transcribed interviews.

Field Experience and Reflection on this experience

I visited Oslo on 17th and 18th of February, in order to conduct face to face personal interviews with my targeted respondents. In the field, based on my² experience, I think proverb 'expect the unexpected' can give the idea about the bottom line. The uncertainty creep in from different sources like weather conditions to traffic level and the knowledge of the taxi driver. There are so many variables that can affect your planning that at the end i wonder how I was able to achieve 80% of my targeted interview.

February 17, 2011 – Day 1

I planned to take flight from Bodo to Oslo on 17th of February at 10:30 so that I can reach on my appointed time with the pre arranged and informed respondent at 13:00. Less than 80 minutes flight, and rest of the 90 minutes to locate the respondent while you are on a taxi who have GPS..... perfect. But due to certain unavoidable circumstances, the flight was late for 45 minutes, OK fine, even then I have the margin of 45 minutes and I can arrive 5-10 minutes late with my respondent having the genuine reason of flight delay. But flight unexpectedly took another 15 minutes to let us out of the plan.

Now I was a bit confused and worried as it was my first experience of field study. When we were waiting for my five months old son's Vogan, I called my first respondent, explained to her the situation and put a request to entertain me at any other time but within these two days. She was a busy public officer, first thing she forgot that she had an appointment with me. After getting her recalled the appointment she asked me to see her next day, fortunately at the time when I had an available slot.

After getting this respondent on board again after the initial fear of losing it, I thought that now its OK. But it was my wishful thinking. When I arrived at my second scheduled respondent at 14:30, and asked the reception lady to get me to this person. She first asked, do

² During my field trip, I was along with my 5 months son therefore, my husband was along with me to provide support to manage my son during the interviews. Therefore, in this part some time I used the word 'we' instead of I.

you have an appointment, after my confirmatory, she said can you show me I was switched off, as I don't had the copy of this conversation record. I explained to her that it was sharing on mail. She went to the back office and after some time came back and said she is not available, I can get to another official in this organization (who was not among my targeted respondents), then I had to explain to her that its a research study and its important that I should meet only and only with my predefined respondent. She again went into the back office, another lady came with her, and she said unfortunately my targeted respondent got an accident, with no injury but with accident shock and she is at home. I asked them ok give me her cell number and I can talk to her. They refused to give this number³. And asked me rather, I should give my number, they will convey this number to her and she will give me a call. Disappointed it was the second major disappointment along with the minor ones associated with flight delays.

When we get out of this office, we got a call from my this 'mysterious' respondent. She excused for the inconvenience and offered to have this interview on 'skype' or on the telephone. I didn't had any option. At that time, we asked our taxi driver friend to pick us early instead of after one hour as was conveyed to him earlier⁴.

My third scheduled appointment was at 16:30⁵. The respondent gave me ample time, and we kept on sharing for more than 90 minutes. It was my final scheduled interview of the day. While going back to my accommodation, I was thinking that tomorrow I have a tough day.

February 18, 2011 – Day 2

Bad start! as we lost the key of the flat we got from one of our friend who has been kept on moving from Oslo to Bodo frequently due to the nature of his business. In Asian culture, its a big face losing issue, because the bottom line is that you did not care much about the others property. Our taxi was arrived at scheduled time but we were busy in trying to find the key. Its still a mystery that after getting into the flat we did not leave the flat, until

³ It was surprising for me because I could not find her number on the web as well, though I was able to locate the numbers of all other respondents easily.

⁴ In order to avoid inconvenience for our five months son in waiting for the taxi at different and uncertain locations we reserved this taxi for two days.

⁵ I was able to secure this odd time because, respondent gave me the choice to suggest time and adjust her while looking at my time table to optimize my limited time and resources, and she agreed to see me at her home, means quite convenient for her as well

morning when we were leaving for our interviews. We spend half an hour in searching the whole flat but could not find the key. So we had to left the flat unlocked, and in a precarious situation informed our friend as well. At that time, my husband advised me that not to focus on this issue rather, focus on your interviews, because it's the reason we are here. From this I also learned that a budget option may not necessarily inexpensive option for the student because later on we had to pay quite heavy to our friend who made payment to get the new lock.

My first respondent of the day 2 was an elder women as compare to our rest of the profile of the respondent. Though she did not represent the 2nd generation, as she was among the immigrant who came along with her husband, but because of her active work for Norwegian-Pakistani women, I included her⁶. Despite this that we were half an hour late, but when I arrived at her home she just got out of her bed. Later on she told us that she had a nice and she had to stay with her daughter in law in the hospital and she came back at 3:00 in the morning. Interview with her was very informative, it really gave me a much need tacit knowledge about the Norwegian-Pakistani women issues and the different efforts so far including from this respondent.

While planning my trip, this respondent promised to invite another Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women as well and I considered this bonus as backup. However, after the completion of the discussion with her when I asked her about her friend she told me that this lady was along with her in the hospital as she was her son's mother in law. She called her but she excused..... so I lost my back up as well. However, I was because I was able to engage my respondent for more than 90 minutes in this discussion.

I did my next scheduled interview as well on time. This respondent promised to meet at a hotel, despite our best efforts to find out a silent location, we still had some irritants which were unavoidable. However, my discussion with her was very fruitful, she was also a writer and in these days extensively visiting different institutions to give a lecture on her newly launched book. Again I was able to engage my respondent for more than the stipulated time.

The last respondent of the day was the respondent which I missed yesterday due to flight delay. She was a former journalist as well, she knew the tricks therefore, before the

⁶ Another reason behind getting such relatively elder women was that i could not find a reasonable number of respondents for my study.

inception of the interview, she said “ you have to watch your watch for the time you asked for”, and I did.

The day was over and I was happy that I was able to use my time effectively. And when I evaluated my this two day progress, I was not that much happy, but the problem was many issues which affect my performance were beyond my control.

One interviews I did via telephone.

Do's and Don'ts for my fellows who are planning to begin their field work:

1. One week old appointment with the respondent, consider it one year old, before leaving your shoes, give the respondent a fresh call to remind her or him about the appointment. Don't assume that appointment with you is the most important job, your respondent have to do on that particular day therefore, there's zero probability that he or she can miss it.
2. Get last minute information about the respondent. There are many natural reasons due to which the respondent may not be able to honor his or her commitment, therefore, last minute information about the respondent will enable you to plan well.
3. Always keep a backup, if one respondent fall or may not be able to or willing to honor his or her commitment, you should have another respondent in backup that you can try (though it's quite difficult but it's worth to go for this). But its not necessary that the backup will also show up as in my case.
4. If a respondent ask you to suggest time, suggest a time where you could not find any other respondent. If he or she is the first one or among the first contacts, go for extreme hours like at 9:00 or at 15:00. It will give you the flexibility to adjust the respondent who suggest time according to their schedule. The rationale behind this is these are the times where fewer people will be willing to spare time if they were given the option.
5. When you are planning to go into the field, keep the copy of conversation record with the respondent.
6. Don't expect that you will get from the field what you planned for, in the same way, and to the same extent.

7. Keep the margin between two events like flight time and your first interview quite higher.⁷
8. It's better to express duration of the interview 45 minutes and keep yourself prepared for this limited time, but in most of the cases, if the respondent is taking keen interest in this discussion, you can extend the time as you want to. However, if you are asking the respondent to spare 60 minutes, the respondent may take it quite heavy which can increase the probability of 'no' from the respondent. Try to use the word 'hour' it looks quite greater than 'minutes' even if these are 60.
9. Budgeted planning may not always give you least cost.
10. Time and discussion with the respondent should be the major worries for you.
11. Spare time to reflect on the interviews, to write important notes, interesting questions
12. While securing appointment with your targeted respondent, though you conveyed the background and objectives of your study, but it's good to brief this in short introduction with the respondents. It will refresh the memory of the respondent and help her or him to assimilate and organize his or her ideas.
13. Based on profile of the respondent, you can not bet which respondent will be relatively more helpful for you, in a sense, who will give you relevant information.
14. One into the hand is better than two into the bushes. Try to exploit what you have, don't compromise on the information you are getting from your existing suppliers in the pressure that you have to rush to the next one. You don't know, the next person may not be available, not that much informative as your present respondent, therefore capitalize this interview in full and don't ruin it in the expectations of the next.
15. Last but not the least "Expect the disappointment from many sources but don't lose hope!"

⁷ Though I can understand that 'higher' is a subjective term, 4 hours quite be reasonable if everything went as per planned, but 12 hours could be trouble some if you are unfortunate to have many unpleasant surprises like flight delay etc.

Quality of Research

When we talk about research quality in most of the cases we are trying to look at the validity and reliability of the research study. Primarily the terms are derived from quantitative research which develop more quantitative/statistical techniques to test the validity and reliability of the research. However in qualitative research we have very different criteria against which quality of a research study can be evaluated.

For the validity of research which refers to the ability of the research instrument to measure what it suppose to measure, I used interview guideline. Though interview guideline can not be compared to the questionnaire which is structured form of interviewing technique, but an interview guideline well grounded into the literature may serve the purpose to a greater extent. Therefore, before going into the field for the interviews, I substantially studied empowerment literature and develop the interview guideline while considering the issues highlighted in the guideline.

Unlike quantitative research where an analysis of the research data can be possible in isolation, qualitative research is more driven by greater involvement of the researcher as human being, therefore, the data interpreted while taking data as the extension or part of the researcher's perspective. Though I did my best to give voice to the data instead of pushing hard my own interpretation based on my own perspective, but its difficult to claim that I could be very much successful. However, I have audio and transcribed interviews with me that can be provided as support not only for the validity of the study findings but also if a researcher's wish to see "can I arrive on the same conclusion by interpreting the same data?" which as per my readings (so far) is possible but not necessary in qualitative studies.

Study Limitations

1. Let me admit one of the limitations of the literature. Despite my efforts to find out literature on how empowered immigrant women strived to uplift their less fortunate fellows, I could not find much. I browsed different data bases like Sage, JStore etc. and looked at the journals like Gender and Education, Gender and Development but I could not find literature on how empowered immigrant women strived to uplift their less fortunate fellows. I also wrote to the faculty working at Gender and Development Institute at University of Bergen, but could not get much.
2. Sample size, due to resource constraints I could have greater number of respondents. It may be the situation that I may have study with higher rigor if I could have greater number of interviews.
3. There are few of the respondents who did and have been doing some efforts to bring a change in the lives of their subjugated fellows, the quality of the study could be enhanced if the voices of the recipients of empowerment efforts could also be bring into this perspective.

Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women's Background, Self Empowerment Efforts, Their Efforts for Others and My Reflection on These

These findings are based on 274 minutes and 11295 words of transcribed interviews from 5 respondents. Although in the research proposal 8 interviews were suggested but due to limited number of Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women and their non availability restricted my access to this target. I will present substantial detail about the background of my respondents because I find interesting links between their background and their empowerment efforts for themselves and for the others.

Norwegian – Pakistani Empowered Women 1 (NPEW 1)

First Respondent should be in her forty, from the first generation of immigrant here in Norway. The reason behind her move to Norway was not economic rather she got married to a Pakistani who has been living in Norway for quite some time. She has highly educated parents, and she spent major part of life (before marriage) in Africa where her father served in different countries as Agronomist under United Nations Organization (UNO) platform. She has grown up in a community where mixed nationality was a norm rather than an exception. The community was also very educated. She learned over there how to keep a Muslim identity in a mixed religion society.

She belongs to a progressive but somewhat conservative family because according to her medical and teaching were the only two disciplines where females were allowed to seek education and career. These are the two professions opted by a majority of the women in Pakistan as well, the reason may be as explained by this respondent that family may have reservations about the other options. In fact it has something to do with opportunities of interaction with the male members of the society. These are the two professions where females have to have limited interaction with the males which is the preferred situation for the parents of Pakistani females.

My respondent got married in her early 20s, which is under present prevailing situation in Pakistani urban society is quite early. It reflects that it was not her choice further, she got married when there was no internet (as she came to Norway in early 1990s) therefore,

more likely it was an arranged marriage but I am not sure about forced marriage. Got further education here in Norway, and then seek employment in a government public service organization where she got interaction with the Pakistani community, otherwise she doesn't own her Pakistani identity, as revealed by her while describing her experiences about Islam, Pakistan and Pakistani community here in Norway.

According to her *"after 9-11, I studied a lot about Islam, when people ask about me, I say I am from Africa and the people close their mouths therefore, people don't ask questions from me about Pakistan and about Islam."* At another occasion she said *"I don't interact a lot with Pakistanis."* And again on another occasion she said *"I started interacting with the Pakistanis now, I didn't feel easy, I could not fit."* She was included in my targeted respondents list because she was recommended by my lead reference. Later on I will discuss, her limited voluntary as well as non voluntary social contribution to somewhat justify her inclusion into the study.

Her education in Norway, her irritation with the Pakistani people stereotype image emerged here i.e., these are the people who are for low skilled jobs enabled her to opt different profession. She also struggled in her empowerment process. It can be inferred from the fact that in spite of this that writing is her passion she could not continue with writing but due to certain unexplainable reasons she could not manage to do that as she said *"I would like to write further, but because I got married and you know then the things can be different after marriage"*. At another occasion she said *"its not easy that you can ask your husband that I am going to have a job."* These two comments reflect the challenges she also faced in her empowerment process.

It seems that increased turbulent global political situation make her sensitive about her own identity as well, as she tried to not to own her Pakistani identity. I will discuss later on, this identity crises still hunting most of these Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women (NPEW), which I believe affecting their potential to make a difference for the subjugated Norwegian Pakistani Women.

It seems that she tried to deliver more in her professional or official capacity than in a voluntary capacity (a problem she reported about Pakistani community as well, will discuss later on). That makes her less interesting for me because, one of the pre-requisite for an empowered women is that she should have motivation to empower others. However, she remained interesting because of fewer such empowered case examples in Pakistani

community. In her official capacity she used to educate the women who approached her, how to space out their day and how to manage their family along with the job. She did one voluntary experiment to work for the Pakistani women's issues but due to her family engagement, some behavioral problems over the part of targeted community and lack of initiative from others, she abandoned this effort.

On her contribution for others she herself admits that *"I don't think that I motivated others, but I am an example that I represent a woman that she red from outside the country and she didn't move away from the Islamic values. I still manage to hold on more Islamic and less Pakistani values. And I think probably I am more of an inspiration than a motivation."* She believes that empowerment is a personal ambition of the individuals, which is influenced by one's background and their motivation to excel. She also believes that in this personal ambition women like her can not make any contribution. According to her *"its an individual fight, I can not fight on your behalf"*.

Though she claims that educated people have the responsibility to help others but she is following this to a little extent. Like she says *"education opens your eyes and educated people have the responsibility, I don't know, you know. There's no way that you can shrug your shoulders."* But her other statements reveal that she is actually shrugging of her shoulder to indicate that it's not my responsibility. These mixed stances make her a challenging respondent for me.

Norwegian – Pakistani Empowered Women 2 (NPEW 2)

She is also from the first generation of the immigrants who came here in Norway. She should be in her late 40s or early 50s, got married very early (16 years old) and then came to Norway after spending quite some time in Denmark. From this it can be inferred that as with the case of NPEW1 she also have the exposure of foreign societies before coming to Norway.

Her father is a retired professor at one of the universities in Pakistan. Her upbringing at staff residence within the premises of the university⁸ gives her a milieu enriched with education and empowered people. She shared a lot about her mother, who though illiterate

⁸ In Pakistan, its a practice at large that universities built accommodations for their employees within the university premises.

but very active socially. The idea of importance of education in their family can be fairly judged from her mother's statement as according to NPEW2, whenever my mother felt pity on her lack of education she used to say *"May God send my father further then hell, because he did not allow me to get education."* Therefore, despite the fact that she recently has become grandmother, she has continued her education.

Her motivation to get education here in Norway is fuelled by her initial but limited association with her daughter's school. According to her *"I represent my community in my daughters' Urdu language class, and their class teacher used to absent, the school called me. It created an urge in me that I should also do something. I should also study. Then I used to learn Norwegian language."* She was the first foreigner who got admission in teacher's training course. However, due to Ny Norsk language requirement⁹ and due to her sudden move to Pakistan in 1998 she could not complete her teaching education. But after two years they had to come back and she had to restart her education from scratch, which she finally completed recently. And it's not the end, now she got admission in developmental studies at master level.

She also faced a number of challenges in her path towards empowerment, like she was refused for admission in Norwegian language because she spent some time in Denmark, and Danish language is considered as close to the Norwegian language. When she got admission in teachers training course she also faced people surprises as well as she said *"first impression of the people, they look at me in a strange way that what she is doing here, as I was wearing scarf."* It was all her personal motivation to excel that provided the support for this passionate journey, as while recalling she said *"it was not easy as I had to see children, my husband's business as well, along with the study. If I could not be fond of, it would not be possible. Now when I looked back, I am myself surprised how I did that."*

Her commitment with her family did not allow her to stick to her study schedule but she managed and managed well. And in Pakistani society, if you are 30 plus of age, it's unthinkable that you can be a regular student. And this respondent as I already said is in her 50s but still studying. This feature also makes her one of my important respondent.

She did voluntary efforts for the empowerment of others. In her first effort, she joined an organization consist of Pakistani women who were working on the issues faced by

⁹ At the time of admission she was not aware about this condition that you have to have this language to sit in the exam

Norwegian - Pakistani women. She served the organization with a lot of commitment as according to her *"I want what so ever I can do, I should do for them."* However, the leader's move to Pakistan and her unwillingness to have election for the selection of a new leader forced my respondent to left this organization.

Her second voluntary social effort is more in general to address the issues faced by immigrants' women including Pakistani women. While reflecting on the objectives of her organization which is at initial stages of organizing, she said *"the purpose is the challenges I faced, in my empowerment process, others should not have to face. It should be an advisory group which give advice to these people. It should be a plat form where we can deliver information to the people."*

She also intends to work on the Pakistani children taken over by the state. Because she believes its an important issue to which hardly any representative from the Pakistani community is looking at. She observes the social issues like family conflicts and lack of attention by the parents as the reasons behind this social crisis. She realized the potential and importance of the second generation of these immigrants therefore want to get them into these efforts as according to her *"we are looking for educated people in the board. I don't want to get elder women in this organization. I want rather the children from the second generation. Because they (the first generation) have passed their time, now its the time for this second generation. It can be any nationality."*

She did efforts to bring a change in the society in her individual capacity as well as in collaboration with other organizations as well.

Norwegian – Pakistani Empowered Women 3 (NPEW 3)

She represents the second generation of the Pakistani immigrants whose parents came to Norway in 70s. Economic was the major reason behind her parents' immigration. She should be in her early 30s, married and having children. She did her master in journalism, served in a newspaper and then served for quite a long time as a journalist reporter in a house that works for trade union leaders. She recently wrote a book on the issue of identity and now busy in series of lectures at different educational institutions.

Her family background is quite challenging as her both parents has under secondary level education. Despite her challenging background, she did master in journalism. While reflecting on the challenges emerged due to this fact she said *“I did not know what I have to do, it was all coincidence.”*

Her awareness about identity issues is the beginning of her social work in the form of a youth magazine. According to her

“you were in what’s happening in the society, and I was 18 -19 when there was debate on ethnic divisions and biases. And the uncles who could not speak Norwegian well, they used to debate, but we thought that there are many things they are talking about do not belong to us, it do not represent us. Therefore, I started a youth magazine, it was the first magazine of Norway by a youth from minority but it was for the main stream Norwegians. That’s how my interest in writing and social engagement, or social work started.”

She also strived hard for her own empowerment and she had to make certain compromises as well due to her responsibilities as mother. As she had to quit from the job of a newspaper and assumed the responsibilities at a position which was not in the main stream but it gave her flexibility she was in need to look after her children well. While recalling these difficult choices she said *“some times I thought to move to a main stream magazine but it was quite flexible job that I can manage along with my children. In main stream, sometimes you have to do night shifts which I did not want to do. Therefore, stick to this job.”*

Identity crisis remained focus of her social work and to a certain extent she had also been facing this problem as according to her *“because when you live in another society like Norway, there’s always fight in you where I belong more. Because society expects something else from you and your family demands are something else and you become a sandwich, where to go. And you feel sorry for yourself. When you have your own kids the identity crises become further critical.”*

However, it’s interesting to see that she has awareness as well how to get out of this identity crisis. According to her

“then I thought that if you think that you are stranger here then you will be considered as stranger. Because my parents spent 40 years, we born and grew up here, and now my children are also here. And if we think in reality our future is also here. And now if

somebody asks me, I say, I am Norwegian and my background is Pakistani and I am very proud of this background but I am a Norwegian.”

So her main social work is how to give confidence to the people on their dual identity.

Giving back to the society aspect is quite strong in her and what she expects from other youngsters as well. In her lectures she tried to deliver this message according to her *“the message I want to convey through my book that the future generations should be taught what your parents did for you. And you have to give something back and what you can give back is try to excel in education. Pakistani girls are doing very well in education. But boys are somewhat lazy.”* I believe, this is one of the most important characteristics of an empowered person, therefore, though she is not working on precisely Pakistani-women issues but her desire to contribute makes her an ideal NPEW. And she can be a great source of inspiration for others that in such a young age, she is doing valuable services to the society.

She is working not only on these immigrants to help them gain confidence on their dual identity but she is also working with Norwegian young generation as well, as she is lecturing in classes of 8 to 10 grade students¹⁰. She is helping the different segment of the society to understand and give room for this dual identity while inviting them to make a comparison between American-Norwegian Immigrants (a population which has now surpassed the total population of Norway) and the immigrants in Norway.

Apart from this identity project, she did some jobs for Pakistani women as well during the time when she was serving as the editor of a magazine run by Pakistani youth. However, due to financial limitations they could not continue their focus on women issues. But while reflecting on her insight for the problems faced by women, she emphasized that we need to bring Pakistani men as well into these efforts. According to her

“we need to develop understanding among men as well why it’s important because if your wife has language skills, she will be better integrated, she will have better training for her children. At present they are serving inside but they don’t know what their children are doing outside of the home. At home she can assist the children to get their home work done and it is very difficult for the children as well if they don’t have support system at home.”

¹⁰ I think she is working in collaboration with the Norwegian government because she already visited 20-24 schools and has plan to visit more. However, I didn’t confirm this from her.

Here I think she tried to recall the challenges she probably faced along with her other sisters, due to lack of education on the part of their parents.

Apart from identity issue, her future intention is to work for the elderly people because she believes they are very lonely, they are patients, their children left them after marriages and they are now unable to move. And she wants to work on this issue for all the minorities irrespective to their geo-political affiliations.

Norwegian – Pakistani Empowered Women 4 (NPEW 4)

She represents the second generation of the Norwegian Pakistanis, and her father came to Norway in 1971. Her parents are well educated, that I think set the empowerment base of this respondent as she served as the member of the Oslo parliament quite a long ago. She did her bachelor in political science and now a medical student on leave. Her motivation to join the politics was to bring change. According to her *“I believe in order to bring change in the society you have to get access to the political corridors.”* She married to a person who also served as member parliament.

She did not mention any big challenge she faced during her empowerment process. I think it has something to do with enlightened home environment and her active participation in the politics since she was in school.

She worked on different issues faced by Pakistani women, and according to her after our party lost majority, but still I am working on these issues. However, efforts started 6 years back therefore, according to her it may be too early to expect high results.

At present she is voluntary doing different works for the Pakistani community in general and specifically for the women. She categorically mentioned the different problems being faced by Pakistani women. Problems like lack of awareness, low on education, inability to take initiatives etc. She also specially highlighted the problem of new immigrants who came to Norway and despite their higher education in Pakistan, they could not find jobs because of equivalence and other issues. She worked on this issue when her party was in power.

Apart from this she also worked on the general biasness against all the immigrants in the job market. According to her we were able to pass the legislation that if an employer have to

choose between a Norwegian and an immigrant for a job when both are complying to the job criteria, the employer should have to prefer the immigrant. But she admit that this law is more on paper than in practice.

Norwegian – Pakistani Empowered Women 5 (NPEW 5)

This respondent neither represents the first generation nor is she from the second generation of Pakistani Immigrants. She should be in her mid 50s. She did her 10th grade education from Pakistan, and she joined her father along with the family members who arrived in Norway in 70s. She also belongs to a challenging family background where her both parents are illiterate. She belongs to a small village in Pakistan and completed her higher secondary education from a small school in this small village.

After arriving here in Norway, she did higher qualification in international politics. She started her professional career as journalists and served on a state TV channel for 15 years. There are many ‘first’ associated with her. In her own words, *“in my family I am the first academicians, in my community I am the first at university level, as journalist on TV, I am the first non-native and in my community I am the person who explored different paths for the first time.”* And now she is serving in the Norwegian government at higher level official position.

While reflecting on the challenges faced by her in this empowerment process she said *“being the first immigrant female and this empowerment path was not easy but was easy in another way as well. For education, I was motivated, but I think due to male dominated society, my parents were not that much pushy that I should get education, my mother also had the typical mentality that these children should get married early.”*

Her motivation and support during this process is her brother, who while looking at Benazir Bhutto¹¹ used to push her a lot that you can also do. According to her at that time, there was no role model who can be looked at and strived for, it was sheer luck, in her own words *“by chance my choices were good but there was no guidance.”*

¹¹ A female politician in Pakistan who has the credit of being the first lady prime minster of any Islamic country. She was elected twice.

She is not much different than my NPEW1 as she also believes in more to serve as a source of aspiration rather than to become an active source of motivation for the youngsters. In her own words *“role models are very important, and now in this society, many girls said you are ideal for us. They can see, I am from their class, and if I did they can also.”* She tried to highlight different women issues as a part of her official assignments whether these were in Norway, Pakistan or Afghanistan.

In her whole career so far, she didn't have any social contribution that can be considered as 'voluntary'. Further to this at another occasion on this empowerment debate she said *“I did not have any charity, this is the fight at individual level, I can not fight for you neither you can fight for me.”* When I was forced to put a tough question like are you satisfied from your contribution for the community she replied *“I think so, the time when I came on top there were few models, being me a lot of difference, I hope so. Your existence at a certain place is enough, it's a source of motivation for others.”* For me it was quite disappointing.

Reflection on Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women's own Empowerment Process and their contribution for the others

According to Jayaweera (1997) in recent literature, education is seen as an agent to empower women by widening their knowledge and skills. It holds true in my study as well because all of my respondents used their education to find their destiny of being an empowered Norwegian-Pakistani Women. For one if education enables her to find good job in public sector, other used it to establish her name in literary world and still others developed the vision to establish plat forms like NGOs to work on women's issues. And another one finds her increased access to the political corridors due to her education.

However, these respondents represent both first and the second generation of immigrants and most of these empowered women seems to be still struggling for their own empowerment efforts or enjoying their own empowerment. Their absence of any concrete efforts (most of them) reveals this. Like one is struggling with identity crises of the immigrants while getting terrified from the 7—7 London incident, another find it inconvenient to disclose her Pakistani identity and still others are more busy in their professional jobs. As one of the empowered women who is serving in a ministry claimed that

the other women get inspiration from me, and can make efforts. Another one did some efforts but now abandon, because she experienced that there's dearth of voluntary initiatives on the behalf of other Pakistani Norwegian women and it affected her motivation as well. . It is because of the fact that her own family (children) question why she is doing what she is doing when others are less inclined to support or substantiates her efforts. And then she also went into the same syndrome that I am more a source of aspiration rather than a motivation. I think it other way, that if others are not working or not willing to work voluntary then it increased your responsibility to work, instead of shrugging of your shoulder and saying why should I?

Norway is the country which have started receiving (a larger number of) immigrants from 70's, which make it a quite younger nation and country as compare to the countries like USA and UK which have a longer history of this experience. This difference of tradition may have implications for the difference in the immigrants' confidence while living in these societies. In this experience immigrants or their next generation here in Norway may be wrestling with the issues which the immigrants in other parts of the world like USA had faced earlier. However, a comparison with the studies in such countries can substantiate my such hunch, that empowered women from a particular immigrant group start actively supporting their subjugated class when they get themselves established well, may be their next generation did this job.

As my findings reveal that these NPEW are not that much active to the extent as compare to their capacity. My point is ok its fine that the youngsters can get inspiration from you as a model empowered women, but the structural barriers in this empowerment process may vary. Therefore, as being the informed person about such barriers, it is your moral as well as social obligation to work for those women to subside these structural barriers. I substantiate my this position based on Bernard (1971) as quoted by Hall (1992:84) "perhaps one of the clearest indicators of women's empowerment is an increase in women's capacities and willingness to support other women and to work diligently toward strengthening women in their efforts to survive, or to gain equality."

Here are two considerations: capacity of these women and their willingness. I can find capacity of these women but they are short on their willingness due to the following reasons:

- Feel themselves politically insecure due to changing religious and political world environment and the questioned raised by the general public from them being a part of the Muslim as well as Pakistani community
- Claim of these NPEWs that lack of initiative from others de-motivate them, rather I believe it should be a source of motivation
- Take a passive look that others will get inspiration from them and will try to excel – self appraised women

However, I challenge my own inference that immigrant empowered women capacity and willingness to help out others has something to do with the length of their stay in that particular society. It is based on Hall (1992) description of three biographies of immigrant women Sophie, Louise and Jane who went to an alien society, empowered themselves and are willing to look forward to support others as well. Here, it is important to mention that these case examples represent the first generation of the immigrants arrived on a foreign land. Out of these biographies, Louise opt a career where she can help out people professionally, Jane joined a political party to work for the women's rights. Hall (1992) very rightly labeled these women as reflective women who can imagine themselves in position of influence. Norwegian-Pakistani empowered women sampled in this study represent both first and second generation of the immigrants but I find that either they are wrestling with their own identity crisis or in the illusion of their own self appraisal.

This second category of women lifted themselves above the average Pakistanis in Norway therefore, somehow, want to keep a distance themselves from the main stream, a colonial tradition which Pakistani society got from former British Empire. These findings are contrary to the Hall's (1992) twenty years research according to which increased economic independence and increased social contacts, enhanced the ability of empowered women to come strongly and to influence strongly on others as well.

Norwegian Pakistani Empowered Women Reflection on the issues faced by Norwegian Pakistani Women

Norwegian Pakistani Women's issues as identified by these respondents are:

1. Lack of Norwegian language skills and not active in learning this language

2. Lack of awareness about the Norwegian social system, in a way how it can support them

3. Limited participation in the labor market, as one of the NPEW said

“it’s sad that Pakistanis are living for the last 40 years but they are not actively participating in labor market. And the reasons behind this are difficult to explain. Many came from villages where it’s normal that women did not work and they are following the same pattern. But the problem is that it’s ok that first generation did not but why not the second generation. They are taking higher education, when it comes to marriage most of them left job market.”

NPEW 4 mentions that Pakistani women participation in the job market is 20-35% whereas Indians have 80%.

4. Domestic situation, as one of the respondent says *“these women have to do what their in laws or their husband says, a lot of things have to do with the situation at home”*
5. Stereotyping about Pakistanis , that they do less skilled jobs like cleaning and in the kinder garden
6. Gender inequality – one of the NPEWs says *“you may say that here’s a lot of gender equality but still there’s lot of hurdles for the women”*
7. Lack of awareness how to space out their day, as they spend their whole day in house hold activities
8. Lack of education, NPEW3 says

“and here there are families where they did not allow their girls to go to the school. Up to 10th there’s compulsory education but after that many parent do not allow that their girls should go to school any more. It’s because of their illiterate background, but again that’s also changing.”

9. Strong socio-cultural influence as one of the NPEWs says

“until the culture and traditions at home don’t change, until the religious leaders don’t change, you have to get to the roots, the tree will not have any fruits if the roots are damaged. Root cause of the problem is we live here but our remote control probably is lying somewhere in any village of Pakistan and as long your remote control is lying somewhere else, you are moving at the behest of others. Then this will happen.”

Another NPEW finds their reason for limited integration into their strong cultural association. According to her *“I think few ethnic groups are more difficult to*

integrate than the others, it is because of the background. So its quite challenging in today's environment."

10. Lack of motivation for empowerment – like as quoted by one

"plus I am thinking about women empowerment, when you have one bread earner at your home, its fine, when your husband is earning why do you need to go to school and learn from the start. What is the motivation..... some of the women loves to be at home. This is very individual kind of thing. I think you must be desperate that you need to learn from the scratch and then you can do a job. I will myself would not be able to do that."

11. Inability to take initiative even for their own sake, NPEW 1 endorses *"there are adult vocational program. You will be able to do it, when you will go there. No body will come at your home"*. Another NPEW adds *"but the problem is for entertainment, you will get a lot of people but if the objective is seminar, they will excuse that we have a lot of things to do at home, like cocking."* Another NPEW also emphasizes this point, as according to her

"they used to blame their husbands, I don't think that the extent is high. Because they used to come out side of their home for economic reason why not for this reason. Also used to come to go to the sale. But the excuse is for this good reason only. Our own women don't want, because it's easy to sit at home, don't do anything. They are afraid of that if I speak wrong Norwegian how the others will think about me. I can not understand why we care much what others think about us."

12. Insecurity about their identity, NPEW 3 highlights

"It was a big deal that when the people came here along with their family. You always feel threat from this alien culture. Therefore, they confined to their norms and keep them very closely. More closely then even in Pakistan, now the people in Pakistan went for marriage outside of their families, but here it still a taboo."

13. Identity crises, NPEW 1 says

"how you manage to combine religion with the western life style." Pakistani girls, they have problems at home, they have identity problem. They need to be Pakistani at home and they need to be Norwegian outside. It was difficult for them to balance. The confusion between environment at home and outside, and the person's inability to cope up with these challenges make them confused."

NPEW3 put this in the following words

“because when you live in another society like Norway, there’s always fight in you where I belong more. Because society expects something else from you and your family demands are something else and you become a sandwich, where to go. And you feel sorry for yourself. When you have your own kids the identity crises become further critical.”

14. Cultural limitations, according to NPEW1, *“the girls have more restrictions than boys, no, no, you can not go outside of home alone.”*

15. Second marriage of their husbands

16. Intergenerational communication as according to NPEW5 *“Fathers were for economic reason and mothers were to look after their children with some job. Their focus was to get family well off and in this race their next generation might have suffered.”*

17. Lack of integration with the main stream society - while making suggestions for the immigrants one of the NPEW said *“the first was integration, in the society where you are living, become a part of this society.”* Another NPEW said

“here the problem is to gain equality you have to become a part of their culture or society to a certain extent. It’s my opinion, you can not live in your own group, because now here the problem has started that parallel societies are creating problems. And Pakistanis are more stick to their cultures than any other immigrant group, that’s what I believe.”

NPEW5 adds *“Multicultural society is also a problem. Many parents are trying to fix these problems.”*

18. Leadership problem, as one of the NPEWs explains *“Pakistanis have a problem with the leadership, no we will listen to him we will listen to that person, we are that much divided people. Situation at home is reflected in situation here as well, unfortunately.”*

19. Pay less attention to their children’s study related issues like one according to one of the respondents *“they left children at school and then never turned back. Even never attended the school meetings”.*

20. Short sightedness, one respondent shares

“I used to see the other communities; they are very active in every field, like in org. In seminars, etc. But our people do not take participate. They don’t have the awareness. Their objective is to earn, eat and live. They have typical thought. They don’t have thinking for advancement and development.”

21. Carelessness with respect to their own health issues, that make them lazy, keep their network limited and so the opportunities for empowerment
22. Lack of serious attitude – while reflecting on her voluntary efforts to create awareness among the Pakistani community through non-traditional methods one of the NPEWs says *“we did a lot. Cultural programs, music, drama, we try to educate people through drama. But people used to consider it as a part of the drama, and did not take lessons with them.”*
23. Lack of awareness and motivation to fight for their own rights – while describing the message one of NPEWs want to deliver through her social efforts to the other women she says *“fight for your right, no body will offer you your rights while having these in the plate (in an easy way). You have to take these rights, you have to fight.”*
24. Lack of interest in voluntary jobs, it is a problem identified by about all the NPEWs along with the issues of culture and integration issue – one of the NPEWs observes this problem in the second generation as well. According to her *“even in second generation as well they don’t have this urge to work in such organization or to do some voluntary jobs. They are hesitant as it’s a sin.”*
25. Lack of sense of responsibility, taking everything for granted
26. Norwegian strong social support system which provides negative incentives for women to have more children, stay at home for their care as they can get substantial lump sum and monthly income through this. However, I think it may fall into more short sightedness problem as they are not looking at their increased earning opportunities, which they can avail while having higher level of education.
27. Double discrimination by Norwegian job market - as according to one of the respondents *“First these are women and then they are immigrants, who are perceived as weak and dependent on others.”*
28. Gender inequality in general
29. Family and social problems and they forget themselves

From these points it emerge that out of issues or problems identified by these women issue 01, 04, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11 (to a lesser extent), 14, 15 and 29 to a greater extent are related to socio-cultural norms prevalent in this community. Along with this socio cultural the other categories that may emerge are limited integration into the main stream society and

lack of voluntary service attitude explain the subjugated status of these Norwegian Pakistani Women.

Changes which are setting the future of Norwegian Pakistani Women Empowerment

1. Education

Education is becoming the most important tool to get the basics of empowerment i.e., your ability to make choices as put by one of the NPEWs

“there are always pressure that they are doing medical not because they want to become doctor rather a big motivation is at the end mother can’t say that now get married to a cusion who lives in a village in Pakistan.” Further to this she says *“I think the girls learned that here education is considered as your key to freedom to a certain extent. Then you can become financial independent, if you are dependent, your choices are limited. If you have financial independence then sky is the limit. I think Pakistanis are intelligent but they have navigational problem, cultural navigational problem.”*

Further another NPEW emphasizes that education is the key for women entry into the job market and according to her *“women empowerment will be materialized when they will become financially independent which will give them power to decide.”* Endorsed by another about the good academic performance of Pakistani girls as according to her *“Now Pakistani girls are excelling in education. Boys are far behind. In universities etc. Girl are excelling. Because, now they have been established.”* Still another one adds *“I focused on second generation because they got this awareness that by getting education you can do a lot.”*

According to one of the respondents, socio-cultural norms strongly affect the lives of our women. These socio-cultural norms she referred as remote control. According to her though these women are living here but their remote control is lying somewhere in Pakistan which make most of the choices on their behalf. Under such context, education has emerged as a way out, because its more acceptable, it initiates a gradual process towards empowerment, that enable the young women to exercise their right to make choices like saying no to arrange marriages. Through education, these women are able to change the perception about them, their legitimacy in their family and in their close society increased. That gives them more power to exercise choices. Ahmed (2001) also reveals that Muslims

(including Pakistani women) in UK used empowerment routes like education to postpone arrange marriages.

2. Eroding stereotype about Pakistanis

According to NPEW1

“Now the things have become individual things, now you can not associate any thing with Pakistan. Pakistanis group consists of so different people now, you can not say that they did a Pakistani job, what is Pakistani job, how will you define a Pakistan job. It become varies and become so diverse. I think will be individual ambitious based on which the individual girls will excel. Pakistani girls are doing wonder.”

3. Cultural Change

According to one of the NPEWs

“The education will go, however, cultural problems will remain there but it will be different for different family, the changes are going on like first people believe that don't go for marriage out of family, then don't go out of cast, and then don't go out of the country ,but all these have changed now. Pakistani girls are getting married to British, Norwegians, and even Americans living here. People are happy on this, ok, go ahead.”

Pakistani women are becoming active politically as well, as we can find few Pakistanis including women as well have served or serving in the Parliament.

Another NPEW highlights towards another cultural change, according to her *“but I think over the time it will change because many such girls are going back to the job market. Because economic independence give the women empowerment.”* NPEW3 substantiates this claim

“And I know in my circle, that the attitude of living with a bad marriage is changing. Because girls have jobs and if they have bad relations and they are just drawing out of it. And I can see that divorce rate is increasing. Its not a good thing, but it reveal that they are not absorbing every thing.”

The most important change I believe is as reported by NPEW5 *“now educated women are getting respect a lot. Their parents are proud of their daughters’ education and profession.”*

Future Challenges in this Empowerment Process

Cultural baggage as the term used by one of the respondents, will remain the most important concern in the empowerment process of these women. As highlighted by one of the NPEWs

“I mean the cultural baggage we bring from our home will be a telling factor in the future. Unless development is limited to big cities, but if the development did not prevail at village level in Pakistan, the problem will persist. The change will happen here when the change will happen in Pakistan.”

NPEW 3 adds into these fears in the following words *“I hope situation will change, they will get more education, more visible in higher ranks. But the only fear is that while taking their religion they should not take a back seat, rather fight for their religious right as well.”*

Identity Crises, is the issue faced by most of these NPEWs as well and therefore will remain one of the most important challenge in this empowerment process.

Solution for the Challenges

For identity crises one of the respondents suggests *“Its not difficult, if your parents don’t have an identity problem. If they can tell you who we are and why we are, it can give them the confidence.”* And for cultural issues respondents emphasized on the importance of continuity of work on its. According to one of the NPEWs *“I wish, there are many welfare organizations which are working.”*

However, there are NPEWs who believe that empowerment is an individual thing, as revealed by NPEW1 *“I came to believe that empowerment, its individual things, if the parents are strict should I knock the door and try to teach them, they will say who are you. Therefore, I believe that if you can save individuals, it is sufficient enough.”* My understanding with NPEW5 also substantiates this claim. However, I would like to disagree from their stance because they should also need to understand that there are some structural

barriers like cultural issues which may be difficult to overcome by the individuals for this only a group work can work.

It will be interesting to bring some perspective from the literature to see the field data.

Table 2: Selective Women's Empowerment Strategies

Datta and Cornberg (2002)	Troutner and Smith (2004)	Elliott (2008)	Frank (2010)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual level, 2. Organization and 3. Policy level process 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Power within - collective action, the organization and mobilization of self-confident individuals for social change, 2. Power with - focused on institutional changes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. By developing individual capabilities; such as education, health and self-confidence and vision etc. 5. Provision of resources like institutional and cultural which facilitate or constrain in seizing opportunities 6. Agency or process through which choices are made 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowerment through policy and planning - change structures and institutions, 2. Empowerment through social and political actions 3. Empowerment through education and conscious raising

Among these four, two strategies can be identified as common, one where institutional support is suggested to build/develop/extend and increase the individual capacity by involving the empowered individuals (may be). I belong to social responsibility school of thought. I firmly believe that as socially aware individual, one has the responsibility to contribute towards the fixation of the social problems to the extent where the individual's capacity allows allow to do it. Therefore, I have the perspective that the Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women has the social and moral responsibility to come forward and offer helping hand to the Norwegian-Pakistani Women who are in need to break the socio-cultural ice they are facing which has frozen them and limited their ability to make their own choices.

My field data reveals that most of these women are wrestling with their own identity crises and they are in the process of getting a green signal (signal of acceptance) from the main stream Norwegian society. And while considering the contemporary geo-political situation and still looming uncertainty about the global political situation for Muslim community in general and Pakistani community in particular, its not difficult to foresee that these women's efforts for their own identity is not going to end even in distant future. If these women are not self confident to the extent that they can offer this confidence to the other Pakistani women, then even Norwegian government efforts to mobilize Pakistani women will be short on its targets. Therefore, the main stream Norwegian civil society may come forward and may help these Norwegian-Pakistani Empowered Women to fortify this confidence. At least Norwegian women share a lot with Pakistani women therefore, they have greater responsibility to step forward for this job.

While summing up this discussion part, I find my study substantiating the following propositions related to women's empowerment as given by Hall (1992):

1. To the extent that women can become independently in their families, they will be empowered in diverse social settings.
2. Women who increase their control over their work at home and outside the home are in advantageous positions for achieving equality and empowerment.
3. Women's mutual support is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for their empowerment. Alone, individual women cannot develop their potential or make their fullest possible contribution to the society.

Over and above these Hall's (1992) propositions my further proposition based on the findings are:

4. It is not necessary that once a woman get empowered then she will strive for the empowerment of others.
5. It is not limited to the second generation of immigrant that they can do actively for the empowerment of others, my study reveal that first generation is more active in this than the second generation.

Implications

I think the limited efforts by NPEWs for the subjugate class of their community will reduce the speed of process of the empowerment of this community which may have negative consequences for these NPEWs as well. In a way they also need a wider network over and above their Norwegian network, a Pakistani network where they can feel proud of that as a community we are better off.

It will increase the job of policy makers as well if these empowered within the community who understand well this community, are not coming forward to bring a change, these policy makers have to put more efforts and resources to understand and devise policies for this purpose.

And for the community, as one of the respondent says, "*by chance my choices went well*". We are leaving more chances for the chances than for the choices of their development.

Conclusion

The objective of this project was to look at how Norwegian-Pakistani empowered women are trying to make the life of their subjugate fellows better off. What are the challenges being faced by these empowered women in these efforts. The study was designed to develop an insight about the state of Norwegian-Pakistani women empowerment in Norway so areas of intervention can be identified to uplift this part of the Norwegian society.

While aligning myself with Haque (2002) I believe the aspirations and attitudes of parents determine to a greater extent what young Pakistani boys and girls will do in their life. Family remained the most important institution for the women in Pakistan's society with no exception to Norwegian-Pakistani society as well. Despite the opportunities to develop their abilities by actively participating in education, and other socio-political initiatives, they will always have to look towards family limitations. Therefore, any effort for the emancipation of these women can not be materialized without the active participation and support of their families. Though the change is coming but we need to work more in order to bring a change into the attitude of the families to accept the new role of their female members and allow them to change this role.

Based on Hall (1992) who defined empowered women efforts to empowered other women an important aspect of the definition of empowered women. According to this definition if an empowered women, who is focused on its own development only, will be short on this definition. That's what we can partially observe in case of empowered Norwegian Pakistani women, who (a substantial part of them) are due to one or another reason, are not in the main stream of these empowerment efforts. They should have this understanding that their role is important not only for their immediate family, but their empowered status also bestowed a special responsibility on them to guide, show or enable others as well to walk on the pathways of empowerment. Same is described by Kabeer (2005) according to her there is no guarantee that women who enter into national parliaments will be more responsive to the needs and priorities of poor women than many men in the parliament.

Women's empowerment is a hydra-headed issue. Therefore, I believe there's no quick and linear fixation or solution of this problem. We should keep on working on the issues identified in this report like socio-culture, integration and their ability to take more voluntary initiatives with a big hope.

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Appendix

Interview Guideline

Establish the Respondent identity

1. When their parents migrated to Norway, what was or is the profession of the parents (both), your education,

Reflection on Respondent's personal empowerment process

1. How the idea emerge to excel - the first drop
2. How you were able to break up the ice
3. Who support you - challenges faced by you
4. Do you think the challenges faced by you were different than what being faced by less empowered today

Reflection on Respondent's efforts to empower others

1. What are the issue or problems of Pakistan Women here in Norway
2. Take individual issue and discuss its reasons
3. Segregate the issues related to empowerment and tailor the debate or focus the discussion on these.
4. What are the reasons of problems or issues related to women empowerment
5. What you did so far, why, on what empowerment issue, what were the challenges you faced, achievement so far, your own evaluation on these achievements
6. What further should be done, what you plan to do next, in individual capacity or in collaboration with others
7. Response of targeted women or community
8. Are there any negative consequences of your efforts, like selective empowerment of a specific class or group at the cost of others?